

ARABIC PHONOLOGY FROM WIKIPEDIA

The Arabic alphabet						
خ	ح	ج	ث	ت	ب	ا
ص	ش	س	ز	ر	ذ	د
ق	ف	غ	ع	ظ	ط	ظ
ي	و	هـ	ن	م	ل	ك
History · Transliteration Diacritics · <i>hamza</i> ء Numerals · Numeration						

The [Arabic language](#) has a standard pronunciation, which is basically the one used to recite the [Qur'an](#). The same pronunciation is used in newscasts, discourses and formal actuations of all types. As in other widely used languages, [dialects](#) of Arabic pronounce some letters differently.

Standard Arabic (or Quranic Arabic) has 28 [consonant](#) sounds, represented by the 28 letters of the [Arabic alphabet](#), and three [vowel](#) sounds. Both consonants and vowels may be short or long; long consonants are marked with the [shadda](#) (sign of [gemination](#), literally "sign of emphasis" in Arabic), whereas long vowels are marked with the letters ^ا (*alif*), ^ي (*yā*) or ^و (*wāw*) quiescent (then called *matres lectionis* or "mothers of reading").

VOWELS AND DIPHTHONGS

There are three short vowels, three long vowels and two diphthongs (formed by a combination of short *a* with the semivowels *y* and *w*).

- Short *a* is pronounced like *e* in English *bed* but with the tongue towards the center of the mouth: [IPA](#) [æ]. However, in an environment of velarised or laryngeal (so called "emphatic") consonants, it is pronounced like a short version of the first vowel in English *father*: IPA [ɑ].
- Short *i* is pronounced like *i* in English *sit*: IPA [i].
- Short *u* is pronounced like *u* in English *put*: IPA [ʊ].
- Long *a* (ā) is pronounced like a long version of the vowel in English *man*: IPA [æː]. In proximity to velarised consonants, as well as after *r*, it is pronounced like the first vowel in English *father*: IPA [ɑː].
- Long *i* (ī) is pronounced like *ee* in English *need*: IPA [iː].
- Long *u* (ū) is pronounced like *uh* in German *Stuhl*: IPA [uː]. (Note: *oo* in English *tool* is different - it is centralised)
- The diphthong *ai* (equivalently *ay*) is pronounced as a combination of the short *a* and short *i*: [ɛi]. In a velarised environment it is pronounced with a back first element: IPA [ɑɪ].
- The diphthong *au* (equivalently *aw*) is pronounced as a combination of the short *a* and short *u*: [ɛʊ]. Near velarised consonants it is pronounced with a back first element: IPA [ɑʊ].

CONSONANTS

The 28 consonant sounds of Arabic are the following: (Letters left without a comment are pronounced more or less like in English.)

Standard Arabic consonant phonemes											
		<u>Bilabial</u>	<u>Inter-dental</u>	<u>Dental (incl. alveolar)</u>		<u>Post-alveolar</u>	<u>Palatal</u>	<u>Velar</u>	<u>Uvular</u>	<u>Pharyngeal</u>	<u>Glottal</u>
				plain	emphatic						
<u>Stop</u>	<u>voiceless</u>			t	t ^ʕ			k	q		ʔ
	<u>voiced</u>	b		ḏ	ḏ ^ʕ	dʒ ¹		g ¹			
<u>Fricative</u>	<u>voiceless</u>	f	θ	s	s ^ʕ	ʃ		x		ħ	h
	<u>voiced</u>		ð	z	z ^ʕ			ɣ		ʕ	
<u>Nasal</u>		m		n							
<u>Lateral</u>				l							
<u>Trill</u>				r							
<u>Approximant</u>		w					j				

- [dʒ] is pronounced as [g] by some speakers. This is especially characteristic of the Egyptian and southern Yemeni dialects. In many parts of North Africa and in the Levant, it is pronounced as [ʒ], and in certain regions of Oman it is pronounced as [j].

To pronounce the four emphatics, make your tongue broader and cover the side teeth with it, and lower the back of the tongue. The four corresponding "unemphatics" (s, d, t, dh) are pronounced with a narrow tongue and with the back of the tongue raised. You also lower the back of the tongue to pronounce q and r.

Long consonants are pronounced exactly like short consonants, but last longer. Arabs call them "mushaddadah" i.e. "strengthened", but they are not pronounced any stronger, just held longer.