



إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

"Indeed, We sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an so that you may understand." (Yūsuf 12:2)

Understand what you Recite

A first guide to the Arabic of the Qur'an: roots, common words and patterns, starting with al-Fātiḥah.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Preface

All praise is for Allah, and may peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and his Companions.

Many of us read the Qur'an every day, some of us have memorised much of it, and yet we do not understand what we are reciting. Allah describes His Book as an Arabic Qur'an revealed "so that you may understand". Understanding it, even a little, changes how we pray, how we recite and how we live.

This guide is a first step. It shows how Arabic words are built from roots, gives you the most common words and particles of the Qur'an, takes you through al-Fātiḥah word by word, and ends with a 12-week plan and a tracker. It does not replace a teacher; it helps you start, and shows you where a teacher will take you next.

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

"Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an, or are there locks upon their hearts?"

Sūrat Muḥammad 47:24

Before you start

You should already be able to read the Qur'an in Arabic script, even slowly. If you cannot yet, start with the Rawdah or Tamheedi level at the Madrasah, then come back to this guide.

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كِتَابُ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

“A blessed Book which We have revealed to you, so that they may reflect upon its verses and that people of understanding may take heed.”

Sūrat Ṣād 38:29

Explanation

- **Reflection (tadabbur).** Allah revealed the Qur'an to be reflected upon. Knowing the words lets the meaning reach the heart while you recite.
- **Prayer with presence (khushū').** You say al-Fātiḥah at least seventeen times a day in the obligatory prayers. Understanding it turns repetition into conversation with your Lord.
- **Firmer hifdh.** Verses you understand are easier to memorise and harder to forget.
- **Protection from error.** With some Arabic, you can follow what scholars explain and check what you hear, rather than depending entirely on translations.

How much Arabic do you need to start?

Far less than you think. A small number of particles, pronouns and common words make up a large share of the Qur'an. Learn those, add a little grammar, and you will begin to recognise meaning in every page you read.

Lesson 1 Roots and patterns

Explanation

Most Arabic words are built from a **root** of three letters that carries a core meaning. Different **patterns** (awzān) are laid over the root to make related words. Learn one root and you can often guess the meaning of several words.

Root ك ت ب: the idea of writing

Word	Pattern	Meaning
كَتَبَ	fa'ala (past verb)	he wrote
يَكْتُبُ	yaf'ulu (present verb)	he writes

كَاتِب	fā'il (doer)	a writer
مَكْتُوب	maf'ul (done to)	written
كِتَاب	fi'al	a book, something written
مَكْتَب	maf'al (place)	a desk, an office

Root ع ل م: the idea of knowing

Word	Pattern	Meaning
عَلِمَ	fa'ila (past verb)	he knew
عَالِم	fā'il (doer)	a scholar, one who knows
عِلْم	fi'l (noun)	knowledge
مَعْلُوم	maf'ul	known
عَلِيم	fa'il	All-Knowing (a Name of Allah)
عَلَّمَ	fa'ala	he taught

Tip: listen for the root

When you meet a new word, find its three root letters by removing the extra letters (such as م at the start, ل after the first letter, or و and ي before the last). Ask: which root do I already know?

What we learn

1	Most Arabic words come from a three-letter root with a core meaning.
2	Patterns show the role of the word: doer, thing done, place, action.
3	One root learned well unlocks many words in the Qur'an.

Lesson 2 The little words

Explanation

Particles (ḥurūf) and pronouns (ḍamā'ir) are short, but they appear in almost every verse. Learn these first and every page becomes more familiar.

Common particles

Word	Meaning	Example
مِنْ	from, of	مِنْ النُّورِ: from the light
إِلَى	to, towards	إِلَى اللَّهِ: to Allah
فِي	in	فِي الْأَرْضِ: in the earth
عَلَى	on, upon	عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ: over everything
عَنْ	about, from	عَنِ الصَّلَاةِ: about the prayer
مَعَ	with	مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ: with the patient
لَا	no, not, do not	لَا رَيْبَ: no doubt
مَا	what; not	مَا أَدْرَاكَ: what will make you know
لَمْ	did not	لَمْ يَلِدْ: He did not beget
إِنَّ	indeed, truly	إِنَّ اللَّهَ: indeed Allah
قَدْ	certainly (with past verbs)	قَدْ أَفْلَحَ: has certainly succeeded
ثُمَّ	then, after that	ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى: then He rose over
إِذَا	when	إِذَا جَاءَ: when there comes
إِنْ	if	إِنْ كُنْتُمْ: if you are
الَّذِي / الَّذِينَ	who, which (one / many)	الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا: those who believe

Pronouns

Word	Meaning	Attached form
هُوَ	he, it	...هُ: his, him (رَبُّهُ his Lord)
هُمْ	they	...هُمْ: their, them (رَبُّهُمْ)

أَنْتَ	you (one man)	...رَبُّكَ: your
أَنْتُمْ	you (many)	...رَبُّكُمْ: your
أَنَا	I	...رَبِّي: my, me
نَحْنُ	we	...رَبَّنَا: our, us

What we learn

1	Particles and pronouns are the most frequent words in the Qur'an.
2	Pronouns often attach to the end of a word: رَبُّكَ is "your Lord".
3	Knowing these lets you follow who is speaking and to whom.

Lesson 3 The common words

Explanation

These nouns and verbs appear again and again across the Qur'an. Learn five a day, say them aloud with their meaning, and look for them in the surahs you recite.

Word	Meaning	Word	Meaning
اللَّهُ	Allah	نَاسٌ	people
رَبٌّ	Lord, Sustainer	قَوْمٌ	a people, nation
قَالَ	he said	شَيْءٌ	thing
كَانَ	he was	كِتَابٌ	book, scripture
آمَنَ	he believed	رَسُولٌ	messenger
كَفَرَ	he disbelieved	حَقٌّ	truth, right
عَمِلَ	he did, worked	نَفْسٌ	soul, self
جَعَلَ	he made, placed	عَذَابٌ	punishment
خَلَقَ	he created	جَنَّةٌ	garden, Paradise
أَنْزَلَ	he sent down	نَارٌ	fire

عَلِمَ	he knew	صَلَاة	prayer
هَدَى	he guided	رَحْمَةً	mercy
يَوْمَ	day	ذِكْرُ	remembrance, reminder
أَرْضَ	earth	صَبْرَ	patience
سَّمَاءَ	sky, heaven	آيَةً	sign, verse

Tip: verbs come in families

قَالَ (he said), يَقُولُ (he says), قُلْ (say!). When you see قُلْ at the start of a surah, Allah is telling the Prophet ﷺ, and us, what to say.

What we learn

- 1 A few dozen common words appear on almost every page of the Qur'an.
- 2 Five words a day, revised often, adds up to hundreds in a few months.
- 3 Spotting known words while reciting builds understanding naturally.

Lesson 4 Al-Fātiḥah word by word

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنَ الْعَظِيمَ

“And We have certainly given you seven of the often-repeated verses and the great Qur'an.”

Sūrat al-Ḥijr 15:87

Explanation

You recite al-Fātiḥah in every rak'ah. Learn it word by word this week, and from your very next prayer you will know what you are saying.

Arabic	Word by word	Meaning of the verse
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ	in the name of • Allah • the Entirely Merciful • the Especially Merciful	In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ	all praise · is for Allah · Lord of · the worlds	All praise is for Allah, Lord of the worlds.
الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ	the Entirely Merciful · the Especially Merciful	The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful.
مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ	Master of · the Day of · Recompense	Master of the Day of Recompense.
إِيَّاكَ تَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ تَسْتَغِيثُ	You alone · we worship · and You alone · we ask for help	You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help.
اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ	guide us (to) · the path · the straight	Guide us to the straight path,
صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ	the path of · those whom · You have blessed · upon them	the path of those You have blessed,
غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ	not (of) · those who earned anger · upon them · nor · those who go astray	not of those who have earned anger, nor of those who go astray.

Notice the patterns

- الرَّحْمَنُ and الرَّحِيمِ both come from the root م ر ح (mercy), the root of رَحْمَةً.
- تَعْبُدُ (we worship) and تَسْتَغِيثُ (we ask for help) begin with تَ, which means “we”.
- إِيَّاكَ comes before the verb, which gives the meaning “You ALONE”.
- عَلَيْهِمْ is عَلَى (upon) + هُمْ (them), the pronoun you learned in Lesson 2.

What we learn

1	Al-Fātiḥah uses words and patterns you will meet across the whole Qur'an.
2	Knowing its meaning brings presence of heart to every prayer.
3	Each surah you understand becomes a lesson in Arabic.

Lesson 5 How to keep learning

أَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَدْوَمُهَا وَإِنْ قَلَّ

“The most beloved deeds to Allah are the most consistent, even if small.”

Narrated by al-Bukhārī (6464) and Muslim (783).

A daily method (20 minutes)

- 1 **New words (5 minutes):** learn five new words with their meaning. Say each aloud three times and write it once.
- 2 **Revise (5 minutes):** go over yesterday’s words and last week’s words. Keep the ones you forget on a separate list.
- 3 **One verse (5 minutes):** take a verse from a short surah you know (Juz ‘Amma is ideal). Read it word by word with a word-by-word translation, and find words you already know.
- 4 **Use it (5 minutes):** in your next prayer, recite that surah slowly and think of the meaning.

Then go further

- Study grammar with a teacher, in order: the Madrasah teaches **Arabiyyah, Naḥw and Ṣarf** step by step, using books such as *Durūs al-Lughah al-‘Arabiyyah* (the Madinah books).
- Read a reliable tafsīr in a language you understand alongside the Arabic, to learn the meaning scholars have explained.
- Be humble: knowing some words does not make anyone a mufassir. Take the meaning of the Qur’an from qualified scholars.

What we learn

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Twenty minutes a day, every day, is enough to make real progress. |
| 2 | Revision matters as much as new words. |
| 3 | A teacher and a reliable tafsīr turn vocabulary into true understanding. |

Plan Your 12-week plan

Weeks	Words	Reading and grammar
1 to 2	The particles and pronouns in Lesson 2	Al-Fātiḥah word by word; read it slowly in every prayer
3 to 4	The 30 common words in Lesson 3	Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ, al-Falaq and an-Nās word by word
5 to 6	30 more words from the surahs you recite	Roots and patterns: find the root of each new word
7 to 8	Verbs: past, present and command forms	Sūrat al-‘Aṣr, al-Kawthar, al-Kāfirūn, an-Naṣr
9 to 10	Words from Āyat al-Kursī	Āyat al-Kursī (al-Baqarah 2:255) word by word
11 to 12	Revise all your words	Choose any short surah you know and explain it word by word to someone

Word tracker

Write five words each day. Tick the box when you still remember them a week later.

Day	Words learned today	Remembered a week later
Mon		☐
Tue		☐
Wed		☐
Thu		☐
Fri		☐
Sat		☐
Sun		☐

Activities

1 Write three words from the root م ر ح and their meanings.

.....

.....

2 Underline every pronoun in Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ. Who is being spoken about?

.....

.....

3 Explain al-Fātiḥah word by word to a younger brother, sister or friend.

.....

.....

4 Choose one verse you love and find three words in it you already know.

.....

.....

Du‘ā’ Ask Allah for understanding

اللَّهُمَّ اِنْفَعْنِي بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنِي، وَعَلِّمْنِي مَا يَنْفَعُنِي،
وَزِدْنِي عِلْمًا

“O Allah, benefit me with what You have taught me, teach me what will benefit me, and increase me in knowledge.”

Narrated by at-Tirmidhī (3599) and Ibn Mājah (251).

Sources References

- *The Noble Qur’an*. Verses cited: Yūsuf 12:2, Muḥammad 47:24, Ṣād 38:29, al-Ḥijr 15:87, al-Fātiḥah 1:1–7.
- Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 6464; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 783; Jāmi‘ at-Tirmidhī 3599; Sunan Ibn Mājah 251.
- V. Abdur Rahim. *Durūs al-Lughah al-‘Arabiyyah li-Ghayr an-Nāṭiqīna bihā* (the Madinah Arabic books). Islamic University of Madinah.
- Translations of al-Fātiḥah follow the wording widely used in *Saheeh International*.

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وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

“And my success is only through Allah.” (Hūd 11:88)

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From reciting to understanding.

This free guide from the Himaayah Madrasah helps students and parents take the first steps from reading the Qur'an to understanding it, a little every day.

- Why every Muslim benefits from Qur'anic Arabic
- Roots and patterns: one root, many words
- The most common words and particles, with meanings
- Al-Fātiḥah word by word
- A 12-week plan and a word tracker



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