

Video 3

السلام عليكم, Yusuf Mullan here. Welcome everyone to the third of the four presentations. We are going to take a little detour in this video. Instead of resuming the heavy grammar (sentences, grammatical states and differentiating between the roles of the **اسم**), we are going to focus on **verb patterns**.

As you remember from the earlier presentation, the majority of meanings in Arabic don't come from words. They come from vowels, patterns and grammatical structures. The patterns is where the consonants are giving you separate meaning. The way those consonants are vowelised is giving you separate meaning. The **اسْتَنْصَرُوا** example exemplified that very well. That looked like a single word but it was actually giving you 7 meanings. From those 7 meanings only one of them was coming from the dictionary, and the other meanings were coming from either the **pattern** or the **ending**.

This is discussed in **صَرَف**.

It is about verbs and there are 3 verbs in the entire language. You need to know a little about verbs before you begin any reading. Part of our introductory theory is to go through the two major verbs. There are 3 of them, but the third one can be taught later, it is not incredibly important. Two definitely need to be taught. They are:

- 1) **الفِعْلُ الْمَاضِي** [The Past Tense Verb]
- 2) **الفِعْلُ الْمُضَارِع** [The Imperfect Verb that indicates on present and future]

I want to at least go through the **Past Tense Verb**.

Comprehensiveness At The Word Level

Before beginning with the past tense table and developing it, there is this reality that we need to keep in mind. That is that the Arabic language is unlike any other language. Allah chose it as the medium for His final message. There is a reason for that. If you were to sum up that reason in a single sentence it would be the sentence:

The majority of meanings in Arabic do not come from words.

The best way to understand that is if you have a paragraph of Arabic sentences, and you were to translate that paragraph into any other language, you would need at least twice the amount of words to be able to properly translate it, if not even more than that. This is because every word individually gives you meaning, and we call that **vocabulary**. Then the

words are made of **consonants** and **vowels**. Even in English words are made up of consonants and vowel, and Arabic is no different.

One of the factors that makes Arabic different is that the *consonants* will give you separate meaning, and the *vowels* will also give you separate meaning. What looks like a single word will give you up to 7 meanings. One of them coming from the consonants and 6 more coming from *vowel patterns, designated endings* and things of that nature.

At the end of the noun there is a particular vowel that tells you that this noun is the subject. A particular ending that tells you this noun is the object, etc. This is grammar.

Then there are grammatical structures. When you take two or more words and gather them together using a method sanctioned by the language. The method will give you an additional meaning above and beyond the meaning of the words. We don't want to go into detail here because we have to focus on the verb tables.

Today's presentation is about the **Past Tense Verb**.

Consonants and Vowels

Very briefly, if you go into the alphabet you will notice that there are 28 letters and they are all **consonants**. ب [baa] is equivalent of a "b" in English, ت [taa] is equivalent of a "t". ج

أ ب ت ث ج ح خ د ذ ر ز [jeem] is equivalent of a "j". You can run through the whole alphabet. Some of them don't have English equivalents but the bottom line is that they are all consonants.

س ش ص ض ط ظ ع غ
ف ق ك ل م ن ه و ي

Then there are **vowels** that are not part of the alphabet, but they are introduced *on top* and *beneath* the consonants to create the sounds of "a e i o u". In English there are 5 but in Arabic there are only 3.

When words are constructed, it is done by grouping the consonants from the 28 letters of the alphabet into groups of 3. Every group of 3 has an associated meaning. If you take:

- ن - ص - ر, those three letters have the meaning of "helping"
- ج - ل - س have the meaning of "sitting down"
- ب - ر - ش have the meaning of "drinking".

Hitting, helping, sitting, standing, eating and drinking, all of these meanings are achieved by grouping the letters into groups of 3. You would have tens of thousands of groups of 3.

The issue is that *consonants on their own are not pronounceable*. If you take ب - ت - ك, those three letters on their own, without any vowels are not pronounceable. You would have something like "ktb" which is not possible. You need a vowel on each consonant in order to make them pronounceable.

When people speak they don't speak in consonants, they speak in syllables. A "syllable" is a sound that is achieved by combining a consonant and a vowel. Vowels are not part of the alphabet. They are introduced above and beneath the consonants, and together they give us the sounds associated to "a e i o u"

The Purpose of Vowels

Vowels are added:

- In order to make the consonants pronounceable.
- And to give us *more meaning*. More specifically the **tense** and the **voice** is coming from the **vowels**.

When you have one set of vowels, that gives you *past tense*. If you change the vowels, and maybe add an extra letter at the front, it becomes *present/future tense*. If you change the vowels yet again, then it may become a *command verb*. The letters are the same, i.e. the ن –

ص – ر would be present in all variations. What distinguishes a verb from all other verbs is the particular vowel configuration. This is what we mean when we say **pattern**.

Short Vowels

Corresponds to the sound of..	Represented..	Vowel	
"o" or "u" in English	on top of the letter	ـُ	ضَمَّة
"a" in English	as stroke on top of the letter	ـَ	فَتْحَة
"i" or "e" in English	as stroke beneath the letter	ـِ	كَسْرَة
See below	circle on top of the letter	Symbols	
		ـُ	سُكُون
See below		ـِ	شَدَّة

- ب [baa] with a ضَمَّة on top of it: بُ would be pronounced "bu".
- ب [baa] with a فَتْحَة on top of it: بَ would be pronounced "ba".
- ب [baa] with a كَسْرَة beneath it: بِ would be pronounced "bi".

We have a symbol which is a circle called سُكُون: ـُ

In English you have 3 lettered words like the word "fun", "bat". It starts with a consonant, a vowel in the middle and a consonant at the end, *not* followed by another vowel. When this happens, in Arabic the consonant has that symbol on it which is called سُكُون [ـُ].

شَدَّة [ـّـ] is duplicating of the letter. When you have a word in English, where the first syllable ends in the same consonant the second syllable begins in, then normally they write the letter twice, like “pretty”, “funny”. In Arabic it is not written twice, it is only written once. This symbol is placed on top of it, and it means that the letter will be pronounced twice.

Introducing The Table Layout

Why Do We Need Verb Tables?

In English there is no need for verb tables because of 2 reasons. The flip of those 2 reasons is precisely why we need it in Arabic.

1. In English, when you combine a verb with a pronoun, e.g. sleeping combined with “he”, “she” or “they”. The gender, plurality and person of the one doing the sleeping has no impact on the verb. It looks the same. It would be: he *slept*, she *slept*, they *slept*, you *slept*, I *slept*, we *slept*.
2. There are not so many of them. There are only 6 (he, she, they, you, I, we).

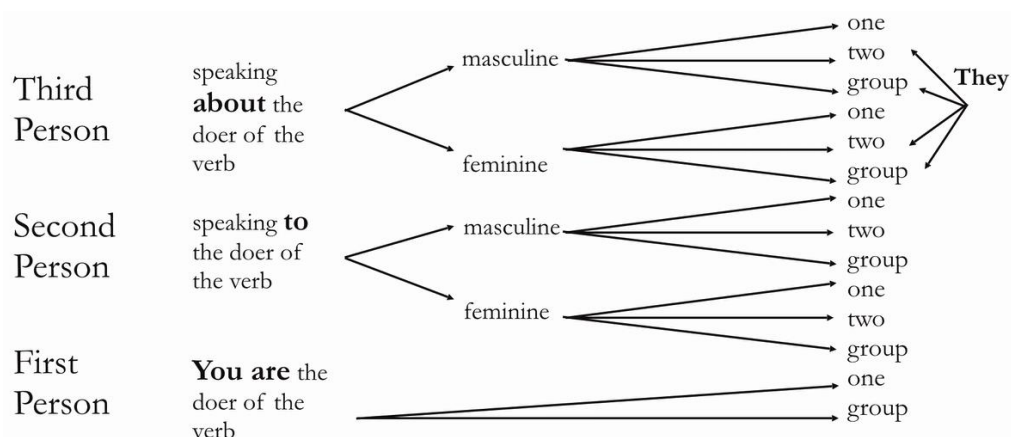
In Arabic, it is the total flip of that.

1. When the pronoun is attached to the verb (this is called *conjugating*), it is represented with a **letter at the end of the verb**. The verb would be the first three letters, and the pronoun would be the letter at the end. And there would be no space in between.

It looks like the same word is being repeated multiple number of times. The number is 14 (contrasting that to 6 in English). In Arabic the verb changes and it is attached to the pronoun and looks like it is a single word.

2. There are 14 of them. When what looks like the same word being repeated 14 times, slightly different each time, then this calls for a table.

What is the significance of the number 14?



You are either speaking:

- about the doer [third person] – he, she, they
- to the doer [second person] – you

- or you yourself are the doer [first person] – I, we.

Each of those can be:

- masculine,
- and feminine.

And they can be:

- singular,
- dual,
- or group.

Arabic has a dual. If I wanted to speak about 2 males, there is a different way of doing that than if I wanted to talk about a group of males. The same thing is with the females. If I wanted to talk about 2 females, there is a different way of doing that than if I wanted to talk about a group of females.

In the **third person** we have: he, they [2 males], they [group of males], she, they [2 females], they [group of females].

In the **second person** we have you x 6. Speaking to 1 male, 2 males, group of males, 1 female, 2 females, group of females.

In the **first person**: I and We. There is no distinction between the gender. If you a man speaking about yourself, or a woman speaking about yourself, you would use the same verb.

Notice there is actually 4 “they”s. In English, there is no distinction whether you are speaking about 2 people or a group of people. Their plural starts at 2. In Arabic, there is singular, dual, and then plural would be 3+. Essentially there are 4 “they”s. This has caused our number to be much larger. Instead of 6 pronouns like they have in English we have 14 pronouns. The point is that they are all different.

Table Layout – 3rd Person

If you look below at the third person layout, from all of the columns, focus on the “English Equivalent” column.

Person	Gender	Plurality	English Equivalent	Conjugation #
3 rd (i.e. speaking about someone)	Masculine	Singular	He	1
		Dual (2)	They (2 males)	2
		Plural (3+)	They (3 or more males)	3
	Feminine	Singular	She	4
		Dual (2)	They (2 females)	5
		Plural (3+)	They (3 or more females)	6

You should be able to put up your head and say: he, they, they, she, they, they.

Table Layout – 2nd Person

Then we have: you x 6.

Person	Gender	Plurality	English Equivalent	Conjugation #
2 nd (i.e. speaking <u>to</u> someone)	Masculine	Singular	You (1 male)	7
		Dual (2)	You (2 males)	8
		Plural (3+)	You (3 or more males)	9
	Feminine	Singular	You (1 female)	10
		Dual (2)	You (2 females)	11
		Plural (3+)	You (3 or more females)	12

Table Layout – 1st Person

Finally we have: I, we.

Person	Gender	Plurality	English Equivalent	Conjugation #
1 st (i.e. speaking <u>about</u> <u>oneself</u>)	Masculine/ Feminine	Singular	I	13
		Plural (2+)	We (2 or more people)	14

Over here, gender is irrelevant. Then in conjugation number 14, dual becomes irrelevant also. It is just “we”. The same as it is in English.

At this stage, you should be able to turn your head away from the screen and say that:

He, they, they, she, they, they you x 6, I, we

Person	Gender	Plurality	English Equivalent	صيغة
3 rd	Masculine	Singular	He	1
		Dual (2)	They (2 males)	2
		Plural (3+)	They (3 or more males)	3
	Feminine	Singular	She	4
		Dual (2)	They (2 females)	5
		Plural (3+)	They (3 or more females)	6
2 nd	Masculine	Singular	You (1 male)	7
		Dual (2)	You (2 males)	8
		Plural (3+)	You (3 or more males)	9
	Feminine	Singular	You (1 female)	10
		Dual (2)	You (2 females)	11
		Plural (3+)	You (3 or more females)	12
1 st	Masculine/ Feminine	Singular	I	13
		Plural (2+)	We (2 or more people)	14

Now we are about to dive into the table. Like already mentioned, 3 letters of the alphabet are taken, they receive a particular pattern to convey past tense. For the present/future

there would be a different pattern. For the command verb there would be a different pattern. And for any other verb the pattern would be different. The letters would be the same.

Right now we are developing the past tense table, simple 3-lettered.

Conjugation #1: فَعَلَ

The model pattern for the past tense is فَعَلَ. That means that each of those 3 consonants would be pronounced with a فتحة [َ]. You would just change the letters.

Conjugation # 1

فَعَلَ

Examples:

He helped نَصَرَ
He sat جَلَسَ

Examples: نَصَرَ (He helped), جَلَسَ (He sat)

By default they would mean “he”.

There are 14 conjugations, out of which 13 of them will have endings. The absence of all other endings would suggest to the reader or listener that it is *one male* being spoken about (i.e. it is conjugation #1).

Conjugation #2: فَعَلَا

Now we speak about what modification to فَعَلَ would need to be done in order to turn it into **2 males**.

You would add an ا at the end.

Conjugation # 2

Add ا
فَعَلَا

Examples:

They (two males) helped نَصَرَا
They (two males) sat جَلَسَا

Conjugation #3: فَعَلُوا

To turn it into **group of males**, you would add a و at the end. The و would need to be preceded by a ضمة [ُ].

There is a silent ا at the end, and there is a wisdom behind that but I won't go into that for the sake of time.

Can you lift your head and say فَعَلُوا – فَعَلَا – فَعَلَ?

Conjugation # 3

Put ا on the third base letter

Add و
فَعَلُوا

Examples:

They (three or more males) helped نَصَرُوا
They (three or more males) sat جَلَسُوا

Conjugation #4: فَعَلَتْ

Moving into the females.

The particular ending that tells us we are talking about **1 female** is a ت with سكون [ْ] on it: ت.

Conjugation # 4

Add ثُ
فَعَلَتْ

Examples:

She helped نَصَرَتْ
She sat جَلَسَتْ

Conjugation #5: فَعَلْتَا

When speaking about **2 females**, the ending would be the same ت that we just added plus an ا.

Conjugation # 5

فَعَلْتَا

Examples:

They (two females) helped نَصَرْتَا
They (two females) sat جَلَسْتَا

At this stage you should be able to say: فَعَلْتُ – فَعَلَا – فَعَلُوا – فَعَلْتَا – فَعَلْنَا

Conjugation #6: فَعَلْنَ

Now we are moving into the **group of females**. The particular ending that tells us that the doer is a group of females would be a ن with a فتحة on it: نَ.

Conjugation # 6

position becomes sakin ْ
and remains that way until
the end of the table

Add نَ

فَعَلْنَ

Examples:

They (three or more females) helped نَصَرْنَ
They (three or more females) sat جَلَسْنَ

A very special thing happens on the verb. That is that the third letter which we call the *laam* position will receive a سكون [ْ]. That سكون [ْ] will then maintain until the bottom of the table. The ending will be added after the سكون [ْ].

From the top it was فَعَلْتُ – فَعَلَا – فَعَلُوا – فَعَلْتَا – فَعَلْنَا. Now all of a sudden it is فَعَلْ + the ending, all the way until the end.

The rest of them will be like that. The bottom 9 all have a سكون [ْ] on their third letter. The top ones never had that.

We are now done with the top 6: he, they, they, she, they, they.

Conjugation #7 - #12

Now we isolate the endings for the middle 6. We get our head around the endings then we just add the فَعَلْ part and miraculously 6 more.

The endings are: تَنْ, تُمَا, تِ, تُمْ, تُمَا, تْ

- تْ is the designated ending when you are speaking to **1 male**.
- تُمَا when you are speaking to **2 males**.
- تُمْ when you are speaking to a **group of males**.
- تِ when speaking to **1 female**.
- تُمَا when speaking to **2 females**.
- تَنْ when speaking to a **group of females**.

Just try to memorise that. It is not particular difficult because on the one hand it rhymes. It is like memorising a phone number when you don't have a pen handy.

Let's go through them:

فَعَلْتُمْ - فَعَلْتُمَا - فَعَلْتِ - فَعَلْتُ - فَعَلْتُمْ - فَعَلْتُمْ

Conjugation #13: فَعَلْتُ

When you are speaking about yourself, it doesn't matter whether you are male or female.

The ending is تْ.

Notice the ت ending happens in quite a few of them:

- conjugation #4: فَعَلْتُ had a ت ending,
- conjugation #7 when you are speaking to a male: فَعَلْتُ
- conjugation #10 when you are speaking to a female: فَعَلْتِ
- and conjugation #13 when you are speaking about yourself: فَعَلْتُ

That is very efficient because the same letter was repurposed 4 times. One of them was a ساكن letter, and the other 3 were vowels.

Conjugation #14: فَعَلْنَا

Now for the very last one. We saw a ن in the conjugation #6 when speaking about a group of females: فَعَلْنَ. That was without a stretch. This one is with a stretch.

That concludes the table! Pause and try to recite the full table.

Pronoun	Verb
He	فَعَلَ
They (2m)	فَعَلَا
They (3+m)	فَعَلُوا
She	فَعَلَتْ
They (2f)	فَعَلْنَا
They (3+f)	فَعَلْنَ
You (1m)	فَعَلْتَ
You (2m)	فَعَلْتُمَا
You (3+m)	فَعَلْتُمْ
You (1f)	فَعَلْتِ
You (2f)	فَعَلْتُمَا
You (3+f)	فَعَلْتُنَّ
I	فَعَلْتُ
We	فَعَلْنَا

We spent quite a bit of time in the beginning introducing the table layout and speaking about:

- third person, second person, first person.
- 6 – 6 – 2.
- He, they, they, they, she, they, they, you x 6, I and we.

With that in mind, then it is just a matter of filling in the slots. Introducing the table layout, speaking about the reason why we need tables, and also why in English there are no tables. (1. The number is only six 2. The pronoun and the verb in English are written separately, the verb is always the same, e.g. *slept* regardless of who slept).

In Arabic, it is written together and there is no space in between. So that calls for a table and justifies spending time on a table. There is a heavy emphasis in Classical Arabic on verb patterns and verb tables. There is a whole science that deals with it called صَرْف (Morphology).

What we gave you now is a lesson in Morphology.

- Spending that time at the beginning, speaking about the reasoning, the relative importance and what role this plays.
- Then contrasting it in English, that why in English there is no emphasis. And the 2 reasons why not.
- The opposite of those 2 reasons, why in Arabic there is a heavy emphasis on this.
- Then speaking about the layout. How it is organised. The third person ones are at the top, the second person ones in the middle and the first person at the bottom.

All this is the equivalent of “sharpening the axe”. Lincoln said that *if I had 6 hours to cut down a tree, I would spend the first 4 hours sharpening the axe.*

66% of the time he spent sharpening the axe and 33% he is cutting the tree. This is what we do. When we teach these topics, we try to conceptually use analogies, contrast with English. Then the filling the slots part can happen rather quickly, once you have a framework.

Now we have the whole table in front of us.

Person	Gender	Plurality	English	Arabic	Conj. #
3 rd	Masculine	Singular	He	فَعَلَ	1
		Dual	They (2M)	فَعَلَا	2
		Plural	They (3+M)	فَعَلُوا	3
	Feminine	Singular	She	فَعَلَتْ	4
		Dual	They (2F)	فَعَلَتَا	5
		Plural	They (3+F)	فَعَلْنَ	6
2 nd	Masculine	Singular	You (1M)	فَعَلْتَ	7
		Dual	You (2M)	فَعَلْتُمَا	8
		Plural	You (3+M)	فَعَلْتُمْ	9
	Feminine	Singular	You (1F)	فَعَلْتِ	10
		Dual	You (2F)	فَعَلْتُمَا	11
		Plural	You (3+F)	فَعَلْتُنَّ	12
1 st	Masculine / Feminine	Singular	I	فَعَلْتُ	13
		Plural	We	فَعَلْنَا	14

Passive Voice

Let's wrap this up. To convey the past tense, the vowels on all 3 letters was : فتحة - فتحة - فتحة : [ف _ ع _ ل].

If you wanted to make that passive. Instead of conveying the meanings of: "he helped, they helped, they helped, she helped, they helped, you helped, I helped, we helped", you are conveying the meanings of: "he was helped, they were helped, she was helped, you were helped, I was helped, we were helped".

How is that done?

That is by making 2 simple vowel changes to the earlier pattern. The second to last letter which is the ع receives a كسرة [ـِ], and the very first letter receives a ضمة [ـُ]. فَعَلَ would become فُعِلَ.

Now those endings which we discussed [تُ، تَ، تِ] etc are no longer representing the **doer**.

They are now representing the **object** and the subject is missing. The doer is suppressed and the verb is attributed to the object. The rest stays the same.



He was helped	نُصِرَ
They (2m) were helped	نُصِرَا
They (3+m) were helped	نُصِرُوا
She was helped	نُصِرَتْ
They (2f) were helped	نُصِرَتَا
They (3+f) were helped	نُصِرْنَ
You (1m) were helped	نُصِرْتَ
You (2m) were helped	نُصِرْتُمَا
You (3+m) were helped	نُصِرْتُمْ
You (1f) were helped	نُصِرْتِ
You (2f) were helped	نُصِرْتُمَا
You (3+f) were helped	نُصِرْتُنَّ
I was helped	نُصِرْتُ
We were helped	نُصِرْنَا

Negative verbs

Simply add ما at the front. ما is a particle and means “not”. Instead of “he helped”, it would become “he did not help”. Instead of “she helped”, it would become “she did not help”. On the passive side, instead of “he was helped”, it would become “he was not helped” etc.

Active		Passive
مَا فَعَلَ		مَا فُعِلَ
Place the particle مَا before the verb to make it negative		
Examples:		
He did not help مَا نَصَرَ		He was not helped مَا نُصِرَ
She did not help مَا نَصَرَتْ		She was not helped مَا نُصِرَتْ
We did not help مَا نَصَرْنَا		We were not helped مَا نُصِرْنَا

That pretty much concludes the presentation.

Now there are 4 tables:

- نَصَرَ
- نُصِرَ
- مَا نَصَرَ
- مَا نُصِرَ

Now that we are done with the past tense verb table, and we developed it line by line, I'd like to ask you to post a comment under the video. Let me know how much of the table you were able to memorise just by watching the video. If you got to a higher percentage of maybe 60/70% it would be a good idea to rewind the video and re-watch (re-read this transcript). Once you have re-watched, post beneath the video. I have been sharing this material for 5/6 years, and a great deal of people say they memorised the table *just* by watching it, without having to tediously sit down and memorise.

صرف is not very complicated. The verb tables need to be conceptually taught in a way that creates a mental imprint and an appreciation of why we need this.

The first 20 minutes of the video was like “sharpening the axe”. That is what we do at the beginning, then it is a matter of filling in the slots.

If you like this method and if you think you can learn through this approach, then I would strongly encourage you to consider joining the Premium Program. These four videos are leading up to registration opening up for the Premium Program. I would suggest to click the link below this video and get on the early bird list. This way you will be able to guarantee for yourself a spot and jump ahead of the line.

This video was light, but I would strongly suggest you go back and re-watch the first and second video. The second video covered an incredible amount of material. The better you know the second video, the more you will be able to appreciate the fourth video. It talks about the grammatical states, and the human emotions and facial expressions. We will develop the total possible ways a noun can be used in a sentence, and how to differentiate between the roles, through a very particular method.

One sister watched the presentation about the grammatical states, and she said *“SubhanAllah, he covered more in an hour than I studied in an entire decade!”*