






Arabic Consonants

Arabic Character	Name of the Letter	Pronunciation	Sounds Like ...	Example	
ب	baa' (b)	bah	Sounds like the "b" in "boy"	baab (bahb; door)	
ت	taa' (t)	tah	Sounds like the "t" in "table"	Tamr (dates)	
ث	thaa' (th)	thah	Sounds like the "th" in "think"	thalaatha (thah-lah- thah; three)	
ن	nuun (n)	noon	Sounds like the "n" in "no"	namlah (ant)	
ي	yaa' (y)	yaah	Sounds like the "y" in "yes"	yad (hand)	

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ا	'alif ('a)	ah-leef	Sounds like the "a" in "apple"	'ab (<i>ah-b</i> ; father)
د	daal (d)	dahl	Sounds like the "d" in dog	daar (<i>dah-r</i> ; house)
ذ	dhaal (dh)	dhahl	Sounds like the "th" in "those"	dhahab (<i>thah-hab</i> ; gold)
ر	raa' (r)	rah	Like the Spanish "r," rolled really fast	rajul (<i>rah-jool</i> ; man)
ز	zaay (z)	zay	Sounds like the "z" in "zebra"	zahra (flower)
و	waaw (w)	wahw	Sounds like the "w" in "winner"	wardah (rose)



Arabic Character	Name of the Letter	Pronunciation	Sounds Like ...	Example
ج	jiim (j)	jeem	Sounds like the "j" in "measure"	jamal (camel)
ح	Haa' (H)	hah	No equivalent in English; imagine the sound you make when you want to blow on your reading glasses to clean them; that soft, raspy noise that comes out is the letter Haa'.	habl (rope)
خ	khaa' (kh)	khah	'ch' as in German 'Bach'	kharoof (sheep)
م	miim (m)	meem	Sounds like the "m" in "Mary"	maktab (desk)
هـ	haa' (h)	haah	Created by exhaling heavily; very different from the Haa' earlier in the list. (Think of yourself as a marathon runner who's just finished a long race and is breathing heavily through the lungs to replenish your oxygen)	hadha (this)



Arabic Character	Name of the Letter	Pronunciation	Sounds Like . . .	Example
س	siin (s)	seen	Sounds like the "s" in "snake"	samak (<i>sah-mahk</i> ; fish)
ش	shiin (sh)	sheen	Sounds like the "sh" in "sheep"	shams (<i>shah-mes</i> ; sun)
ص	Saad (S)	sahd	A very deep "s" sound you can make if you open your mouth really wide and lower your jaw	Sadiiq (<i>sah-deek</i> ; friend)
ض	Daad (D)	dahd	A very deep "d" sound; the exact same sound as a Saad except that you use a "d" instead of an "s"	dharaba (hit)



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ف	faa' (f)	fah	Sounds like the "f" in "Frank"	farasha (butterfly)
ق	qaaf (q)	qahf	Similar to the letter "k," but produced much farther at the back of the throat; you should feel airflow being constricted at the back of your throat	qahwa (kah-wah; coffee)
ك	kaaf (k)	kahf	Sounds like the "k" in "keeper"	kalb (dog)
ل	laam (l)	lahm	Sounds like the "l" in "llama"	laymoon (lemon)



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ط	Taa' (T)	tah	A deep "t" sound; start off by saying a regular "t" and then lower your mouth to make it rounder	Tabiib (<i>tah-beeb</i> ; doctor)
ظ	DHaa' (DH)	dhah	Take the "th" as in "those" and draw it to the back of your throat	DHahr (<i>dha-her</i> ; back)
ع	'ayn (')	ayen	No equivalent in any of the Romance languages; produced at the very back of the throat. Breathe heavily and consistently through your esophagus and then intermittently choke off the airflow so that you create a staccato noise	ayen (eye)
غ	ghayn (gh)	ghayen	Sounds like the French "r" in "rendezvous"; it's created at the back of the throat	ghada'a (lunch)

