

Pronunciation Guide

These letters... are pronounced as in the following words...

| | |
|-----------|---------------------------|
| <i>Ee</i> | Meet |
| <i>Ae</i> | Game |
| <i>Uu</i> | Moon |
| <i>E</i> | Get |
| <i>O</i> | Got |
| <i>U</i> | a short version of “moon” |
| <i>A</i> | Gas |
| <i>Aa</i> | Air |
| <i>Oo</i> | Goal |

You will find consonants written in either upper or lower case and is each pronounced in a different way.

Consonants shown in CAPITALS are emphatic or hard versions of the lower case letters.

Pronunciation of the vowel “a” is changed if it has an emphatic consonant before or after it. For example...

| | |
|--------------|---|
| <i>ba...</i> | is pronounced as in back |
| <i>Ba...</i> | is pronounced as in but |
| <i>s-h</i> | is pronounced as two separate letters, not “sh” |

When a consonant is doubled, each of the letters must be pronounced separately, with a short break between. For example, note the difference here...

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| <i>kasar</i> - (he) broke something | is pronounced as ka-sar |
| <i>kassar</i> - (he) broke something into pieces | is pronounced as kas-sar |

Some Arabic letters have no direct equivalent sounds in English. These have been represented in the dictionary as numbers. For example...

- 2 pronounced as a stop in the word, as in the Cockney pronunciation of the word "Bottle" - bo2le
- 3 pronounced as the sound "Ah" but from deep in the throat
- 3' pronounced as the last letter in the French word "Bonjour"; or the first letter in the German word "Rennen"
- 7 pronounced as the sound you make when you breathe on your glasses to clean them
- 7' pronounced as the "ch" in the Scottish "lock"; the first sound in the Russian word "ХОРОШО"; the first sound in the Spanish word "Justo"

You can find further examples on pronunciation together with access to audio buttons to enable you to listen to the sounds at nourbalasa.com

Useful expressions

Personally, I don't find it interesting at all when to find some greetings in the beginning of any language book. I feel something inside me is saying to the book "Hey, don't tell me what they say in the morning, let me know how they build it".

Here, we will have some greetings not just to know them, but also to practice the sounds and to start exploring the way Egyptian think by seeing how the expression is built. Personally I feel this gives an interesting insight into a complete new language that doesn't belong to my native language tree.

Again and again I say: I don't agree with all books when they give general translations for sentences because you don't get the concept of the language to enable you to use it the way any native speaker does; you just learn what they say not HOW they say it.

For example:

When you find the Arabic sentence *SaBaa7 il 7'aer* translated in any book, it will be translated as "good morning". And here is why I don't agree with this: English people decided to use the word good + the word morning to greet each other in the morning, that doesn't mean that Arabs should decide the same, right?

Let's see how Arabs really thought about it!

The word *SaBaa7* means Morning

The word *il* means The

The word *7'aer* means goodness

So it's not really "good" morning - all books will translate the word 'good' as *kwayyis*.

How does it go then?

The word "of" doesn't really exist in Arabic, but we just 'feel' it. So, if we translate the sentence the way we really understand it, it will be:

"Morning of the goodness".

So, this is how different the concept of the language is and I think you will agree with me that it really helps to understand it. Even if this introduction to the concept is a little difficult to get your mind round in the beginning, you have the book and you are reading it now so stay with it and all will become clearer!

Ok, I will take you through another example.

Because the reply to the English greeting “Good morning” is also “Good morning”, many books translate the greeting and the reply in Arabic the same way – both as “Good Morning”. However, the reply is different in Arabic so it’s not logical at all!

In Arabic, the reply to *SaBaa7 il 7'aer* is *SaBaa7 il nuur*, which is not the same right?

So what does the reply “*SaBaa7 il nuur*” mean then?

If you’re asking this question now it means you must agree with me that you need to understand the concept of the language, and don't just repeat phrases without that understanding. So here's my explanation:

The concept of greetings for Arabs are different. They always need to reply to a greeting with something that is better – at least as far as they think. So they replace the word *7'aer* (goodness) in the greeting with the word *nuur* which means light, giving a reply of “*SaBaa7 il nuur*”. Personally, I don’t really know why light is better than goodness but that’s the way that the old Arabs felt it.

So, now we are able to say in the morning: *SaBaa7 il 7'aer*

And to replay: *SaBaa7 il nuur*

...**and** understand what it means, and why we say it!

Good.

As you now understand the morning greeting and the reply (and you “understand” it rather than just “knowing” it), you may now be able to work out how Arabs say good evening if I tell you that the word evening is *masaa2*

masaa2 il 7'aer

right!

Then the reply:

masaa2 il nuur

Exactly. You are very smart!

Note that *masa2 il 7'aer* is also used for the afternoon as well as the evening.

Now, we can move farther with more helpful expressions.

shokran: means thanks, and you should reply with *3afwan*.

These two words came from the classical Arabic that is used for reading and writing which is not our subject in this book as we are learning the spoken colloquial Egyptian Arabic.

2aasif: means sorry which needs to be changed to *2asfa* if the speaker is a woman or a girl.

For more expressions we need to understand some grammar first in order to be able to use them correctly.

Pronouns

Singular Subject Pronouns

Now, we came to the part that I always jump to when I learn a new language.

Firstly, we will have the singular pronouns as we move step by step into the grammar, to make it easy and fun.

Here is the translation for the singular pronouns in Egyptian Arabic:

| | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|
| I | <i>ana</i> |
| You | <i>inta</i> (when you talk to male) |
| You | <i>inti</i> (when you talk to female) |
| He | <i>huwwa</i> |
| She | <i>hiyya</i> |

These are the singular subject pronouns for the person who either does the action in the sentence, or who is the subject of the sentence.

Singular Object Pronouns

There are also other kinds of pronouns. If “I” is a subject pronoun, there are “my” and “me” which are related to “I”.

The word “me” is the Object Pronoun to use when talking about receiving the action in a sentence. For example, when I say “he helps me”:

| | |
|-------|---|
| he | is the Subject Pronoun |
| helps | is the verb |
| me | is the object pronoun (receiving the action, which is in this case is “help”) |

In English, the word “My” is the Possessive Pronoun referring to the possession or the ownership of something, like when I say “my pen”.

GOOD NEWS! In Arabic we don’t have the possessive pronoun, we only have subject and object pronouns. We use the object pronouns to describe the possessive relation. For example:

Instead of saying “This is my pen”, we say “this is pen of me”, and because we don’t have the word “of” as we already know, we just say it, literally, like this:

this is pen me.

Then I have another surprise for you: we don’t have “am, is or are”. So the sentence will be in Arabic will be:

This pen me

...which is translated into proper English as “This is my pen”.

So you will be starting to understand what kind of challenge you will have when studying this language; you will always feel that something is missing. You will also always be surprised by how simple the language is.

Now let's move on and learn the object pronouns, which are used as possessive pronouns too. The Object Pronouns are as shown below, and are added to the END of words:

| | |
|-----------------|------------|
| Me/my | <i>i</i> |
| You/your (masc) | <i>ak</i> |
| You/your (fem) | <i>ik</i> |
| He/his | <i>u</i> |
| She/her | <i>aha</i> |

So, if the word "Name" translated into Arabic is "*ism*", how can I say "my name"?

ismi

We connect both words and say it as one word.

So, for all the pronouns it will be like the following:

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| <i>ismi</i> | My name |
| <i>ismak</i> | Your name (m) |
| <i>ismik</i> | Your name (f) |
| <i>ismu</i> | His name |
| <i>ismaha</i> | Her name |

Nouns and Adjectives

Nouns and Adjectives in Arabic have a relationship. There is no pronoun in Arabic for the English “it”, so all nouns in Arabic will be “he” or “she”; in other words, all the nouns in Arabic are masculine or feminine. Apart from a few irregular ones, Feminine nouns normally end with the letter “a”. Masculine nouns can end with any other letter.

Adjectives in Arabic must agree with the noun, regardless of whether it is masculine, feminine or plural.

For example, the word *alam* in Arabic means pen or pencil, and the word *3arabyya* means car. So, if we wanted to use each of them with the word *kwayyis*, which means good, it will be used as following:

alam kwayyis (a) good pen
3arabyya kwayyisa (a) good car

Note that the adjective follows the noun.

Note too that there is no indefinite article (“a” or “an”) in Arabic. We simply omit it.

If the definite- article (the) is added it changes the meaning:

il alam il kwayyis the good pen
il 3arabyya il kwayyisa the good car

Some useful words

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Name | <i>ism</i> |
| Grandfather | <i>gidd</i> |
| Grandmother / women | <i>sitt</i> |
| Mother | <i>umm</i> |
| Teacher | <i>mudarris</i> |
| House | <i>baet</i> |
| Door | <i>baab</i> |
| Uncle | <i>3amm</i> |
| Old (as in people) | <i>kibeer</i> |
| Big (for things) | <i>kibeer</i> |
| Not | <i>mish</i> |
| Window | <i>shibbaak</i> |
| Here | <i>hina</i> |
| There | <i>hinaak</i> |
| A lot | <i>kiteer</i> |
| Day | <i>yoom</i> |
| Work (as a noun) | <i>sho3'l</i> |
| Very | <i>awi</i> (comes after the adjective) |
| In | <i>fi</i> |
| From | <i>min</i> |
| Bathroom | <i>7ammaam</i> |
| Wife | <i>miRaat</i> |
| Good | <i>kwayyis</i> |
| Busy | <i>mash3'uul</i> |
| Arabic | <i>3arabi</i> |
| Husband | <i>Gooz</i> |

Exercise 1

Translate the following sentences:

- 1 My name is Jane.
- 2 Your grandfather is old. (talking to a man)
- 3 His grandmother is not old.
- 4 Your mother is very old. (talking to a woman)
- 5 Her uncle is not very old.
- 6 My teacher is from Canada.
- 7 Your house is good. (talking to a man)
- 8 Your door is not good. (talking to a woman)
- 9 His uncle is in the bathroom.
- 10 His window is not big.
- 11 My mother is here.
- 12 Your grandmother is there. (talking to a man)
- 13 Your grandfather is in Canada. (talking to a woman)
- 14 His work is a lot.
- 15 My day is busy.
- 16 My wife is in the bathroom.
- 17 Your wife is good in the Arabic. (talking to a man)
- 18 Your husband, his work is a lot. (talking to a woman)