



La-Net

ARA 201

GRAMMAR II



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Course code: ARA 201

Course title: Grammar II

Course credit load: 2 Units

Series 1: Historical Background of Arabic Grammar

Part 1.1 Early foundations of Arabic grammar

- 1.1.1 Emergence of Arabic grammar in the early Islamic period
- 1.1.2 Contributions of Basra and Kufa schools
- 1.1.3 Role of Qur'anic studies in shaping grammar

Part 1.2 Key scholars and their contributions

- 1.2.1 Sibawayh and his *Kitāb*
- 1.2.2 Al-Farāhīdī and lexicographic influence
- 1.2.3 Other notable grammarians and their works

Part 1.3 Evolution and transmission of Arabic grammar

- 1.3.1 Spread of grammatical studies across regions
- 1.3.2 Influence on later Islamic scholarship
- 1.3.3 Relevance of historical grammar to modern studies

Introduction

Arabic grammar has a rich and fascinating history that reflects the intellectual and cultural development of the Arabic-speaking world. From its earliest foundations in the study of the Qur'an to the scholarly debates of the Basra and Kufa schools, grammar became a discipline that shaped not only language but



also theology, literature, and law. Understanding this background is essential, as it provides the context for the rules and structures you will encounter throughout this course.

The aim of this Series is to introduce you to the origins and historical development of Arabic grammar, highlighting the contributions of early scholars and the ways in which grammatical studies spread and influenced later scholarship. By the end of this Series, you should be able to explain how Arabic grammar emerged, identify key figures and their works, and appreciate the relevance of historical grammar to modern studies.

We shall commence this Series by exploring the early foundations of Arabic grammar, including its emergence in the Islamic period and the role of Qur'anic studies. Next, we will move on to examine key scholars such as Sibawayh and Al-Farāhīdī, considering their contributions and influence. Finally, we will wrap up by tracing the evolution and transmission of Arabic grammar across regions, showing how it shaped later scholarship and continues to inform modern linguistic studies.

Series Learning Outcomes

Series 1: Origins and Historical Development of Arabic Grammar

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 1.1** define the concept of Arabic grammar and explain its early foundations in the Islamic period.
- **SLO 1.2** describe the contributions of the Basra and Kufa schools to the development of grammar.
- **SLO 1.3** analyse the role of Qur'anic studies in shaping grammatical thought.
- **SLO 1.4** identify key scholars such as Sibawayh and Al-Farāhīdī and outline their major works.
- **SLO 1.5** explain the influence of Sibawayh's *Kitāb* on subsequent grammatical studies.
- **SLO 1.6** evaluate the spread and transmission of Arabic grammar across regions and its impact on later scholarship.
- **SLO 1.7** assess the relevance of historical grammar to modern linguistic and academic studies.



1.1 Early Foundations of Arabic Grammar

Arabic grammar did not emerge overnight. It developed gradually as scholars sought to preserve the accuracy of the Qur'anic text and ensure the correct usage of Arabic in speech and writing. The early foundations of grammar are closely tied to religious, cultural, and scholarly needs, making this stage of development crucial for understanding how the discipline evolved.

1.1.1 Emergence of Arabic grammar in the early Islamic period

The earliest efforts to systematise Arabic grammar were motivated by the need to protect the **Qur'an**, the holy book of Islam, from misinterpretation. Scholars realised that without clear rules, errors in recitation and writing could distort meaning. Thus, grammar became a tool for safeguarding the sacred text.

Grammar in this context refers to the set of rules that govern how words are formed and combined to create meaningful sentences. Early grammarians focused on identifying patterns in speech and codifying them into rules.

Fill in the blank: The earliest efforts to systematise Arabic grammar were motivated by the need to protect the _____.



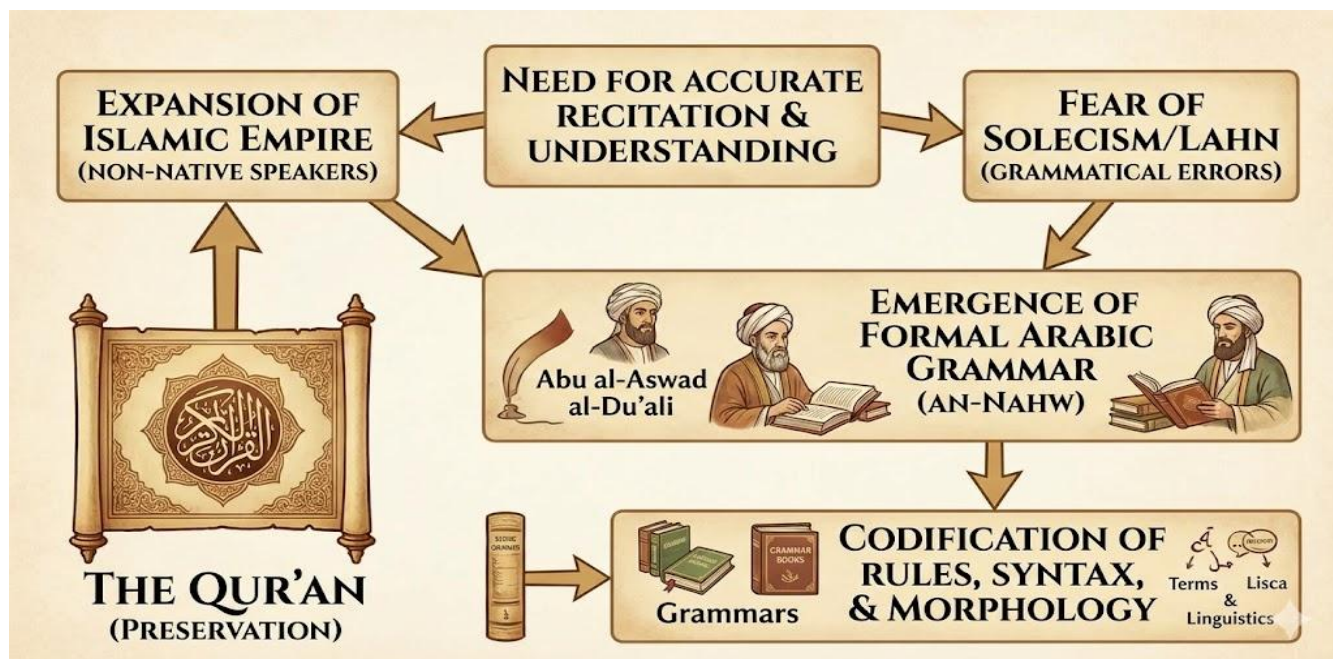


Figure 1.1 Emergence of Arabic grammar in the early Islamic period

1.1.2 Contributions of Basra and Kufa schools

Two major centres of learning, **Basra** and **Kufa**, played a pivotal role in shaping Arabic grammar. The **Basra school** emphasised strict rules and logical analysis, while the **Kufa school** was more flexible, drawing on spoken usage and poetic traditions. Together, they provided complementary perspectives that enriched the study of grammar.

For example, scholars in Basra focused on consistency and theoretical frameworks, whereas those in Kufa valued practical examples from everyday speech and literature.

Fill in the blank: The two major centres of learning that shaped Arabic grammar were _____ and Kufa.

The Basra and Kufa schools were the two major centers of Arabic grammar in the early centuries, each with distinct approaches: Basra emphasized logic and analogy, while Kufa relied more on transmitted texts and poetic usage.



Aspect	Basra School (مدرسة البصرة)	Kufa School (مدرسة الكوفة)
Methodology	Relied heavily on analogy (القياس), logic, and systematic rules to build grammar.	Depended more on transmission (السماع) from Qur'an, Hadith, and Arabic poetry.
Philosophical Orientation	More rationalist and theoretical , seeking consistency and universal rules.	More empirical and descriptive , reflecting actual usage in texts and speech.
Sources	Preferred Qur'an and carefully selected poetry ; cautious about colloquial speech.	Broader acceptance of poetic evidence and dialectal variations ; more inclusive of oral traditions.
Attitude Toward Innovation	Conservative, emphasizing purity and correctness of language.	Flexible, acknowledging linguistic diversity and regional variations.
Representative Scholars	Sibawayh (سيبويه), Al-Khalil ibn Ahmad (الخليل بن أحمد).	Al-Kisā'ī (الكسائي), Al-Farrā' (الفراء).
Impact	Influenced the standardization of Arabic grammar and became dominant in later scholarship.	Preserved dialectal richness and alternative grammatical interpretations.

Table 1.1 Comparison of Basra and Kufa schools

1.1.3 Role of Qur'anic studies in shaping grammar

The study of the Qur'an was central to the development of grammar. Scholars examined the text to identify correct forms of words, sentence structures, and declensions. This process gave rise to the concept of **'Icrāb**, defined as the system of inflectional endings that indicate grammatical functions such as subject, object, or predicate.

By analysing Qur'anic verses, grammarians established rules that later became standard in Arabic grammar. This ensured that the sacred text was recited and interpreted accurately across generations.



Fill in the blank: The system of inflectional endings that indicate grammatical functions in Arabic is called _____.

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Example</i>
Role of Qur'anic Studies (دور الدراسات القرآنية)	The need to preserve the correct recitation and interpretation of the Qur'an led scholars to study grammar systematically.	Ensuring that verses are read with proper vowel endings to avoid misinterpretation.
Development of Grammar Rules (تطوير القواعد النحوية)	Grammarians analyzed Qur'anic text to establish rules of syntax, morphology, and phonetics.	Sibawayh's Kitāb relied on Qur'anic examples to illustrate grammatical principles.
I'rāb (الإعراب)	Refers to the system of case endings (vowel marks) that indicate grammatical function of words in a sentence.	"الكتابُ جَدِيدٌ" (nominative subject), "قرأْتُ الكتابَ" (accusative object), "مررتُ بالكتابِ" (genitive after preposition).
Preservation of Meaning (حفظ المعنى)	Correct application of I'rāb ensures accurate meaning and prevents theological or linguistic errors.	إنما يخشى اللهَ " vs. "إنما يخشى اللهَ العلماءُ" → Different subject/object roles change meaning.
Impact on Arabic Grammar (الأثر على النحو العربي)	Qur'anic studies established grammar as a science, balancing oral tradition with systematic analysis.	Schools of Basra and Kufa used Qur'anic verses as primary evidence for grammatical debates.

Box 1.1 Role of Qur'anic studies in shaping grammar

Pilot questions 1.1

1. What motivated the earliest efforts to systematise Arabic grammar?
2. Which two schools played a major role in shaping Arabic grammar?



3. How did the Basra school differ from the Kufa school in its approach?
4. What is 'Icrāb, and why is it important in Arabic grammar?
5. How did Qur'anic studies contribute to the development of grammar?

1.2 Key Scholars and Their Contributions

The development of Arabic grammar owes much to the efforts of pioneering scholars who systematised the language and produced works that remain influential today. Their contributions provided the foundation for later grammatical studies and shaped the way Arabic is taught and understood.

1.2.1 Sibawayh and his *Kitāb*

One of the most celebrated figures in Arabic grammar is **Sibawayh**, a Persian scholar who lived in the 8th century. His monumental work, the ***Kitāb***, is regarded as the first comprehensive grammar of Arabic. In this text, Sibawayh analysed sentence structures, declensions, and phonetics, setting out rules that became authoritative for centuries.

The ***Kitāb*** is not only a grammar manual but also a reflection of the intellectual debates of its time. It demonstrates the influence of the Basra school, with its emphasis on logical consistency and rigorous analysis.

Fill in the blank: The first comprehensive grammar of Arabic was written by _____.



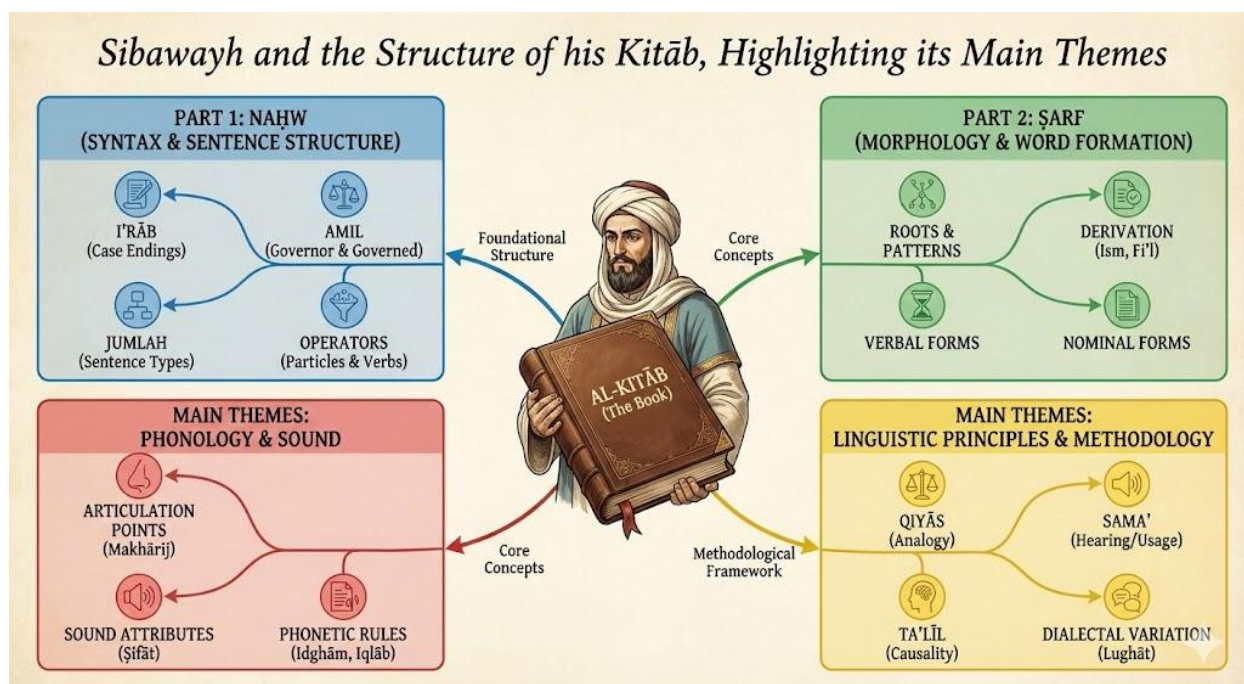


Figure 1.2 Sibawayh and his Kitāb

1.2.2 Al-Farāhīdī and lexicographic influence

Another key figure is **Al-Farāhīdī**, renowned for his contributions to lexicography and phonology. He compiled one of the earliest Arabic dictionaries, *Kitāb al-'Ayn*, which organised words according to their root letters. This work not only supported grammatical studies but also helped preserve the richness of the Arabic lexicon.

Al-Farāhīdī also introduced systematic approaches to analysing sounds, laying the groundwork for later studies in Arabic phonology. His influence extended beyond grammar into poetry and prosody, showing the interconnectedness of language disciplines.

Fill in the blank: The earliest Arabic dictionary, *Kitāb al-'Ayn*, was compiled by _____.

Field	Contribution	Explanation	Example / Impact
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Lexicography (المعاجم)	<i>Authored Kitāb al-‘Ayn (كتاب العين), the first Arabic dictionary.</i>	<i>Organized words by their phonetic articulation points rather than alphabetical order.</i>	<i>Established systematic lexicography, influencing later dictionaries like Lisān al-‘Arab.</i>
Phonology (علم الأصوات)	<i>Developed analysis of Arabic sounds and articulation points.</i>	<i>Classified consonants by place of articulation (e.g., throat, tongue, lips).</i>	<i>Provided a framework for understanding sound patterns and correct recitation.</i>
Prosody (علم العروض)	<i>Founded the science of ‘Arūḍ (Arabic prosody).</i>	<i>Identified and codified the metrical patterns of Arabic poetry.</i>	<i>Defined 15 recognized poetic meters, enabling poets to compose within structured rhythmic systems.</i>
Orthography & Grammar (الإملاء والنحو)	<i>Contributed to early grammatical studies alongside Basra school scholars.</i>	<i>Linked phonology and lexicography to grammar for precise usage.</i>	<i>Influenced Sibawayh’s Kitāb, which cited his methods.</i>

Table 1.2 Contributions of Al-Farāhīdī

1.2.3 Other notable grammarians and their works

Beyond Sibawayh and Al-Farāhīdī, many other scholars contributed to the growth of Arabic grammar. Figures such as **Al-Kisā’ī**, a leading grammarian of the Kufa school, and **Al-Zajjāj**, known for his commentaries on grammar and Qur’anic exegesis, enriched the discipline with their perspectives.

These scholars often debated issues such as declension, syntax, and the interpretation of poetic forms. Their works illustrate the diversity of thought within Arabic grammar and the importance of scholarly dialogue in refining linguistic rules.



Fill in the blank: A leading grammarian of the Kufa school was _____.

Grammatician	Era / School	Contributions	Example Impact
<i>Al-Kisāʾī</i> (الكساني)	8th century, Kufa School	- Leading Kufan grammarian and one of the seven canonical Qurʾān reciters. - Emphasized dialectal diversity and oral transmission in grammar. - Served as tutor to the Abbasid caliphs.	Preserved variant readings of the Qurʾān and enriched grammar with dialectal evidence.
<i>Al-Zajjāj</i> (الزجاج)	9th–10th century, Basra tradition	- Student of Al-Mubarrad, blending grammar with Qurʾānic exegesis. - Authored works explaining difficult Qurʾānic expressions. - Known for clarity and precision in grammatical analysis.	His book <i>Maʾānī al-Qurʾān</i> became a key reference for grammar in tafsīr.
<i>Sibawayh</i> (سيبويه)	8th century, Basra School	- Author of <i>Al-Kitāb</i>, the foundational text of Arabic grammar. - Systematized rules using analogy and logic.	Established the framework of classical Arabic grammar .
<i>Al-Farrāʾ</i> (الفراء)	8th–9th century, Kufa School	- Major Kufan grammarian, focused on Qurʾānic grammar and Bedouin dialects. - Wrote <i>Maʾānī al-Qurʾān</i>.	Preserved oral traditions and dialectal richness in grammar.



<i>Al-Mubarrad</i> (المبرِّد)	<i>9th century, Basra School</i>	- Refined Sibawayh's system, emphasizing <i>analogy and precision</i> . - Authored <i>Al-Kāmil</i> , a major grammar and literature work.	<i>Influenced later grammarians and lexicographers.</i>
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Box 1.2 Other notable grammarians and their works

Pilot questions 1.2

1. Who wrote the first comprehensive grammar of Arabic?
2. What is the name of Sibawayh's famous work?
3. Which scholar compiled *Kitāb al-'Ayn*, one of the earliest Arabic dictionaries?
4. Name one contribution of Al-Farāhīdī to Arabic studies.
5. Identify a leading grammarian of the Kufa school.

1.3 Evolution and Transmission of Arabic Grammar

Arabic grammar did not remain static after its early foundations. It evolved through scholarly debates, regional exchanges, and the transmission of knowledge across generations. This Part explores how grammar spread beyond its original centres, influenced later Islamic scholarship, and continues to hold relevance in modern studies.

1.3.1 Spread of grammatical studies across regions

As Islamic civilisation expanded, so too did the study of grammar. Centres of learning in places such as Baghdad, Damascus, and Cairo became hubs where scholars taught and refined



grammatical rules. The transmission of grammar was facilitated by **madrasas**, defined as institutions of higher learning where religious and linguistic sciences were taught.

This spread ensured that Arabic grammar was standardised across diverse regions, allowing for consistency in Qur'anic recitation, poetry, and scholarly writing.

Fill in the blank: Institutions of higher learning where grammar was taught were called _____.

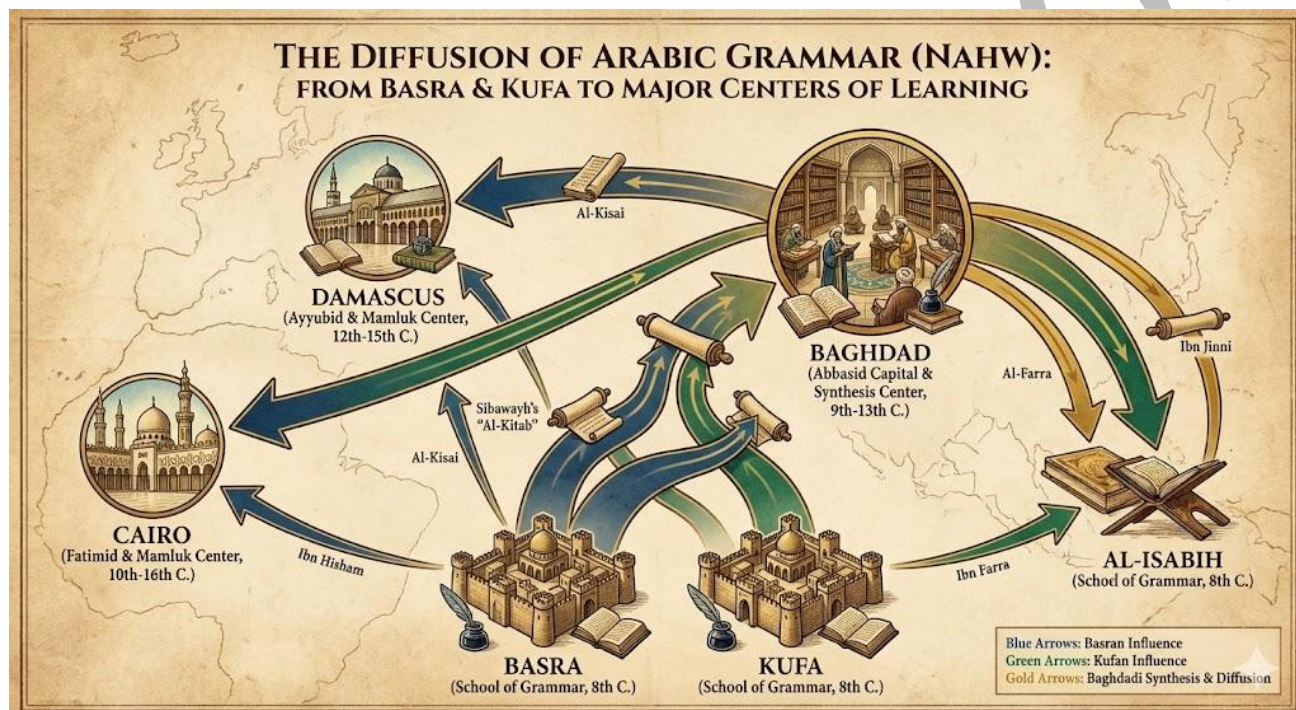


Figure 1.3 Spread of grammatical studies across regions

1.3.2 Influence on later Islamic scholarship

Arabic grammar became a cornerstone of Islamic scholarship. It influenced disciplines such as **tafsir**, defined as the interpretation of the Qur'an, and **fiqh**, defined as Islamic jurisprudence. Scholars relied on grammatical rules to ensure precise interpretation of texts, since even small changes in declension could alter meaning.



Grammar also shaped literary studies, as poets and writers adhered to grammatical conventions to maintain clarity and elegance in their works.

Fill in the blank: The discipline concerned with the interpretation of the Qur'an is called _____.

Field	Influence of Grammar	Example / Impact
Tafsīr (التفسير)	Grammar ensures correct understanding of Qur'anic verses by clarifying syntax, case endings ('i rāb), and word functions.	The verse "إنما يخشى الله العلماء" → grammar shows that "العلماء" (scholars) is the subject, preventing misinterpretation.
Fiqh (الفقه)	Legal rulings depend on precise grammatical interpretation of Qur'anic and Hadith texts. Grammar distinguishes between commands, prohibitions, and conditions.	The difference between "أقيموا الصلاة" (establish prayer – obligation) vs. "فإذا حللتم فاصطادوا" (when you finish, then hunt – permissibility).
Literary Studies (الدراسات الأدبية)	Grammar provides structure for analyzing poetry, prose, and rhetoric. It enables appreciation of stylistic devices and metrical accuracy.	In classical poetry, correct use of 'i rāb and syntax preserves rhythm and meaning, e.g., Al-Mutanabbī's verses.

Table 1.3 Influence of Arabic grammar on Islamic scholarship

1.3.3 Relevance of historical grammar to modern studies

The study of historical grammar remains important today. Modern linguists and students of Arabic benefit from understanding how rules were codified and transmitted. This knowledge provides insights into the evolution of the language and helps learners appreciate the depth of Arabic's grammatical tradition.



For example, examining Sibawayh's *Kitāb* or Al-Farāhīdī's *Kitāb al-ʿAyn* allows modern scholars to trace the roots of grammatical concepts still in use. Historical grammar also supports comparative studies between classical and modern Arabic.

Fill in the blank: The study of historical grammar helps modern learners trace the roots of _____ concepts still in use.

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Modern Relevance</i>
Preservation of Classical Arabic (حفظ العربية الكلاسيكية)	Historical grammar safeguarded Qur'anic language and early literature.	Provides a stable reference point for modern Arabic dialect studies and comparative Semitic linguistics.
Systematic Analysis (التحليل المنهجي)	Basra and Kufa schools developed structured rules of syntax, morphology, and phonology.	Offers models for linguistic theory and inspires frameworks in modern grammar research.
ʿI'rāb and Case Endings (الإعراب)	Historical focus on case endings clarified meaning and syntax.	Helps modern linguists study inflectional systems and compare with Indo-European and other language families.
Dialectal Evidence (الشواهد اللهجية)	Kufan grammarians preserved Bedouin and regional variations.	Supports sociolinguistic research and comparative studies of language change and diversity.
Influence on Other Sciences (الأثر على العلوم الأخرى)	Grammar shaped tafsīr, fiqh, and literary criticism.	Demonstrates interdisciplinary relevance, linking linguistics with theology, law, and literature.
Comparative Linguistics (اللغويات المقارنة)	Historical grammar provides rich data for cross-language analysis.	Enables comparison with Hebrew, Syriac, and other Semitic languages, highlighting shared roots and divergences.



Box 1.3 Relevance of historical grammar to modern studies

Pilot questions 1.3

1. Which institutions helped spread Arabic grammar across regions?
2. Name two cities that became centres of grammatical studies after Basra and Kufa.
3. Which discipline relies on grammar for interpreting the Qur'an?
4. How did grammar influence Islamic jurisprudence?
5. Why is the study of historical grammar still relevant today?

Series Summary

This Series has introduced you to the origins and historical development of Arabic grammar, highlighting why its study is essential for understanding the language and its scholarly traditions. By tracing the earliest foundations, you have seen how the need to preserve the Qur'an motivated the systematisation of grammar, and how the Basra and Kufa schools provided distinct approaches that enriched the discipline.

We began with the early foundations of grammar, then moved on to examine the contributions of key scholars such as Sibawayh and Al-Farāhīdī, before concluding with the spread and transmission of grammatical studies across regions and their influence on later scholarship. By completing this Series, you should now be able to define the concept of Arabic grammar, describe the role of major schools and scholars, analyse the impact of Qur'anic studies, and evaluate the relevance of historical grammar to modern linguistic studies, in line with the Series Learning Outcomes.



Glossary of Terms

- **Basra school:** One of the earliest centres of Arabic grammatical study, known for its strict rules and logical analysis of language.
- **Fiqh:** Islamic jurisprudence, the discipline concerned with interpreting and applying Islamic law, which relies on grammar for precise meaning.
- **Grammar:** The set of rules that govern how words are formed and combined to create meaningful sentences in a language.
- **Kufa school:** A major centre of Arabic grammatical study, recognised for its flexible approach that drew on spoken usage and poetic traditions.
- **Madrasas:** Institutions of higher learning in the Islamic world where religious and linguistic sciences, including grammar, were taught.
- **Qur'an:** The holy book of Islam, whose preservation and accurate recitation motivated the early development of Arabic grammar.
- **Sibawayh:** An influential Persian scholar of Arabic grammar, author of the *Kitāb*, the first comprehensive grammar of Arabic.
- **Tafsīr:** The discipline of interpreting the Qur'an, which depends on grammar to ensure accurate understanding of verses.
- **ʿIcrāb:** The system of inflectional endings in Arabic that indicate grammatical functions such as subject, object, or predicate.
- **Al-Farāhīdī:** A renowned scholar who compiled *Kitāb al-ʿAyn*, one of the earliest Arabic dictionaries, and contributed to phonology and prosody.
- **Al-Kisāʾī:** A leading grammarian of the Kufa school, known for his contributions to syntax and Qur'anic exegesis.
- **Al-Zajjāj:** A grammarian noted for his commentaries on grammar and Qur'anic interpretation, contributing to the refinement of linguistic rules.



Concept Check Questions [Series 1]

Objective Questions

1. Define grammar in the context of Arabic studies. (Linked to SLO 1.1)
2. Identify the two major schools that shaped early Arabic grammar. (Linked to SLO 1.2)
3. Name the scholar who authored the *Kitāb*, the first comprehensive grammar of Arabic. (Linked to SLO 1.4)
4. State the title of the earliest Arabic dictionary compiled by Al-Farāhīdī. (Linked to SLO 1.4)
5. What is 'Icrāb, and what does it indicate in Arabic grammar? (Linked to SLO 1.3)

Short-Answer Questions

6. Explain how Qur'anic studies influenced the development of Arabic grammar. (Linked to SLO 1.3)
7. Describe one key difference between the Basra and Kufa schools of grammar. (Linked to SLO 1.2)
8. Outline one major contribution of Al-Farāhīdī to Arabic scholarship. (Linked to SLO 1.4)
9. Analyse how Arabic grammar supported the interpretation of Islamic law. (Linked to SLO 1.6)
10. Demonstrate why historical grammar remains relevant to modern linguistic studies. (Linked to SLO 1.7)

Long-Answer Questions

11. Analyse the motivations behind the early systematisation of Arabic grammar and discuss their impact on later scholarship. (Linked to SLO 1.1, SLO 1.6)
12. Evaluate the contributions of Sibawayh and Al-Farāhīdī, highlighting how their works shaped Arabic grammar. (Linked to SLO 1.4, SLO 1.5)
13. Assess the relevance of historical grammar to modern studies, providing examples of how it informs contemporary Arabic learning. (Linked to SLO 1.7)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 1]

Objective Questions

1. Grammar is the set of rules that govern how words are formed and combined to create meaningful sentences.
2. Basra and Kufa.



3. Sibawayh.
4. *Kitāb al-‘Ayn*.
5. ‘Icrāb is the system of inflectional endings in Arabic that indicate grammatical functions such as subject, object, or predicate.

Short-Answer Questions

6. Qur’anic studies influenced grammar by motivating scholars to codify rules that ensured accurate recitation and interpretation of the sacred text.
7. The Basra school emphasised strict logical rules, while the Kufa school drew more on spoken usage and poetic traditions.
8. Al-Farāhīdī compiled *Kitāb al-‘Ayn*, one of the earliest Arabic dictionaries, and contributed to phonology and prosody.
9. Grammar supported Islamic law by clarifying meanings in legal texts, ensuring that declensions and syntax were interpreted correctly.
10. Historical grammar remains relevant because it helps learners trace the roots of grammatical concepts still in use and supports comparative studies between classical and modern Arabic.

Long-Answer Questions

11. **Basic response:** Early systematisation was motivated by the need to preserve the Qur’an and prevent errors in recitation. This laid the foundation for later grammatical scholarship.
Value-added response: Outstanding learners may add that these motivations also influenced other disciplines such as tafsīr and fiqh, ensuring consistency in religious and legal interpretation across regions.
12. **Basic response:** Sibawayh’s *Kitāb* provided the first comprehensive grammar, while Al-Farāhīdī’s *Kitāb al-‘Ayn* preserved the lexicon and introduced phonological analysis.
Value-added response: Outstanding learners may explain that Sibawayh’s logical approach shaped Basra’s influence, while Al-Farāhīdī’s lexicographic work supported later linguistic and poetic studies, showing their combined impact on Arabic scholarship.
13. **Basic response:** Historical grammar is relevant because it informs modern learners about the origins of rules and concepts still applied today.
Value-added response: Outstanding learners may provide examples such as how Sibawayh’s analysis of declension supports modern syntax studies, or how Al-Farāhīdī’s dictionary aids comparative linguistics and lexicography.



Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 1]

Part 1.1 Early foundations of Arabic grammar

- The Qur'an.
- Basra and Kufa.
- The Basra school emphasised strict logical rules, while the Kufa school drew on spoken usage and poetry.
- 'Icrāb, the system of inflectional endings that indicate grammatical functions.
- Qur'anic studies provided the basis for codifying grammatical rules and ensuring accurate recitation.

Part 1.2 Key scholars and their contributions

- Sibawayh.
- *Kitāb*.
- Al-Farāhīdī.
- He compiled *Kitāb al- 'Ayn* and contributed to phonology and prosody.
- Al-Kisā'ī.

Part 1.3 Evolution and transmission of Arabic grammar

- Madrasas.
- Baghdad and Cairo.
- Tafsīr.
- Grammar clarified meanings in legal texts, ensuring accurate interpretation in Islamic jurisprudence.
- It helps modern learners trace the roots of grammatical concepts and supports comparative studies.



References and Attributions [Series 1]

General References

- Ryding, K. C. (2005). *A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic*. Cambridge University Press.
- Haywood, J. A., & Nahmad, H. M. (1965). *A New Arabic Grammar of the Written Language*. Lund Humphries.
- Wehr, H. (1994). *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (J. M. Cowan, Ed.). Spoken Language Services.
- Versteegh, K. (1997). *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition*. Routledge.

Illustrations

- *Figure 1.1 Emergence of Arabic grammar in the early Islamic period*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a diagram showing how the preservation of the Qur’an led to the emergence of Arabic grammar.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “emergence of Arabic grammar Qur’an preservation diagram OER”.
- *Table 1.1 Comparison of Basra and Kufa schools*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a table comparing the Basra and Kufa schools of Arabic grammar, highlighting their approaches.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Basra vs Kufa schools Arabic grammar comparison table OER”.
- *Box 1.1 Role of Qur’anic studies in shaping grammar*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box explaining how Qur’anic studies influenced Arabic grammar, including the concept of ‘Icrāb.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Qur’anic studies role in Arabic grammar Icrāb OER”.
- *Figure 1.2 Sibawayh and his Kitāb*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a diagram illustrating Sibawayh and the structure of his Kitāb, highlighting its main themes.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.



- Suggested OER search string: “Sibawayh Kitab Arabic grammar diagram OER”.
- *Table 1.2 Contributions of Al-Farāhīdī*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a table listing Al-Farāhīdī’s contributions to Arabic lexicography, phonology, and prosody.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Al-Farahidi Kitab al-Ayn contributions table OER”.
- *Box 1.2 Other notable grammarians and their works*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box listing notable Arabic grammarians such as Al-Kisā’ī and Al-Zajjāj, with their contributions.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “notable Arabic grammarians contributions OER”.
- *Figure 1.3 Spread of grammatical studies across regions*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a diagram showing the spread of Arabic grammar from Basra and Kufa to Baghdad, Damascus, and Cairo.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “spread of Arabic grammar regions diagram OER”.
- *Table 1.3 Influence of Arabic grammar on Islamic scholarship*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a table showing how Arabic grammar influenced tafsīr, fiqh, and literary studies.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar influence Islamic scholarship table OER”.
- *Box 1.3 Relevance of historical grammar to modern studies*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box explaining the relevance of historical Arabic grammar to modern studies and comparative linguistics.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “relevance of historical Arabic grammar modern studies OER”.



Series 2: Grammatical Features of Nouns and Verbs

Part 2.1 Nouns and their grammatical features

- 2.1.1 Primary signs of declension in nouns
- 2.1.2 Secondary signs of declension in nouns
- 2.1.3 Examples of nominative and accusative nouns

Part 2.2 Verbs and their grammatical features

- 2.2.1 Verb forms and conjugation patterns
- 2.2.2 Agreement of verbs with subjects
- 2.2.3 Use of verbs in different tenses

Part 2.3 Interaction of nouns and verbs in sentences

- 2.3.1 Subject–predicate relationship
- 2.3.2 Role of nouns and verbs in sentence meaning
- 2.3.3 Illustrative examples from classical Arabic texts

Introduction

In the last Series, we explored the historical background of Arabic grammar, tracing its origins, key scholars, and transmission across regions. Having established this foundation, we now turn our attention to the practical aspects of grammar, focusing on the features of nouns and verbs. These two categories form the backbone of Arabic sentences, and a clear understanding of their grammatical behaviour is essential for accurate analysis and expression.

The aim of this Series is to equip you with the ability to identify, explain, and apply the core grammatical features of nouns and verbs. By the end of this Series, you should be able to recognise primary and



secondary signs of declension, describe verb forms and their agreement with subjects, and analyse how nouns and verbs interact to form meaningful sentences.

We shall commence this Series by examining nouns and their grammatical features, including the signs of declension and examples of nominative and accusative forms. Next, we will move on to verbs, considering their forms, conjugation patterns, and usage across different tenses. Finally, we will wrap up by exploring how nouns and verbs interact within sentences, focusing on the subject–predicate relationship and illustrating these concepts with examples from classical Arabic texts.

Series Learning Outcomes

Series 2: Core Grammatical Features of Nouns and Verbs

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 2.1** define the primary signs of declension in Arabic nouns.
- **SLO 2.2** explain the secondary signs of declension in Arabic nouns with suitable examples.
- **SLO 2.3** demonstrate the use of nominative and accusative nouns in sentences.
- **SLO 2.4** describe the main verb forms and conjugation patterns in Arabic.
- **SLO 2.5** analyse how verbs agree with subjects in different contexts.
- **SLO 2.6** apply verb usage across different tenses to construct accurate sentences.
- **SLO 2.7** evaluate the interaction of nouns and verbs in forming subject–predicate relationships.
- **SLO 2.8** illustrate the role of nouns and verbs in sentence meaning using examples from classical Arabic texts.

2.1 Nouns and Their Grammatical Features

Nouns form one of the most important categories in Arabic grammar. They are used to name people, places, things, and abstract concepts. In Arabic, nouns are marked by specific grammatical features that determine their role in a sentence. These features are expressed



through signs of **declension**, defined as the system of endings that indicate the grammatical case of a noun, such as nominative, accusative, or genitive.

2.1.1 Primary signs of declension in nouns

The **primary signs of declension** are the basic markers that show the grammatical case of a noun. In Arabic, these are usually expressed through short vowel endings known as **harakāt**. For example:

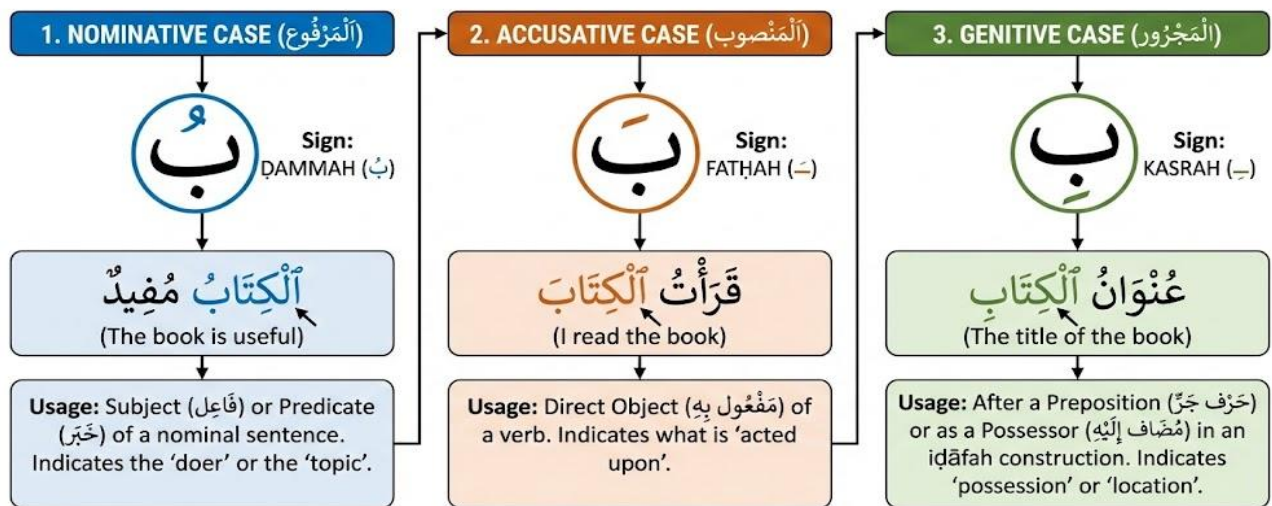
- The nominative case is marked by **ḍammah** (◌ُ).
- The accusative case is marked by **fathah** (◌َ).
- The genitive case is marked by **kasrah** (◌ِ).

These endings are crucial because they determine the function of the noun in a sentence. A subject will typically be in the nominative case, while an object will be in the accusative case.

Fill in the blank: The nominative case in Arabic nouns is marked by _____.



PRIMARY SIGNS OF ARABIC NOUN DECLENSION (الإِعْرَابُ): NOMINATIVE, ACCUSATIVE, GENITIVE



SUMMARY: These are the primary vowel markers (حَرَكَات) that change the end of a noun to show its grammatical role in the sentence.

Figure 2.1 Primary signs of declension in nouns

2.1.2 Secondary signs of declension in nouns

The **secondary signs of declension** are alternative markers used in specific contexts, such as with dual forms, sound masculine plurals, or certain irregular nouns. For example:

- The dual form uses **alif** (ا) for nominative and **yā'** (ي) for accusative and genitive.
- The sound masculine plural uses **wāw** (و) for nominative and **yā'** (ي) for accusative and genitive.

These secondary signs help learners recognise patterns beyond the basic vowel endings and are especially important when dealing with plural and dual forms.

Fill in the blank: The dual form in the nominative case is marked by _____.



Form	Case	Secondary Sign (العلامة الفرعية)	Example	Explanation
Dual (المثنى)	Nominative (مرفوع)	- (alif + nun) ان	الطالبان مجتهدان	Dual nouns in nominative take alif as the sign.
	Accusative (منصوب)	- (ya + nun) ين	رأيت الطالبين	Dual nouns in accusative take ya as the sign.
	Genitive (مجرور)	- (ya + nun) ين	مررت بالطالبتين	Dual nouns in genitive also take ya as the sign.
Sound Masculine Plural (جمع المذكر السالم)	Nominative (مرفوع)	- (waw + nun) ون	المسلمون متعاونون	Plural nouns in nominative take waw as the sign.
	Accusative (منصوب)	- (ya + nun) ين	كرمتم المسلمين	Plural nouns in accusative take ya as the sign.
	Genitive (مجرور)	- (ya + nun) ين	سلمت على المسلمين	Plural nouns in genitive also take ya as the sign.

Table 2.1 Secondary signs of declension in nouns

2.1.3 Examples of nominative and accusative nouns

To fully grasp declension, it is useful to see examples of nouns in different cases. Consider the sentence:

- جاء الطالب (jā'a al-ṭālibu) – “The student came.” Here, **al-ṭālibu** (the student) is in the nominative case as the subject.



- رأى الطالب (ra'aytu al-ṭāliba) – “I saw the student.” Here, **al-ṭāliba** is in the accusative case as the object.

These examples show how endings change depending on the noun's role in the sentence.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *ra'aytu al-ṭāliba*, the noun **al-ṭāliba** is in the _____ case.

Case	Arabic Example	Translation	Explanation
Nominative (المرفوع)	الطالب مجتهدٌ	The student is diligent.	الطالب is the subject in nominative, marked with ḍammah (◌ُ).
	الكتاب جديدٌ	The book is new.	الكتاب is nominative as the subject of the sentence.
	المعلم حاضرٌ	The teacher is present.	Subject noun in nominative case.
Accusative (المنصوب)	رأيتُ الطالبَ	I saw the student.	الطالب is the object in accusative, marked with fathah (◌َ).
	قرأتُ الكتابَ	I read the book.	الكتاب is the direct object in accusative.
	قابلتُ المعلمَ	I met the teacher.	المعلم is accusative as the object of the verb.

Box 2.1 Examples of nominative and accusative nouns

Pilot questions 2.1

1. What are the primary signs of declension in Arabic nouns?
2. Which vowel ending marks the genitive case?
3. What secondary sign is used for the nominative dual form?
4. Give one example of a noun in the nominative case.
5. How does the ending of a noun change when it is used as an object?



2.2 Verbs and Their Grammatical Features

Verbs are central to Arabic grammar because they express actions, states, or occurrences. In Arabic, verbs are marked by specific grammatical features that determine their form, tense, and agreement with subjects. Mastering these features is essential for constructing accurate sentences and understanding how meaning is conveyed.

2.2.1 Verb forms and conjugation patterns

Arabic verbs are built from **roots**, defined as sets of three or sometimes four consonants that carry the core meaning of a word. From these roots, different verb forms are derived to express variations in meaning, intensity, or causation.

Conjugation refers to the process of changing the verb form to reflect tense, person, gender, and number. For example:

- كَتَبَ (*kataba*) – “he wrote” (past tense, singular, masculine).
- يَكْتُبُ (*yaktubu*) – “he writes” (present tense, singular, masculine).
- سَيَكْتُبُ (*sayaktubu*) – “he will write” (future tense, singular, masculine).

Fill in the blank: The root of the verb *kataba* is formed from the consonants _____.



Arabic Verb Derivation from Root Consonants (The Three-Letter Root System)

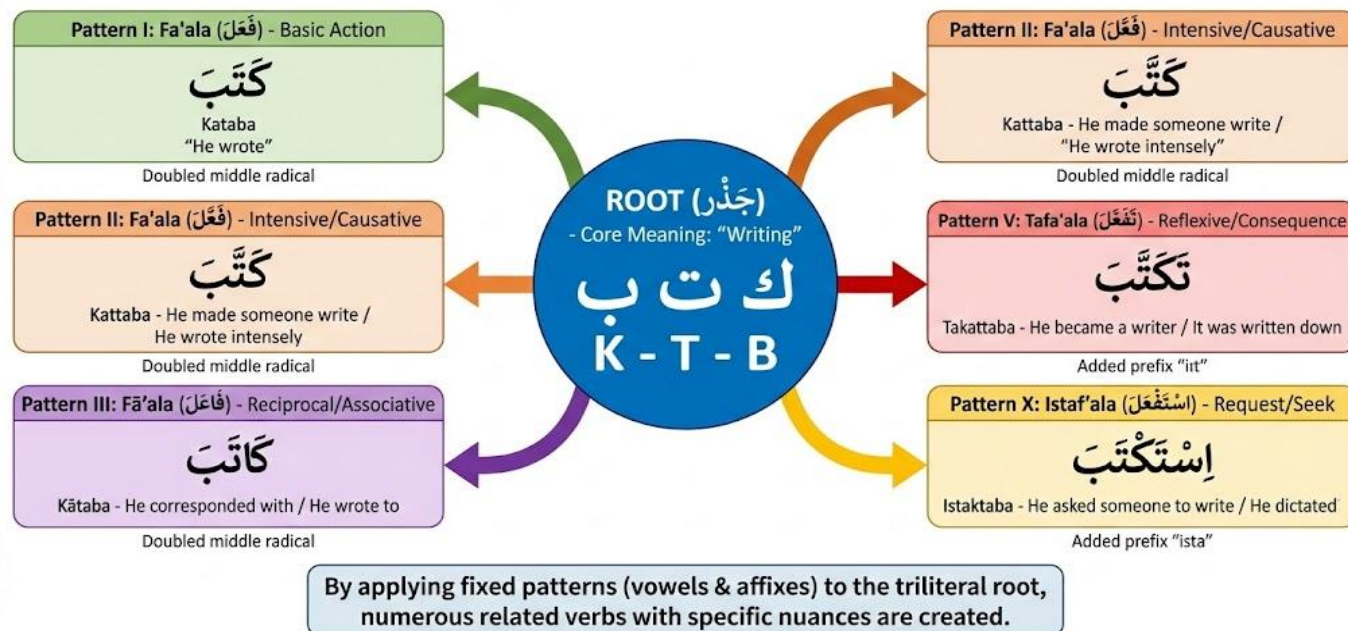


Figure 2.2 Verb forms and conjugation patterns

2.2.2 Agreement of verbs with subjects

In Arabic, verbs must agree with their subjects in **person**, **gender**, and **number**.

- **Person** refers to whether the subject is first, second, or third person.
- **Gender** distinguishes between masculine and feminine subjects.
- **Number** indicates whether the subject is singular, dual, or plural.

For example:

- كَتَبْتُ (*katabtu*) – "I wrote" (first person singular).
- كَتَبْنَا (*katabnā*) – "we wrote" (first person plural).
- كَتَبَتْ (*katabat*) – "she wrote" (third person singular feminine).

Fill in the blank: The verb *katabat* shows agreement with a subject that is _____ person, singular, and feminine.



Person	Gender	Number	Arabic Example	Translation	Explanation
1st Person	Masculine/Feminine	Singular	أكتبُ	I write	Verb agrees with speaker (أنا).
	Masculine/Feminine	Plural	نكتبُ	We write	Verb agrees with group of speakers (نحن).
2nd Person	Masculine	Singular	تكتبُ	You (m) write	Verb agrees with مخاطب (أنت).
	Feminine	Singular	تكتبينَ	You (f) write	Feminine ending - ين marks agreement.
	Masculine	Plural	تكتبونَ	You (m. pl.) write	Plural ending - ون marks masculine plural.
	Feminine	Plural	تكتبنَ	You (f. pl.) write	Plural ending - ن marks feminine plural.
3rd Person	Masculine	Singular	يكتبُ	He writes	Verb agrees with هو.
	Feminine	Singular	تكتبُ	She writes	Verb agrees with هي.
	Masculine	Plural	يكتبونَ	They (m) write	Plural ending - ون marks masculine plural.
	Feminine	Plural	يكتبنَ	They (f) write	Plural ending - ن marks feminine plural.

Table 2.2 Agreement of verbs with subjects



2.2.3 Use of verbs in different tenses

Arabic verbs are used to express three main **tenses**: past, present, and future.

- The **past tense** (perfect) describes completed actions.
- The **present tense** (imperfect) describes ongoing or habitual actions.
- The **future tense** is formed by adding particles such as *sa-* or *sawfa* before the present tense verb.

For example:

- *دَرَسَ (darasa)* – “he studied” (past).
- *يَدْرُسُ (yadrusu)* – “he studies” (present).
- *سَيَدْرُسُ (sayadrusu)* – “he will study” (future).

Fill in the blank: The particle *sa-* is used to form the _____ tense in Arabic.

<i>Tense</i>	<i>Arabic Example</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
Past (الماضي)	كَتَبَ الطَّالِبُ الرسالة	The student wrote the letter.	Past tense verb كَتَبَ indicates completed action.
Present (المضارع)	يَكْتُبُ الطَّالِبُ الرسالة	The student writes / is writing the letter.	Present tense verb يَكْتُبُ shows ongoing or habitual action.
Future (المستقبل)	سَيَكْتُبُ الطَّالِبُ الرسالة	The student will write the letter.	Prefix سـ or particle سَوْفَ marks future tense.

Box 2.2 Use of verbs in different tenses

Pilot questions 2.2

1. What is meant by the root of an Arabic verb?
2. Give one example of a verb in the past tense.
3. How does the verb *katabat* agree with its subject?



4. Which particle is used to form the future tense in Arabic?
5. Explain the difference between the past and present tense in Arabic verbs.

2.3 Interaction of Nouns and Verbs in Sentences

Nouns and verbs are the two pillars of Arabic grammar. When combined, they form sentences that convey complete meaning. Understanding how nouns and verbs interact is essential for identifying subjects, predicates, and the overall structure of Arabic sentences. This Part will guide you through the subject–predicate relationship, the role of nouns and verbs in sentence meaning, and examples drawn from classical Arabic texts.

2.3.1 Subject–predicate relationship

In Arabic, the **subject** is the noun that performs the action, while the **predicate** is the verb or phrase that describes what the subject does. This relationship is central to sentence construction. For example:

- جاء الطالب (*jā'a al-ṭālibu*) – “The student came.” Here, **al-ṭālibu** is the subject, and **jā'a** is the predicate.
- كتبت فاطمة الرسالة (*katabat Fāṭimatu al-risālah*) – “Fatimah wrote the letter.” Here, **Fāṭimatu** is the subject, and **katabat** is the predicate.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *jā'a al-ṭālibu*, the noun **al-ṭālibu** functions as the _____.



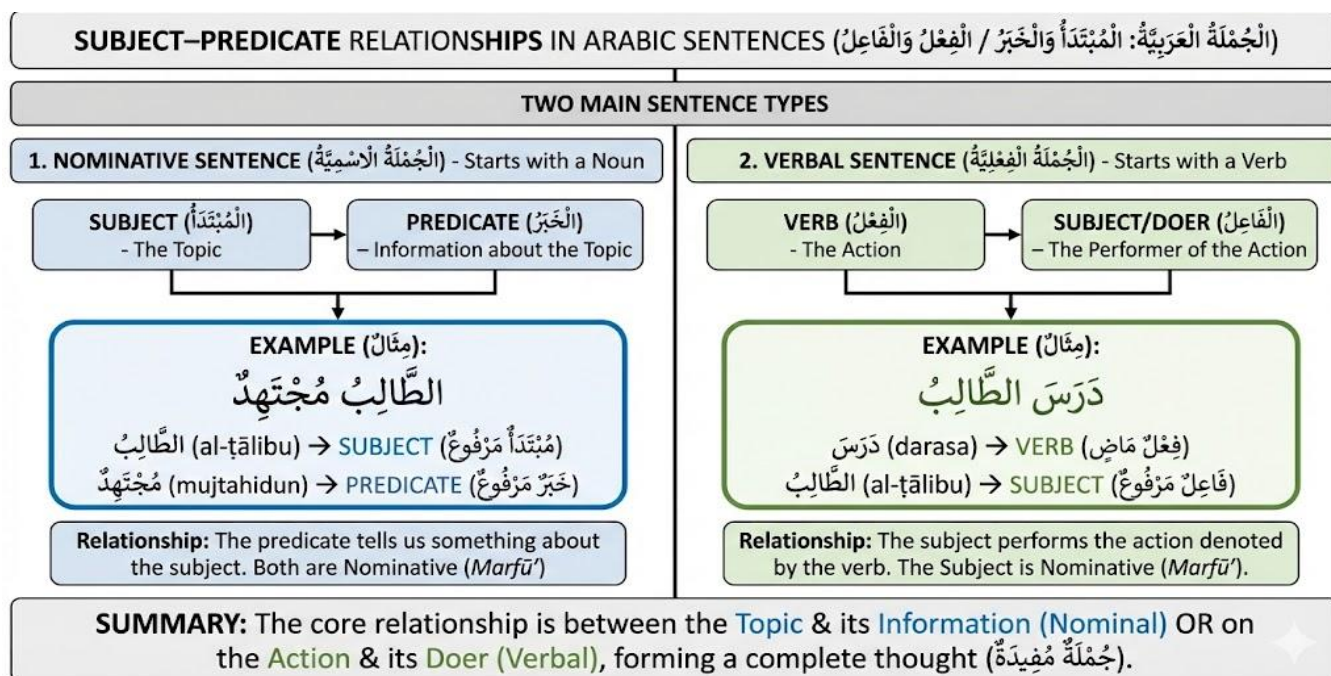


Figure 2.3 Subject–predicate relationship in Arabic sentences

2.3.2 Role of nouns and verbs in sentence meaning

The interaction of nouns and verbs determines the meaning of a sentence. The noun provides the actor or entity, while the verb provides the action or state. Together, they form a complete thought.

For example:

- سَافَرَ الرَّجُلُ (sāfara al-rajulu) – “The man travelled.”
- يَاقِرُ الْوَلَدُ الْكِتَابَ (yaqra’u al-ṭiflu al-kitāba) – “The child reads the book.”

In both cases, the noun identifies who is involved, while the verb specifies what is happening.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *yaqra’u al-ṭiflu al-kitāba*, the verb **yaqra’u** expresses the _____ performed by the child.



Arabic Sentence	Translation	Noun Role	Verb Role
كتب الطالب الدرس	The student wrote the lesson.	الدرس = subject (فاعل), الطالب = object (مفعول به)	كتب = past tense verb (فعل ماضي)
يقرأ الطفل الكتاب	The child reads the book.	الكتاب = subject, الطفل = object	يقرأ = present tense verb (فعل مضارع)
سيروى المعلم المدرسة	The teacher will visit the school.	المدرسة = subject, المعلم = object	سيروى = future tense verb (فعل مضارع مسبق) (يسوف/سـ)
جلس الرجل على الكرسي	The man sat on the chair.	الرجل = subject, الكرسي = object of preposition (اسم مجرور)	جلس = past tense verb
كتبت البنت الرسالة	The girl wrote the letter.	البنت = subject, الرسالة = object	كتبت = past tense verb (with feminine ending)

Table 2.3 Role of nouns and verbs in sentence meaning

2.3.3 Illustrative examples from classical Arabic texts

Classical Arabic texts provide rich examples of how nouns and verbs interact. These texts often demonstrate the elegance and precision of Arabic grammar. For instance:

- قال الله تعالى (qāla Allāhu ta'ālā) – “Allah, the Exalted, said.”
- نصر الله المؤمنين (naṣara Allāhu al-mu'minīn) – “Allah helped the believers.”

Such examples show how the subject (noun) and predicate (verb) work together to convey profound meanings.

Fill in the blank: In the phrase *naṣara Allāhu al-mu'minīn*, the noun **Allāhu** is the _____ of the verb *naṣara*.



Classical Arabic Example	Translation	Subject (المبتدأ)	Predicate (الخبر)
العلم نور	Knowledge is light.	العلم(knowledge)	نور(light)
الصبر مفتاح الفرج	Patience is the key to relief.	الصبر(patience)	مفتاح الفرج(key to relief)
الكتاب صديق	The book is a friend.	الكتاب(book)	صديق(friend)
الحق واضح	Truth is clear.	الحق(truth)	واضح(clear)
الوقت كالسيف	Time is like a sword.	الوقت(time)	كالسيف(like a sword)

Box 2.3 Illustrative examples from classical Arabic texts

Pilot questions 2.3

1. What is the role of the subject in an Arabic sentence?
2. Give one example of a subject–predicate relationship.
3. How do nouns and verbs interact to form meaning in a sentence?
4. In the sentence *sāfara al-rajulu*, what role does **al-rajulu** play?
5. Provide one example from classical Arabic that shows the interaction of nouns and verbs.

Series Summary

This Series has focused on the grammatical features of nouns and verbs, building on the historical foundations introduced earlier. Its purpose has been to help you recognise how these two categories function as the backbone of Arabic sentences, equipping you with the skills to identify, explain, and apply their grammatical features in practice.

We began by examining nouns, looking at their primary and secondary signs of declension and seeing examples of nominative and accusative forms. We then moved on to verbs, exploring their forms, conjugation patterns, agreement with subjects, and use across different tenses.

Finally, we considered how nouns and verbs interact within sentences, focusing on the subject–predicate relationship and drawing examples from classical Arabic texts. By completing this



Series, you should now be able to define and explain declension signs, demonstrate verb usage, analyse agreement between verbs and subjects, and evaluate how nouns and verbs combine to form meaningful sentences, in line with the Series Learning Outcomes.

Glossary of Terms

- **Accusative case:** A grammatical case in Arabic that marks the noun as the object of a verb, usually indicated by the short vowel *fathah* (ـَ).
- **Declension:** The system of endings added to Arabic nouns to show their grammatical role in a sentence, such as subject, object, or possession.
- **Dual form:** A special noun or verb form in Arabic used to indicate exactly two of something, marked by endings such as *alif* (ـِ) or *yā'* (ـَي).
- **Genitive case:** A grammatical case in Arabic that marks the noun as showing possession or relation, usually indicated by the short vowel *kasrah* (ـِ).
- **Harakāt:** Short vowel signs in Arabic script that mark pronunciation and grammatical case, including *ḍammah* (ـُ), *fathah* (ـَ), and *kasrah* (ـِ).
- **Nominative case:** A grammatical case in Arabic that marks the noun as the subject of a verb, usually indicated by the short vowel *ḍammah* (ـُ).
- **Predicate:** The part of a sentence that describes what the subject does or is, often expressed by a verb in Arabic.
- **Root:** The basic set of three (sometimes four) consonants in Arabic from which words, especially verbs, are derived to carry core meaning.
- **Secondary signs of declension:** Alternative markers used in Arabic grammar for specific forms such as duals and sound masculine plurals, often involving *alif*, *wāw*, or *yā'*.
- **Subject:** The noun in a sentence that performs the action of the verb or is described by the predicate.
- **Tense:** The grammatical feature of verbs that indicates the time of the action, such as past, present, or future.
- **Verb conjugation:** The process of changing the form of an Arabic verb to show tense, person, gender, and number.



Concept Check Questions [Series 2]

Objective Questions

1. Define declension in Arabic nouns. (Linked to SLO 2.1)
2. Identify the vowel ending that marks the genitive case in Arabic nouns. (Linked to SLO 2.2)
3. State the secondary sign used for the nominative dual form. (Linked to SLO 2.2)
4. Name the three consonants that form the root of the verb *kataba*. (Linked to SLO 2.4)
5. Which particle is used to form the future tense in Arabic? (Linked to SLO 2.6)

Short-Answer Questions

6. Explain the difference between the nominative and accusative cases in nouns. (Linked to SLO 2.3)
7. Describe how verbs agree with subjects in terms of person, gender, and number. (Linked to SLO 2.5)
8. Demonstrate with an example how a verb changes from past to present tense. (Linked to SLO 2.6)
9. Analyse the subject–predicate relationship in the sentence *jā'a al-ṭālibu*. (Linked to SLO 2.7)
10. Illustrate with one example from classical Arabic how nouns and verbs interact to form meaning. (Linked to SLO 2.8)

Long-Answer Questions

11. Analyse the primary and secondary signs of declension in Arabic nouns, explaining their importance in sentence construction. (Linked to SLO 2.1, SLO 2.2)
12. Evaluate how verb conjugation patterns and subject agreement contribute to clarity in Arabic sentences. (Linked to SLO 2.4, SLO 2.5)
13. Assess the interaction of nouns and verbs in forming subject–predicate relationships, using examples to support your explanation. (Linked to SLO 2.7, SLO 2.8)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 2]

Objective Questions

1. Declension is the system of endings added to Arabic nouns to show their grammatical role in a sentence.
2. *Kasrah* (-).
3. *Alif* (ـ).



4. K-T-B.
5. *Sa-* (س).

Short-Answer Questions

6. The nominative case marks the subject of a verb, usually with *ḍammah* (ـَ), while the accusative case marks the object, usually with *fathah* (ـِ).
7. Verbs agree with subjects by changing form to reflect person (first, second, third), gender (masculine or feminine), and number (singular, dual, plural).
8. Example: *kataba* (“he wrote”) in past tense changes to *yaktubu* (“he writes”) in present tense.
9. In *jā’a al-ṭālibu*, **al-ṭālibu** is the subject in the nominative case, and **jā’a** is the predicate verb.
10. Example: *qāla Allāhu ta’ālā* – “Allah, the Exalted, said.” Here, **Allāhu** is the subject and **qāla** is the predicate.

Long-Answer Questions

11. **Basic response:** Primary signs of declension are short vowels (*ḍammah*, *fathah*, *kasrah*), while secondary signs include endings like *alif* and *yā’*. They are important because they indicate whether a noun is a subject, object, or shows possession.

Value-added response: Outstanding learners may add that these signs also help distinguish singular, dual, and plural forms, and ensure consistency in Qur’anic recitation and literary expression.

12. **Basic response:** Verb conjugation patterns show tense, while agreement ensures verbs match subjects in person, gender, and number. This prevents ambiguity in sentences.

Value-added response: Outstanding learners may explain that conjugation patterns also reflect subtle nuances in meaning, such as causation or intensity, and agreement rules help maintain clarity in complex sentences across classical and modern Arabic.

13. **Basic response:** Nouns provide the actor, while verbs provide the action, forming subject–predicate relationships. For example, *sāfara al-rajulu* – “The man travelled.”

Value-added response: Outstanding learners may expand by showing how classical texts use these relationships to convey theological or literary depth, and how analysing them helps modern learners appreciate the precision of Arabic grammar.



Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 2]

Part 2.1 Nouns and their grammatical features

- Dammah (◌).
- Kasrah (◌).
- Alif (◌).
- *Al-ṭālibu* (the student).
- The ending changes to *fathah* (◌) when used as an object.

Part 2.2 Verbs and their grammatical features

- K-T-B.
- *Kataba* – “he wrote.”
- Third person, singular, feminine.
- The particle *sa-* (سـ).
- The past tense describes completed actions, while the present tense describes ongoing or habitual actions.

Part 2.3 Interaction of nouns and verbs in sentences

- The subject performs the action of the verb.
- Example: *jā'a al-ṭālibu* – “The student came.”
- Nouns provide the actor, verbs provide the action, together forming complete meaning.
- In *sāfara al-rajulu*, **al-rajulu** is the subject.
- Example: *qāla Allāhu ta'ālā* – “Allah, the Exalted, said.”

References and Attributions [Series 2]



General References

- Haywood, J. A., & Nahmad, H. M. (1965). *A New Arabic Grammar of the Written Language*. Lund Humphries.
- Ryding, K. C. (2005). *A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic*. Cambridge University Press.
- Versteegh, K. (1997). *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition*. Routledge.
- Wehr, H. (1994). *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (J. M. Cowan, Ed.). Spoken Language Services.

Illustrations

- *Figure 2.1 Primary signs of declension in nouns*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a diagram showing the primary signs of declension in Arabic nouns: nominative (ḍammah), accusative (fathah), genitive (kasrah).”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar primary signs of declension diagram OER”.
- *Table 2.1 Secondary signs of declension in nouns*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a table showing secondary signs of declension in Arabic nouns, including dual and sound masculine plural forms.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar secondary signs of declension table OER”.
- *Box 2.1 Examples of nominative and accusative nouns*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box showing examples of Arabic nouns in nominative and accusative cases, with translations.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar nominative accusative noun examples OER”.
- *Figure 2.2 Verb forms and conjugation patterns*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a diagram showing how Arabic verbs are derived from three root consonants, with examples.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.



- Suggested OER search string: “Arabic verb forms conjugation root consonants diagram OER”.
- *Table 2.2 Agreement of verbs with subjects*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a table showing examples of Arabic verb agreement with subjects in person, gender, and number.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic verb agreement subject person gender number table OER”.
- *Box 2.2 Use of verbs in different tenses*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box showing examples of Arabic verbs in past, present, and future tenses, with translations.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar verb tenses past present future examples OER”.
- *Figure 2.3 Subject–predicate relationship in Arabic sentences*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a diagram showing subject–predicate relationships in Arabic sentences, with examples in Arabic script.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar subject predicate relationship diagram OER”.
- *Table 2.3 Role of nouns and verbs in sentence meaning*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a table showing examples of Arabic sentences with nouns and verbs, highlighting their roles.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar role of nouns and verbs in sentence meaning table OER”.
- *Box 2.3 Illustrative examples from classical Arabic texts*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box showing examples of subject–predicate relationships from classical Arabic texts, with translations.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar subject predicate examples classical texts OER”.



Series 3: Primary and Secondary Signs of Declension (Calāmāt al-‘Icrāb)

Part 3.1 Primary signs of declension

- 3.1.1 Definition and role of primary signs
- 3.1.2 Nominative case markers
- 3.1.3 Accusative case markers
- 3.1.4 Genitive case markers

Part 3.2 Secondary signs of declension

- 3.2.1 Definition and role of secondary signs
- 3.2.2 Dual forms and their markers
- 3.2.3 Sound masculine plural markers
- 3.2.4 Other irregular forms

Part 3.3 Application of declension signs in sentences

- 3.3.1 Subject and object identification using declension
- 3.3.2 Declension in possessive and descriptive structures
- 3.3.3 Examples from Qur’anic and classical Arabic texts

Introduction

In the last Series, we examined the grammatical features of nouns and verbs, focusing on how they function individually and interact within sentences. Building on that foundation, we now turn to the specific signs that mark their grammatical roles. These signs of declension, known in Arabic as *Calāmāt al-‘Icrāb*, are essential for understanding sentence structure and meaning. Without them, it would be difficult to distinguish subjects from objects or to interpret relationships between words accurately.



The aim of this Series is to introduce you to both the primary and secondary signs of declension and to equip you with the ability to recognise, explain, and apply them in the analysis of Arabic sentences. By mastering these signs, you will gain confidence in identifying grammatical cases and applying them correctly in reading and writing.

We shall commence this Series by exploring the primary signs of declension, beginning with their definition and role, and then examining the markers for nominative, accusative, and genitive cases. Next, we will move on to the secondary signs of declension, considering their use in dual forms, sound masculine plurals, and other irregular patterns. Finally, we will wrap up by applying both primary and secondary signs in sentences, focusing on how they help identify subjects, objects, and possessive structures, with examples drawn from Qur'anic and classical Arabic texts.

Series Learning Outcomes

Series 3: Primary and Secondary Signs of Declension (Calāmāt al-‘Icrāb)

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 3.1** define the concept of primary signs of declension in Arabic grammar.
- **SLO 3.2** explain the role of nominative case markers in identifying subjects.
- **SLO 3.3** describe the function of accusative case markers in marking objects.
- **SLO 3.4** demonstrate how genitive case markers indicate possession or relation.
- **SLO 3.5** define secondary signs of declension and their grammatical role.
- **SLO 3.6** illustrate the use of dual forms with appropriate declension markers.
- **SLO 3.7** apply sound masculine plural markers in sentence construction.
- **SLO 3.8** analyse irregular declension patterns in selected nouns.
- **SLO 3.9** evaluate how declension signs help identify subjects and objects in sentences.
- **SLO 3.10** demonstrate the application of declension signs in possessive and descriptive structures.
- **SLO 3.11** illustrate the use of declension signs with examples from Qur'anic and classical Arabic texts.



3.1 Primary Signs of Declension

Declension is one of the most important features of Arabic grammar. It refers to the system of endings attached to nouns and adjectives to indicate their grammatical role in a sentence. The **primary signs of declension** are the basic vowel markers that show whether a word is functioning as a subject, object, or part of a possessive structure. These signs are expressed through short vowels known as **harakāt**, which are placed above or below the final letter of a noun.

3.1.1 Definition and role of primary signs

The **primary signs of declension** are the standard markers used to identify the three main grammatical cases: nominative, accusative, and genitive. They are essential because they prevent ambiguity in sentences and allow readers to know exactly how each noun functions. Without these signs, it would be difficult to distinguish between subjects, objects, and possessive forms.

Fill in the blank: The primary signs of declension are expressed through short vowels called _____.



PRIMARY ARABIC DECLENSION SIGNS (الْإِعْرَابُ الْأَصْلِيُّ): NOMINATIVE, ACCUSATIVE, & GENITIVE

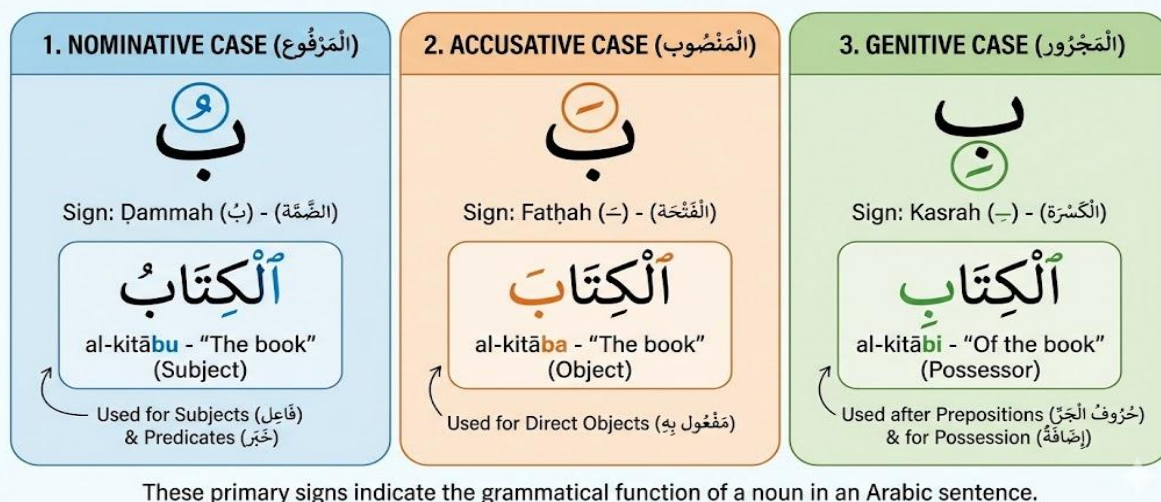


Figure 3.1 Primary signs of declension in Arabic nouns

3.1.2 Nominative case markers

The **nominative case** is used when a noun functions as the subject of a verb or the predicate of a nominal sentence. It is marked by **dammah** (◌ُ) placed above the final letter. For example:

- الطالبُ مجتهدٌ (al-ṭālibu mujtahidun) – “The student is hardworking.”

Here, **al-ṭālibu** is in the nominative case as the subject.

Fill in the blank: The nominative case is marked by the short vowel _____.

Arabic Noun (المرفوع)	Translation	Role in Sentence	Example Sentence
الطالبُ	The student	Subject (مبتدأ / فاعل)	الطالبُ مجتهدٌ → The student is diligent.
الكتابُ	The book	Subject	الكتابُ جديدٌ → The book is new.
المعلمُ	The teacher	Subject	المعلمُ حاضِرٌ → The teacher is present.
الحقُّ	The truth	Subject	الحقُّ واضحٌ → The truth is clear.
الوقتُ	Time	Subject	الوقتُ ثمينٌ → Time is precious.

Box 3.1 Examples of nominative case markers



3.1.3 Accusative case markers

The **accusative case** is used when a noun functions as the direct object of a verb. It is marked by **faṭḥah** (ـَ) placed above the final letter. For example:

- رأى الطالب (ra'aytu al-ṭāliba) – “I saw the student.”

Here, **al-ṭāliba** is in the accusative case as the object.

Fill in the blank: The accusative case is marked by the short vowel _____.

Arabic Noun (المنصوب)	Translation	Role in Sentence	Example Sentence
الطالب	The student	Direct object (مفعول به)	رأيتُ الطالب → I saw the student.
الكتاب	The book	Direct object	قرأتُ الكتاب → I read the book.
المعلم	The teacher	Direct object	قابلتُ المعلم → I met the teacher.
الرسالة	The letter	Direct object	كتبْتُ الرسالة → I wrote the letter.
الطريق	The road	Object of verb	سلكْتُ الطريق → I followed the road.

Table 3.1 Examples of accusative case markers

3.1.4 Genitive case markers

The **genitive case** is used when a noun shows possession or follows a preposition. It is marked by **kasrah** (ـِ) placed below the final letter. For example:

- كتاب الطالب (kitābu al-ṭālibi) – “The student’s book.”

Here, **al-ṭālibi** is in the genitive case, showing possession.

Fill in the blank: The genitive case is marked by the short vowel _____.



EXAMPLES OF ARABIC NOUNS IN GENITIVE CASE (الْمَجْرُور) WITH TRANSLATIONS

EXAMPLE (مِثَال)	GENITIVE NOUN (الْإِسْمُ الْمَجْرُور)	TRANSLATION (التَّرْجَمَةُ)
فِي الْبَيْتِ →	الْبَيْتِ (حَرْفُ جَرٍّ) Preceded by Preposition	in the house
كِتَابُ الطَّالِبِ →	الطَّالِبِ (مُضَافٌ إِلَيْهِ) Possessor in Idafa	the student's book
بَعْدَ الدَّرْسِ →	الدَّرْسِ (ظَرْفٌ) After Adverb of Time/Place	after the lesson

SUMMARY: Nouns in the Genitive Case (Majrūr) typically end with a Kasrah (ـِ) and follow a preposition, another noun in a possessive construction, or certain adverbs.

Figure 3.2 Genitive case markers in Arabic nouns

Pilot questions 3.1

1. What are the primary signs of declension in Arabic grammar?
2. Which short vowel marks the nominative case?
3. Which short vowel marks the accusative case?
4. Which short vowel marks the genitive case?
5. Give one example of a noun in the nominative case.

3.2 Secondary Signs of Declension

While the primary signs of declension are expressed through short vowels, Arabic grammar also makes use of **secondary signs of declension**, which are alternative markers applied in specific contexts. These signs are particularly important when dealing with dual forms, sound masculine plurals, and certain irregular nouns. They ensure that declension rules remain consistent even when words take on more complex forms.



3.2.1 Definition and role of secondary signs

The **secondary signs of declension** are endings other than the short vowels that mark grammatical cases. They are used when nouns or verbs appear in dual or plural forms, or when irregular patterns occur. For example, instead of a simple vowel ending, the nominative case in dual nouns is marked by **alif** (ا), while the accusative and genitive cases are marked by **yā'** (ي).

Fill in the blank: The nominative case in dual nouns is marked by the letter _____.

ARABIC DECLENSION SIGNS: PRIMARY vs. SECONDARY

PRIMARY SIGNS (الْعَلَامَاتُ الْأَصْلِيَّةُ)

Vowel Markers (الْحَرَكَاتُ)

NOMINATIVE (الرَّفْعُ)

بُ

Dammah (الضَّمَّةُ) - (ُ)

الْكِتَابُ

al-kitāb

ACCUSATIVE (النُّصْبُ)

بَ

Fathah (الْفَتْحَةُ) - (َ)

الْكِتَابَ

al-kitāba

GENITIVE (الْجَرُّ)

بِ

Kasrah (الْكَسْرَةُ) - (ِ)

الْكِتَابِ

al-kitābi

Used for Singular Nouns & Broken Plurals.

SECONDARY SIGNS (الْعَلَامَاتُ الْفَرْعِيَّةُ)

Letter Markers (الْأُحُرُوفُ)

NOMINATIVE (الرَّفْعُ)

و

Wāw (الْوَاوُ) - (و)

الْمُسْلِمُونَ

al-muslimūna

ACCUSATIVE (النُّصْبُ)

ا

Alif (الْأَلِفُ) - (ا)

أَبَاكَ

abāka

GENITIVE (الْجَرُّ)

ي

Yā' (الْيَاءُ) - (ي)

الْمُسْلِمِينَ

al-muslimīna

Used for Dual, Sound Masculine Plural, & The Five Names.

SUMMARY:

Primary signs change the vowel on the last letter, while
Secondary signs change the letter itself to indicate grammatical case.

Figure 3.3 Primary versus secondary declension signs

3.2.2 Dual forms and their markers

The **dual form** in Arabic is used to indicate exactly two of something. It is marked by **alif** (ا) in the nominative case and **yā'** (ي) in the accusative and genitive cases. For example:

- جاء الطالبان (jā'a al-ṭālibāni) – “The two students came.” (nominative)
- رأيت الطالبين (ra'aytu al-ṭālibayni) – “I saw the two students.” (accusative)

Fill in the blank: In the accusative case, the dual form is marked by the letter _____.



Case	Marker (العلامة)	Example (Arabic)	Translation	Explanation
Nominative (المرفوع)	ان(alif + nun)	الطالبان مجتهدان	The two students are diligent.	Dual nouns in nominative take alif as the marker.
Accusative (المنصوب)	ين(ya + nun)	رأيت الطالبين	I saw the two students.	Dual nouns in accusative take ya as the marker.
Genitive (المجرور)	ين(ya + nun)	مررت بالطالبين	I passed by the two students.	Dual nouns in genitive also take ya as the marker.

Table 3.2 Dual forms and their declension markers

3.2.3 Sound masculine plural markers

The **sound masculine plural** refers to nouns that take a regular plural ending. In the nominative case, it is marked by **wāw** (و), while in the accusative and genitive cases, it is marked by **yā'** (ي). For example:

- المعلمون مجتهدون (al-mu'allimūna mujtahidūna) – “The teachers are hardworking.” (nominative)
- رأيت المعلمين (ra'aytu al-mu'allimīna) – “I saw the teachers.” (accusative)

Fill in the blank: The sound masculine plural in the nominative case is marked by the letter

_____.

Case	Marker (العلامة)	Arabic Example	Translation	Explanation
Nominative (المرفوع)	ون(waw + nun)	المسلمون متعاونون	The Muslims are cooperative.	In nominative, the ending ون marks the plural subject.
	ون	المعلمون حاضرون	The teachers are present.	Subject noun in nominative case.



Accusative (المنصوب)	يَنْ (ya + nun)	كَرَّمْتُ المسلمينَ	<i>I honored the Muslims.</i>	<i>In accusative, the ending يَنْ marks the plural object.</i>
	يَنْ	قَابَلْتُ المعلمينَ	<i>I met the teachers.</i>	<i>Object noun in accusative case.</i>

Box 3.2 Sound masculine plural markers

3.2.4 Other irregular forms

Some nouns follow **irregular declension patterns**, where endings differ from the standard primary or secondary signs. These include certain broken plurals and specific lexical items. For example:

- أسماء (asmā' u) – “names” (irregular plural in nominative).
- أسماء (asmā' a) – “names” (irregular plural in accusative).

These irregular forms must be memorised, as they do not always follow predictable rules.

Fill in the blank: Broken plurals often require learners to _____ their declension patterns individually.

IRREGULAR ARABIC NOUN DECLENSION: BROKEN PLURALS (جَمْعُ التَّكْسِيرِ)			
SINGULAR NOUN (المُفْرَد - Mufrad)	TRANSFORMATION (التَّحْوِيل - Tahwīl)	BROKEN PLURAL (الْجَمْع - Jam')	DECLENSION (الْإِعْرَاب - Al-I'rāb)
 مَسْجِدٌ (masjid) - Mosque	Internal Change (Pattern: مَفَاعِلٌ - mafā'il)	 مَسَاجِدُ (masājidu) - Mosques	Irregular Patterns (أَنْمَاطٌ شاذَّةٌ) Nom. (الرَّفْع): مَسَاجِدُ (Dammah) Acc. (النَّصَب): مَسَاجِدَ (Fathah) **Gen. (الْجَر): مَسَاجِدَ (Fathah) Diptote: Genitive takes Fathah instead of Kasrah, no Tanwīn
 كِتَابٌ (kitāb) - Book	Internal Change (Pattern: فُعُلٌ - fu'ul)	 كُتُبٌ (kutubun) - Books	Nom. (الرَّفْع): كُتُبٌ (Dammah Tanwīn) Acc. (النَّصَب): كُتُبًا (Fathah Tanwīn) Gen. (الْجَر): كُتُبٍ (Kasrah Tanwīn) Triptote: Fully Declined, Standard Signs
 قَاضٍ (qāḍin) - Judge	Internal Change (Pattern: فُعَلَةٌ - fu'alah)	 قُضَاةٌ (quḍātun) - Judges	Nom. (الرَّفْع): قُضَاةٌ (Dammah Tanwīn) Acc. (النَّصَب): قُضَاةً (Fathah Tanwīn) Gen. (الْجَر): قُضَاةٍ (Kasrah Tanwīn) Triptote: Behaves like a feminine singular noun, ending in Tā' Marbūṭah, fully declined
SUMMARY: Broken plurals change the internal structure of the singular noun, and their declension can be either Triptote (fully declined) or Diptote (partially declined, with Genitive taking Faṭḥah), requiring specific pattern knowledge.			

Figure 3.4 Irregular declension patterns in Arabic nouns



Pilot questions 3.2

1. What are secondary signs of declension?
2. Which marker is used for the nominative case in dual nouns?
3. Which marker is used for the accusative case in sound masculine plurals?
4. Give one example of a noun in the dual form.
5. Why must irregular declension patterns often be memorised?

3.3 Application of Declension Signs in Sentences

Declension signs are not merely theoretical markers; they play a practical role in shaping meaning within Arabic sentences. By applying both **primary signs of declension** (short vowels) and **secondary signs of declension** (letters such as *alif*, *wāw*, and *yā*'), learners can accurately identify subjects, objects, and possessive structures. This Part will guide you through their application in sentences, showing how declension clarifies grammatical relationships and prevents ambiguity.

3.3.1 Subject and object identification using declension

In Arabic, the **subject** is usually marked by the nominative case, while the **object** is marked by the accusative case. Declension signs make this distinction clear. For example:

- جاء الطالب (*jā'a al-ṭālibu*) – “The student came.” Here, **al-ṭālibu** is the subject in the nominative case.
- رأيت الطالب (*ra'aytu al-ṭāliba*) – “I saw the student.” Here, **al-ṭāliba** is the object in the accusative case.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *ra'aytu al-ṭāliba*, the noun **al-ṭāliba** is marked by the _____ case.



SUBJECT & OBJECT IDENTIFICATION IN ARABIC SENTENCES: USING DECLENSION SIGNS (الْفَاعِلُ وَالْمَفْعُولُ بِهِ: عَلَامَاتُ الْإِعْرَابِ)	
SUBJECT (الْفَاعِلُ) - The Doer (مَرْفُوع)	OBJECT (الْمَفْعُولُ بِهِ) - The Receiver (مَنْصُوب)
NOMINATIVE SIGN (عَلَامَةُ الرَّفْعِ) دَرَسَ الطَّالِبُ الْكِتَابَ Subject (Nom.): Identified by Dammah	ACCUSATIVE SIGN (عَلَامَةُ النَّصْبِ) دَرَسَ الطَّالِبُ الْكِتَابَ Object (Acc.): Identified by Fathah
These final vowel signs define the grammatical role, not the word order.	

Figure 3.5 Subject and object identification with declension signs

3.3.2 Declension in possessive and descriptive structures

Declension also plays a key role in **possessive structures** (known as *idāfah*) and **descriptive structures** (adjectives agreeing with nouns). In possessive structures, the possessed noun is in the nominative case, while the possessor is in the genitive case. For example:

- كِتَابُ الطَّالِبِ (*kitābu al-ṭālibi*) – “The student’s book.”

In descriptive structures, adjectives must agree with the nouns they describe in case, gender, and number. For example:

- الطَّالِبُ الْمُجْتَهِدُ (*al-ṭālibu al-mujtahidu*) – “The hardworking student.”

Fill in the blank: In the phrase *kitābu al-ṭālibi*, the noun **al-ṭālibi** is in the _____ case.



Structure Type	Arabic Example	Translation	Declension Marker	Explanation
Possessive (الإضافة)	كتابُ الطالبِ	The student's book	كتابُ(nominative), الطالبِ(genitive)	First noun is marked by its role; second noun always genitive.
	قلمُ المعلمِ	The teacher's pen	قلمُ(accusative), المعلمِ(genitive)	First noun is object; second noun remains genitive.
	حقيبةُ البنتِ	The girl's bag	حقيبةُ(genitive), البنتِ(genitive)	Both nouns in genitive when preceded by a preposition.
Descriptive (النعته والمنعوت)	الطالبُ المجتهدُ	The diligent student	Both مرفوع with dammah (ـُ)	Adjective agrees in case, gender, number, and definiteness.
	رأيتُ الطالبَ المجتهدَ	I saw the diligent student	Both منصوب with fathah (ـَ)	Adjective follows the noun in case and form.
	مررتُ بالطالبِ المجتهدِ	I passed by the diligent student	Both مجرور with kasrah (ـِ)	Adjective mirrors noun's genitive case after preposition.

Table 3.3 Declension in possessive and descriptive structures

3.3.3 Examples from Qur'anic and classical Arabic texts

Classical Arabic texts, especially the Qur'an, provide rich examples of declension in action.

These examples demonstrate how declension signs clarify meaning and ensure accurate interpretation. For instance:

- نَصَرَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (naṣara Allāhu al-mu'minīn) – “Allah helped the believers.” Here, **Allāhu** is the subject in the nominative case, and **al-mu'minīn** is the object in the accusative case.



- **قال الله تعالى** (*qāla Allāhu ta ‘ālā*) – “Allah, the Exalted, said.” Here, **Allāhu** is the subject in the nominative case.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *naṣara Allāhu al-mu’minīn*, the noun **al-mu’minīn** is in the _____ case.

Arabic Sentence	Translation	Declension Sign	Grammatical Role
إنما يخشى الله العلماء (Qur’an 35:28)	Only those who fear Allah are the scholars.	الله= fathah (ـَ), العلماء= dammah (ـِ)	الله= object (منصوب), العلماء= subject (مرفوع)
وخلق الله السماوات والأرض	And Allah created the heavens and the earth.	الله= dammah, السماوات= kasrah (ـِ), الأرض= fathah	الله= subject, السماوات / الأرض= objects
الكتاب صديق لا يخون	The book is a friend who does not betray.	الكتاب / صديق / يخون all with dammah	Nominal sentence: subject and predicate both in nominative
رأيت القمر جميلاً	I saw the moon beautiful.	القمر / جميلاً = fathah	القمر= object, جميلاً= object of state (حال)
مررت بالمسجد الكبير	I passed by the grand mosque.	المسجد / الكبير = kasrah	Genitive case after preposition (اسم مجرور + نعت)

Box 3.3 Examples of declension signs in Qur’anic and classical Arabic texts

Pilot questions 3.3

1. How do declension signs help identify subjects and objects in Arabic sentences?
2. In the phrase *kitābu al-ṭālibi*, which case is used for **al-ṭālibi**?
3. Why must adjectives agree with nouns in case, gender, and number?
4. Give one example from the Qur’an where declension clarifies meaning.
5. What case marks the object in the sentence *naṣara Allāhu al-mu’minīn*?



Series Summary

This Series has focused on the primary and secondary signs of declension (*Calāmāt al-‘Icrāb*), which are central to understanding how Arabic nouns function within sentences. Its purpose has been to equip you with the ability to recognise, explain, and apply these signs so that you can accurately identify grammatical cases and interpret sentence meaning with confidence.

We began by examining the primary signs of declension, looking at how short vowels mark the nominative, accusative, and genitive cases. We then moved on to secondary signs, exploring their role in dual forms, sound masculine plurals, and irregular patterns. Finally, we applied these signs in sentences, considering their use in subject–object identification, possessive and descriptive structures, and examples from Qur’anic and classical Arabic texts. By completing this Series, you should now be able to define and describe declension markers, demonstrate their application in different contexts, analyse irregular forms, and evaluate how they clarify meaning in sentences, in line with the Series Learning Outcomes.

Glossary of Terms

- **Accusative case:** A grammatical case in Arabic that marks the noun as the direct object of a verb, usually indicated by the short vowel *fathah* (ـَ).
- **Adjective agreement:** The rule in Arabic grammar that requires adjectives to match the nouns they describe in case, gender, and number.
- **Alif:** A secondary declension marker used in the nominative case of dual nouns.
- **Declension:** The system of endings added to Arabic nouns and adjectives to show their grammatical role in a sentence, such as subject, object, or possession.
- **Dual form:** A special noun form in Arabic used to indicate exactly two of something, marked by endings such as *alif* (ـِ) or *yā’* (ـَي).
- **Genitive case:** A grammatical case in Arabic that marks the noun as showing possession or relation, usually indicated by the short vowel *kasrah* (ـِ).
- **Harakāt:** Short vowel signs in Arabic script that mark pronunciation and grammatical case, including *dammah* (ـُ), *fathah* (ـَ), and *kasrah* (ـِ).



- **Irregular declension:** Patterns of declension that do not follow the standard rules, often found in broken plurals or specific lexical items.
- **Kasrah:** A primary declension marker, represented by a short diagonal stroke below a letter (ـِ), used for the genitive case.
- **Nominative case:** A grammatical case in Arabic that marks the noun as the subject of a verb or the predicate of a nominal sentence, usually indicated by the short vowel *ḍammah* (ـَ).
- **Object:** The noun in a sentence that receives the action of the verb, typically marked by the accusative case.
- **Possessive structure (iḍāfah):** A grammatical construction in Arabic where one noun possesses another, with the possessor marked in the genitive case.
- **Predicate:** The part of a sentence that describes what the subject does or is, often expressed by a verb or descriptive phrase.
- **Secondary signs of declension:** Alternative markers used in Arabic grammar for specific forms such as duals and sound masculine plurals, often involving *alif*, *wāw*, or *yā'*.
- **Sound masculine plural:** A regular plural form in Arabic for masculine nouns, marked by *wāw* (ـِ) in the nominative case and *yā'* (ـِ) in the accusative and genitive cases.
- **Subject:** The noun in a sentence that performs the action of the verb or is described by the predicate.
- **Wāw:** A secondary declension marker used in the nominative case of sound masculine plural nouns.
- **Yā':** A secondary declension marker used in the accusative and genitive cases of dual and sound masculine plural nouns.



Concept Check Questions [Series 3]

Objective Questions

1. Define declension in Arabic grammar. (Linked to SLO 3.1)
2. Identify the short vowel that marks the nominative case. (Linked to SLO 3.2)
3. State the short vowel used for the accusative case. (Linked to SLO 3.3)
4. Name the short vowel that marks the genitive case. (Linked to SLO 3.4)
5. Which letter marks the nominative case in dual nouns? (Linked to SLO 3.6)
6. Which letter marks the nominative case in sound masculine plurals? (Linked to SLO 3.7)

Short-Answer Questions

7. Explain the role of secondary signs of declension. (Linked to SLO 3.5)
8. Demonstrate with an example how the dual form changes between nominative and accusative cases. (Linked to SLO 3.6)
9. Illustrate with one example how sound masculine plurals are marked in the accusative case. (Linked to SLO 3.7)
10. Analyse why irregular declension patterns must often be memorised. (Linked to SLO 3.8)
11. Evaluate how declension signs help distinguish subjects from objects in sentences. (Linked to SLO 3.9)

Long-Answer Questions

12. Analyse the primary signs of declension and explain their importance in sentence construction. (Linked to SLOs 3.1–3.4)
13. Evaluate the role of secondary signs of declension in dual and plural forms. (Linked to SLOs 3.5–3.7)
14. Assess the application of declension signs in possessive and descriptive structures, using examples to support your explanation. (Linked to SLOs 3.9–3.10)
15. Illustrate with examples from Qur'anic and classical Arabic texts how declension clarifies meaning. (Linked to SLO 3.11)



Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 3]

Objective Questions

1. Declension is the system of endings added to Arabic nouns and adjectives to show their grammatical role in a sentence.
2. *Dammah* (◌َ).
3. *Fathah* (◌ِ).
4. *Kasrah* (◌ِ).
5. *Alif* (◌ِ).
6. *Wāw* (◌ِ).

Short-Answer Questions

7. Secondary signs of declension are alternative markers such as *alif*, *wāw*, and *yā'*, used in dual and plural forms.
8. Example: *al-ṭālibāni* (two students, nominative) changes to *al-ṭālibayni* (two students, accusative).
9. Example: *ra'aytu al-mu'allimīna* – "I saw the teachers."
10. Irregular declension patterns must be memorised because they do not follow predictable rules, especially in broken plurals.
11. Declension signs mark subjects with nominative endings and objects with accusative endings, preventing ambiguity.

Long-Answer Questions

12. **Basic response:** Primary signs are short vowels (*dammah*, *fathah*, *kasrah*) marking nominative, accusative, and genitive cases. They are important because they show whether a noun is a subject, object, or in possession.
Value-added response: Outstanding learners may add that primary signs also ensure clarity in recitation, literary expression, and interpretation of classical texts.
13. **Basic response:** Secondary signs such as *alif*, *wāw*, and *yā'* mark dual and plural forms, ensuring consistency in declension.
Value-added response: Outstanding learners may explain that these signs also highlight the richness of Arabic morphology, showing how grammar adapts to different word forms.
14. **Basic response:** In possessive structures, the possessor is marked in the genitive case, while adjectives agree with nouns in case, gender, and number.



Value-added response: Outstanding learners may expand by showing how these rules maintain harmony in sentence structure and provide precision in Qur’anic interpretation.

15. **Basic response:** Qur’anic and classical texts use declension signs to clarify meaning, e.g., *naṣara Allāhu al-mu’minīn* – “Allah helped the believers.”

Value-added response: Outstanding learners may add that analysing these examples deepens appreciation of Arabic’s grammatical precision and its role in preserving meaning across centuries.



Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 3]

Part 3.1 Primary signs of declension

- Harakāt.
- Dammah (◌ُ).
- Fathah (◌َ).
- Kasrah (◌ِ).
- *Al-ṭālibu* – “The student.”

Part 3.2 Secondary signs of declension

- Endings such as *alif*, *wāw*, and *yā*’ used in dual and plural forms.
- Alif (◌ِ).
- Yā’ (◌ِي).
- *Al-ṭālibāni* / *al-ṭālibayni* – “The two students.”
- Memorise.

Part 3.3 Application of declension signs in sentences

- They mark subjects with nominative endings and objects with accusative endings.
- Genitive case.
- To ensure grammatical harmony and clarity.
- *Naṣara Allāhu al-mu’minīn* – “Allah helped the believers.”
- Accusative case.



References and Attributions [Series 3]

General References

- Haywood, J. A., & Nahmad, H. M. (1965). *A New Arabic Grammar of the Written Language*. Lund Humphries.
- Ryding, K. C. (2005). *A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic*. Cambridge University Press.
- Versteegh, K. (1997). *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition*. Routledge.
- Wehr, H. (1994). *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (J. M. Cowan, Ed.). Spoken Language Services.

Illustrations

- *Figure 3.1 Primary signs of declension in Arabic nouns*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a diagram showing Arabic primary declension signs: nominative (ḍammah), accusative (faṭḥah), genitive (kasrah), with examples.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar primary declension signs diagram OER”.
- *Box 3.1 Examples of nominative case markers*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box showing examples of Arabic nouns in nominative case with translations.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar nominative case examples OER”.
- *Table 3.1 Examples of accusative case markers*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a table showing examples of Arabic nouns in accusative case with translations.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar accusative case examples table OER”.
- *Figure 3.2 Genitive case markers in Arabic nouns*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a diagram showing examples of Arabic nouns in genitive case with translations.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar genitive case examples diagram OER”.
- *Figure 3.3 Primary versus secondary declension signs*



- AI-generated prompt: “Create a diagram comparing primary declension signs (ḍammah, fathah, kasrah) with secondary signs (alif, yā’, wāw).”
- Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
- Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar primary vs secondary declension signs diagram OER”.
- *Table 3.2 Dual forms and their declension markers*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a table showing Arabic dual forms with nominative, accusative, and genitive markers.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar dual forms declension table OER”.
- *Box 3.2 Sound masculine plural markers*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box showing examples of Arabic sound masculine plural nouns with nominative and accusative markers.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar sound masculine plural examples OER”.
- *Figure 3.4 Irregular declension patterns in Arabic nouns*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a diagram showing examples of irregular declension patterns in Arabic nouns, including broken plurals.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar irregular declension broken plurals diagram OER”.
- *Figure 3.5 Subject and object identification with declension signs*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a diagram showing subject and object identification in Arabic sentences using nominative and accusative declension signs.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar subject object declension diagram OER”.
- *Table 3.3 Declension in possessive and descriptive structures*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a table showing Arabic possessive and descriptive structures with declension markers and translations.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar possessive descriptive structures declension table OER”.
- *Box 3.3 Examples of declension signs in Qur’anic and classical Arabic texts*



- AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box showing examples of declension signs in Qur’anic and classical Arabic sentences with translations.”
- Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
- Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar declension Qur’anic classical examples OER”.



Series 4: The Dual, Subject and Predicate in Arabic Sentences

Part 4.1 The dual form in Arabic

- 4.1.1 Definition and role of the dual form
- 4.1.2 Declension markers in dual nouns
- 4.1.3 Examples of dual forms in sentences

Part 4.2 The subject in Arabic sentences

- 4.2.1 Definition and grammatical role of the subject
- 4.2.2 Case markers for subjects
- 4.2.3 Examples of subjects in nominal and verbal sentences

Part 4.3 The predicate in Arabic sentences

- 4.3.1 Definition and grammatical role of the predicate
- 4.3.2 Types of predicates (verbal and nominal)
- 4.3.3 Agreement between subject and predicate

Introduction

In the last Series, we explored the primary and secondary signs of declension, focusing on how they mark nouns and clarify grammatical roles in sentences. Building on that foundation, this Series turns to the dual form and the basic structure of Arabic sentences, namely the subject and predicate. These elements are essential for constructing clear and meaningful expressions, and they provide learners with the tools to analyse and produce accurate Arabic sentences.



The aim of this Series is to introduce you to the dual form and to equip you with the skills needed to identify and apply subjects and predicates correctly in both nominal and verbal sentences. By mastering these concepts, you will strengthen your ability to interpret and construct sentences with precision.

We shall commence this Series by examining the dual form in Arabic, beginning with its definition, declension markers, and examples in sentences. Next, we will move on to the subject, considering its grammatical role, case markers, and examples in different sentence types. Finally, we will wrap up by studying the predicate, looking at its definition, types, and agreement with the subject. In conclusion, this Series will round off your understanding of how the dual, subject, and predicate work together to form coherent Arabic sentences.

Series Learning Outcomes

Series 4: The Dual, Subject and Predicate in Arabic Sentences

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 4.1** define the dual form in Arabic and explain its grammatical role.
- **SLO 4.2** demonstrate how declension markers are applied in dual nouns.
- **SLO 4.3** illustrate the use of dual forms in complete Arabic sentences.
- **SLO 4.4** define the subject in Arabic sentences and describe its grammatical role.
- **SLO 4.5** identify case markers associated with subjects in nominal and verbal sentences.
- **SLO 4.6** apply examples of subjects correctly in both nominal and verbal sentence structures.
- **SLO 4.7** define the predicate in Arabic sentences and explain its grammatical role.
- **SLO 4.8** distinguish between verbal and nominal predicates with examples.
- **SLO 4.9** analyse the agreement between subject and predicate in terms of case, gender, and number.



4.1 The Dual Form in Arabic

The **dual form** in Arabic is a special grammatical feature used to indicate exactly two of something. Unlike English, which often uses the word “two” before a plural noun, Arabic has a distinct form that changes the noun ending to show duality. This makes the dual form an important aspect of sentence construction, as it ensures clarity and precision in communication.

4.1.1 Definition and role of the dual form

The **dual form** is created by adding specific endings to a noun to indicate that it refers to two entities. It plays a vital role in Arabic grammar because it avoids ambiguity and provides a clear distinction between singular, dual, and plural forms. For example:

- طالبان (*tālibāni*) – “two students” (nominative case).
- طالبين (*tālibayni*) – “two students” (accusative/genitive case).

Fill in the blank: The dual form in Arabic is used to indicate exactly _____ of something.



ARABIC NOUNS: SINGULAR, DUAL, & PLURAL FORMS (المُفْرَد، المثنى، الجمع)

SINGULAR (المُفْرَد - Al-Mufrad)	DUAL (المثنى - Al-Muthannā)	PLURAL (الجمع - Al-Jam')
Refers to one entity . Default form, no specific suffix.	Refers to two entities . Adds suffix '-āni' (ان) for nominative, or '-ayni' (ين) for accusative/genitive.	Refers to three or more . Types: Sound Masculine ('-ūna' وُن), Sound Feminine ('-āt' ات), & Broken Plural (Internal Change).
 كِتَابٌ (ki-tā-bun) A book	 كِتَابَانِ (ki-tā-bā-ni) Two books	 مُعَلِّمُونَ (mu-'al-li-mū-na) Male teachers (Sound Masc.)
 مُعَلِّمَةٌ (mu-'al-li-ma-tun) A female teacher	 مُعَلِّمَتَانِ (mu-'al-li-ma-tā-ni) Two female teachers	 مُعَلِّمَاتٌ (mu-'al-li-mā-tun) Female teachers (Sound Fem.)
		 كُتُبٌ (ku-tu-bun) Books (Broken Plural)

Understanding these forms is essential for correct subject-verb agreement and noun modification in Arabic.

Figure 4.1 Singular, dual, and plural forms in Arabic

4.1.2 Declension markers in dual nouns

Dual nouns follow specific **declension markers** depending on their grammatical case. In the nominative case, the dual is marked by **alif** (لـ) followed by **nūn** (ن). In the accusative and genitive cases, the dual is marked by **yā'** (يـ) followed by **nūn** (ن). These endings replace the normal short vowels used in singular nouns.

Examples:

- Nominative: **طَالِبَانِ** (ṭālibāni) – “two students” (subject).
- Accusative: **رَأَيْتُ الطَّالِبَيْنِ** (ra'aytu al-ṭālibayni) – “I saw the two students.”
- Genitive: **كِتَابُ الطَّالِبَيْنِ** (kitābu al-ṭālibayni) – “The book of the two students.”

Fill in the blank: In the nominative case, the dual form is marked by the letter _____ followed by nūn.



Case	Declension Marker (العلامة)	Arabic Example	Translation	Explanation
Nominative (المرفوع)	ان(alif + nun)	الطالبان مجتهدان	The two students are diligent.	Dual nouns in nominative take alif as the marker.
Accusative (المنصوب)	ين(ya + nun)	رأيت الطالبين	I saw the two students.	Dual nouns in accusative take ya as the marker.
Genitive (المجرور)	ين(ya + nun)	مررت بالطالبين	I passed by the two students.	Dual nouns in genitive also take ya as the marker.

Table 4.1 Declension markers in dual nouns

4.1.3 Examples of dual forms in sentences

The dual form is frequently used in both nominal and verbal sentences. It ensures that the subject or object clearly refers to two entities. For instance:

- جاء الطالبان إلى الفصل (jā'a al-ṭālibāni ilā al-faṣli) – “The two students came to the class.”
- رأيت المعلمين في المدرسة (ra'aytu al-mu'allimayni fī al-madrasa) – “I saw the two teachers in the school.”

In these examples, the dual endings make it clear that exactly two students or teachers are being referred to, rather than one or many.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *jā'a al-ṭālibāni ilā al-faṣli*, the noun **al-ṭālibāni** is in the _____ case.

Arabic Sentence	Translation	Dual Noun	Case Marker	Explanation
الطالبان مجتهدان	The two students are diligent.	الطالبان	ان (nominative)	Subject in nominative case.



رَأَيْتُ الطَّالِبَيْنِ	<i>I saw the two students.</i>	الطَّالِبَيْنِ	تَيْنِ (accusative)	<i>Object in accusative case.</i>
مَرَرْتُ بِالطَّالِبَيْنِ	<i>I passed by the two students.</i>	الطَّالِبَيْنِ	تَيْنِ (genitive)	<i>Object of preposition in genitive case.</i>
المُعَلِّمَانِ فِي الْمَدْرَسَةِ	<i>The two teachers are in the school.</i>	المُعَلِّمَانِ	انِ (nominative)	<i>Subject in nominative case.</i>
قَابَلْتُ الْمُعَلِّمَيْنِ	<i>I met the two teachers.</i>	المُعَلِّمَيْنِ	تَيْنِ (accusative)	<i>Direct object in accusative case.</i>

Box 4.1 Examples of dual forms in Arabic sentences

Pilot questions 4.1

1. What is the dual form in Arabic used to indicate?
2. Which marker is used for the nominative case in dual nouns?
3. Which marker is used for the accusative and genitive cases in dual nouns?
4. Give one example of a dual noun in a nominal sentence.
5. Give one example of a dual noun in a verbal sentence.

4.2 The Subject in Arabic Sentences

The **subject** in Arabic grammar is the noun or pronoun that performs the action of the verb or is described by the predicate. It is a central element in both nominal and verbal sentences, and its correct identification ensures clarity of meaning. The subject is usually marked by the **nominative case**, which distinguishes it from other sentence elements such as the object.



4.2.1 Definition and grammatical role of the subject

The **subject** is the doer of the action in a verbal sentence or the topic being described in a nominal sentence. In Arabic, the subject is always expressed in the nominative case, which is marked by **ḍammah** (ـَ) or its equivalents in dual and plural forms. For example:

- جاء الطالب (jā'a al-ṭālibu) – “The student came.”

Here, **al-ṭālibu** is the subject marked by nominative case.

Fill in the blank: In Arabic, the subject is always expressed in the _____ case.

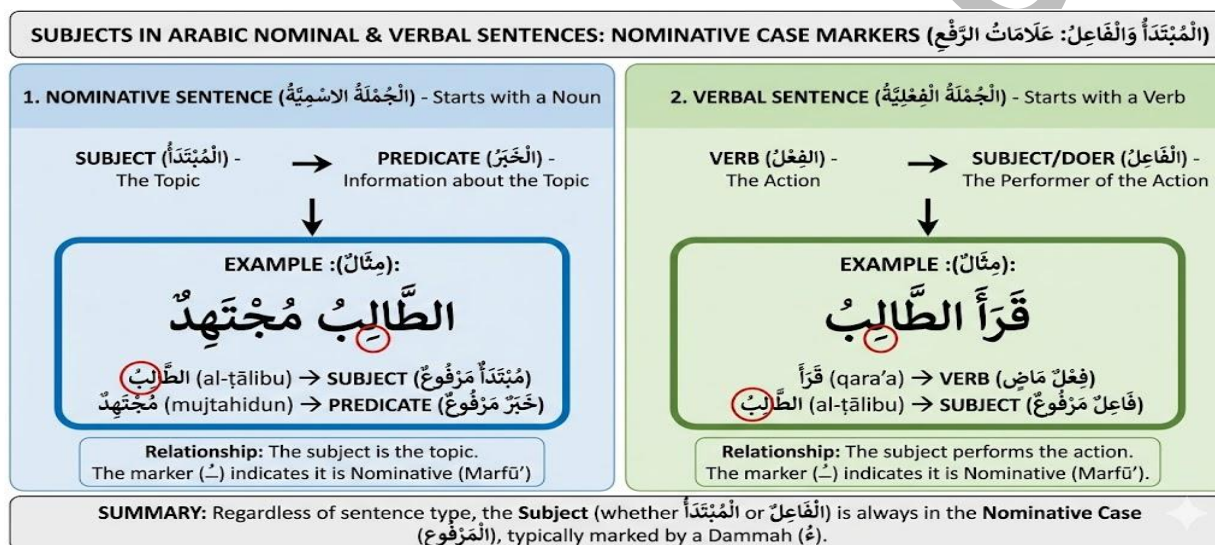


Figure 4.2 Subject in Arabic sentences

4.2.2 Case markers for subjects

Subjects are marked differently depending on whether they are singular, dual, or plural.

- **Singular nouns:** marked by **ḍammah** (ـَ).
- **Dual nouns:** marked by **alif** (ـِ) followed by **nūn** (ن).
- **Sound masculine plurals:** marked by **wāw** (ـِ) followed by **nūn** (ن).

Examples:



- Singular: الطالبُ مجتهدٌ (*al-ṭālibu mujtahidun*) – “The student is hardworking.”
- Dual: الطالبانِ مجتهدانِ (*al-ṭālibāni mujtahidāni*) – “The two students are hardworking.”
- Plural: المعلمونِ مجتهدونِ (*al-mu‘allimūna mujtahidūna*) – “The teachers are hardworking.”

Fill in the blank: The subject in a sound masculine plural is marked by the letter _____ followed by nūn.

Form	Nominative Marker (علامة الرفع)	Arabic Example	Translation	Explanation
Singular (المفرد)	ḍammah (ـ)	الطالبُ مجتهدٌ	The student is diligent.	Singular nouns in nominative take ḍammah .
Dual (المثنى)	ان (alif + nun)	الطالبانِ مجتهدانِ	The two students are diligent.	Dual nouns in nominative take alif .
Sound Masculine Plural (جمع المذكر السالم)	ون (waw + nun)	المسلمون متعاونون	The Muslims are cooperative.	Sound masculine plural in nominative takes waw .
Sound Feminine Plural (جمع المؤنث السالم)	ḍammah (ـ)	الطالباتُ مجتهداتُ	The female students are diligent.	Sound feminine plural in nominative takes ḍammah .

Table 4.2 Case markers for subjects in Arabic

4.2.3 Examples of subjects in nominal and verbal sentences

Subjects appear in both **nominal sentences** (which begin with a noun) and **verbal sentences** (which begin with a verb). In nominal sentences, the subject is the topic being described, while in verbal sentences, the subject performs the action.



Examples:

- Nominal: الطالب مجتهدٌ (*al-ṭālibu mujtahidun*) – “The student is hardworking.”
- Verbal: كتب الطالبُ الدرسَ (*kataba al-ṭālibu al-darsa*) – “The student wrote the lesson.”

In both cases, the subject is clearly marked by the nominative case, ensuring that the reader or listener knows who is performing the action or being described.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *kataba al-ṭālibu al-darsa*, the noun **al-ṭālibu** is the _____.

<i>Sentence Type</i>	<i>Arabic Example</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Subject</i> (المبتدأ / الفاعل)	<i>Explanation</i>
Nominal Sentence (الجملة الاسمية)	الطالبُ مجتهدٌ	The student is diligent.	الطالبُ	Subject (مبتدأ) in nominative case with ḍammah (ـُ) .
	الكتابُ جديدٌ	The book is new.	الكتابُ	Subject (مبتدأ) in nominative case.
	الحقُّ واضحٌ	The truth is clear.	الحقُّ	Subject (مبتدأ) in nominative case.
Verbal Sentence (الجملة الفعلية)	كتبَ الطالبُ الدرسَ	The student wrote the lesson.	الطالبُ	Subject (فاعل) in nominative case with ḍammah (ـُ) .
	يقرأُ الطفلُ الكتابَ	The child reads the book.	الطفلُ	Subject (فاعل) in nominative case.
	سيُزوِّرُ المعلمُ المدرسةَ	The teacher will visit the school.	المعلمُ	Subject (فاعل) in nominative case.

Box 4.2 Examples of subjects in nominal and verbal sentences

Pilot questions 4.2

1. What case is used to mark the subject in Arabic sentences?



2. Which marker is used for the subject in dual nouns?
3. Which marker is used for the subject in sound masculine plurals?
4. Give one example of a subject in a nominal sentence.
5. Give one example of a subject in a verbal sentence.

4.3 The Predicate in Arabic Sentences

The **predicate** in Arabic grammar is the part of the sentence that provides information about the subject. It may describe what the subject is, what it does, or what state it is in. In both nominal and verbal sentences, the predicate is essential for completing meaning and ensuring that the sentence communicates a full idea.

4.3.1 Definition and grammatical role of the predicate

The **predicate** is the element in a sentence that tells us something about the subject. In nominal sentences, it describes the subject, while in verbal sentences, it expresses the action performed by the subject. For example:

- الطالبُ مجتهدٌ (*al-ṭālibu mujtahidun*) – “The student is hardworking.” (predicate = *mujtahidun*)
- كتبَ الطالبُ الدرسَ (*kataba al-ṭālibu al-darsa*) – “The student wrote the lesson.” (predicate = *kataba*)

Fill in the blank: In Arabic, the predicate provides information about the _____.



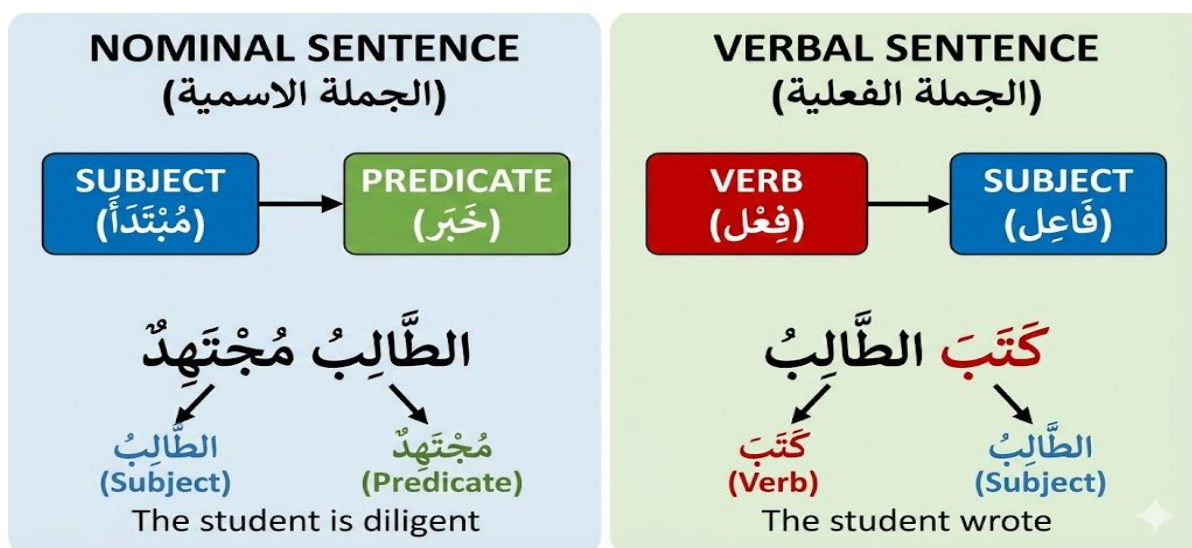


Figure 4.3 Subject and predicate in Arabic sentences

4.3.2 Types of predicates (verbal and nominal)

Predicates can be classified into two main types:

- **Nominal predicate:** A word or phrase that describes the subject, often an adjective or noun. Example: البيت كبيرٌ (*al-baytu kabīrun*) – “The house is big.”
- **Verbal predicate:** A verb that shows the action performed by the subject. Example: ذهب الطالبُ (*dhahaba al-ṭālibu*) – “The student went.”

Fill in the blank: A predicate that describes the subject with an adjective or noun is called a _____ predicate.

Sentence Type	Arabic Example	Translation	Predicate (الخبر / الفعل)	Explanation
Nominal Sentence (الجملة الاسمية)	الطالب مجتهدٌ	The student is diligent.	مجتهدٌ	Predicate (خبر) in nominative case with ḍammah (ـ).



	الكتابُ جديدٌ	The book is new.	جديدٌ	Predicate (خبر) in nominative case.
	الحقُّ واضحٌ	The truth is clear.	واضحٌ	Predicate (خبر) in nominative case.
Verbal Sentence (الجملة الفعلية)	كتبَ الطالبُ الدرسَ	The student wrote the lesson.	كتبَ	Predicate verb (فعل ماضٍ) showing completed action.
	يقرأُ الطفلُ الكتابَ	The child reads the book.	يقرأُ	Predicate verb (فعل مضارع) showing ongoing action.
	سيُزورُ المعلمُ المدرسةَ	The teacher will visit the school.	سيُزورُ	Predicate verb (فعل مضارع) marking future tense.

Table 4.3 Types of predicates in Arabic sentences

4.3.3 Agreement between subject and predicate

In Arabic, the predicate must agree with the subject in **case, gender, and number**. This agreement ensures grammatical harmony and clarity. For example:

- Singular: الطالبُ مجتهدٌ (*al-ṭālibu mujtahidun*) – “The student is hardworking.”
- Dual: الطالبانِ مجتهدانِ (*al-ṭālibāni mujtahidāni*) – “The two students are hardworking.”
- Plural: المعلمونِ مجتهدونَ (*al-mu'allimūna mujtahidūna*) – “The teachers are hardworking.”

Fill in the blank: In Arabic, the predicate must agree with the subject in case, _____, and number.

Sentence Type	Arabic Example	Translation	Subject	Predicate	Agreement Explanation
Nominal Sentence	الطالبُ مجتهدٌ	The student is diligent.	الطالبُ (singular, masculine)	مجتهدٌ (singular, masculine)	Predicate matches subject in number and gender .



	الطالبتان مجتهدتان	The two female students are diligent.	الطالبتان (dual, feminine)	مجتهدتان (dual, feminine)	Predicate agrees in dual form and feminine gender .
	المسلمون متعاونون	The Muslims are cooperative.	المسلمون (plural, masculine)	متعاونون (plural, masculine)	Predicate agrees in plural and masculine gender .
Verbal Sentence	كتب الطالب الدرس	The student wrote the lesson.	الطالب (singular, masculine)	كتب (verb, singular, masculine)	Verb agrees with subject in person , number , gender .
	كتبت الطالبة الرسالة	The female student wrote the letter.	الطالبة (singular, feminine)	كتبت (verb, singular, feminine)	Verb agrees with subject in feminine singular .
	يكتبون الطلاب الدروس	The students are writing the lessons.	الطلاب (plural, masculine)	يكتبون (verb, plural, masculine)	Verb agrees with subject in plural masculine .

Box 4.3 Agreement between subject and predicate

Pilot questions 4.3

1. What is the role of the predicate in Arabic sentences?
2. What are the two main types of predicates?
3. Give one example of a nominal predicate.
4. Give one example of a verbal predicate.
5. What three aspects must the predicate agree with the subject in?



Series Summary

This Series has focused on the dual form, subject, and predicate in Arabic sentences, all of which are fundamental elements for constructing clear and grammatically accurate expressions. Its purpose has been to strengthen your ability to recognise and apply these structures, ensuring that you can distinguish between singular, dual, and plural forms, and identify how subjects and predicates function together to convey meaning.

We began by examining the dual form, looking at its definition, declension markers, and examples in sentences. We then moved on to the subject, considering its grammatical role, case markers, and how it appears in both nominal and verbal sentences. Finally, we explored the predicate, defining its role, distinguishing between verbal and nominal types, and analysing how it agrees with the subject in case, gender, and number. By completing this Series, you should now be able to define and demonstrate the dual form, identify and apply subjects correctly, and analyse the role and agreement of predicates, in line with the Series Learning Outcomes.

Glossary of Terms

- **Accusative case:** A grammatical case in Arabic that marks the noun as the direct object of a verb, usually indicated by the short vowel *fathah* (ـَ) or by *yā'* in dual and plural forms.
- **Agreement:** The grammatical requirement that the predicate must match the subject in case, gender, and number.
- **Alif:** A letter used as a declension marker in the nominative case of dual nouns.
- **Dual form:** A special noun form in Arabic used to indicate exactly two of something, marked by endings such as *alif* + *nūn* (ـَانِ) or *yā'* + *nūn* (ـَيْنِ).
- **Genitive case:** A grammatical case in Arabic that marks possession or relation, usually indicated by the short vowel *kasrah* (ـِ) or by *yā'* in dual and plural forms.
- **Dammah:** A primary declension marker, represented by a small curl above a letter (ـُ), used for the nominative case in singular nouns.
- **Nominative case:** A grammatical case in Arabic that marks the subject of a verb or the topic of a nominal sentence, usually indicated by *dammah* (ـُ) or by *alif* and *wāw* in dual and plural forms.



- **Nominal predicate:** A predicate that describes the subject using a noun or adjective, rather than a verb.
- **Predicate:** The part of a sentence that provides information about the subject, either describing it or showing the action it performs.
- **Subject:** The noun or pronoun in a sentence that performs the action of the verb or is described by the predicate.
- **Verbal predicate:** A predicate that expresses the action performed by the subject, usually beginning with a verb.
- **Wāw:** A letter used as a declension marker in the nominative case of sound masculine plural nouns.
- **Yā’:** A letter used as a declension marker in the accusative and genitive cases of dual and sound masculine plural nouns.



Concept Check Questions [Series 4]

Objective Questions

1. Define the dual form in Arabic. (Linked to SLO 4.1)
2. Identify the declension marker used for the nominative case in dual nouns. (Linked to SLO 4.2)
3. State the declension marker used for the accusative and genitive cases in dual nouns. (Linked to SLO 4.2)
4. Define the subject in Arabic sentences. (Linked to SLO 4.4)
5. Identify the case used to mark subjects in Arabic sentences. (Linked to SLO 4.5)
6. Define the predicate in Arabic sentences. (Linked to SLO 4.7)
7. Distinguish between nominal and verbal predicates. (Linked to SLO 4.8)

Short-Answer Questions

8. Demonstrate with an example how the dual form is used in a sentence. (Linked to SLO 4.3)
9. Illustrate with one example how the subject appears in a nominal sentence. (Linked to SLO 4.6)
10. Illustrate with one example how the subject appears in a verbal sentence. (Linked to SLO 4.6)
11. Explain why the predicate must agree with the subject in case, gender, and number. (Linked to SLO 4.9)

Long-Answer Questions

12. Analyse the role of the dual form in Arabic grammar, giving examples of its application. (Linked to SLOs 4.1–4.3)
13. Evaluate the grammatical role of the subject in nominal and verbal sentences, with examples. (Linked to SLOs 4.4–4.6)
14. Assess the types of predicates in Arabic sentences and explain how they contribute to meaning. (Linked to SLOs 4.7–4.8)
15. Analyse the importance of agreement between subject and predicate, using examples from singular, dual, and plural forms. (Linked to SLO 4.9)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 4]

Objective Questions



1. The dual form is a special noun form used to indicate exactly two of something.
2. *Alif + nūn* (لَان).
3. *Yā' + nūn* (يِن).
4. The subject is the noun or pronoun that performs the action of the verb or is described by the predicate.
5. The nominative case.
6. The predicate is the part of the sentence that provides information about the subject.
7. A nominal predicate describes the subject with a noun or adjective, while a verbal predicate expresses the action performed by the subject.

Short-Answer Questions

8. Example: جاء الطالبان (*jā'a al-ṭālibāni*) – “The two students came.”
9. Example: الطالب مجتهد (*al-ṭālibu mujtahidun*) – “The student is hardworking.”
10. Example: كتب الطالب الدرس (*kataba al-ṭālibu al-darsa*) – “The student wrote the lesson.”
11. Agreement ensures grammatical harmony and clarity, so the reader or listener can easily identify the relationship between subject and predicate.

Long-Answer Questions

12. **Basic response:** The dual form marks nouns referring to two entities, using *alif + nūn* in the nominative and *yā' + nūn* in the accusative/genitive.
Value-added response: Outstanding learners may add that the dual form reflects the precision of Arabic grammar, distinguishing between singular, dual, and plural, and is especially important in Qur'anic and classical texts where exact meaning is critical.
13. **Basic response:** The subject is marked in the nominative case and appears in both nominal and verbal sentences, either as the topic or the doer of the action.
Value-added response: Outstanding learners may expand by explaining how subject placement affects emphasis in Arabic, and how understanding subjects aids in accurate translation and interpretation.
14. **Basic response:** Predicates can be nominal, describing the subject with a noun or adjective, or verbal, showing the action performed by the subject.
Value-added response: Outstanding learners may add that predicates enrich sentence meaning by linking subjects to qualities or actions, and that their flexibility allows Arabic to express complex ideas with clarity.



15. **Basic response:** The predicate must agree with the subject in case, gender, and number, ensuring grammatical correctness.

Value-added response: Outstanding learners may expand by showing how agreement maintains coherence in longer texts, prevents ambiguity, and reflects the highly structured nature of Arabic grammar.



Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 4]

Part 4.1 The dual form in Arabic

- Exactly two of something.
- Alif.
- Yā’.
- Nominative case.

Part 4.2 The subject in Arabic sentences

- Nominative case.
- Alif followed by nūn.
- Wāw followed by nūn.
- Subject.

Part 4.3 The predicate in Arabic sentences

- Subject.
- Nominal and verbal predicates.
- Nominal predicate.
- Verbal predicate.
- Gender.

References and Attributions [Series 4]

General References

- Haywood, J. A., & Nahmad, H. M. (1965). *A New Arabic Grammar of the Written Language*. Lund Humphries.
- Ryding, K. C. (2005). *A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic*. Cambridge University Press.
- Versteegh, K. (1997). *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition*. Routledge.
- Wehr, H. (1994). *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (J. M. Cowan, Ed.). Spoken Language Services.



Illustrations

- *Figure 4.1 Singular, dual, and plural forms in Arabic*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a diagram showing singular, dual, and plural forms of Arabic nouns with examples.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar singular dual plural forms diagram OER”.
- *Table 4.1 Declension markers in dual nouns*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a table showing declension markers for Arabic dual nouns in nominative, accusative, and genitive cases.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar dual noun declension markers table OER”.
- *Box 4.1 Examples of dual forms in Arabic sentences*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box showing examples of Arabic dual nouns used in sentences with translations.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar dual noun examples in sentences OER”.
- *Figure 4.2 Subject in Arabic sentences*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a diagram showing subjects in Arabic nominal and verbal sentences with nominative case markers.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar subject nominative case diagram OER”.
- *Table 4.2 Case markers for subjects in Arabic*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a table showing nominative case markers for Arabic subjects in singular, dual, and plural forms.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar subject nominative case markers table OER”.
- *Box 4.2 Examples of subjects in nominal and verbal sentences*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box showing examples of subjects in Arabic nominal and verbal sentences with translations.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.



- Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar subject examples nominal verbal sentences OER”.
- *Figure 4.3 Subject and predicate in Arabic sentences*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a diagram showing subject and predicate in Arabic nominal and verbal sentences with examples.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar subject predicate diagram OER”.
- *Table 4.3 Types of predicates in Arabic sentences*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a table showing examples of nominal and verbal predicates in Arabic sentences with translations.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar nominal verbal predicate examples table OER”.
- *Box 4.3 Agreement between subject and predicate*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box showing examples of subject–predicate agreement in Arabic sentences with translations.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar subject predicate agreement examples OER”.



Series 5: The Agent, Vocative, Specification and Adverbs

Part 5.1 The agent in Arabic sentences

- 5.1.1 Definition and grammatical role of the agent
- 5.1.2 Case markers for the agent
- 5.1.3 Examples of agents in sentences

Part 5.2 The vocative in Arabic sentences

- 5.2.1 Definition and usage of the vocative
- 5.2.2 Vocative particles and their functions
- 5.2.3 Examples of vocative expressions

Part 5.3 Specification (tamīz) in Arabic sentences

- 5.3.1 Definition and role of specification
- 5.3.2 Types of specification (numerical, descriptive, etc.)
- 5.3.3 Examples of specification in sentences

Part 5.4 Adverbs in Arabic sentences

- 5.4.1 Definition and grammatical role of adverbs
- 5.4.2 Types of adverbs (time, place, manner, etc.)
- 5.4.3 Examples of adverbs in sentences

Introduction

In the last Series, we examined the dual form, subject, and predicate in Arabic sentences, focusing on how these elements combine to create clear and grammatically accurate expressions. Building on that foundation, this Series introduces additional structures that enrich sentence meaning and provide



precision in communication. By studying the agent, vocative, specification, and adverbs, you will gain insight into how Arabic conveys emphasis, detail, and nuance in both spoken and written contexts.

The aim of this Series is to equip you with the knowledge and skills to identify, explain, and apply the agent, vocative, specification, and adverbs correctly in Arabic sentences. This will strengthen your ability to analyse sentence structures and to construct expressions that are both accurate and stylistically effective.

We shall commence this Series by exploring the agent in Arabic sentences, considering its definition, grammatical role, and examples. Next, we will move on to the vocative, examining its usage and the particles that introduce it. Following that, we will study specification, looking at its types and how it clarifies meaning in sentences. Finally, we will wrap up by focusing on adverbs, analysing their role, types, and examples. In conclusion, this Series will round off your understanding of these important elements, enabling you to apply them confidently in your study and use of Arabic.

Series Learning Outcomes

Series 5: The Agent, Vocative, Specification and Adverbs in Arabic

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 5.1** define the agent in Arabic sentences and explain its grammatical role,
- **SLO 5.2** identify case markers associated with the agent and demonstrate their use in examples,
- **SLO 5.3** define the vocative in Arabic and explain its function in addressing or calling,
- **SLO 5.4** apply vocative particles correctly in constructing Arabic sentences,
- **SLO 5.5** define specification (*tamyīz*) and explain its role in clarifying meaning,
- **SLO 5.6** distinguish between types of specification with appropriate examples,
- **SLO 5.7** define adverbs in Arabic and explain their grammatical role,
- **SLO 5.8** classify adverbs into types such as time, place, and manner, and
- **SLO 5.9** demonstrate the correct use of adverbs in Arabic sentences.



5.1 The Agent in Arabic Sentences

The **agent** in Arabic grammar is the noun or pronoun that performs the action expressed by the verb. It is a central element in verbal sentences and is always expressed in the **nominative case**, which distinguishes it from the object. Understanding the agent helps learners identify who or what is carrying out the action in a sentence.

5.1.1 Definition and grammatical role of the agent

The **agent** (in Arabic, *fā'il*) is the doer of the action in a verbal sentence. It follows the verb and is marked by the nominative case. For example:

- كَتَبَ الطَّالِبُ الدَّرْسَ (*kataba al-ṭālibu al-darsa*) – “The student wrote the lesson.”

Here, **al-ṭālibu** is the agent performing the action of writing.

Fill in the blank: In Arabic, the agent is always expressed in the _____ case.

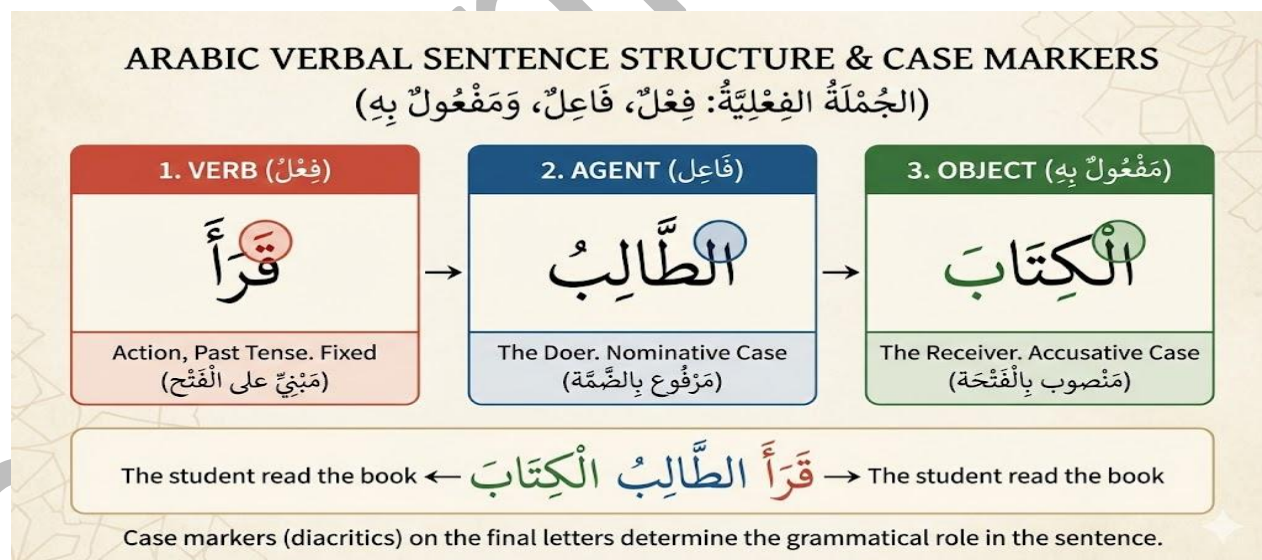


Figure 5.1 Structure of a verbal sentence with agent



5.1.2 Case markers for the agent

Agents are marked differently depending on whether they are singular, dual, or plural.

- **Singular nouns:** marked by **ḍammah** (ـَ).
- **Dual nouns:** marked by **alif** (ـِ) followed by **nūn** (ن).
- **Sound masculine plurals:** marked by **wāw** (و) followed by **nūn** (ن).

Examples:

- Singular: جاء الطالب (jā'a al-tālibu) – “The student came.”
- Dual: جاء الطالبان (jā'a al-tālibāni) – “The two students came.”
- Plural: جاء المعلمون (jā'a al-mu'allimūna) – “The teachers came.”

Fill in the blank: The agent in a dual form is marked by the letter _____ followed by nūn.

Form	Nominative Marker (علامة الرفع)	Arabic Example	Translation	Explanation
Singular (المفرد)	ḍammah (ـَ)	كتب الطالب الدرس	The student wrote the lesson.	Singular subject (الطالب) is nominative with ḍammah.
Dual (المثنى)	alif + nun (ـَان)	كتب الطالبان الدرس	The two students wrote the lesson.	Dual subject (الطالبان) is nominative with ـَان.
Sound Masculine Plural (جمع المذكر السالم)	waw + nun (ـُون)	كتب المسلمون الرسالة	The Muslims wrote the letter.	Plural subject (المسلمون) is nominative with ـُون.
Sound Feminine Plural (جمع المؤنث السالم)	ḍammah (ـَ)	كتبت الطالبات الرسالة	The female students wrote the letter.	Plural subject (الطالبات) is nominative with ḍammah.

Table 5.1 Case markers for agents in Arabic



5.1.3 Examples of agents in sentences

Agents appear in a wide range of verbal sentences, and their correct identification ensures clarity of meaning. Consider the following examples:

- قرأ الطالب الكتاب (*qara 'a al-ṭālibu al-kitāba*) – “The student read the book.”
- سافر الرجلان إلى مكة (*sāfara al-raǧulāni ilā makkata*) – “The two men travelled to Mecca.”
- عمل العاملون في المصنع (*‘amila al-‘ummālūna fī al-maṣna ‘i*) – “The workers worked in the factory.”

In each case, the agent is clearly marked in the nominative case, showing who performed the action.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *qara 'a al-ṭālibu al-kitāba*, the noun **al-ṭālibu** is the _____.

Arabic Sentence	Translation	Agent (الفاعل)	Case Marker	Explanation
كتب الطالب الدرس	The student wrote the lesson.	الطالب	ḍammah (ـ)	Subject (agent) in nominative case.
قرأ المعلم الكتاب	The teacher read the book.	المعلم	ḍammah (ـ)	Agent in nominative case.
لعب الطفل في الحديقة	The child played in the garden.	الطفل	ḍammah (ـ)	Agent in nominative case.
سافر الرجل إلى مكة	The man traveled to Mecca.	الرجل	ḍammah (ـ)	Agent in nominative case.
كتبت الطالبة الرسالة	The female student wrote the letter.	الطالبة	ḍammah (ـ)	Agent in nominative case, feminine form.

Box 5.1 Examples of agents in Arabic sentences



Pilot questions 5.1

1. What is the agent in Arabic grammar?
2. Which case is used to mark the agent?
3. Which marker is used for the agent in dual nouns?
4. Give one example of an agent in a singular sentence.
5. Give one example of an agent in a plural sentence.

5.2 The Vocative in Arabic Sentences

The **vocative** in Arabic grammar is a construction used when directly addressing someone or something. It is introduced by specific particles and plays an important role in spoken and written communication, as it signals attention and directs speech to a particular person or group.

5.2.1 Definition and usage of the vocative

The **vocative** (in Arabic, *nidā'*) is the grammatical structure used to call or address someone. It is typically introduced by the particle **yā** (يَا), which functions like “O” in English. For example:

- يَا تَالِبُ اجْتَهِدْ (*yā tālibu ijtahid*) – “O student, work hard.”

The noun following the vocative particle is usually in the nominative case and may appear with or without the definite article.

Fill in the blank: The vocative particle most commonly used in Arabic is _____.



THE ARABIC VOCATIVE PARTICLE 'YĀ' (يَا) & THE ADDRESSED NOUN (الْمُنَادَى)

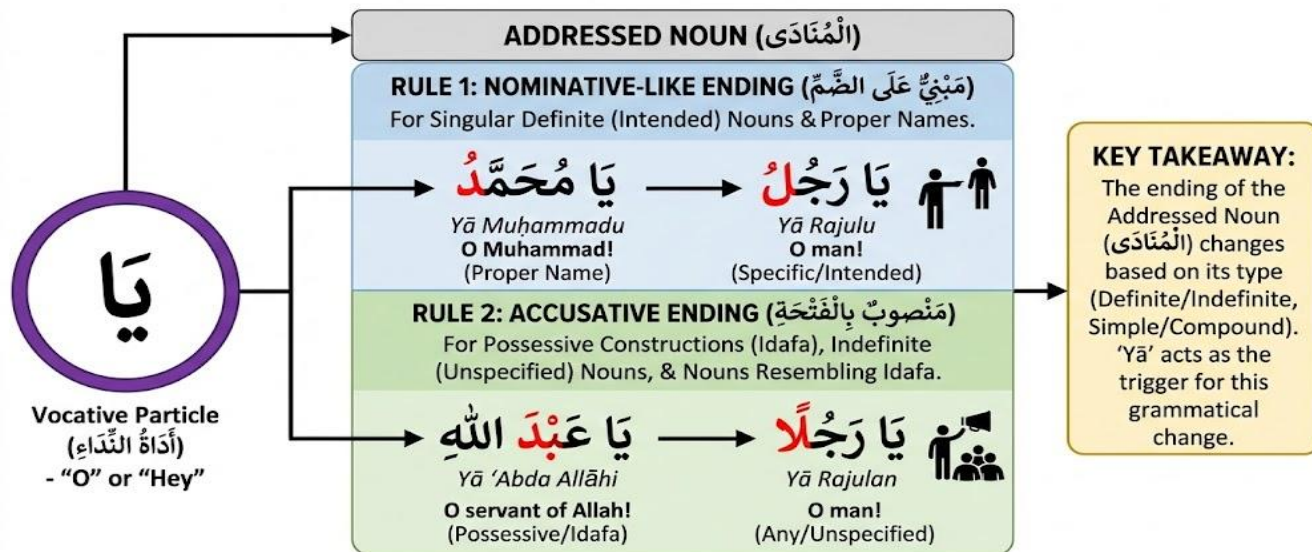


Figure 5.2 Structure of the vocative in Arabic

5.2.2 Vocative particles and their functions

Arabic uses several **vocative particles**, though **yā** is the most common. Others include **ayyuhā** (أَيُّهَا) and **ayyatuhā** (أَيَّتُهَا), which are used for emphasis or formality. These particles help the speaker draw attention to the addressee.

Examples:

- يَا رَجُلُ (yā rajulu) – “O man.”
- أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ (ayyuhā al-nāsu) – “O people.”
- أَيَّتُهَا الْمَرْأَةُ (ayyatuhā al-mar'atu) – “O woman.”

Fill in the blank: The vocative particle used for formal emphasis when addressing groups is _____.



Vocative Particle	Arabic Example	Translation	Function / Usage
يا	يا طالبُ اجتهِدْ	O student, strive!	The most common vocative particle; used for both near and far addresses.
أيّا	أيّا قومُ اتقوا الله	O people, fear Allah!	Used for calling someone at a distance or for emphasis.
هيا	هيا رجالُ تقدّموا	O men, advance!	Similar to أيّا, often used for distant or emphatic calling.
أ (rare)	أ محمدُ	O Muhammad!	Rarely used; poetic or classical style.
أيّ	أيّ رجلُ ساعدني	O man, help me!	Used with descriptive vocatives, often followed by a clarifying apposition.
وا (in lamentation)	وا إسلاماه	Alas, Islam!	Used in exclamatory or lamenting vocatives.

Table 5.2 Common vocative particles in Arabic

5.2.3 Examples of vocative expressions

Vocative expressions are common in everyday speech, literature, and religious texts. They serve to call attention, express respect, or convey urgency. For instance:

- يا معلمُ علمني (yā mu‘allimu ‘allimnī) – “O teacher, teach me.”
- يا اللهُ اغفر لنا (yā Allāhu ighfir lanā) – “O Allah, forgive us.”
- أيّها الطلابُ استمعوا جيّدًا (ayyuhā al-ṭullābu istami ‘ū jayyidan) – “O students, listen carefully.”

In each case, the vocative particle introduces the addressee, and the rest of the sentence provides the command, request, or statement.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *yā mu‘allimu ‘allimnī*, the noun **mu‘allimu** is the _____ being addressed.

Arabic Sentence	Translation	Vocative Particle	Vocative Noun (المنادى)	Explanation
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يا طالبُ اجتهدْ	<i>O student, strive!</i>	يا	طالبُ	<i>Common vocative particle يا; noun definite, nominative.</i>
يا معلمَ الخيرِ	<i>O teacher of goodness!</i>	يا	معلمَ	<i>Vocative noun indefinite, accusative with fathah (ـَ).</i>
أيا قومُ اتقوا اللهَ	<i>O people, fear Allah!</i>	أيا	قومُ	<i>Used for distant/emphatic calling; noun nominative.</i>
هيا رجالُ تقدموا	<i>O men, advance!</i>	هيا	رجالُ	<i>Similar to أيا, emphatic/distant vocative.</i>
إوا إسلاماه	<i>Alas, Islam!</i>	وا	إسلاماه	<i>Lamentation vocative, expressing grief or strong emotion.</i>

Box 5.2 Examples of vocative expressions in Arabic translations.

Pilot questions 5.2

1. What is the vocative in Arabic grammar?
2. Which particle is most commonly used to introduce the vocative?
3. Name two other vocative particles besides *yā*.
4. Give one example of a vocative expression in Arabic.
5. What case is usually used for the noun following the vocative particle?

5.3 Specification (Tamyīz) in Arabic Sentences

The **specification** in Arabic, known as **tamyīz**, is a grammatical device used to clarify or specify the meaning of a preceding word or phrase. It removes ambiguity by explaining quantities, descriptions, or comparisons. Mastering *tamyīz* helps learners produce precise sentences and interpret texts more accurately.



5.3.1 Definition and role of specification

Specification (tamyīz) is a noun in the accusative case that explains or distinguishes the meaning of another word. It often follows numbers, comparative expressions, or vague descriptions to make the sentence clearer. For example:

- اشتريتُ عشرينَ كتابًا (*ishtaraytu 'ishrīna kitāban*) – “I bought twenty books.”

Here, **kitāban** is the specification clarifying what was bought.

Fill in the blank: In Arabic, the specification is always expressed in the _____ case.

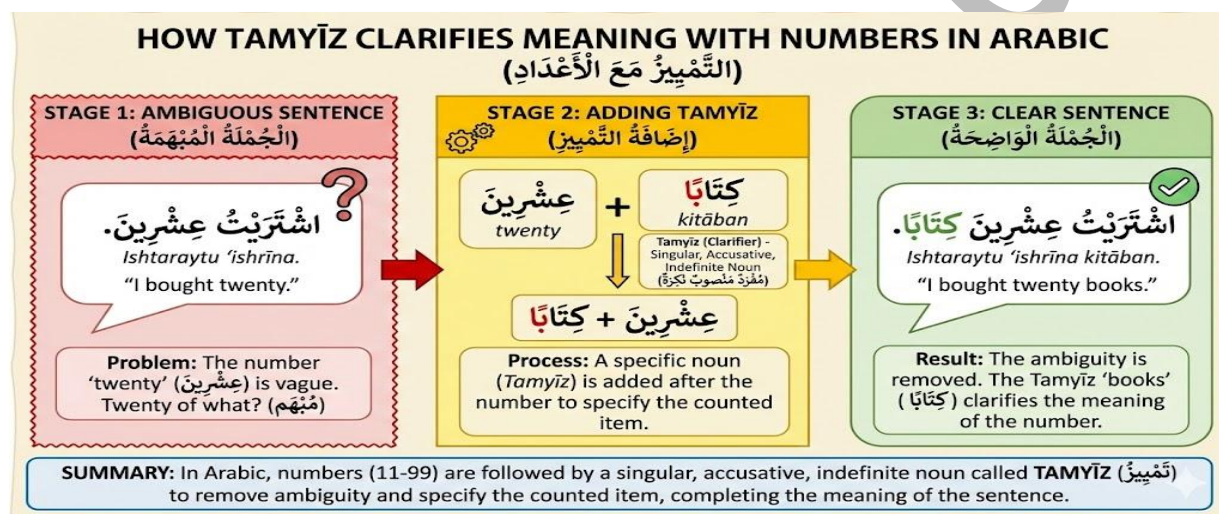


Figure 5.3 Structure of specification in Arabic

5.3.2 Types of specification (numerical, descriptive, etc.)

There are several types of **specification** depending on the context:

- **Numerical specification:** Clarifies quantities.
Example: عندي ثلاثة أقلام (*indī thalāthatu aqlāmin*) – “I have three pens.”
- **Descriptive specification:** Explains a vague description.
Example: امتلأ الإناء ماءً (*imtala 'a al-inā 'u mā'an*) – “The vessel was filled with water.”



- **Comparative specification:** Clarifies comparisons.

Example: زيدٌ أفضلُ منك علماً (zaydun aḥḍalu minka ‘ilman) – “Zayd is better than you in knowledge.”

Fill in the blank: A specification that clarifies quantities is called _____ specification.

Type of Tamyīz	Arabic Example	Translation	Function / Explanation
Tamyīz of Quantity (تمييز (العدد)	عندي عشرون كتاباً	I have twenty books.	Clarifies the counted noun; comes after numbers (3–10 in genitive, 11+ in accusative).
Tamyīz of Measure (تمييز (المقدار)	اشتريتُ لترًا ماءً	I bought a liter of water.	Specifies measure, weight, or volume.
Tamyīz of Comparison (تمييز (النسبة)	طابَ محمدٌ نفساً	Muhammad felt good at heart.	Clarifies the meaning of a verb/adjective; often abstract.
Tamyīz of Content (تمييز المفعول به)	ملأتُ الكأسَ ماءً	I filled the cup with water.	Specifies what fills or constitutes something.
Tamyīz of Ambiguity (تمييز (المبهم)	ازدادَ الرجلُ علماً	The man increased in knowledge.	Removes ambiguity from verbs/adjectives that imply growth, increase, or change.

Table 5.3 Types of specification in Arabic sentences

5.3.3 Examples of specification in sentences

Specification is widely used in everyday Arabic to avoid ambiguity. Consider the following examples:



- اشتريت كيلو تمر (ishtaraytu kīlo tamrin) – “I bought a kilo of dates.”
- امتلأ القلب فرحاً (imtala' a al-qalbu farahan) – “The heart was filled with joy.”
- محمد أعلم الناس خلقاً (muḥammadun a'lamu al-nāsi khuluqan) – “Muhammad is the most knowledgeable of people in character.”

In each case, the specification clarifies what is being measured, described, or compared.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *imtala' a al-qalbu farahan*, the word **farahan** is the _____.

Arabic Sentence	Translation	Tamyīz (التَّمْيِيز)	Case Marker	Explanation
عندي عشرون كتاباً	I have twenty books.	كتاباً	fathāh (-)	Tamyīz clarifies the counted noun after numbers.
اشتريت لتر ماء	I bought a liter of water.	ماء	fathāh (-)	Tamyīz specifies measure/volume.
طاب محمد نفساً	Muhammad felt good at heart.	نفساً	fathāh (-)	Tamyīz clarifies the meaning of the verb/adjective.
ملأت الكأس ماء	I filled the cup with water.	ماء	fathāh (-)	Tamyīz specifies the content of the object.
ازداد الرجل علماً	The man increased in knowledge.	علماً	fathāh (-)	Tamyīz removes ambiguity from the verb of increase.

Box 5.3 Examples of specification in Arabic sentences

Pilot questions 5.3

1. What is specification (tamyīz) in Arabic grammar?
2. Which case is used to mark specification?
3. Name the three main types of specification.
4. Give one example of numerical specification.
5. Give one example of descriptive specification.



5.4 Adverbs in Arabic Sentences

The **adverb** in Arabic grammar, known as **zarf**, is a word that provides additional information about the action of the verb. It usually specifies **time**, **place**, or **manner**, helping to make sentences more precise and meaningful. Adverbs are typically expressed in the **accusative case**, and they enrich communication by clarifying when, where, or how an action occurs.

5.4.1 Definition and grammatical role of adverbs

An **adverb (zarf)** is a noun in the accusative case that functions to describe the circumstances of an action. It answers questions such as “when?”, “where?”, or “how?”. For example:

- سافرتُ أمس (*sāfartu amsi*) – “I travelled yesterday.” (adverb of time)
- جلستُ أمامَ البيتِ (*jalastu amāma al-bayti*) – “I sat in front of the house.” (adverb of place)

Fill in the blank: In Arabic, adverbs are usually expressed in the _____ case.

ARABIC VERBAL SENTENCE: VERB, SUBJECT, & ADVERB (WITH CASE MARKERS)

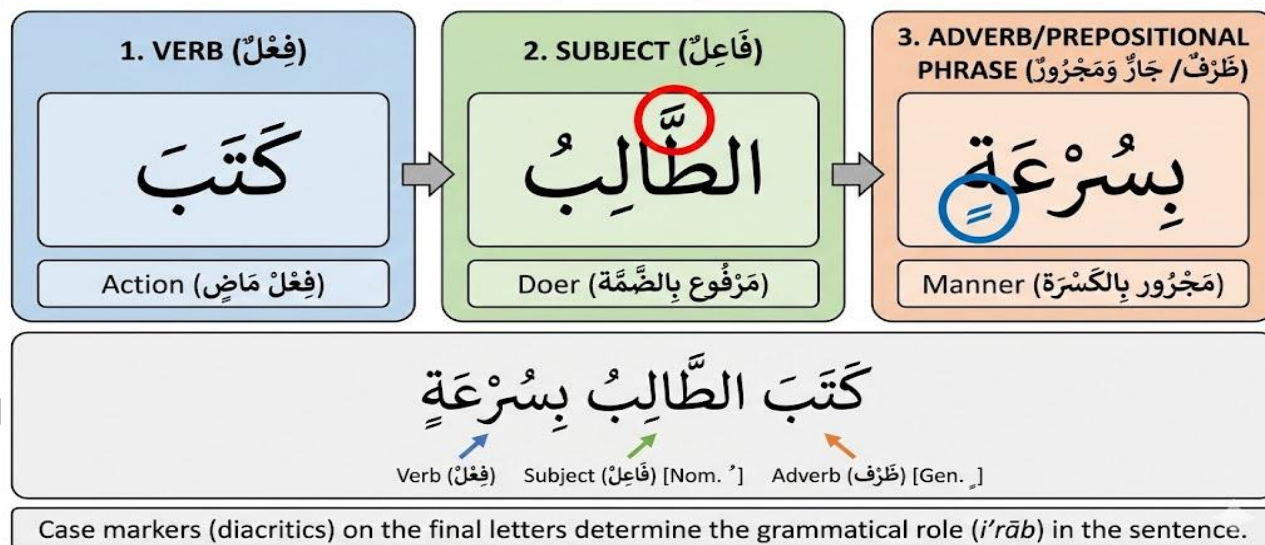


Figure 5.4 Structure of a sentence with adverb



5.4.2 Types of adverbs (time, place, manner, etc.)

Adverbs in Arabic can be classified into several types:

- **Adverbs of time (ẓarf zamān):** Indicate when an action occurs.
Example: ذَهَبْتُ صَبَاحًا (dhahabtu ṣabāḥan) – “I went in the morning.”
- **Adverbs of place (ẓarf makān):** Indicate where an action occurs.
Example: جَلَسْتُ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ (jalastu taḥta al-shajarati) – “I sat under the tree.”
- **Adverbs of manner:** Indicate how an action occurs.
Example: عَمِلْتُ بِجِدٍّ (amiltu bijiddin) – “I worked diligently.”

Fill in the blank: The adverb that indicates where an action occurs is called adverb of _____.

Type of Adverb (نوع الظرف)	Arabic Example	Translation	Function / Explanation
Adverb of Time (ظرف الزمان)	سافرت أمس	I traveled yesterday.	Specifies when the action occurred.
	سأعود غدا	I will return tomorrow.	Indicates future time.
Adverb of Place (ظرف المكان)	جلست أمام البيت	I sat in front of the house.	Specifies location of the action.
	وقفت خلف الباب	I stood behind the door.	Indicates spatial position.
Adverb of Manner (ظرف الحال / الكيفية)	عملت بجد	I worked diligently.	Describes how the action was performed.
	سار بسرعة	He walked quickly.	Explains the manner of movement.
Adverb of Quantity/Extent (ظرف الكمية / المقدار)	أحبك كثيرا	I love you very much.	Specifies the degree or extent.
	قرأت قليلا	I read a little.	Indicates limited quantity.



Adverb of Affirmation/Negation (ظرف التوكيد / النفي)	نعم، فهمت الدرس	Yes, I understood the lesson.	Confirms the action.
	لا، لم أذهب	No, I did not go.	Negates the action.

Table 5.4 Types of adverbs in Arabic sentences

5.4.3 Examples of adverbs in sentences

Adverbs are widely used in Arabic to add detail and precision. Consider the following examples:

- سافرت إلى القاهرة أمس (*sāfartu ilā al-qāhirati amsi*) – “I travelled to Cairo yesterday.”
- جلس الطفل فوق الكرسي (*jalasa al-tiflu fawqa al-kursī*) – “The child sat on the chair.”
- قرأ الطالب الكتاب بسرعة (*qara’a al-ṭālibu al-kitāba bisur’atin*) – “The student read the book quickly.”

In each case, the adverb clarifies the time, place, or manner of the action.

Fill in the blank: In the sentence *qara’a al-ṭālibu al-kitāba bisur’atin*, the word **bisur’atin** is the adverb of _____.

Arabic Sentence	Translation	Adverb (الظرف)	Type	Explanation
سافرت أمس	I traveled yesterday.	أمس	Time	Specifies when the action occurred.
سأعود غدا	I will return tomorrow.	غدا	Time	Indicates future time.
جلست أمام البيت	I sat in front of the house.	أمام	Place	Specifies location of the action.
وقفت خلف الباب	I stood behind the door.	خلف	Place	Indicates spatial position.
عملت بجد	I worked diligently.	بجد	Manner	Describes how the action was performed.



سَارَ بِسْرَعَةٍ	<i>He walked quickly.</i>	بِسْرَعَةٍ	<i>Manner</i>	<i>Explains the manner of movement.</i>
أَحْبَبْتُ كَثِيرًا	<i>I love you very much.</i>	كَثِيرًا	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Specifies the degree or extent.</i>
قَرَأْتُ قَلِيلًا	<i>I read a little.</i>	قَلِيلًا	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Indicates limited amount.</i>

Box 5.4 Examples of adverbs in Arabic sentences

Pilot questions 5.4

1. What is an adverb (ẓarf) in Arabic grammar?
2. Which case is usually used to mark adverbs?
3. Name three types of adverbs in Arabic.
4. Give one example of an adverb of time.
5. Give one example of an adverb of place.

Series Summary

This Series has focused on four important elements of Arabic grammar that enrich sentence construction and meaning: the agent, vocative, specification, and adverbs. Its purpose has been to help you recognise how these structures function, so that you can apply them confidently in both spoken and written Arabic. By studying them together, you have gained insight into how Arabic conveys precision, emphasis, and clarity.

We began with the agent, examining its definition, case markers, and role in verbal sentences. We then moved on to the vocative, exploring the particles used to address or call attention to someone. Following that, we studied specification (*tamyīz*), looking at how it clarifies numbers, descriptions, and comparisons. Finally, we considered adverbs, analysing their types and how they add detail about time, place, and manner. By completing this Series, you should now be able to define, identify, and demonstrate each of these elements, in line with the Series Learning Outcomes, thereby strengthening your ability to analyse and construct accurate Arabic sentences.



Glossary of Terms

- **Accusative case:** A grammatical case in Arabic that marks the noun as the object of a verb or as an adverbial expression, usually indicated by the short vowel *fathah* (ـَ).
- **Adverb (ẓarf):** A noun in the accusative case that describes the circumstances of an action, such as time, place, or manner.
- **Agent (fā'il):** The noun or pronoun in a verbal sentence that performs the action of the verb, always expressed in the nominative case.
- **Comparative specification:** A type of specification (*tamyīz*) used to clarify comparisons, often following comparative adjectives.
- **Descriptive specification:** A type of specification (*tamyīz*) that explains vague descriptions, often clarifying what fills or characterises something.
- **Nominative case:** A grammatical case in Arabic that marks the subject or agent of a verb, usually indicated by the short vowel *ḍammah* (ـُ).
- **Numerical specification:** A type of specification (*tamyīz*) that clarifies quantities, often following numbers.
- **Specification (tamyīz):** A noun in the accusative case that clarifies or specifies the meaning of a preceding word or phrase, removing ambiguity.
- **Vocative (nidā'):** A grammatical construction used to directly address someone or something, usually introduced by the particle *yā* (يَا).
- **Vocative particles:** Words such as *yā* (يَا), *ayyuhā* (أَيُّهَا), and *ayyatuhā* (أَيَّتُهَا) used to introduce the vocative and call attention to the addressee.
- **Ẓarf zamān (adverb of time):** An adverb that specifies when an action occurs, e.g., *amsi* (yesterday).
- **Ẓarf makān (adverb of place):** An adverb that specifies where an action occurs, e.g., *taḥta al-shajaratī* (under the tree).

Concept Check Questions [Series 5]

Objective Questions

1. Define the agent in Arabic sentences. (Linked to SLO 5.1)
2. Identify the case used to mark the agent. (Linked to SLO 5.2)



3. Define the vocative in Arabic grammar. (Linked to SLO 5.3)
4. State the most common vocative particle in Arabic. (Linked to SLO 5.4)
5. Define specification (*tamyīz*) in Arabic sentences. (Linked to SLO 5.5)
6. Name the three main types of specification. (Linked to SLO 5.6)
7. Define an adverb (*ẓarf*) in Arabic grammar. (Linked to SLO 5.7)
8. Identify the case usually used to mark adverbs. (Linked to SLO 5.7)
9. Distinguish between adverbs of time and adverbs of place. (Linked to SLO 5.8)

Short-Answer Questions

10. Demonstrate with an example how the agent appears in a verbal sentence. (Linked to SLO 5.2)
11. Apply vocative particles correctly in one Arabic sentence. (Linked to SLO 5.4)
12. Illustrate with one example how specification clarifies a numerical expression. (Linked to SLO 5.6)
13. Illustrate with one example how specification clarifies a descriptive expression. (Linked to SLO 5.6)
14. Demonstrate the correct use of an adverb of manner in a sentence. (Linked to SLO 5.9)

Long-Answer Questions

15. Analyse the grammatical role of the agent in Arabic sentences, with examples. (Linked to SLOs 5.1–5.2)
16. Evaluate the function of vocative particles in Arabic communication, with examples. (Linked to SLOs 5.3–5.4)
17. Assess the importance of specification (*tamyīz*) in clarifying meaning, with examples of its types. (Linked to SLOs 5.5–5.6)
18. Analyse the role of adverbs in Arabic sentences, explaining how they add precision and detail. (Linked to SLOs 5.7–5.9)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 5]

Objective Questions

1. The agent is the noun or pronoun that performs the action of the verb.
2. The nominative case.
3. The vocative is a grammatical construction used to directly address someone or something.
4. *Yā* (يَا).



5. Specification (*tamyīz*) is a noun in the accusative case that clarifies the meaning of a preceding word or phrase.
6. Numerical, descriptive, and comparative specification.
7. An adverb (*ẓarf*) is a noun in the accusative case that describes the circumstances of an action.
8. The accusative case.
9. Adverbs of time indicate when an action occurs, while adverbs of place indicate where an action occurs.

Short-Answer Questions

10. Example: كَتَبَ الطَّالِبُ الدَّرْسَ (*kataba al-ṭālibu al-darsa*) – “The student wrote the lesson.”
11. Example: يَا طَالِبُ اجْتَهِدْ (*yā ṭālibu ijtahid*) – “O student, work hard.”
12. Example: عِنْدِي ثَلَاثَةُ أَقْلَامٍ (*indī thalāthatu aqlāmin*) – “I have three pens.”
13. Example: امْتَلَأَ الْإِنَاءُ مَاءً (*imṭala 'a al-inā'u mā'an*) – “The vessel was filled with water.”
14. Example: عَمِلْتُ بِجِدٍّ (*amiltu bijiddin*) – “I worked diligently.”

Long-Answer Questions

15. **Basic response:** The agent is the doer of the action in a verbal sentence, marked by the nominative case.
Value-added response: Outstanding learners may add that the agent is central to sentence meaning, and its placement after the verb reflects Arabic's verb–subject–object structure, which differs from English.
16. **Basic response:** Vocative particles introduce direct address, with *yā* being the most common.
Value-added response: Outstanding learners may expand by explaining how vocatives are used in Qur'anic verses, poetry, and formal speech to convey respect, urgency, or emphasis.
17. **Basic response:** Specification clarifies meaning by removing ambiguity, whether in numbers, descriptions, or comparisons.
Value-added response: Outstanding learners may add that *tamyīz* demonstrates the precision of Arabic grammar, ensuring clarity in both everyday speech and classical texts, and is vital for accurate translation.
18. **Basic response:** Adverbs add detail about time, place, or manner, enriching the meaning of sentences.
Value-added response: Outstanding learners may expand by showing how adverbs contribute to stylistic variation, narrative detail, and rhetorical emphasis in Arabic literature and communication.



Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 5]

Part 5.1 The agent in Arabic sentences

- The noun or pronoun that performs the action of the verb.
- Nominative case.
- Alif followed by nūn.
- كَتَبَ الطَّالِبُ الدَّرْسَ (*kataba al-ṭālibu al-darsa*) – “The student wrote the lesson.”
- جَاءَ الْمُعَلِّمُونَ (*jā'a al-mu'allimūna*) – “The teachers came.”

Part 5.2 The vocative in Arabic sentences

- A grammatical construction used to directly address someone or something.
- يَا (يا).
- أَيُّهَا (*ayyuhā*) and أَيَّتُهَا (*ayyatuhā*).
- يَا مُعَلِّمُ عَلِّمْنِي (*yā mu'allimu 'allimnī*) – “O teacher, teach me.”
- Nominative case.

Part 5.3 Specification (tamayiz) in Arabic sentences

- A noun in the accusative case that clarifies or specifies the meaning of a preceding word or phrase.
- Accusative case.
- Numerical, descriptive, and comparative specification.
- عِنْدِي ثَلَاثَةُ أَقْلَامٍ (*indī thalāthatu aqlāmin*) – “I have three pens.”
- امْتَلَأَ الْإِنَاءُ مَاءً (*imtala'a al-inā'u mā'an*) – “The vessel was filled with water.”

Part 5.4 Adverbs in Arabic sentences

- A noun in the accusative case that describes the circumstances of an action.
- Accusative case.
- Adverbs of time, place, and manner.
- ذَهَبْتُ صَبَاحًا (*dhahabtu ṣabāḥan*) – “I went in the morning.”
- جَلَسْتُ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ (*jalastu taḥta al-shajaratī*) – “I sat under the tree.”



References and Attributions [Series 5]

This section provides references and attributions for **Series 5: The Agent, Vocative, Specification and Adverbs in Arabic**, including sources cited in the instructional content, illustration details, and suggested open educational resources (OERs).

General References

- Haywood, J. A., & Nahmad, H. M. (1965). *A New Arabic Grammar of the Written Language*. Lund Humphries.
- Ryding, K. C. (2005). *A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic*. Cambridge University Press.
- Versteegh, K. (1997). *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition*. Routledge.
- Wehr, H. (1994). *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (J. M. Cowan, Ed.). Spoken Language Services.

Illustrations

- *Figure 5.1 Structure of a verbal sentence with agent*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a diagram showing verb, agent, and object in an Arabic verbal sentence with case markers.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar agent in verbal sentence diagram OER”.
- *Table 5.1 Case markers for agents in Arabic*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a table showing nominative case markers for Arabic agents in singular, dual, and plural forms.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar agent nominative case markers table OER”.
- *Box 5.1 Examples of agents in Arabic sentences*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box showing examples of agents in Arabic verbal sentences with translations.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar agent examples verbal sentences OER”.
- *Figure 5.2 Structure of the vocative in Arabic*



- AI-generated prompt: “Create a diagram showing the vocative particle ‘yā’ and the addressed noun in Arabic sentences.”
- Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
- Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar vocative particle ya diagram OER”.
- *Table 5.2 Common vocative particles in Arabic*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a table showing vocative particles in Arabic with examples and their functions.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar vocative particles table OER”.
- *Box 5.2 Examples of vocative expressions in Arabic*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box showing examples of vocative expressions in Arabic sentences with translations.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar vocative expressions examples OER”.
- *Figure 5.3 Structure of specification in Arabic*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a diagram showing how tamyīz clarifies meaning in Arabic sentences with numbers.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar tamyiz specification diagram OER”.
- *Table 5.3 Types of specification in Arabic sentences*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a table showing types of tamyiz (specification) in Arabic with examples and translations.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar tamyiz types table OER”.
- *Box 5.3 Examples of specification in Arabic sentences*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box showing examples of tamyiz (specification) in Arabic sentences with translations.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar tamyiz specification examples OER”.
- *Figure 5.4 Structure of a sentence with adverb*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a diagram showing verb, subject, and adverb in Arabic sentences with case markers.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar adverb sentence diagram OER”.



- *Table 5.4 Types of adverbs in Arabic sentences*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Create a table showing types of adverbs in Arabic sentences with examples and translations.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar adverbs types table OER”.
- *Box 5.4 Examples of adverbs in Arabic sentences*
 - AI-generated prompt: “Generate a text box showing examples of adverbs in Arabic sentences with translations.”
 - Tool/platform: Microsoft Copilot image generation.
 - Suggested OER search string: “Arabic grammar adverbs examples sentences OER”.

