5

Letters

1



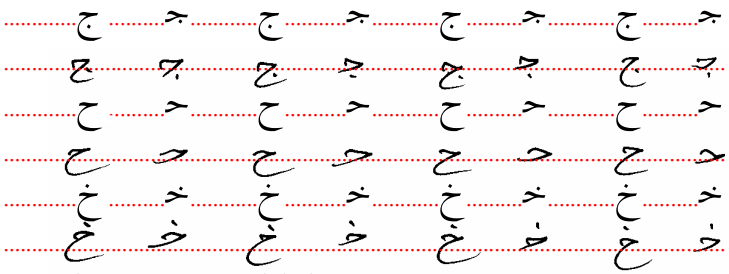
A family of three joined letters, each with a short and full form used exactly like those of ب . The only difference between these three letters in the writing is the dot.

ج *jīm* sounds like j in English 'jam', in most Arab countries. In Egypt it sounds like hard g in English 'go'. We use the sound *j* in this book.

ح *ḥā* is a heavy *h*; it is the sound produced when we breathe on glass to clean it. To an Arab it sounds quite distinct from ه *hā*, which we learned in Lesson 3. Try to make the distinction yourself.

خ *khā* represents the sound of ch in Scottish 'loch' or Welsh 'bach'.

The short forms are shallow, resting on or near the line of writing. The full forms are deep, with an *anticlockwise* downward swing ↺, the head still resting on or near the line. **Write** a line of each letter, starting at its top left-hand corner ↘:



An *a* or *ā* next to خ is often (not always) pronounced dark (4/3).

Don't be confused by the transcription of ح *ḥā*; this letter does not have a dark sound. We transcribe it with a dot merely to distinguish it from ه *hā*.

Read and write a few new words:

جنوبي *janūbī* southern — جنوب *janūb* south

دخول *dukhūl* entry* — خروج *khurūj* exit*

* the *action*. The *place* is *mákhraj* or *mádkhal*, see below.

Open *S33.wav*. Read, listen and repeat.

When one of these letters is joined to a previous letter in print, the connection is often made at the top right-hand corner of ج جـ etc.; in handwriting we make the connection at the beginning of the outline, i.e. the top left-hand corner ج جـ etc. Compare print with handwriting below (for *jīm* only; the others go the same way); practise the handwritten forms:

	handwriting	*print and type*
tooth + *j*	بج	بج\بجـ
teeth + *j*	سج	سج
l + *j*	لج	لج\لجـ
m + *j*	مج	مج\مجـ
s + *j*	سج	سج

(and so on, with other preceding joined letters)

Read and write (dark *a* and *ā* are dotted in the transcription below):

لجنة	*lájna* committee	احتجاج	*iḥtijā́j* objection
أجنبي	*'ájnabī* foreign	إنتاج	*'intā́j* production
مدخل	*mádkhal* entrance*	مخرج	*mákhraj* exit*
انتخاب	*intikhā́b* election	خبر	*khábar* news (item)
خاصّ	*khā́ṣṣ* private, special, particular		

* the *place*. The *action* is *khurū́j* or *dukhū́l*, see above.

Open *S34.wav*. **Read, listen and repeat**.

2

ط	*ṭā*
ظ	*ẓā*

The letters called *ṭa* and *ẓā* are joined letters, yet they have only one form each. It is tall, and always rests on the line. The loop of these letters has no tooth-like projection after it, as do ضـ\صـ (4/3).

Write a line of these letters, first the loop, then the upright:

ظ ط ظ ط ظ ط

ظ ط ظ ط ظ ط

These are sun letters with dark sounds. Just as ص is the dark equivalent (tongue low, with cavity) of س, so ط is the dark equivalent of ت, and ظ is the dark equivalent of ز. We transcribe ط with *ṭ* and ظ with *ẓ*. As you might guess, any neighbouring *a* or *ā* is darkened. In the list given below, we dot the transcription of these two vowels for clarity.

The upright stroke of ط and ظ is best treated as a *detached form* in handwriting (see 1/3), i.e. written (downwards) after its supporting ligature is completed. You can see this in action now: **Open** *W16.pps* to watch the handwriting of طائرة *ṭā'ira*, listed below.

Now **read and write:**

مطار	*maṭā́r* airport	طائرة	*ṭā'ira* aeroplane *W16*
وطني	*wáṭanī* national	وطن	*wáṭan* home country
خطّ	*khaṭṭ* line	شرطة	*shúrṭa* police
إيطاليا	*'ītā́liya* Italy	بريطانيا	*barītā́niya* Britain
خطر			*kháṭar* danger, *kháṭir* dangerous
تنظيم			*tanẓī́m* organisation (the activity)
منظّمة			*munáẓẓama* organisation (the body)

Open *S35.wav*. **Read, listen and repeat**.

Exercise 1 Read the following signs:

(a) 

(b) 

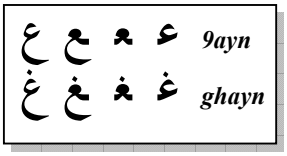
(c) 

Exercise 2 Fill in the missing letter:

(a) إ..تاج (b) منـ..مة (c) و..ني (d) ابتـ..ائي (e) انتـ..اب

The answers to these Exercises follow in paragraph 4.

3



Here comes probably the most difficult sound in the Arabic language. It is the sound of the letter ع *9ayn*, which we transcribe with *9*, since no letter in our own alphabet comes anywhere near its sound. Say to yourself the name 'Maggie'. Keep repeating it, but as you do, try to stop making contact in your throat for the -gg- in the middle, i.e. let the middle consonant become more and more vague until it is no more than a gulp. You are now probably saying something like *má9ī* 'with me'. Now do it again, but get to the target sound faster. Say it again and again until you can hit it first time, without Maggie's help. The correct sound of the word *má9ī* (for example) is a little like the name 'Marie' as pronounced in French, but without the contact of the French r.

The sound of the letter غ *ghayn*, which we transcribe as *gh*, is the 'hard' equivalent of *kh*, for which see paragraph 1 above. It sounds somewhat like the French r of 'Marie', but shorter.

ع and غ are joined letters. The two short forms are shallow, and the two full forms are deep with an anticlockwise downward swing like ج . The different forms are used as follows:

- ع and غ are written at the beginning of a word, or in the middle of a word after a *disjoined* letter,
- ـعـ and ـغـ are written in the middle of a word after a *joined* letter,
- ـع and ـغ are written at the end of a word after a *joined* letter,
- ع and غ are written at the end of a word after a *disjoined* letter, or when isolated.

Or we can put it more simply: the 'solid' forms stand after a joined letter, and the 'open' forms stand everywhere else. Note also that the isolated form of the letters (the last form listed above) stands somewhat higher than the other forms.

Write several of each:



Open *W17.pps* for the handwriting of عامّ *9āmm*,
and *W18.pps* for the handwriting of مشغول *mashghūl*, both words listed below.
Now **read and write:**

سعر	*si9r* price	عامّ	*9āmm* general, public *W17*
مطعم	*máṭ9am* restaurant	صناعة	*ṣinấ9a* industry
معلّم	*mu9állim* teacher	أسبوع	*'usbū́9* week
شارع	*shấri9* street	اجتماع	*ijtimấ9* meeting
غربي	*ghárbī* western	غرب	*gharb* west
مشغول	*mashghūl* busy *W18*	مبلغ	*máblagh* sum, amount

Open *S36.wav*. **Read, listen and repeat**.

Don't confuse the initial written form of *9ayn* ع with *hámza* ء, which it resembles in shape. Each has a different sound (see 3/1), and *9ayn* is a joined letter, whereas *hámza* is never joined to anything. Distinguish also medial *9ayn* (written clockwise) from medial *mīm* (anticlockwise, 2/2).

Stress

4 So far we have marked the stress (see 1/4) with an accent. But Arabic stress is almost entirely regular, and we can learn and apply simple rules:

– The stress falls on the last so-called 'heavy' syllable if there is one. A heavy syllable is one with:

- **either** a long vowel (*ā, ī, ū*) or vowel-combination (*ay, ow*) followed by a consonant: *bināyā́t, marī́ḍ, 'usbū́9, bintáyn, 9ā́mma.*
- **or** a short vowel (*a, i, u*) followed by two consonants* or a doubled consonant: *máblagh, mumáththil.*

  * Remember that the transcriptions *th, dh, sh, kh, gh* represent single consonants in Arabic.

– If there is no heavy syllable in the word, the first syllable is stressed: *'ấna.*

One important type of word, which we learn later, is irregularly stressed. We shall continue to mark the stress accent on such words; also on words like *lī́biya,* for clarity. For the great majority of words, regularly stressed, we shall mark the accent in the lessons only where necessary.

The following elements are not stressed, and have no influence on the stress of the word:

– the article *al-, at-, an-* etc.
– any vowel, long or short, or any vowel-combination, ending a word, i.e. with no following consonant. Remember that *hámza* is a consonant, so that in a word like *ibtidấ'* the final syllable counts as heavy, and is therefore stressed.

Stress rule: The stress falls on the last heavy syllable of the word. If the word has no heavy syllable, the first syllable of the word is stressed. The article is never stressed.

Exercise 3 Read the signs:

(a) 

(b) 

(c) 

(d) 

Exercise 4 Mark the (regular) stress with an accent on these new words in transcription:

(a) *mashghūlīn* (b) *maḥaṭṭa* (c) *intikhābāt* (d) *tarbiya*

Exercise 5 Complete the word with the right form of *9ayn* or of *ghayn*:

(a) ...اجتما (b) مشـ..ول (c) مـ..لّمة (d) مبل... (e) عا..مّ

Exercise 6 Write in Arabic (putting any relatives or other adjectives in the m. form), and pronounce your answers, taking care with the stress:

(a) the meeting (b) daily (c) monthly (d) south (e) the school (f) arrival (g) the week (h) Italian (j) administrative (k) electoral

The answers to these Exercises are given immediately below.

Answers to exercises

1 (a) *bāṣ* BUS (b) *kháṭar* DANGER (c) *'íbil* CAMELS*

2 (a) إنتاج (b) منظّمة (c) وطني (d) ابتدائي (e) انتخاب

3 (a) *shimā́l* (c) *mádkhal* (b) *mákhraj* (d) *shurṭa*

4 (a) *mashghūlī́n* (b) *maḥáṭṭa* (c) *intikhābā́t* (d) *tárbiya*

5 (a) اجتماع (b) مشغول (c) معلّمة (d) مبلغ (e) عامّ

6 (a) الاجتماع *al-ijtimā́9* (b) يومي *yówmī* (c) شهري *sháhrī* (d) جنوب *janū́b* (d) المدرسة *al-mádrasa* (e) وصول *wuṣū́l* (g) الأسبوع *al-'usbū́9* (h) إيطالي *'iṭā́lī* (j) إداري *'idā́rī* (k) انتخابي *intikhā́bī*

* This picturesque desert-road warning should be taken seriously, especially if visibility is poor. In a collision, animals smaller than the camel fall under the car. But the camel is hit below his knees, with possibly appalling consequences for both beast and man. The stricken and struggling animal, his already considerable weight increased by the impact, comes crashing through the car roof.

The camel deserves respect. He is silent and can be swift. And the desert is his. We are no more than visitors on sufferance.

Tests

1 Read aloud and translate these words:

(a) الشيء (b) مسؤولة (c) السعر (d) مدخل (e) الانتخاب

2 Arrange these in order of size, biggest first. Read aloud and translate your answer:

(a) اليوم (b) السنة (c) الأسبوع (d) الشهر

3 Make a relative, in the indefinite masculine form, from each noun. Give its English equivalent:

(a) الصناعة (b) ابتداء (c) الأسبوع (d) إيطاليا (e) بريطانيا

4 Write:

(a) *at-tá'sīs* (b) *nihā́'ī* (c) *mas'ū́la* (d) *al-mákhraj* (e) *ad-dukhū́l*

*