ARABIC AND ENGLISH SENTENCE PATTERNS
A COMPARATIVE GUIDE

CLIFF BREEDLOVE
PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY
## CONTENTS

1. **INTRODUCTION** ................................................................. 3

2. **DEFINITIONS AND TYPES OF VERBS** ............................. 5
   1.1 **ENGLISH** ................................................................. 5
   1.2 **ARABIC** ................................................................. 6

3. **TENSE AND TIME REFERENCE: ENGLISH AND ARABIC**  ...... 6

4. **TENSE AND ASPECT** .......................................................... 7
   3.1 **ENGLISH** ................................................................. 7
   3.2 **ARABIC** ................................................................. 11

5. **MOOD AND MODALITY: ENGLISH AND ARABIC** ............... 14
   4.1 **MODALS, MODALITY, AND MOOD** ............................ 15
      4.1.1 **ENGLISH** .......................................................... 15
      4.1.2 **ARABIC** .......................................................... 16

6. **CHARTS** .............................................................................. 19
   5.1 **FORMAT AND CONTENT** ............................................... 19
   5.2 **TIME REFERENCE: PAST** ............................................... 23
   5.3 **TIME REFERENCE: PRESENT** ......................................... 33
   5.4 **TIME REFERENCE: FUTURE** ........................................... 41

7. **SENTENCE TYPES** ............................................................ 55
   6.1 **ENGLISH** ................................................................. 55
   6.2 **ARABIC** ................................................................. 55

8. **NOTES** .............................................................................. 59

9. **BIBLIOGRAPHY** ............................................................... 68
INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE BOOK

This text explores verb time, tense, aspect, and mood through comparison of Arabic and English sentence patterns. It includes examples of the Arabic patterns from classical and popular sources so that Arabic students can learn by explanation and example how to formulate cohesive and grammatically correct sentence structure.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following scholars reviewed this guide and provided advice and practical suggestions for improvement. Many thanks for your care and expertise. I am indebted to you for your time, effort, and consideration!

- DR. DIRGHAM SBAIT: PROFESSOR OF ARABIC/SEMITIC LANGUAGES, LITERATURES, & FOLKLORE, PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY
  Your generosity, patience, and encyclopedic knowledge of Arabic made this project a reality.

- DR. JENNIFER MITTELSTAEDT: PROFESSOR OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS, PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY
  Your thorough comprehension of English morphology and syntax proved invaluable toward clarifying the comparative nature of the text.

- DR. YASMEEN HANOOSH, PROFESSOR OF ARABIC STUDIES, PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY
  Your knowledge of Arabic and insightful formatting suggestions greatly enhanced the accuracy and readability of the text.

- LINA GOMA’A, SENIOR ARABIC INSTRUCTOR, PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY
  The examples you provided from your extensive knowledge of Arabic literature and media made the charts far more practical and beneficial.

- ANN GAYLIA O’BARR, WRITER, http://anngayliaobarr.net/
  Your literary experience and insightful suggestions are greatly appreciated.
**PURPOSE**

In this guide are definitions, discussions, and charts displaying the form, function, and meaning of English and Arabic verbs in context as a reference for use with Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) textbooks. English is used as a starting point to establish a familiar foundation. Use of this reference will improve your reading and writing skills by enabling you better to understand the sentence structure of both languages especially with regard to verb time, tense, aspect, mood, and transitive/intransitive structures.

While this guide is intended mainly for English-speaking students studying Arabic, the charts also provide a quick reference of English sentence patterns for Arabic speakers.
1.1 **English**

Verbs are words that denote an action, event, process, or state of being, with reference to a subject. Functionally, there are two types: Auxiliary (helping) and Lexical.

Auxiliary verbs have grammatical meaning related to their function but, as their name implies, do not stand on their own. The primary (non-modal) auxiliaries are *do, have,* and *be.* Like lexical verbs, these inflect (change their form) to varying degrees for tense, person, number, and mood. The modal auxiliaries are words such as *could, must, will,* and *used to.* The inflection of such verbs is extremely limited.

All other verbs are lexical; they have complete meaning and thus can stand on their own or be used with auxiliaries.

The various forms of *have, do,* and *be* can be primary auxiliaries or lexical:

- **As primary auxiliary verbs:**
  “She *has* watched / She *does* watch / She *is* watching that film.”

- **As lexical verbs:**
  “She *has* that film; She *does* the acting; She *is* the star.”
1.2 ARABIC

Arabic verbs share the above definition but differ according to type. The two most common primary auxiliaries are َكَانَ and َلَ ﯿْ ﻲَ. Unlike English, however, only some of the Arabic primary auxiliaries fully inflect.

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) has no modal auxiliaries (see p. 18). Consequently, almost all Arabic verbs are lexical, including َكَانَ and َلَ ﯿْ ﻲَ when they function as main verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TENSE AND ASPECT</th>
<th>MOOD AND MODALITY</th>
<th>CHARTS</th>
<th>SENTENCE TYPES</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2 TENSE AND TIME REFERENCE: ENGLISH AND ARABIC

Time, when it relates to language, is semantic. When we speak or write, we mean (refer to) past, present, or future. Tense is not consistently semantic; it is related to the form of the verb rather than to its meaning. Consider the following sentences:

The meeting will begin (modal auxiliary and infinitive/uninflected verb) in two hours.

\( \text{الاجتماع} \space \text{بُدَءَ ساعٍتَينَ} \)

The meeting begins (present tense verb) in two hours.

\( \text{يَبِدَءُ} \space \text{الاجتماع} \space \text{بُدَءَ ساعٍتَينَ} \)

The meeting is beginning (present tense primary auxiliary and present participle) in two hours.

\( \text{الاجتماع} \space \text{بَدِئٍ} \space \text{بُدَءَ ساعٍتَينَ} \)

If the meeting began (past tense verb) in two hours, I would be late.

\( \text{إِذَا بَدَأَ} \space \text{الاجتماع} \space \text{بُدَءَ ساعٍتَينَ فَسُكَأَ مَتَأَخِّرًا} \)

All of these sentences refer to future time, yet none uses a future verb form because there are no future tense verb forms in English or Arabic. Thus, the
tense of the verb does not always determine the time of the sentence. Verb tense functions with adverbs of time and other elements to contribute to context,\textsuperscript{6} the sole consistent determiner of sentence time.

### 3 TENSE AND ASPECT

#### 3.1 ENGLISH

Traditionally, English has been characterized as having 12 tenses: simple past/present/future, past/present/future perfect, past/present/future progressive, and past/present/future perfect progressive. However, only past and present refer to tense. Perfect and progressive are also forms of the verb but refer to aspect rather than tense. Although the term compound tenses is sometimes applied to the combination of tense and aspect (such as past perfect or present progressive), a less ambiguous term for these 12 forms is conjugations (variations in form according to grammatical categories such as tense, person, and number).

Aspect generally refers to the manner in which an action or event is perceived or experienced, usually as completed\textsuperscript{7} (perfect/perfective) or in progress\textsuperscript{8} (progressive/continuous). Semantically, English aspect refers to the relationship of an event (E) to a point of reference (R).\textsuperscript{9} An event, action, or process (and, under certain conditions, state) is perceived as a completed unit (perfect aspect) or an uncompleted/ongoing unit (progressive aspect) before, during, or after a point (period of reference) in the past, present, or future. Both event and reference are regarded from the vantage point of the present (P). The reference provides a backdrop against which to view more clearly the event from the present time, just as a stage background helps highlight the players for the audience.
Since we are only figuratively watching the event, we can (at least in the past and future perfect and progressive) use adverbials to change its position relative to the reference, as in the examples below. The perfect is marked by a form of the primary auxiliary verb *have* followed by a past participle, and the progressive by a form of the primary auxiliary verb *be* followed by a present participle. In both structures, the auxiliary verb is marked for tense. In many structures referring to future time, the modal auxiliary *will* or *shall* is included before the primary auxiliary. In such cases, the primary auxiliary is no longer marked for tense, as all modals are consistently followed by the infinitive form of the verb, which does not show tense (thus its designation as infinitive, or non-finite). The auxiliary and participle (*had read, was reading, etc.*.) always indicate the event (E). In the examples, (E) and (R) verbs are color designated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAST</th>
<th>PERFECT (Charts 2, 4):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>past</td>
<td>present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I **had read** the book before the movie **came out**.¹²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>past</th>
<th>present</th>
<th>future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. I **had read** the book when the movie **came out**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>past</th>
<th>present</th>
<th>future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R/E/R</td>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. I **had read** the book during the movie.
4. I **had read** the book after the movie **came out**.

**PROGRESSIVE (Charts 3, 4):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>past</th>
<th>present</th>
<th>future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E / R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I **was reading** the book before the movie **came out**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>past</th>
<th>present</th>
<th>future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E / R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. I **was reading** the book when the movie **came out**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>past</th>
<th>present</th>
<th>future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R / E / R</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. I **was reading** the book during the movie.

**FUTURE**

**PERFECT (Charts 13, 15):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>past</th>
<th>present</th>
<th>future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>E R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I **will have read** the book before the movie **comes out**.

**PROGRESSIVE (Charts 14, 15):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>past</th>
<th>present</th>
<th>future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I **will be reading** the book before the movie **comes out**.
The other future time references can be constructed using the same pattern, varying the relative placement of E and R.

Thus, English *tense* refers to past- and present-tense forms, and *aspect* to forms that indicate either complete or ongoing action. Both function within the time set by the context. Aspect, though, is a more consistent determiner of the “shape” or “cycle” of time (inception, progression, completion, etc.) than tense is of its location in the past, present, or future. That is, aspect more consistently indicates meaning. Whereas a past- or present-tense verb does not always indicate equivalent time, a perfect- or progressive-aspect verb nearly always indicates either completed or ongoing action.

The present perfect and progressive are more complex, primarily because R and P coincide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| PERFECT (Charts 7, 9):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>past</th>
<th>present</th>
<th>future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E----------------R/P-----------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have read the book.

| PROGRESSIVE (Charts 8, 9):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>past</th>
<th>present</th>
<th>future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>---------------E/R/P---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I am reading the book.

If R and P are coincident, we are now viewing the event on its own, almost as if no reference exists. This accounts for the occasionally ongoing appearance of the present perfect action. As in the following sentences, the event can extend to and include the present.
The coincidence of R and P can make the aspect seem ambiguous. The twenty years have been completed, but the action could continue, giving the present perfect a completed/uncompleted (ongoing) sense on occasion.

As in the following sentence, this is especially true with stative verbs, which denote “states (mental and physical), relations, and attributes,” such as know, believe, resemble, be hungry, own.14

This same completed/ongoing sense is true of the perfect progressive aspect. In the sentence “Tom had been reading the book,” Tom had probably ceased reading at the moment referred to, but we do not know for how long. He might have begun reading again.15

3.2 Arabic
Arabic is generally characterized as having two basic tenses, perfect ( الماضي) and imperfect (الحاضر).16 These terms, however, relate more directly to aspect than to tense. As with English, conjugation or form is a clearer designation. We will continue to use perfect and imperfect for consistency with Arabic textbooks, with the following qualifications.

The Arabic perfect (فعل pattern) typically denotes a completed (finished) action, event, process, or state; the imperfect (فعل pattern) an action which is ongoing (unfinished) at some point or during some interval. These two forms, though,
can express the English simple\textsuperscript{17}, perfect, or progressive, depending on context, so aspect indication is only one of their functions. For example, the perfect 
\begin{equation*}
\text{درس}\\
\end{equation*}
is usually translated “he studied,” but “he has studied” is acceptable in certain contexts. Thus, both English simple past tense and present tense perfect aspect can be expressed by the Arabic perfect form. We cannot, then, equate the Arabic perfect with the English perfect, specifically because the Arabic perfect does not consistently have the reference that in English acts as background information for the event. MSA does have a structure that closely parallels the English perfect: a perfect verb is used with the particle \begin{equation*}
\text{قد}\\
\end{equation*}, adding the primary auxiliary \begin{equation*}
\text{كان}\\
\end{equation*} for past or \begin{equation*}
\text{كون}\\
\end{equation*} for future time (the latter most often preceded by the particle \begin{equation*}
\text{س} \\
\text{و}\\
\text{ف}
\end{equation*}).\textsuperscript{18}

\begin{center}

\textbf{The student had studied.} \hspace{1cm} \\
\text{كان الطالب قد درس.}
\end{center}

\begin{center}

\textbf{The student has studied.} \hspace{1cm} \\
\text{درس الطالب.}
\end{center}

\begin{center}

\textbf{The student will have studied.} \hspace{1cm} \\
\text{سكيكون الطالب قد درس.} \quad \text{or} \quad \text{سكيكون الطالب سويف يكون.} \textsuperscript{19}
\end{center}

Similarly, the imperfect \begin{equation*}
\text{يدرس}\\
\end{equation*} is usually translated “he studies,” but “he is studying” is also acceptable.\textsuperscript{20} In this case, both English simple present tense and present tense progressive aspect are expressed by the Arabic imperfect form. As Arabic uses the term \textit{imperfect} and English \textit{progressive}, there is less confusion here. Again, MSA has another structure that parallels the English progressive form. The active participle\textsuperscript{21} can be used, again adding the appropriate form of \begin{equation*}
\text{كان}\\
\end{equation*} for time distinction.

\begin{center}

\textbf{The student was returning from Beirut.} \hspace{1cm} \\
\text{كان الطالب راجعا من بيروت.}
\end{center}
The student is returning from Beirut.

The student will be returning.

Thus, Arabic and English express perfect and progressive aspect in different ways at times; the word *perfect* does not always have the same meaning in the two languages. Despite other differences, the perfect aspect in both languages consistently refers to completed events. English begins with two tenses, past and present, and adds other verb forms to show changes in aspect. Arabic begins with the same two tenses but does not generally need to add other verb forms to indicate aspectual variation.

We cannot, however, refer to the Arabic perfect and imperfect as aspect forms alone; there are also tense/time distinctions, as in the following sentences.

"So Peace is on me the day I was born [perfect passive], the day that I die [imperfect active], and the day that I shall be raised up [imperfect passive] to life (again)." *The Qur'an*: 19:33 (emphasis mine)

Here, the perfect has past meaning, and both imperfects have future meaning. The perfect can have future meaning as well:

If only I [could] get a job!

I wish he [would] call me!

This is the tense/time dissonance discussed earlier. When we use the terms *perfect* and *imperfect* for Arabic verbs, we are referring to relative tense/aspect forms, and context is still the sole consistent determiner of time reference. The manner in which Arabic expresses English perfect and progressive aspect is shown in the charts.
4  MOOD AND MODALITY: ENGLISH AND ARABIC

Mood, like tense and aspect, refers primarily to a form of the verb. Its semantic counterpart is modality, which refers to the conditionality of a clause, sentence, or other contextual unit: whether the speaker or writer is indicating such conditions as possibility, probability, certainty, advisability, necessity, desirability, permissibility, or obligation. Mood refers to verb forms such as indicative (simple statements/questions), subjunctive (wishes, suggestions, some conditions, etc.), imperative (commands), and jussive (some negative commands and past events). Mood and modality differ in roughly the same way that tense differs from time reference and aspect differs from time shape or cycle: there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the two.

MODALITY: DESIRABILITY

May your will be done. (subjunctive mood)

آرامَ (حالة النصب: أنْ يَنامُ. (حالة النص: أنْ يَنامُ)

He wanted (indicative mood) to sleep (infinitive form [not mood]).

أرادَ (حالة الرفع: أنْ يَنامُ. (حالة النص: أنْ يَنامُ)

MODALITY: OBLIGATION

Let the criminal be brought forward. (subjunctive mood)

فلِيَخْصِرَ المَجْرِمَ إلى الأمام. (حالة الحُذُوم: إلى الأمام)

Have him close the door. (subjunctive mood)

ليُسْكَرَ البابّ.* (حالة الحُذُوم: البابّ)

Comparing mood and modality in the sentences above confirms that context determines modality as it does time reference and cycle. Since modality is not
directly linked to any particular form, its various conditions can be expressed in numerous ways.

**4.1 MODALS, MODALITY, AND MOOD**

**4.1.1 ENGLISH**

Modal auxiliary verbs (*could, should, would, might, may, must*, etc.) are the most common means of expressing modality in English. Modals are not grammatically marked for specific moods but assist the reader or listener in discovering such elements as the opinion, intention, or feeling of the writer or speaker.

Some modals are marked for tense (*could*: past, *can*: present), but these markings are such inconsistent indicators of time reference that distinguishing between past- and present-tense modals is rarely worthwhile. One formal time reference does exist, incorrectly referred to in many textbooks as the *present perfect* or *modal perfect*. This form, a modal followed by *have* and a past participle, is a consistent indicator of past time but does not include perfect aspect. The present perfect, in a sentence such as “Martha has studied the lesson,” has current relevance (viewing the action from the vantage point of the present). The modal past, however, in a sentence such as “Martha could have studied the lesson,” refers to a specific point in the past when she had the opportunity and probably did not take it; the current relevance of the perfect aspect is reduced or absent. Modals in past contexts indicate simple past time and are therefore included in the charts under the *past tense/past time* reference rather than under *past tense/perfect aspect/past time*.

Modality is also expressed by past tense verbs, as in “If he studied, he would succeed,” the few remaining subjunctive mood forms, as in “So be it!”, and certain adverbials, such as *perhaps*. The predominance of modals over these
forms has obscured the standard mood forms, as the verbs that follow modals are uninflected; they do not show mood.\textsuperscript{32}

English is generally characterized as having three primary moods: indicative, subjunctive, and imperative (the infinitive and emphatic are sometimes included\textsuperscript{33}). Except for the imperative (see below), these are mostly formal categories but are defined semantically, reminding us that the form/meaning distinction is here neither exact nor absolute.

The indicative refers to what is real or true, expressing everyday fact or routine using finite verbs (in this case, past or present forms), as in “Tom studies every day.” It is also used for “real” conditions, situations which the writer or speaker considers possible or probable, such as “If he sits here, we can talk.”

The subjunctive does not make specific truth claims but addresses hypothetical situations, such as “If I were president . . . ,” and situations in which action is advisable, such as “She suggested that he sit,” using uninflected verb forms.\textsuperscript{34} It is also used for “unreal” conditions, situations considered unlikely, such as “If you studied, you would succeed.”

The imperative is the command form, using infinitive verbs to require action, as in “Study!” This is the single mood form in English with a one-to-one correspondence with modality: imperative verbs consistently indicate the modality of obligation, or command.

\textbf{4.1.2 Arabic}

Unlike English verbs, all Arabic verbs in vowelled texts are marked for mood; there is no infinitive, or unmarked, form. The four primary moods are the indicative (\textit{ﻊﻓْ اﻟﺮﱠ}), subjunctive (\textit{ﺐﺼْ اﻟﻨﱠ}), jussive (\textit{مﺰْ اﻟﺠَ}), and imperative (\textit{ﺮﻣْ اﻷَ}). The indicative is the only finite form (showing tense distinctions) and is the template for the other mood forms. The subjunctive, jussive, and imperative
moods are derived from the present-tense indicative but are not themselves marked for tense and do not locate the action in time. The time reference of these moods depends on indicative verbs and other sentence elements. Beginning with the indicative تَفْعَلُ (you [masc. sing.] do, make), vowel/affix changes signaling different moods are readily recognizable in the subjunctive تَفْعَلَ, jussive تَفْعَلْ, and imperative إِﻓْعَلْ. Other changes occur in order to agree with the noun to which the verb refers. While English mood forms are most often defined semantically (narrowing the gap between mood and modality), Arabic mood forms are usually defined formally, with little reference to meaning. This is what we could expect, as the form of the Arabic verb is easy to describe. This concentration on form, though, widens the gap between mood and modality. With the exception of the imperative, which, as in English, consistently indicates the modality of obligation, Arabic mood forms have even less correspondence with modality than do English forms.

The Arabic and English indicative are similar in meaning.

She studies/is studying.

The Arabic imperative also carries the same semantic weight as the English.

Study! (2nd Person, Singular, Feminine: أَدْرُسِيّ)

The Arabic jussive has no English parallel; it is most commonly used in the following ways:

Past Negation / النفي الماضي

She did not study/has not studied. لَمْ تَدْرُسْ

Negative Imperative / النهي

Don’t study! لا تَدْرُسِيّ (2nd Person, Singular, Feminine: أَّنتَ)

Conditional Clauses / الشرط

No matter what the weather is (like), he goes out / is outside.
If you study, you (will) succeed. إنْ تَدْرُسْ تَنْجَحّ.

The Arabic subjunctive is quite different from its modern English counterpart and is perhaps best categorized with classical languages such as Ancient Greek and Latin, in which the subjunctive subordinates a verb in a dependent (subordinate) clause to a verb in an independent clause. Arabic subjunctive verbs nearly always follow this rule.

He stood (up) in order to see. قَامَ (لِ ، كَيْ ، لِكَيْ ، لَانْ ، حَتّى) يُشَاهِدَ.

As mentioned earlier (p. 6), Arabic does not use modal auxiliary verbs to express modality. Rather, forms such as the following are employed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Participle / اسم الفاعل</th>
<th>مُمْكِنٌ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjective / الصفة</td>
<td>ضروري</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed-Inflection Lexical Verb</td>
<td>الفعل الغير معرَب</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must</td>
<td>يَجِبُ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can, Could</td>
<td>يُمْكِنُ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun / اسم</td>
<td>ضرورة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessity</td>
<td>ضرورةَ (لا يُبْدَ) (as in)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must</td>
<td>يَجِبُ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particle / الأداة</td>
<td>سَوْفَ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will, Shall</td>
<td>اسم المفعول</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

36 ۳۶

37 Arabic subjunctive verbs nearly always follow this rule.

38 قَامَ (لِ ، كَيْ ، لِكَيْ ، لَانْ ، حَتّى) يُشَاهِدَ.

39 Arabic does not use modal auxiliary verbs to express modality.
The above forms are not directly marked for tense\(^{41}\) and resemble English modals in not consistently affecting time reference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TENSE AND TIME</th>
<th>TENSE AND ASPECT</th>
<th>MOOD AND MODALITY</th>
<th>SENTENCE TYPES</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. **CHARTS**

5.1 **FORMAT AND CONTENT**

The charts follow a four-sentence format based on the assertive quality of the verb phrase. The sentences in the first chart, for example, are:

1. The student **studied**. – positive assertive/declarative
2. The student **did not study**. – negative assertive
3. **Did** the student **study**? – positive non-assertive/interrogative
4. **Didn’t** the student **study**? – negative non-assertive\(^{42}\)

This format reveals the changes that occur when Arabic expresses the various English structures. As certain time/tense/mood combinations do not appear in all forms, some charts will lack one or more of the four structures. Included are: past, present, and future time; past and present tense; perfective and progressive aspect; indicative, subjunctive, and jussive mood. Most Arabic grammar texts include complete imperative mood forms, thus obviating the need to repeat them here.

**Examples.** Samples from classical and popular literature and media supplement the pattern sentences. The patterns in the charts are not exhaustive. Examples are provided as published, with or without internal voweling, and headlines are reproduced and translated without periods.

**Structural Elements.** Above each sentence is a list including parts of speech, tense, aspect, mood, and function\(^{43}\) adhering to the following...
abbreviations. Definitions are specific to the charts and are provided for only those terms not discussed elsewhere in the text.

\[
\begin{align*}
S &= \text{subject of main (independent) clause} \\
S_1 &= \text{subject of subordinate (dependent) clause} \\
\forall &= \text{verb or verb phrase} \\
\text{MOD} &= \text{modal auxiliary} \\
\text{PRED} &= \text{predicate: noun, adjective, or adverb phrase that follows a linking verb} \\
\text{PRI} &= \text{primary auxiliary} \\
\text{DO} &= \text{direct object: noun phrase that receives the action of a verb} \\
\text{IO} &= \text{indirect object: noun phrase that indicates the recipient of a direct object} \\
\text{OC} &= \text{object complement: word or phrase that describes or renames a direct object} \\
\text{ADJ} &= \text{adjective: modifies/describes a noun} \\
\text{ADV} &= \text{adverb/adverbial (incl. prepositional phrase): modifies/describes a verb, adjective, or other adverb} \\
\text{PREP} &= \text{preposition or prepositional phrase} \\
\text{PART} &= \text{participle} \\
\text{GER} &= \text{gerund: noun that refers to action} \\
\text{PTL} &= \text{particle (except interrogative): uninfl cted function word} \\
\text{INT} &= \text{interrogative particle} \\
\text{CON} &= \text{conjunction: connects sentence elements} \\
\text{NEG} &= \text{negation} \\
\text{DEM} &= \text{demonstrative: pronoun or adjective that determines location or other quality of a noun phrase} \\
\text{CLS} &= \text{clause marker or subordinator} \\
\text{pst} &= \text{past tense} \\
\text{pres} &= \text{present tense} \\
\text{prog} &= \text{progressive aspect} \\
\text{perf} &= \text{perfective aspect} \\
\text{inf} &= \text{infinitive} \\
\text{ind} &= \text{indicative mood} \\
\text{sub} &= \text{subjunctive mood} \\
\text{imp} &= \text{imperative mood} \\
\text{juss} &= \text{jussive mood} \\
\text{act} &= \text{active voice} \\
\text{pass} &= \text{passive voice} \\
\div &= \text{contraction}
\end{align*}
\]

Above the sentence “Didn’t the student study?” you will see \text{PRI pst + NEG – S – V inf}. This indicates a primary auxiliary (\textit{did}) in its past-tense form contracted with a negative adverb (\textit{not}), then the subject, then the verb in its infinitive form.
**Search Functions.** If you are using this guide via computer, the search function (Ctrl + F on PC, Command + F on MAC) will enable you to locate structural specifics (e.g., “will have been”) and view their Arabic equivalents.

**Underlining.** In order to highlight verb usage, underlining is limited to verbs (including primary and modal auxiliaries) and some participles. In the example sentences, negative adverbs are underlined in contractions such as *didn’t* and *hadn’t* to preserve the continuity of the word. In the list of structural elements, however, their NEG representation is not underlined. Particles also are underlined only when affixed to verbs, such as ﻓُنحنُ, ﻣَأَﻋْﻤَلُ, ﻓَﺤَزِنَ. When separate, such as ﻣَا, ﻗَد, ﻟَم, ﻟَن, ﻓَوِف, particles are not underlined in either the example sentences or the structural elements list.

**Overlap.** In order to avoid multiple structural labels, elements are identified by the form or function most relevant to comparison. In the sentence “The student will study at nine o’clock this evening,” *at nine o’clock* is labeled PREP due to the preposition *at* despite the phrase’s adverbial function, while *this evening* is labeled ADV. Similarly, particles such as ﻣَا, ﻟَن are labeled NEG rather than PTL to highlight their role of negation.
[This page intentionally blank]
Since auxiliaries (in this case, the past-tense *did*) are consistently followed by fixed verb forms (in this case, the infinitive *study*), the English tense designation applies only to the auxiliary, which determines the time frame of the sentence. The same principle applies to all charts that include auxiliaries.
1. "After the bull died, the lion began thinking about his former friend and became sad."

Younes, *Kalila wa Dimna* 85.

2. "It was not strange that the Egyptians worshiped pharaoh, but the strange thing is that pharaoh truly believed he was a god."

47

3. "Didn't you see, O' King for whose favors (generosity) people hope, the wonders of what I saw from the clouds?"

48

4. "Did you not know, or did you just not care?"
**TENSE : PAST**

**ASPECT : PERFECT**

1. **S – PRI pst – PART pst – DO**
   
   The student had **studied** the lesson.

2. **S – PRI pst – NEG – PART pst**
   
   The student had **not studied**.

3. **PRI pst – S – PART pst**
   
   Had the student **studied**?

4. **PRI pst + NEG – S – PART pst**
   
   Hadn’t the student **studied**?
1. "Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'"

The Bible: John 4:10.

2. "They would have calmed down a bit, and you would have lived with them happily [ever after] . . . . He would not have returned to you."

Younes, Kalila wa Dimna 48.

3. "On it was a wooden cover which had been broken, and no one had bothered to repair it."

Brinner 85.

4. "This person could have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Caesar."


The student was studying when he fell asleep.


كان الطالب يدرس عندما غلّب النوم عليه.

PART act – S – PRI pst

كان الطالب ذاهبًا.*

2. S – PRI pst – NEG – PART pre

The student was not studying.

V pre ind – S – PRI pst – NEG

ما كان الطالب يدرس.

3. PRI pst – S – PART pre

Was the student studying?

V pre ind – S – PRI pst – INT

هل كان الطالب يدرس؟

4. PRI pst + NEG – S – PART pre

Wasn’t the student studying?

V pre ind – S – PRI jus – NEG – INT

ألم يكن الطالب يدرس؟

See Chart 1. In this case, the past-tense auxiliary was determines time reference and is followed by the present participle studying to achieve progressive aspect.
EXAMPLES

1. "Moscow says that it [helicopter] was carrying humanitarian aid."

2. "They were treating us like slaves."

3. "She believed that she was participating in a televised prank."

4. "While the people were sleeping . . . a witch came to the city."

Koury, Reader 47.
   The student had been studying for three hours.
   قدّ كان الطالب يُدْرِسَ ثلاث ساعات.

   The student had not been studying.
   ما قدّ كان الطالب يُدْرِسَ.

   Had the student been studying?
   أَفْدَ كَانَ الطَّالِبُ يَدْرُسُ؟

4. PRI pst + NEG – S – PRI/PART pst – PART pre
   Hadn’t the student been studying?
   V pre ind – S – PRI jus – NEG – INT
   أَلَمْ يَكْنَ الطَّالِبُ يَدْرُسُ؟
1. “لأنه وإن كان قد صُلِبَ من ضعفٍ، لكنه حيٌّ بقوة الله.”

“For if He has indeed been crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God.”

2. “قد كانت الآمال معقدة”

“Hopes had been held high”

3. “قد كان بعض الفلاسفة في القرون الوسطى في أوروبا قد اتجه إلى هذا النوع من التفكير.”

“Some of the philosophers in the Middle Ages in Europe had been tending toward this sort of reflection.”

4. “قد كان يُخَيَّط ثوبًا على ضوء ضعيفٍ”

“He had been in his shop stitching a garment by a dim light.”

5. “إنه غريب، وقد وصلت الآن ببضاعتي.”

“I am a stranger and have just now arrived with my belongings.”

So, this student **studies** for three hours and barely **passes** the exam.


فيّدّرُسُ هذا الطَّالِبُ ثَلَاثَ سَاعَاتٍ وَلَا يَكَادُ يَنْجِحُ فِي الإِمْتِحَانِ.

This is the “historical” or “dramatic” present, the context determining its past time reference.
EXAMPLES

1. “After beginning to lead a normal life, Ahmed Zaki resumes his treatment in Paris”

2. “Abbas presents his meeting with Netanyahu and says he is working to curb the attacks”

3. “One of the angels comes forward and says . . .”

Abboud, Intermediate Arabic 103.
5.3 TIME REFERENCE: PRESENT

TIME : PRESENT
الزمن : المضارع المرفوع

ENGLISH

1. S – V pre ind – ADV
   The student studies diligently.
   تَدْرُسُ الطَّالِبَةُ باجْتِﮭاَدٍ

2. S – PRI pre – NEG – V inf
   The student does not study.
   لا تَدْرُسُ الطَّالِبَةُ

3. PRI pre – S – V inf
   Does the student study?
   ﺔَھِلْ تَدْرُسُ الطَّالِبَةُ؟

4. PRI pre + NEG – S – V inf
   Doesn’t the student study?
   أَﻼَ تَدْرُسُ الطَّالِبَةُ؟

ARABIC

1. S – V pre ind – ADV
   تَدْرُسُ الطَّالِبَةُ باجْتِﮭاَدٍ

2. S – V pre ind – NEG
   لا تَدْرُسُ الطَّالِبَةُ

   ﺔَھِلْ تَدْرُسُ الطَّالِبَةُ؟

   أَﻼَ تَدْرُسُ الطَّالِبَةُ؟
1. "The highest level of happiness is finding who really loves us, loves us for who we are."60

2. "Why do you have to marry a girl who reads?"61

3. "He never studies his lessons."
   Abboud, Intermediate Arabic 102.

4. "What do words accomplish in the face of tanks?"62
1. **S – PRI pre – PART pst**
   The student has studied.
   
   **S – V pst – PTL**
   قدَّ درَسَتِ الطَّالِبَةُ.

2. **S – PRI pre – NEG – PART pst**
   The student has not studied.
   
   **S – V jus – NEG**
   لَمْ تَدْرُسِ الطَّالِبَةُ.

3. **PRI pre – S – PART pst**
   Has the student studied?
   
   **S – V pst – PTL – INT**
   هَلْ قَدْ دَرَسَتِ الطَّالِبَةُ؟

4. **PRI pre + NEG – S – PART pst**
   Hasn’t the student studied?
   
   **S – V jus – NEG – INT**
   أَلْمَ تَدْرُسِ الطَّالِبَةُ؟
I have never understood why some people are lucky enough to be born with the chance that I had, to have this path in life.”

"Is it natural that my child has not started walking when he has turned 12 months old?"

"Now my soul has recovered and my concerns have disappeared."

"For there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."

"If I had been born here, I might have remained here, and perhaps, even today, would have a share in the life of the Galileans, and a share in the work of the church and the kingdom of Christ."

1. S – PRI pre – PART pre
The student is studying.

الطالب يدرس

TIME : PRESENT

The student is returning.

الطالب راجع

2. S – PRI pre – NEG – PART pre
The student is not studying.

لا يدرس الطالب

TIME : PRESENT

The student is not returning.

ليس الطالب رجعا

3. PRI pre – S – PART pre
Is the student studying?

هل يدرس الطالب

TIME : PRESENT

4. PRI pre + NEG – S – PART pre
Isn't the student studying?

ألا يدرس الطالب

TIME : PRESENT
1. «وقال المشاركون في تداول الهاشتاغ إن طلبة السعودية الذين يدرسون على حسابهم الخاص في الأردن يعانون من تكاليف دراسية ومعيشة وسكنية مرتفعة.»

“Participants in the hashtag circulation said that the Saudi students who are studying at their own expense in Jordan are suffering from high tuition, living, and housing expenses.”

2. «لمن تتركنا؟»

(«السارق البازى» للمقرى)

“To whom are you leaving us?”

Koury, Reader 44.

3. «يأمل ... أن يدخل الأخير التاريخ بصفته رمز التحول في علاج داء الزهايمر.»

“He is hoping ... that the latter will go down in history as a symbol of transformation in the treatment of Alzheimer’s disease.”
   The student has been studying for two years.
   
   The student has not been studying.
   
3. PRI pre – S – PRI/PART pst – PART pre
   Has the student been studying?
   
4. PRI pre + NEG – S – PRI/PART pst – PART pre
   Hasn’t the student been studying?
The construction \(قد يكون\) followed by a verb is somewhat uncommon. It is more usually followed by a nominal (including participles), a construction which carries the modality of uncertainty or possibility (as in the first example) rather than perfective aspect.

The paucity of exact literary equivalents for this pattern represents the tendency of Arabic writers to use less complex structures to achieve the present perfective. While such economy is the norm in the spoken language, it is something of an anomaly in written Arabic, which is well known for its periphrastic eloquence.

As the second and third examples illustrate, perfect progressive meaning is often understood from the context surrounding simple present verbs (especially cue words such as \(منذ\)).
5.4 Time Reference: Future

   If the student studied, she would succeed.⁶⁸

   If the student studied, would she succeed?

---

If the student studied, she would succeed.

If the student studied, would she succeed?
1. "لو قلت نعم لوجبني.")
النبي محمد (صلى الله عليه وسلم)
"If I said yes, it would be a must."69

2. "لو قامت ثورة على النظام الحالي من أين سنأتي بحاكم؟"
"If a revolution erupts against the current regime, where will we find a leader?"70

3. "لو كان الفقر رجلاً فقتله.")
علي بن طالب أو عمر بن الخطاب
"If poverty were a man, I would kill him."71
The student begins studying at nine o’clock this evening.

يَبْدَا الطَّالِبُ الْدِّرَاسَةَ في السَّاعَةِ التَّاسِعَةِ هذَا الَّمَسَاءِ.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>&quot;Ronaldo might be absent for the return match vs. Manchester City&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>&quot;Today begins orientation week events for new doctors&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>&quot;We are lost without you!&quot; [after you are gone]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Koury, Reader 44.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time: Future</th>
<th>Tense: Modal Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>العربية</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student will study tomorrow.</td>
<td>سؤف تدْرُسٌ الطَّالِبَةُ غَدًا.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student will not study.</td>
<td>لن تدْرُسَ الطَّالِبَةُ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. MOD pre – S – V inf</td>
<td>S – V pre ind + PTL – INT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the student study?</td>
<td>هل ستُدْرُسُ الطَّالِبَةَ؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. MOD pre + NEG – S – V inf</td>
<td>S – V sub – NEG – INT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Won’t the student study?</td>
<td>آلن تدْرُسُ الطَّالِبَةَ؟</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXAMPLES

1. "Your capital might not exceed 20 thousand dollars." "قد يكون رأسمالك لا يتجاوز 20 ألف دولار.

2. "You will not move forward."

3. "They will work exclusively toward achieving the shared goals related to the nuclear issue with Iran.

4. "Mommy, won't you play with me?"

"أمي ألم تلعب معي؟"
The student will have finished his studies by the end of the summer.

2. S – MOD pre – NEG – PRI inf – PART pst
The student will not have studied.

3. MOD pre – S – PRI inf – PART pst
Will the student have studied?

4. MOD pre + NEG – S – PRI inf – PART pst
Won’t the student have studied?
1. "The residents will not have emptied the streets."

"The residents will not have emptied the streets.""81

2. "Morocco will have lost 30 years in vain if it does not push the desert issue in this direction."

"Morocco will have lost 30 years in vain if it does not push the desert issue in this direction."82

3. "Will it be necessary for the accountant to have worked in accounting offices in order to become an auditor in any [other] firm?"

"Will it be necessary for the accountant to have worked in accounting offices in order to become an auditor in any [other] firm?"83

See Chart 9 note.
TENSE: MODAL FUTURE
ASPECT: PROGRESSIVE

1. S – MOD pre – PRI inf – PART pre
The student will be studying.

2. S – MOD pre – NEG – PRI inf – PART pre
The student will not be studying.

3. MOD pre – S – PRI inf – PART pre
Will the student be studying?

4. MOD pre + NEG – S – PRI inf – PART pre
Won’t the student be studying?

الزمن : المضارع (المرفوع أو المنصوب) أو اسم الفاعل النافية : المستمر

اللغة العربية:
الزمن : المضارع (المرفوع أو المنصوب) أو اسم الفاعل النائية : المستمر

1. V pre ind – S – PRI pre – PTL
سُوَّفَ يَّ كُونُ الطَّالِبُ يَدْرُسُ.

PART act – S – PRI pre – PTL
سُوَّفَ يَّ كُونُ الطَّالِبُ راجِعًا.

2. V pre ind – S – PRI sub – NEG
أَلَّنْ يَّ كُونُ الطَّالِبُ يَدْرُسُ.

PART act – S – PRI sub – NEG
أَلَّنْ يَّ كُونُ الطَّالِبُ راجِعًا.

أَسَوَّفَ يَّ كُونُ الطَّالِبُ يَدْرُسُ ؟

أَلَّنْ يَّ كُونُ الطَّالِبُ يَدْرُسُ ؟

اللغة الإنجليزية:
الزمن : المضارع (المرفوع أو المنصوب) أو اسم الفاعل النائية : المستمر

1. S – MOD pre – PRI inf – PART pre
The student will be studying.

2. S – MOD pre – NEG – PRI inf – PART pre
The student will not be studying.

3. MOD pre – S – PRI inf – PART pre
Will the student be studying?

4. MOD pre + NEG – S – PRI inf – PART pre
Won’t the student be studying?
1. "They have made it a legacy worthy of permanence and future dissemination that will be read by generations not yet born." **(50)**

2. "The healing abilities you will receive when you are studying Shambhala are a byproduct." **(51)**

3. "We could all be doing something on the side." **(52)**

4. "You will never be able to achieve the same results." **(53)**

5. "We will not be needing your services." **(54)**

See Chart 9 note.
1. **S** – **MOD pre** – **PRI inf** – **PRI/PART pst** – **PART pre** – ADV (V pre ind)

   The student will have been studying for four years when she graduates.

   سَوْفَ ﻗَﺪْ ﺗَﻛُونُ اﻟﻄّﺎﻟِﺒَةُ ﺛَدْرُسُ ﺍﻟﻄّﺎﻟِﺒَةُ ﻋَنْدَمَا ﺗَخَرَّجُ.

   

2. **S** – **MOD pre** – **NEG** – **PRI inf** – **PRI/PART pst** – **PART pre**

   The student will not have been studying.

   سَوْفَ ﻗَﺪْ ﻻ ﺗَﻛُونُ اﻟﻄّﺎﻟِﺒَةُ ﺛَدْرُسُ.

   

3. **MOD pre** – **S** – **PRI inf** – **PRI/PART pst** – **PART pre**

   Will the student have been studying?

   أَسَوْفَ ﻗَﺪْ ﺗَﻛُونُ اﻟﻄّﺎﻟِﺒَةُ ﺛَدْرُسُ؟

   

4. **MOD pre** + **NEG** – **S** – **PRI inf** – **PRI/PART pst** – **PART pre**

   Won’t the student have been studying?

   أَقَدْ ﻟَﻦَ ﻗَﺪْ ﺗَﻛُونُ اﻟﻄّﺎﻟِﺒَةُ ﺛَدْرُسُ؟
1. "Bankirane: If I fail in the October 7 voting, my political life will have been finished."

2. "In the period starting at the end of March or mid-April at the latest, this crisis will have been resolved.

See Chart 9 note.
"If God were to hasten for men the ill [they have earned] . . . . "

The Qur’an: 10:11

"وَلَوْ يُعَجِّلَ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ الشَّرَّ . . . ."

القرآن الكريم: سورة يونس الآية 11

```
1. CLS – S – V sub – V inf – PREP - DO

“If God were to hasten for men the ill [they have earned] . . . . ”
The Qur’an: 10:11

DO – PREP – S – V pre ind – PTL – CON

"وَلَوْ يُعَجِّلَ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ الشَّرَّ . . . ."

القرآن الكريم: سورة يونس الآية 11


“Hush! May God render you ugly . . . !”

S – V pst – V imp

Brinner 39

"صَٰبِّنَةُ فَيْلَحَكِ اللَّهُ . . . !"
```
1. “If the oppressor were to know what God has prepared for the oppressed . . . he would be miserly in his injustice [toward them].”

2. “He said, 'I wish the young people would learn from you!'”
6  SENTENCE TYPES

6.1  ENGLISH

In English, one of the most practical standards for classifying sentences is the presence of transition, or movement, from the verb to an object. A clause or sentence can usually be categorized by whether its main verb requires an object (transitive) or not (intransitive).94 Within the transitive category is the sub-category active/passive, which is based on voice, the relationship of the subject to the verb.95 In active sentences, the doer of the action is the subject; in passive sentences, the receiver of the action is the subject.

There are three basic types of transitive active sentences: 1) including a direct object; 2) including a direct and indirect object; 3) including a direct object and object complement (a word, phrase, or clause modifying the direct object). There is only one type of transitive passive sentence, in which the subject receives (rather than performs) the action of the verb.

There are two types of intransitive sentence: 1) including a linking verb such as be, taste, smell, seem, which connects the subject to a predicate noun, predicate adjective, or adverbial of place or time; 2) including a complete action, one in which there is no movement, and no connection with any object, predicate noun, or predicate adjective (adverbials can still be used).

6.2  ARABIC

Arabic sentences are most often categorized according to the placement of the verb. This system yields only two major types: verbal and nominal.96 In MSA, verbal sentences begin with a verb; nominal sentences do not. Nominal sentences may include a verb after the subject, or have an implied verb. The latter structure is equivalent to the intransitive linking sentence in English and
is often referred to as equational (see examples below). It has no linking verb because Arabic does not generally use its “be” verb َكَانَ in positive, present-tense, equational sentences. When referring to past or future time, a form of َكَانَ is used, and the sentence type depends on the position of the verb, before the subject (verbal) or after the subject (nominal). Some texts, however, designate as verbal all sentences that include a linking verb such as َنَسْ or َكَانَ as primary (non-auxiliary).

The Arabic verb has this mobility because the language (in its fully vowelled form, at least) is not primarily syntactic, as is English. In English, word order is highly important, and words are only slightly inflected (given affixes such as the –ed and –s suffixes). In Arabic, words are inflected much more consistently and thoroughly, allowing identification of their function with less dependency on their arrangement within the sentence.97

In addition to inflectional affixes indicating such grammatical relationships as person, number, gender, and mood, Arabic verbs also have derived forms, which have a wide range of semantic functions. They indicate that a verb in context is transitive or intransitive, active or passive, reciprocal, reflexive, and so forth. Thus, these grammatical relationships are expressed in Arabic primarily by form and meaning, in English primarily by syntax and meaning. The following examples illustrate some of these relationships.

I. TRANSITIVE

A. Active

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A student read a book.</td>
<td>َقَرأَ طَالِبَ (ما) كِتَابًا (ما).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S – V – DO</td>
<td>S – PREP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student has a book.</td>
<td>للطَالِبِ كِتَابَ.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. $S \rightarrow V \rightarrow IO \rightarrow DO$  $DO \rightarrow IO \rightarrow S \rightarrow V$

The student gave his companion the book.  
أُعْطَى الطَّالِبُ رَفْيَةُ الْكِتَابِ.

3. $S \rightarrow V \rightarrow DO \rightarrow OC$

His companion considered the student a generous friend.

$OC \rightarrow DO \rightarrow S \rightarrow V$

إِعْتَبَرَ رَفْيَةُ الطَّالِبَ صَدِيقًا كَرِيمًا.

$OC \rightarrow S \rightarrow DO \rightarrow V$

إِعْتَبَرَ الطَّالِبَ رَفْيَةُ صَدِيقًا كَرِيمًا.*

B. Passive

$S \rightarrow V$  

(the “deputy” subject: $S \rightarrow V$)

The book was read.

فُرِ أَ الْكِتَابُ.

II. INTRANSITIVE

A. Linking

1. $S \rightarrow V \rightarrow \text{PRED NOUN}$  $\text{PRED NOUN} \rightarrow S$

The student is a scholar/author.

الْتَأْلِبُ أَدِيبٌ.

2. $S \rightarrow V \rightarrow \text{PRED ADJ}$  $\text{PRED ADJ} \rightarrow S$

The student is kind.

الْتَأْلِبُ لَطِيفٌ.

3. $S \rightarrow V \rightarrow \text{PREP}$  $\text{PREP} \rightarrow S$

The student is in the library.

الْتَأْلِبُ فِي الْمَكْتَبَةٌ.
B. Complete

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. S = PRI pre - PART pre</th>
<th>PART act = S or V - S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The student is studying.</td>
<td>الطالبُ يُدْرُسُ. or الطالبُ دارِسٌ.*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. S = V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The students participated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* * * * * * *
7 NOTES


In English and Arabic, verbs denote action with reference to, but not necessarily by, a subject (the subject is not necessarily the doer). For example, in the passive sentence, “The book was purchased,” the subject receives the action; the purchaser is not identified.


3 There are other primary auxiliaries, such as ﺑَﺪَأّ, ﺻَﻊَ, ﺑَدَأّ. Also, ﻷَ ﻷَ ﻷَ has “sisters,” words whose subjects and predicates take the same case endings as those governed by ﺑَﺪَأّ and ﻷَ, but these sisters often have different syntactic functions (such as the adverbial ﻷَ ﻷَ, “still”).


In many grammar books, tense and time reference are not clearly differentiated by form vs. meaning. This distinction is used here for clarification rather than classification, as changes in form usually signal changes in meaning. *Tense* and *aspect* refer primarily to form but do affect meaning within context.

5 Unless the English will and shall are considered future tense forms. They consistently indicate future time, but that is not sufficient reason to call them future tense, as it would leave no reason for designating as past or present other forms such as would and should, which do not consistently indicate past and present time. See Quirk & Greenbaum, *Grammar* 57.
Context here refers to a word within a clause, clause within a sentence, sentence within a paragraph, and so forth.

Jacobs, Syntax 199; Quirk & Greenbaum, Grammar 40. For a discussion of Arabic aspect as perfective and imperfective, see Bernard Comrie, Aspect: An Introduction To The Study Of Verbal Aspect and Related Problems (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1976).

“No complete aspectual description of any language exists. Nor does current aspectological theory provide an adequate theoretical base for such description.”


For a related discussion, albeit with different formulas and conclusions, see Binnick, Time 207-14.

Participles are non-finite verb forms with a variety of functions. The usual English markers are –ing and –ed suffixes for present and past forms, respectively.


The particle out is included in the color designation because it is part of the phrasal verb.

The larger box with space on both sides of the letter indicates the unfinished (progressive) nature of the action.

Statives are not generally used with progressive aspect; we do not usually say “I am knowing Arabic” or “He is owning a car.” The counterparts to stative verbs are dynamic verbs, “which signify actions, processes, and events, that is, situations in which something happens” (“I am learning Arabic.”; “He is driving the car.”). See Jacobs, Syntax 206ff; Quirk and Greenbaum, Grammar 46-7.

See Jacobs, Syntax 209-10.
Historically, there has been significant controversy over the characterization of verbs. Grammarians categorizing the present with the future referred to الماضي المستقبل and المضارع الماضي only, while others (the Basra school in particular) kept الماضي but used المضارع to combine the present and future into one category. The latter designation has become the standard. See Ja’far, *Time* 105-7.

Simple refers to the verb form without explicit aspectual distinctions, for example *He writes* as opposed to *He has written/is writing/has been writing*. Semantically, the English simple tense can indicate aspect based on context, for example *He wrote* (completed action) or *He wrote for an hour* (ongoing action).

Structures using قد in this manner are not common in spoken Arabic. For spoken equivalents, see Gomaa, Lina. *From MSA to CA: A Beginner’s Guide for Transitioning into Colloquial Arabic.* PDXOpen: 2015. http://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/pdxopen/8

This is an uncommon structure in MSA; it might be encountered in writing but is not recommended for use. Similarly rare or archaic structures will also be identified with an *.

This does not apply to all verbs. يذهب, for example, does not generally mean “He is going”; the progressive meaning is usually expressed by the active participle ذاهب.


Arabic uses progressive aspect with stative verbs more persistently than does English. For example, أنا فهمت, “I am knowing,” and أنا أعرف, “I am understanding,” are common.

Arabic participles differ grammatically and semantically from their English counterparts. Arabic participles are generally considered nouns that “match” the verb either substantively, indicating the doer of an action (الكلمة المكتوبة), or adjectivally, using the action to modify another noun (هي كاتبة). See Beeston, *Arabic* 25.
Of the four most common methods of describing the Arabic perfect and imperfect, this seems the most appropriate. For a summary discussion of methods, see Binnick, *Time* 434-9; Comrie, *Aspect* 78-81. The fact that “the great majority of Arabic verbs are aspectually ambivalent” (Beeston, *Arabic* 67-8) can be viewed as liberating or restricting (Wright, *Grammar* (1967) 51).

Another reason for using English as a starting point in the charts: we often lack the “sentence sense” necessary to understand consistently the Arabic context. Kolln, *Rhetorical Grammar* 4-5.

The parentheticals are intended as general examples only since moods have multiple functions. Unlike some other Germanic languages, English has no jussive mood. Its use in Arabic is primarily formal (see p. 17).


Although the infinitive is sometimes referred to as a mood, it generally functions as a noun rather than as a verb, so form is perhaps a better designation than mood. See Ernest N. McCarus, *English Grammar for Students of Arabic*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The Olivia and Hill Press, 2007) 93.

Although still used in certain texts (e.g., Mt. 6:9-10 in *The Bible*), this structure is generally considered archaic. Modern usage employs a direct, second-person imperative such as:

أطلِبْ منه أن تغلق الباب.

Unless it is used to indicate lack of certainty with could replacing the more usual might.

DeCarrico, “Modality” 671 and passim.

There are a few exceptions to this rule. “I should have studied the lesson” is past tense perfect aspect, as the statement has current relevance. DeCarrico, “Modality” 674.
31 Quirk and Greenbaum, *Grammar* 51.

32 Or tense (see p. 8).

33 The emphatic form is at times referred to as a tense. See McCarus, *Grammar* 103.


36 The final jussive sukuun ظ on يَﻛُنْ is replaced by a helping vowel since there is a connection (وَﺻْﻠَﺔ) with the following word.

37 Binnick, *Time* 67.

38 There is one notable exception: the future negating particle ﻟَﻦْ takes a subjunctive verb and often functions in independent clauses.

39 This relates to MSA modality (مَﺸْﺮوطِﯿﱠﺔ) only. In colloquial Arabic, certain verbal forms (لازَم ، ﺿَﺮوري ، ﻣَﻔْﺮوض ، يِﻤْﻜِﻦ ، اﻟْنى) are used in a manner similar to English modals.

40 Since Arabic is an inflected language, in which form identifies function, Arabic verbs are conjugated and nouns declined. Instructional texts, however, sometimes refer to verb conjugations as declensions due to the similarity of noun and verb markings. As Arabic has no uninflected verbs, terms such as *indeclinable* are often used.

41 The tense marking of verbs such as يَﺠِﺐُ and ﻳُﻤْﻜِﻦُ does not affect time reference, due to its fixed status. The particles ﻟَﻦْ ، ﺳَﻮْفَ ﻟَﻢْ ، consistently indicate time (past, future, and future, respectively), although they are not marked for tense.

42 Adapted from Quirk and Greenbaum, *Grammar* 24-25.
This hodgepodge of form, function, and meaning provides the clearest chart format. A function (such as subject or direct object) labelled as a part of speech (such as noun) would be as ambiguous as a part of speech (such as verb) labelled as a function (such as predicate). Term usage is consistent throughout the guide.

That is, they present only those facets which apply to their usage in the charts. For example, predicate in English is broadly defined in binary relationship to the sentence subject. In the charts, however, the predicate is only certain sentence elements that generally follow the linking verb.

In English and Arabic, past-tense verbs do not show mood variations; they are consistently indicative. Thus, mood information is not included with the $V\,pst$ designation in the charts. See also p. 16.

See note 36. In this example, the helping vowel $\hat{o}$ replaces the $\hat{j}$ of the jussive on $\text{نَزِّنُ}$ to facilitate transition to the following word. The $\hat{o}$ is used because, unlike the $\hat{j}$ and $\hat{\jmath}$, it is not a mood marker.

The separate aspectual designation in the charts is artificial. As noted in the text, Arabic employs what is best described as a combined tense/aspect system and thus does not separate the two as distinctly as does English. The Arabic categories are separated in the charts only to provide a more direct cross-reference to English.

There are a number of Arabic terms for aspect such as $\text{نقطة التركيز}$، وجه $\text{ناحية}$ is used here to indicate viewpoint/aspect.

The participle form of “study” is not semantically appropriate for this chart since, in general, only participles of motion carry progressive meaning; others are usually considered nominal. The pattern verb in this structure would mean “The student was a studier,” the participle bearing agentive nominal meaning. See McCarus, Grammar 115-16.
The future time reference here depends on the unfulfilled nature of the conditional.

The Chart 6 structure is repeated here to show the semantic flexibility of the Arabic simple present verb. The other sentence patterns follow those in Chart 6.
*Modal Future* is used here to express the combination of the present-tense modal *will* and the infinitive. It is a concession to the semantic futurity of the modal. See also note 5.

Or since the particle سَﻮْفَ and the prefix سَ are grammatically and semantically equivalent.

https://goo.gl/kdGqGh
https://goo.gl/hHFhwS
https://goo.gl/h2JkwH
http://www.saaid.net/daeyat/sara/3.htm?print_it=1
https://goo.gl/V8e8bU
https://www.anbaa.info/?p=29525
https://goo.gl/TF6Hb5
https://goo.gl/MI6aMa
https://goo.gl/eJ90XN
https://goo.gl/NSM8rZ
https://goo.gl/OsJNhk
https://goo.gl/XTZZuy
http://www.akhbarona.com/politic/183664.html
https://goo.gl/xzQKZq
See pp. 14ff.
http://www.hekams.com/?id=3514
http://alqabas.com/382929/

As in “The puppy slept” vs. “The puppy ate its food.” Note that some verbs, such as *ate*, can be transitive, as in the latter example, or intransitive, as in “The puppy ate.”

Kolln, *Rhetorical Grammar* 218.
Other sentence types include conditional and topic-comment.

In English, the sentence “That man ate some chicken” varies dramatically in meaning from the same words arranged differently, “Some chicken ate that man.” In formal MSA, however, inflection can override syntactic norms so that "أَكَلْ ذَٰﻟِكَ الْرَجُلُ بَعْضَ الْدِجاجِ" and "أَكَلْ بَعْضَ الْدِجاجِ ذَٰﻟِكَ الْرَجُلُ" have the same meaning, “That man ate some chicken.”

Since Arabic sentences rarely begin with indefinite subjects, verbal precedence is required here. The مَا of “obscurity,” مَا الإِبْهَامِيَّة can be used with either or both nouns to indicate lack of specificity.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cliff Breedlove studied Arabic in Cairo, Egypt, before receiving an M.A. in Intercultural Studies from Western Seminary in 1995. He entered the Arabic program at Portland State University in 1996 and received an M.A.T. in 1998. He has been working for the PSU Arabic Section since 1996 and currently teaches first-, second-, and third-year courses.