

1

ī ō ʌ ɔ

'alif - *a* as in all.

3rd symbol is *hamzatu-l-waSl*,
as part of the word “the”, it is silent.

4th symbol is *'alif madda*, which is
a *hamza* followed by an *'alif*.

,

—
12

—
22

—
12

In these cases, the *'alif* has no sound of its own, it is simply acting as the carrier of *hamza*, which is always written on *'alif* at the beginning of a word.

All three symbols are for short vowels:

The first symbol is: 'a

The second symbol is: 'u

The third symbol is: 'i

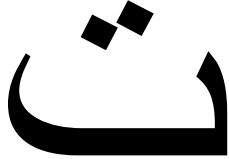
2

ب ج

baa'

b as in **bake**

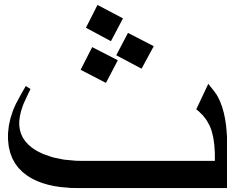
3



taa'

t as in tale

4



thaa'

th as in thanks

5

ج

ج

ج

jiim

like an English *j* or...

like a French *j* or...

like an English hard *g*

6

ح

ح

ح

Haa'

sounds like a very
emphatic *h*

7

خ

خ

خ

khaa'

sounds like hard *ch*
in the Scottish loch

8

ר

daal

d as in dale

9

ז

dhaal

th as in they

10



raa'

Rolled *r* as
rr in Spanish

11



zay

z as in zebra

12

س د

siin

s as in seen

13

س

س

shiin

sh as in sheen

14

ص

ص

EMPHATIC

Saad - emphatic
form of *s* س

15

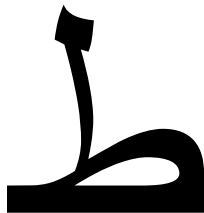
ض

ض

EMPHATIC

Daad - emphatic
form of *d* د

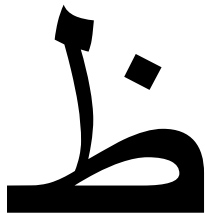
16



EMPHATIC

Taa' - emphatic
form of *t* ت

17



EMPHATIC

DHaa' - emphatic form of
th ð (as in them),
or can be pronounced as
emphatic form of *z* ʒ

18

ع ع ع ع

‘ayn

This letter is completely foreign not only to English but also to any other European language, and in fact to just about all the world's languages. It is a peculiarity of the Semitic languages, and one of the most difficult sounds of the Arabic language to make. Unfortunately, it is also one of the most common letters. The only real way to learn it is to listen to Arabs and to practice incessantly. In scientific phonological terms, this letter is a pharyngeal voiced fricative. That means that the sound is made by constricting the muscles of the larynx so that the flow of air through the throat is partially choked off. One eminent Arabist once suggested that the best way to pronounce this letter is to gag. Do it, and you'll feel the muscles of your throat constrict the passage of air in just the right way. The sound is voiced, which means that your vocal chords vibrate when making it. It sounds rather like the bleating of a lamb, but smoother.

19

ع غ غ غ

ghayn

Close to a French
r (in the throat)

20

ف

ف

faa'

f as in fate

21

ف ف

qaaf

sounds like a *k* at the
back of the throat, sort
of like a cross between
a *k* and a French *r*

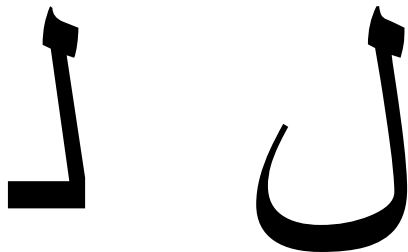
22

ك ك

kaaf

k as in kale

23



laam

l as in lame

24

هـ

ح

miim

m as in mean

25

ن ذ

nuun

n as in noon

26

۲

۳

۴

۵

haa'

h as in hail

27

و

waw

if marked with a vowel, *w* as in well

if after a consonant that is marked with a
short *u* vowel, *long u* as in rude

if marked with a *sukuun* ° (zero vowel),
and the previous letter is marked with a
short *a* vowel, diphthong *ow* as in how

28

ي ي ي

yaa'

if marked with a vowel, *y* as in yell

if after a consonant that is marked with a
short *i* vowel, *long e* as in bee

if marked with a *sukuun* ° (zero vowel),
and the previous letter is marked with a
short *a* vowel, long *i* as in die

۲

hamza

Phonetically, the *hamza* is a glottal stop. It sounds like a little catch in the voice, like in Noël. If you did it properly and forcefully, that little catch in your voice between the two syllables was a perfect *hamza*. Or like in uh-oh (as though you are in trouble). Although the *hamza* is a full consonant in Arabic just like any other, it is written in a special way. Only very rarely can a *hamza* stand on its own. Most often the *hamza* is written “riding” on another letter. That letter can be either *'alif* (ا), *waaw* (و), or *yaa'* (ي). At the beginning of a word, the *hamza* “rides” on an *'alif*.

ة ه

taa' marbuuTa

In general the *taa' marbuuTa* is a sign that a word is grammatically feminine. It can occur only at the end of a word. When a word with *taa' marbuuTa* is pronounced in isolation, there is no *t* sound, and it is as if the word ended with a simple *haa'* (*h*). But when a word with *taa' marbuuTa* is immediately followed by vowel, either in the same word or the next word, it is pronounced as if it were a simple *taa'* (*t*). In other words, *taa' marbuuTa* is a kind of combination *taa'* (*t*) and *haa'* (*h*), and has the sound of the one or the other depending on the context.

עג

laam- 'alif

a *laam* (*l*) followed by
an *'alif* (*a*), written
together as a single
character

ف

ف

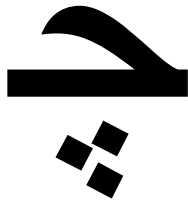
vaa' - *v* as in vase

Sometimes used to
represent the letter *v*
when transliterating
foreign words in Arabic



paa' - *p* as in pay

Sometimes used to
represent the letter *p*
when transliterating
foreign words in Arabic



chaa' - *ch* as in change

Sometimes used to
represent the sound *ch*
when transliterating
foreign words in Arabic

گ گ گ گ

gaaf - g as in gate

Sometimes used to represent the sound *hard g* when transliterating foreign words in Arabic

ی ی

'*alif maqsuura*

A *yaa'* (y) written without any dots is sometimes used to represent the sound of the *extended a* vowel. This job is usually done by a different letter, '*alif* (*extended a*). But in some cases – and this happens **ONLY** at the end of a word – a *yaa'* without dots is used instead of '*alif*.

sun letters

ن ل ظ ط ض ص

ث س ز ر ذ د ث ت

sun letters

When the Arabic word for “the” (ال) comes before a word that starts with one of the “sun letters”, two things happen: the *sukuun* (zero vowel) on the letter *laam* disappears, and a *shadda* (ّ - the doubling sign) is written above that “sun letter”. In pronunciation, the *laam* disappears and the “sun letter” is pronounced doubled. In effect, the *laam* is assimilated to the first letter of the word.

For example, “the sun” NOT written “al-shams” **الشَّمْس**

But “the sun” is instead written “ash-shams” **الشَّمْس**

moon letters

ا ب ج ح خ ع غ
ف ق ك م ه و ي

moon letters

When the Arabic word for “the” (ال) comes before a word that starts with one of the “moon letters”, it is joined to the word as normal.

For example, “the door” is written “al-baab” **الْبَاب**