



Conversational

ARABIC

in **7** Days

- **Develop your confidence with interactive exercises**
- **More than 750 key phrases for all travel situations**
- **Organized for quick and easy reference on the go**

*Master Language Survival Skills
in Just One Week!*

Samy Abu-Taleb

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in **7** Days

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CONTENTS

Introduction		4
What kind of Arabic?		
Pronunciation		
1 youm litnein/Monday	Introductions and greetings	7
	Booking hotel accommodation	11
2 youm ittalaat/Tuesday	Ordering food and drink	16
	Refreshments	19
	Changing money	22
	Telling the time	26
3 youm larbaa/Wednesday	Finding your way	29
	Travelling by bus or taxi	34
	Sightseeing	39
4 youm ilkhamees/Thursday	Shopping for food, clothes and souvenirs	42
	Posting letters and making telephone calls	46
5 youm iggumaa/Friday	Long-distance travel	49
	Sport and leisure	52
6 youm issabt/Saturday	Health problems	57
	Eating out	63
7 youm ilHadd/Sunday	Talking with friends	67
Key to Exercises		76
English-Arabic Topic Vocabularies		79
Arabic-English Vocabulary (Alphabetically)		86
Arab Countries		91
Arabic Writing		92

Arabic in a Week is a short course which will equip you to deal with everyday situations when you visit any of the Arab countries: introducing yourself, asking for directions, booking accommodation, changing money, shopping, eating out, using the phone, using public transport and so on.

The course is divided into 7 units, each corresponding to a day of the week. Different topics are introduced in each unit to illustrate basic Arabic which can be used by tourists or business people during a short stay in an Arabic speaking country. Each unit includes short introductions to the topics covered, dialogues in everyday situations, lists of key words and phrases with their English equivalent, essential grammatical explanations, and exercises for practising spoken Arabic.

A key to exercises is given at the back of this book. English-Arabic vocabulary is listed under topic headings pp. 79-85 followed by an Arabic-English Vocabulary starting on p. 86.

What kind of Arabic?

There are two main varieties of Arabic: literary and colloquial. Literary Arabic is more formal. In its written form, it is used in official documents, newspapers, books, and formal letters. In its spoken form, it is used in public speeches, religious sermons, radio and television news bulletins and documentary programmes. Literary Arabic is standard and is used and understood by educated people in all the Arab countries. A table of the Arab countries is given on p. 91.

Colloquial Arabic is the spoken variety used for everyday purposes: at home, in the shops, offices, hotels, restaurants and places of entertainment. Due to the vast area of the Arab world, colloquial Arabic varies from country to country. Nevertheless, the dialect used in Cairo (the capital of Egypt) is recognised and understood almost everywhere in the Arab world. It is known as Cairene or Egyptian Arabic. Almost everyone in the Arab world is exposed to Egyptian Arabic as a result of listening to Egyptian radio programmes, importing Egyptian television programmes, videos and films and buying cassettes and records of Egyptian popular songs. In addition, millions of Egyptians travel to other Arab countries and millions of Arabs from other countries travel to Egypt for business, education and holidays.

The Arabic taught in this book is Egyptian Arabic. Some words and phrases which are used in non-Egyptian Arabic are also included wherever appropriate.

Pronunciation

Most of the sounds of Arabic are similar to the sounds of English. Only six or seven might be unfamiliar to English speakers. Arabic has its own alphabet of 29 letters, and is usually written from right to left in its own script (see p. 92).

In this book, however, Arabic sounds are represented by English letters, and written from left to right. Some English capital letters are used to represent certain Arabic sounds different from those represented by the corresponding small letters.

Some key words which visitors to Arab countries might need to recognise on signs or notice-boards are also written in Arabic and are introduced in the relevant chapters of the book.

The sounds of Arabic are divided into vowels and consonants. **Vowels** are either short or long.

Short vowels

a as in about, postman, e.g. samak (fish)
i as in bit, his, e.g. bmt (girl)
u as in put, foot, e.g. ruzz (rice)

Long vowels

aa as in hand, e.g. salaam (peace)
ee as in feed, e.g. sheek (cheque)
ou as in dome, e.g. yourn (day)
oo as in room, e.g. lagoon (lemon)
ei as in name, e.g. beif (house)

Note: **a** and **aa** are both influenced by certain consonants near them. The word baTT, for example, is pronounced like the English *but*, because of the **T** sound. The **aa** in the word DaabiT is pronounced like the *a* in *calm*, because of the **D** sound.

Consonants

The following Arabic consonants are similar to English ones.

b book **g** game **l** look
d day **h** home **m** man
f fun **k** king **n** noon
r room (r is always pronounced in Arabic regardless of its position in the word.)

s say **t** ten **y** yes
sh shine **w** well **z** zero

Please note that there are no **p** or **v** sounds in Arabic. Small **p** is usually replaced by **b** as in *bansyoum* for *pension*, and **v** is replaced by **f** as in *karnaafal* for *carnival*.

The Arabic consonants represented by the capital letters **S, D, T, Z** are vocal versions of **s, d, t, z**. You need to open your mouth as if you are saying **aah** and make the sound at the back of your mouth.

S SabaaH = morning **T** Tayyib = O.K.
D beid = eggs **Z** Zareef = charming

This sound is usually called a glottal stop. It is similar to the sound produced if you try to say *butter* or *bottle* without the **t**, as in *Cockney*.

Bill: 'ishshunaT ahih.
 Kamaal: Tayyib, ifaDDalu, 'ilcarabiyya fil maw'af.
 Catherine: shukran, huwwal huteil biceed?
 Nadya: la' ihuteil 'urayyib, mish biceed, laakin ishshunaT ti'eela.
 Bill: 'aywa, 'ishshunaT ti'eela giddan.
 Kamaal: Tayyib, ifaDDalu.

Words and phrases from the dialogue

SabaaH ilkheir
 'ana Bill Taylor
 wi di zmliti/zugti
 'ahlan wa sahlan
 furSa sa'ceeda
 'irriHla kaanit kwayyisa?
 'aywa
 'irriHla kaanit kwayyisa giddan
 'ishshunaT feiri?
 'ishshunaT ahih
 Tayyib
 ifaDDalu
 'ilcarabiyya fil maw'af
 shukran
 huwwal huteil biceed?
 la' ihuteil 'urayyib
 mish biceed
 laakin
 'ishshunaT ti'eela

Good morning
 I am Bill Taylor
 and this is my colleague/wife
 Hello
 pleased to meet you
 Was the flight good?
 Yes
 the flight was very good
 Where are the suitcases?
 The suitcases are here
 All right, O.K.
 Let's go
 The car is in the car park
 Thank you
 Is the hotel far away?
 No, the hotel is nearby
 not far
 but
 the suitcases are heavy

Introductions

In Arab countries people usually shake hands when they meet and when they say goodbye.

'ana Bill
 wi di zmliti (zimliti)
 wi da zmlileeli (zimeeli)
 wi di zugti
 wi da zougti

I am Bill
 and this is my (female) colleague
 and this is my (male) colleague
 and this is my wife
 and this is my husband

Greetings

SabaaH ilkheir/innoor
 masaa' ilkheir/innoor
 ahlan wa sahlan
 ahlan
 marHab/marHaba
 furSa sa'ceeda

good morning
 good afternoon/evening
 Hello/How do you do?
 Hello/How do you do?
 Hello/How do you do?
 Pleased to meet you.

SabaaH innoor and masaa'innoor mean 'Good morning' and 'Good evening' respectively but they are normally used as responses rather than to initiate greetings.

Polite expressions

Tayyib
 ifaDDalu
 ahukran
 min faDiak/faDiik
 'aywa
 la'

Well! All right
 let's go/after you (pl.)
 thanks/thank you
 please (m./f.)
 yes
 no

ifaDDalu is used in many situations and can also mean 'please go ahead' or 'here you are'.

Other useful expressions

irriHla kaanit?
 kwayyis/kwayyisa
 kwayyis giddan
 fein...?

The flight was.../Was the flight...?
 good, fine (m./f.)
 very good
 Where is/are...?

the way it works

Masculine and feminine

Words in Arabic are classified as nouns, verbs or prepositions. Nouns and verbs have masculine and feminine forms. In colloquial Arabic some nouns can be made feminine by adding the sound **a** to the end of the masculine form.

Examples

Masculine	Feminine	Meaning
zimeel	zimeela	colleague (noun)
zoug	zougaa	spouse (noun)
kwayyis	kwayyisa	good (adj.)
sareed	sareeda	pleased/happy (adj.)

Verbs have masculine and feminine forms for the singular, but only one form for the plural.

Examples

kaan he was (m. sing.)
 kaanit she was (f. pl.)
 kaanu they were (m. and f. pl.)

The definite article

It is the definite article in Arabic, like 'the' in English. The **l** sound in **il** disappears in some cases, and the first letter in the word is doubled instead.

Examples

huteil hotel
 carabiyya car
 ihuteil hotel
 ilcarabiyya the car

maw'af
rihla
shunaT

car park
flight
suitcases

ilnaw'af
irihla
ishshunaT

the car park
the flight
the suitcases

I am... and This is...

The Arabic for 'I am Bill' is 'ana Bill. (I/me Bill). The equivalent of the verb to be (am, is, are) in Arabic is not used in such structures as I am, he is, they are, this is, that is, etc. More examples are given below with their English translation.

'ana Bill
da zmeeli
di zugri
il-carabiyya fil maw'af
ishshunaT ti'eela

I Bill
I Catherine
This my colleague
This my wife
The car in the car park
The suitcases heavy

I am Bill
I am Catherine
This is my colleague (he)
'This is my wife (she)
The car is in the car park
(it)
The suitcases are heavy
(they)

My

To say 'my' in Arabic you add i sound at the end of the noun, whether it is masculine or feminine, singular or plural. But when the noun has a feminine ending with an a sound, the pronunciation of the word changes and ti replaces the a.

Examples

zoug
zouga
zimeela
shunaT
carabiyya

husband
wife
colleague
suitcases
car

zougi
zugti
zimeeli
zimulti
shunaTi
carabiyyiti

my husband
my wife
my colleague (m.)
my colleague (f.)
my suitcases
my car

things to do

1.1 Say the following in Arabic.

- 1 Hello!
- 2 Pleased to meet you.
- 3 I am Sally.
- 4 This is my colleague Tom.
- 5 I am Ahmad.
- 6 This is my wife Nadya.
- 7 Was the flight all right?
- 8 Yes, it was a very good flight.
- 9 Where is the car?
- 10 The car is in the car park.

BOOKING HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation There are two main types of accommodation for people on holidays or business for a short period: hotels with star rating, and boarding houses called **bansyoun**. Guests in both types are always asked to fill in registration forms on arrival, giving passport details. There are also Youth Hostels in the big cities like Cairo, Alexandria, Luxor and Aswan.



Look for the following signs

Hotel	funduq	فندق
Boarding House/Pension	bansyoun	بنسبون
Youth Hostel	beit shabaab	بيت شباب
Reception	'istiqbaal	استقبال

Prices are fixed in hotels and Youth Hostels, but subject to negotiation in boarding houses.

'ana eandi HagzI have a reservation

Catherine:	masaa' ilkheir.
Receptionist:	masaa' innoor, ayyi khidma?
Catherine:	'ana eandi Hagz huna.
Receptionist:	'i'ism min faDlik?
Catherine:	'ana 'ismi Catherine Evans.
Receptionist:	kaam feila?
Catherine:	talat layaali.
Receptionist:	'aywa feeh Hagz bismik.

