

The Arabic Alphabet

Arabic has 28 letters and is written from right to left. Hear them all on the web page.

Sound	Transliteration	Name	End	Middle	Start	Alone
ā / ' · A long ā, or a seat for the glottal stop hamza (أ إ ؤ).	alif	أَلِف	ل	ل	ا	ا
b · b as in “bed”.	bā'	بَاء	ب	ب	ب	ب
t · t as in “ten”.	tā'	تَاء	ت	ت	ت	ت
th · th as in “think”.	thā'	ثَاء	ث	ث	ث	ث
j · j as in “jam” (said g in Egypt).	jīm	جِيم	ج	ج	ج	ج
ḥ · A strong, breathy h from deep in the throat.	ḥā'	حَاء	ح	ح	ح	ح
kh · Like ch in Scottish “loch” or German “Bach”.	khā'	خَاء	خ	خ	خ	خ
d · d as in “dog”.	dāl	دَال	د	د	د	د
dh · th as in “this”.	dhāl	ذَال	ذ	ذ	ذ	ذ
r · A rolled or tapped r.	rā'	رَاء	ر	ر	ر	ر
z · z as in “zoo”.	zāy	زَاي	ز	ز	ز	ز
s · s as in “sun”.	sīn	سِين	س	س	س	س
sh · sh as in “shop”.	shīn	شِين	ش	ش	ش	ش
ṣ · A heavy s: the tongue pulls back and the sound is darker than س.	ṣād	صَاد	ص	ص	ص	ص
ḍ · A heavy d, made like ص.	ḍād	ضَاد	ض	ض	ض	ض
ṭ · A heavy t, made like ص.	ṭā'	طَاء	ط	ط	ط	ط
ẓ · A heavy th as in “this”; in many dialects a heavy z.	ẓā'	ظَاء	ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ
' · A squeeze in the throat with the voice on; no English equivalent.	' ayn	عَيْن	ع	ع	ع	ع
gh · Like a French r, gargled in the throat.	ghayn	غَيْن	غ	غ	غ	غ
f · f as in “fish”.	fā'	فَاء	ف	ف	ف	ف
q · A k made further back, at the uvula.	qāf	قَاف	ق	ق	ق	ق
k · k as in “kite”.	kāf	كَاف	ك	ك	ك	ك
l · l as in “love”.	lām	لَام	ل	ل	ل	ل
m · m as in “moon”.	mīm	مِيم	م	م	م	م
n · n as in “no”.	nūn	نُون	ن	ن	ن	ن
h · h as in “hat”, said even at the end of a word.	hā'	هَاء	ه	ه	ه	ه
w / ū · w as in “water”, or a long ū.	wāw	وَاو	و	و	و	و
y / ī · y as in “yes”, or a long ī.	yā'	يَاء	ي	ي	ي	ي

☐ never joins the next letter: ا د ذ ر ز و ل followed by ل is written as one sign: لا (lā).