



# TEACH ME ARABIC



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Any good from this is from Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala  
and any mistake is from us.  
May Allah accept our efforts and make this a means to help you teach  
your children/students Arabic.



At Arabic Nest, we believe in empowering Muslim families in their mission  
of Raising Righteous Muslims, all with Arabic.

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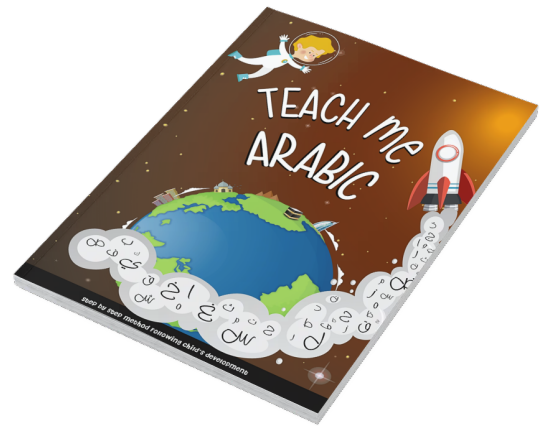
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# INTRODUCTION

This book details a method we have developed to help parents and teachers teach Arabic to children following their natural development.

The method is composed of 5 major stages that are inter-dependent and inter-connected. This means that there is a specific order to follow but you do not need to finish one stage completely to go to the next. You can be mixing the different stages as you progress along and might end up doing 3 stages together.



For whom?

- ➔ Any parent who wants to learn and teach Arabic to his child.
- ➔ Non-Arabic speakers with very little knowledge of Arabic (it is preferable to know the alphabet letters to make it easier to follow along).
- ➔ Arabic speakers who are not sure how to start and what to teach.

*\*The ages mentioned in this guide are purely for indication and cannot be followed too rigidly. The ages are also indicated aiming at bilingual children who have been exposed early on to the language. Each child is different and might progress differently.*

# Key Concepts

Before embarking on this Arabic Learning and Teaching journey, be sure to get familiar with some concepts used throughout the method.

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## Particularity of the Arabic Language

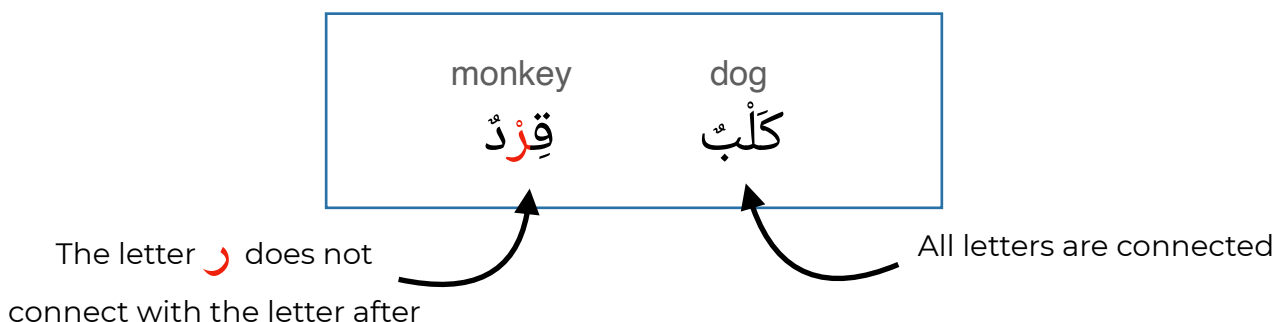
The Arabic Language might be very different from your mother tongue and thus it is necessary to be familiar with the specificity of the language before embarking on this journey.

Keep in mind that some of the grammar rules are not complete and are just an introduction.

## Cursive Aspect

The Arabic language, that is written from right to left, has a particularity as opposed to most latin languages nowadays, it only has one form, the cursive one, meaning that written letters are connected to each others.

In Arabic, there is an additional particularity when it comes to its cursive nature as some of the Arabic letters do not connect with the letter after (semi-connecting letters).



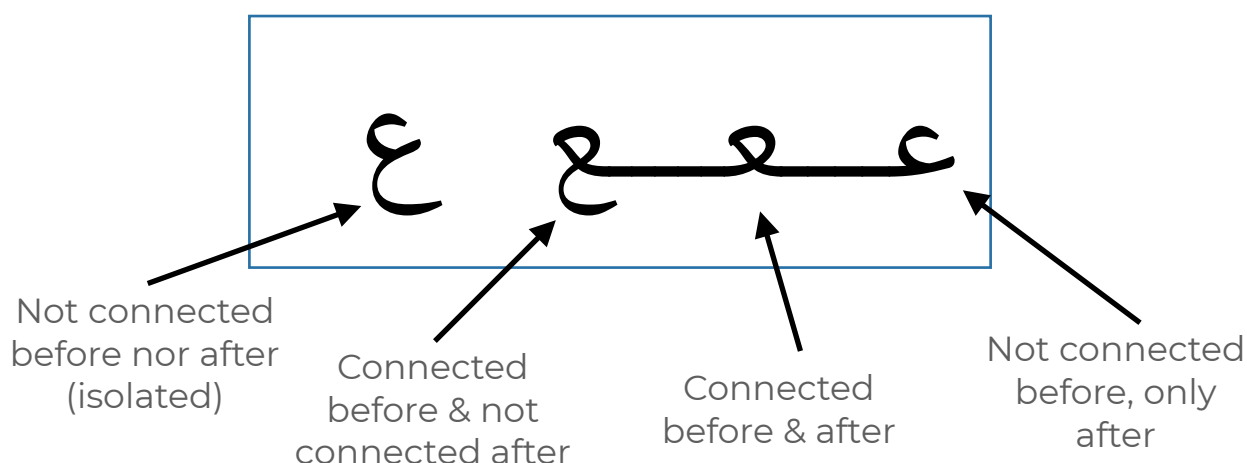
The semi-connecting letters are:

و	ز	ر	ذ	د	ا
waaw	zay	raa	dhaal	daal	alif

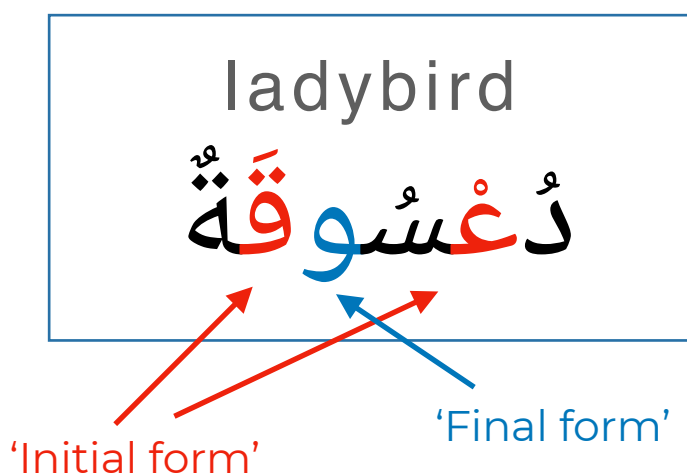
## Different Forms of The Letter

The second particularity is that one letter can have up to 4 different forms<sup>1</sup> depending on its connection to the letter after and before it.

Let's take an example, the letter ع 'ayn



These positions are often designated as isolated, initial, medial and final forms. While these labels can often be true, they are not totally accurate as what is referred to as 'initial form' can be found in the middle of a word or what is labeled 'final form' can be found in the middle of a word.



<sup>1</sup> The semi-connecting letters have only 2 forms.

## Vocalisation

The Arabic script uses marks that can be added on top or under the letters.

- **Harakat**, from the plural of the word *haraka* meaning movement, motion, are referred to as the short vowel marks. There are 3 *harakat* (*fatha, kasra, dhamma*).

The sukoon is the absence of 'movement', meaning the letter has no haraka and is stopped in its pronunciation.

*A letter with a sukoon can only appear after a letter with a haraka and thus cannot start a word.*

- **Mudud**, or long vowels, extend the sound of the vowels. These long vowels match their preceding short vowels.
- **Tanween**, or nunation, refers to doubling a vowel at the end of a word to indicate that the vowel is followed by the consonant ن n.
- **Shadda** is the doubling of a consonant. For example, the word دَرَسَ is actually دَرَّسَ (first consonant always with sukoon) but instead of writing ر twice we replace it with one ر with Shadda on it رّ.

Nunation تَنْوِين		long vowels المُدُّود		short vowels الحَرَكَات		Phonetic Marks عَلَامَاتِ التَّشْكِيل		
/an/ as in wh <b>en</b>	◌◌◌	/a:/ as in fa <b>ther</b>	ا / ي	/a/ as in ca <b>t</b>	◌◌◌	fatha فَتْحَة	Vowel Marks الحَرَكَات	
/in/ as in fi <b>n</b>	◌◌◌	/i:/ as in shee <b>p</b>	ي	/i/ as in me <b>e</b>	◌◌◌	kasra كَسْرَة		
/un/ as in <b>un</b> o (Spanish)	◌◌◌	/u:/ as in moo <b>n</b>	و	/u/ as in you <b>u</b>	◌◌◌	dhamma ضَمَّة		
absence of haraka						◌◌◌	sukoon سُكُون	
Sukoon + letter						◌◌◌	Shadda شَدَّة	



## Moon & Sun Letters

The Arabic letters are classified into 2 categories:

The sun letters (الْحُرُوفُ الشَّمْسِيَّةُ) and the moon letters (الْحُرُوفُ الْقَمَرِيَّةُ).

This classification is based on the way these letters affect the pronunciation of the definite article (ال) at the beginning of words.

The definite article is assimilated into the sun letters and loses its distinctive sound (only the alif 'ا' is pronounced). As a result, the sound at the beginning of the word takes the shadda mark.

### The 14 sun letters

ن	ل	ظ	ط	ض	ص	ش	س	ز	ر	ذ	د	ث	ت
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

the man ar-rajulu الرَّجُلُ	the ice ath-thalju الثَّلْجُ
-----------------------------------	------------------------------------

### The 14 moon letters

ه	ي	و	م	ك	ق	ف	غ	ع	خ	ح	ج	ب	ء/أ
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-----

the door al-babu البَابُ	the rain al-mataru المَطَرُ
--------------------------------	-----------------------------------

## Three-Letters Roots

Arabic is a language that works on a "root" system. This means that all Arabic words are derived from a "root" set of 3 or 4 consonants that contain the base meaning of the word. The added long and short vowels, prefixes, and suffixes will then modify the root to create different grammatical categories (verbs, adjectives, nouns).

Three letter root: ك - ت - ب

Meaning	Arabic
a book	كِتَاب
a writer	كَاتِب
an office	مَكْتَب
a library	مَكْتَبَة
written	مَكْتُوب
he writes	يَكْتُب
he wrote	كَتَب

Another example is the root (ك ح م), which connects the word for a mother's womb (رَحْم) to the word for loving mercy (رَحْمَة).

The Arabic dictionary is organized around these roots. That means that to look up a word, you need to know its root and what letter the root starts with — which may not be the first letter in the word!

## Masculin & Feminine Form

The gender of nouns in Arabic can either be masculine (المُذَكَّر) or feminine (المُؤنَّث).

The masculine is the basic form and thus the feminine form, derived from the masculine, usually requires a marker.

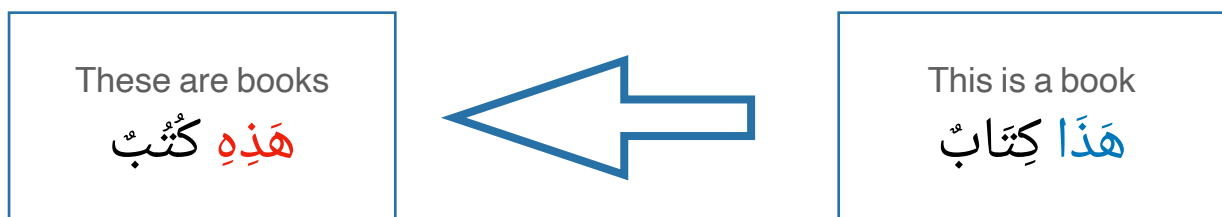
There are 3 main markers that define the feminine nouns, except for the unreal feminine (feminine that don't have a feminine marker but are feminine).

Markers of The Feminine		Example
ة	النَّاءُ الْمَرْبُوطَةُ	شَجَرَةٌ
ى	الألفُ الْمُقْصُورَةُ	الفَوْضَى
اء	الألفُ الْمَمْدُودَةُ	صَخْرَاءٌ

### أَسْمَاءُ الْإِشَارَةِ - Demonstrative pronouns

Feminine	Masculine
هَذِهِ بِنْتٌ	هَذَا وَلَدٌ
This is a girl	This is a boy

Plural nouns describing non-humans are considered feminine.



## Singular, Dual & Plural Form

In Arabic, nouns also have a specificity when it comes to number. Additionally to a singular and plural form, each noun<sup>2</sup> has a dual form for two units of the same thing.

Number	Example	العدد
Singular	قَلَمٌ	المُفْرَدُ
Dual	قَلَمَانِ / قَلَمَيْنِ	المُتَنَّى
Plural	أَقْلَامٌ	الجَمْعُ

### Dual form

The dual form is created by adding the suffix انِ (aani) or يْنِ (ayni).

### Plural form

The plural in Arabic is somehow different as there are two main particularity: sound plural & broken plural.

One form of sound plural exist for masculine (جَمْعُ المَذْكَرِ السَّالِمِ) and one for feminine (جَمْعُ المَوْثَّاتِ السَّالِمِ) and are created simply by adding a suffix to the singular form.

Broken plurals (جَمْعُ التَّكْسِيرِ) however change the internal structure of the singular (that's why the term 'broken' is used) and can have many forms.

Number	Example
Sound Masculine Plural	مُعَلِّمٌ ← مُعَلِّمُونَ
Sound Feminine Plural	كَلِمَةٌ ← كَلِمَاتٌ
Broken Plural	صَدِيقٌ ← أَصْدِقَاءٌ بَحْرٌ ← بَحَارٌ / أَبْحُرٌ / بُحُورٌ

<sup>2</sup> Verbs and adjectives can also have a dual form.

# The 3-Period Lesson

This lesson structure is extremely beneficial to break down the learning process into smaller, more manageable steps for both the parent and the child. It is usually conducted using 3 distinct items or concepts.

## 1<sup>st</sup> period: Naming

### How to proceed?

Name one by one each of the items/concepts to introduce to the child. Allow for the child to take his/her time to observe, touch, feel and contemplate each item as you introduce it.

#### NOTE

At this stage the child might not be able to repeat the word as you say it. That's totally fine and with repetition and the help of the other steps he/she will in shaa Allah slowly be able to.



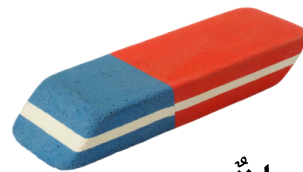
هَذَا قَلَمٌ

This is a pencil



هَذِهِ مِسْطَرَةٌ

This is a ruler



هَذِهِ مِفْحَاةٌ

This is a rubber

## 2<sup>nd</sup> period: Recognizing

### How to proceed?

Ask the child where is the item by naming it. Prompt him/her to point to the correct item. This will allow for checking he/she recognizes the item previously introduced. This is the first step to check the child has retained the information. Proceed with the other items.

#### NOTE

If your child isn't able to properly recognize the items, repeat the 1<sup>st</sup> period and try again as many times as necessary (either during the same session or over different days)



أَيْنَ الْقَلَمُ؟

Where is the pencil?

#### Grammar Point

When asking 'where is the pencil', we are using the definite article 'the'. In Arabic this article is ال and is added as a prefix to the noun (placed before).

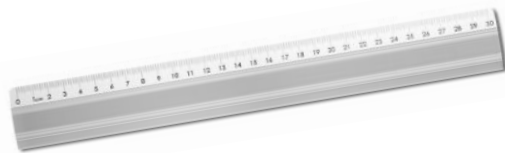
## 3<sup>rd</sup> period: Recalling

### How to proceed?

Point out to one of the items and have the child name it and then proceed with the other items.

#### NOTE

This 3<sup>rd</sup> part is the hardest and children might struggle with it at first. Start again with the first & second period. If you feel the child isn't ready yet, only start with the 2 first periods until the child is confident enough to attempt the third period.

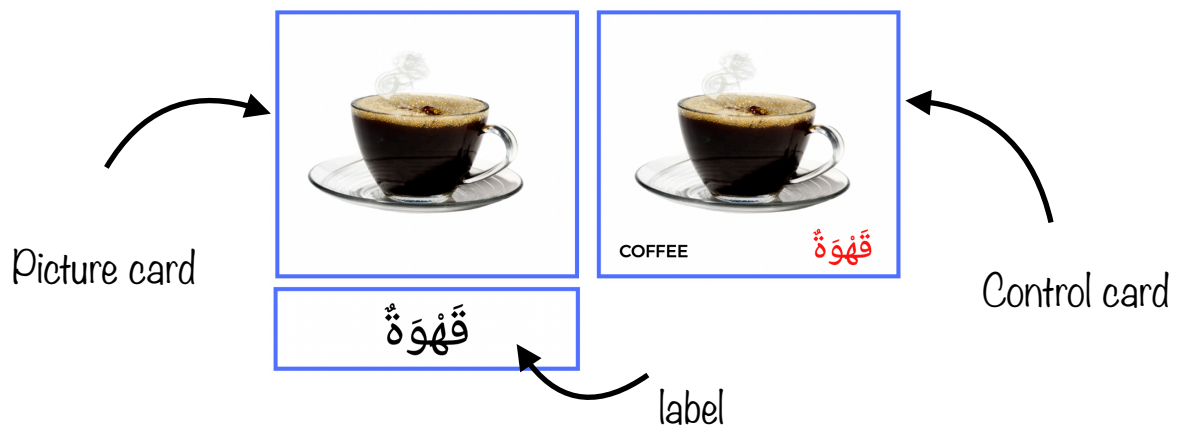


مَا هَذَا؟

What is this?

## The 3-Part Cards

These cards contain 3 elements: a picture card, a label and a picture card already including the vocabulary (*the latest is often referred to as 'control card'*).



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## Invitation to Learn & Play

We highly encourage to present the activities to the child in an organized and inviting manner.

### Activities

#### Display

Make a pre-selection of the activities you would like to introduce to your child to get him/her interested and excited. Be sure to have the activities and materials accessible and visible in a dedicated open space so the child can use them on his/her own when applicable.

#### Work

'Working' doesn't necessarily need to happen sitting on a chair at a table. For young children a lot of learning can happen on the floor, on sofas, on beds, at the kitchen table or counter and even more outside...

#### Follow the child's interests

Make sure to be attentive to your child's interests and to provide activities related to his interests as often as possible to make learning fun. Involve them in choosing and preparing the activities as much as possible too.

### Play & Have fun

*'Play is the work of the child'* Dr. Maria Montessori

Play should be one of the major forms of learning for young children and thus we highly encourage parents to seize learning opportunities through interactions and games as they arise in daily life.



---

## Progression

Following the Child's development means we take into account his Fitrah and Natural evolution.

When it comes to language learning, here are the main stages to keep in mind in shaa Allah.

## Stages

1. Language Acquisition (Exposure, Vocabulary, Sound Awareness)
2. Learning The Code
3. Writing (Coding)
4. Reading (Decoding)
5. Handwriting

## Degree of challenge

Find a balance between something that is boring and too easy and something that is too hard and discouraging.

### Easy to hard

Always start with easier activities (but still challenging) and increase the difficulty depending on your child response and engagement.

### One difficulty at a time

Introduce and work on one specific concept or skill to allow the child to focus on it fully. Isolating difficulty means you don't introduce more than one new skill at a time. Children can handle multiple concepts but these need to have been introduced separately and progressively.

*For example, do not simultaneously teach the letters forms and the harakat.*

## Flexibility

There isn't a perfect method that fits it all as each child is different and unique. Flexibility is necessary to adapt to you and your child's need. Try, experiment, reflect and readjust your method whenever needed.

**TEACHING**  
**ARABIC**  
**TO YOUR CHILD**  
*STEP BY STEP*

# Stage 1: Language Acquisition

## Exposure (Starting from birth)

Language exposure is the first and most important part in learning any language, way before the letters, the reading and all the activities you might find exciting and can't wait for your child to take part in. Before introducing any type of formal learning, the child needs to get familiar with the language, its specificities, its uniqueness, its sounds and intonations in a natural manner. This can successfully be achieved through immersing the child into the language as early and often as possible.

But when it comes to teaching a language that you, the parent, don't master fully (*or don't even speak at all*), it then becomes challenging, forcing some to even abandon the idea altogether.

### How can I teach my child Arabic when I can't speak to him/her in Arabic?

At Arabic Nest we are creating tailored resources just for YOU.

Yes, even if you do not know a word of Arabic! (*We however recommend you to at least get familiar with the Arabic alphabet and pronunciation as a starter for you, the parent, and only you*).



Our language acquisition sets '**Live The Arabic Language**' were thought and designed to provide practical solutions for the most common obstacles found by non-Arabic speakers & parents when attempting to teach their child Arabic.

They focus on the language acquisition aspect of language learning but can be used throughout the different stages of learning in shaa Allah.

## About our 'Live The Arabic Language' units

Through a set of hands-on activities and resources relevant to your daily life, you will in shaa Allah be able to empower yourself and your child to master the language and make it fully part of your life and identity as a true communication language.

These resources are meant to allow for language exposure no matter your fluency or knowledge of the language.

**Remember to stay consistent and to work slowly, step by step, for a truly sustainable learning experience.**

Some activities were conceived to be multi-age for families with more than one child to include different age groups and levels.

Most of the activities provide the necessary exposure for the child to discover and assimilate the different aspects of the language without even realizing it.

We also provide visual support occasionally to support the child learning and to encourage Arabic exposure through written form (*even if the child can't read or write yet*).



## Live the Arabic Language

**Each sub-unit contains a variety of materials including:**

### Vocabulary Cards



These cards can be used in a number of ways such as matching activities, 3-period lesson and games.

All our vocabulary is thought to be practical and can be used with the correct form (case<sup>3</sup> ending) in full sentences.

<sup>3</sup> There are 3 grammatical cases in Arabic; nominative, genitive, and accusative, that are defined by the final harakat of a word.

Posters



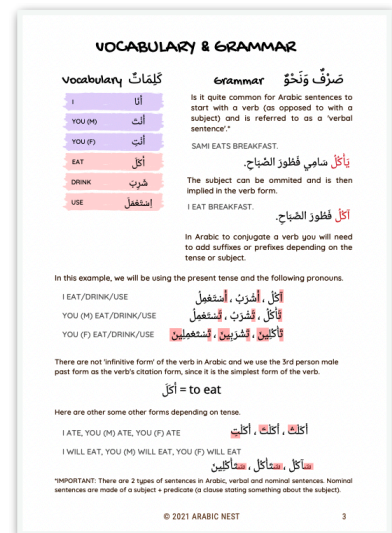
These serve as a quick overview and visual reference to easily access the vocabulary, especially for the parent.

Labels can be perfect for follow-up decoding exercises and can be adapted to the level and interest of the child.

Grammar Sheet

We know and understand how difficult and frustrating it can be to learn Arabic and thus we have included simple and progressive rules and aspects of the language for the parent to easily understand and apply.

Simple and clear grammar points are explained so the parent can better understand the language and gain confidence bi'idhni'Allah.



Bilingual Story Booklet



The small booklets can be used at different stages of the learning.

They are aimed at reinforcing the vocabulary acquired and even initiate conversations, one of the most effective ways to impart knowledge in a natural manner while providing opportunities to build stronger and healthier relationships with your children.

---

## Vocabulary (2/3+ years old)

Once the child has been exposed to some extent to the language, he/she then needs to acquire vocabulary to make sense of what he/she will write and read. The more vocabulary the child acquires, the easier the process of writing and reading will be.

Obviously through exposing your child to the language, he/she will naturally learn some vocabulary. This will in shaa Allah happen with consistent exposure and repetition through daily life activities.

### **What else can I do to help support my child in acquiring vocabulary?**

#### Introducing new vocabulary

All our 3-part cards are color-coded to make it easier for the parent to distinguish between **feminine** and **masculine** form.

Presenting in Arabic

هَذِهِ  
Feminine

هَذَا  
Masculine

#### → **Informally**

- Naming things we use daily while using them (clothes, kitchen items, food...)
- Showing things around us and naming them (sky, sun, rain...)
- Songs & rhymes
- Games (I spy with my little eyes, What did I hide?, Mystery bag, Memory)
- Numbers: Counting food items, counting to play, hide, do something...

#### → **Formally**

'Formal lessons' can be done to effectively help them acquire more vocabulary, especially if your child has entered the sensitive period of talking<sup>4</sup> (*but can be introduced before too*).

---

<sup>4</sup> This can be easily recognized by his/her eagerness to learn about things, wanting to name them, repeating words and sentences, mimicking talking (on the phone often!)

---

## Sound Awareness (3+ years old)

This stage focuses on oral input. The child needs to be exposed to the different sounds of the language in an isolated manner.

But for the child to master the pronunciation of the letters, he first needs to be able to hear them and identify them. Hence this particular stage, where the child's attention is directed toward recognizing sounds.

### How to do the activity?

Take 3 objects (alternatively pictures) that have contrasting starting sounds and that the child is familiar with. We do not recommend doing this activity with new vocabulary. You could however, after some time, introduce one new word out of the 3 words in shaa Allah.

Conduct a 2-period lesson (with only the two first period from the 3-period lesson) to help the child identify the different sounds in a word. This can be done for beginning sounds, ending sounds (especially to practice tanween recognition) and middle sounds in words.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> period: Name it.

- ➔ Name each of the objects by exaggerating the sound you are focusing on and by articulating clearly.

Point to the object and repeat in a different order one or two times.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> period: Identify it.

- ➔ Ask the child to point or show a particular sound.

If the child makes a mistake and isn't able to recognize the sound, prompt him or her to look at your mouth while saying the requested sound and in contrast saying the word he/she pointed to.

If the child still finds it difficult do not insist and try again another day with step 1 to introduce the sounds again.

Which word starts/ends with (+ the letter sound)?

Which word has (+ the letter sound)?

مَا هِيَ الْكَلِمَةُ الَّتِي تَبْدَأُ / تَنْتَهِي بِ...؟

مَا هِيَ الْكَلِمَةُ الَّتِي يُوجَدُ فِيهَا...؟

Rhyming songs or poems are also a perfect way to emphasize on sounds in a fun and appealing way.

# Stage 2: The Code

Now that the child has become familiar with the sounds and learned some vocabulary, it is time to introduce one essential element to language learning: The code.

You might not have paid much attention to it but written language is actually a CODE to transcribe sounds of a language into symbols, aka CODING or WRITING.

READING or DECODING comes then as a consequence:  
Only once you are able to code the language will you be able to decode it.

And subhan'Allah before the age of 6 the child's brain has an immense capacity for retaining this code.

---

## STEP 1: The Alphabet Letters (3+ years old)

This step requires sandpaper letters that you might find online or choose a Do It Yourself option.

Alternatively, you can get simple Arabic letters flashcards, a movable alphabet or write the letters yourself.

This step allows for the child to practice both visual, auditive and pre-writing skills.

NOTE: At this stage only isolated form<sup>5</sup> is necessary.

### **How do we introduce the letters?**

We start with 3 letters<sup>6</sup> at a time (that have contrasting pronunciation and shape) with a 3-period lesson. But this lesson is somehow different as an oral input (pronunciation of the letter) is added as well as tactile one (tracing of the letter).

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<sup>5</sup> Arabic letters have up to 4 forms (cf. next section) but in order not to confuse the child only the isolated form is required at this initial stage.

<sup>6</sup> We do not recommend you start with the letter Alif ا as it is very complex and should be introduced when starting the vowels.



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## The Alphabet Letters

### 1<sup>st</sup> period:

Name each of the letters by their sound<sup>7</sup> while tracing it with your finger<sup>8</sup> on the sandpaper letters.

Allow for the child to do the same after you. Do not hesitate to show again the movement.

This is (+ the letter sound)      هَذَا

It is also important to connect each letter to a word (beginning with that letter) to help the child relate to the letters.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> period:

Pronounce the sound and ask the child to point to the letter.

You can also have the child trace it again as they point at it for more practice.

Where is (+ the letter sound)?      أَيَّنَ ...؟

### 3<sup>rd</sup> period:

Point to a letter and ask the child to sound it and trace it.

What is this?      مَا هَذَا؟

### **Extra practice:**

Match it up!

Select 3 letters from the ones you have already introduced and find some objects (or pictures) that start with those letters. Try using as much as possible vocabulary the child is familiar with.

Place all 3 letters in front of the child and the objects in a small basket or box.

Have the child pick one of the objects and name it. Then Invite the child to match the object to the letter.

With which letter  
does this word start?

مَا هُوَ الْحَرْفُ الَّذِي تَبْدَأُ بِهِ  
هَذِهِ الْكَلِمَةُ؟

---

<sup>7</sup> Avoiding to use the names of the letter at this initial stage can make reading easier later on.

<sup>8</sup> You may use 2 fingers (index and middle finger) to trace the letters to prepare the child for holding a pencil.

## STEP 2: Four Letter-Positions

At this stage we explain that each letter can have up to 4 forms depending on its connection to the letter before (if any) and after.



### How to introduce the 4 letter-positions?

Display the other shapes of the letter together with the isolated form they have already encountered. Select one letter to work on.

1. Show different words with the same letter using different forms (highlight/point to a particular letter and observe the differences). Explain that each letter has a different form because they have a connection ✓ or not ✗ before and after.

عُضْفُورٌ



مَلْعَقَةٌ



بَائِعٌ



مِذْيَاعٌ



2. Place the four different forms of the letter and ask the child to sort words according to the forms of the letter.
3. Invite the child to place the correct form of the letter. Cover the letter in each word and ask the child to find the correct form for each blank. If the child struggles, be sure to prompt to check if it is connecting to the letters around. Let the child try and experiment and avoid correcting.

Once the child has acquired some letters<sup>9</sup> and their different forms we can start the coding process.

<sup>9</sup> Around 10 letters at least.

# Stage 3: Writing (Coding)

To follow the child's natural development, allowing for writing before reading is a must.

But the child isn't yet ready to hold a pencil and write and forcing him/her through repetitive and boring tracing activities might prove to be counterproductive and go against his development.

However, you might observe that your child has entered the sensitive period<sup>10</sup> for language and wants to write and read.

## Then what should I do?

The alternative to get around this is to offer the child another way that can satisfy his need for writing when his hand isn't ready yet: The movable alphabet.

A movable alphabet is a set of individually cut letters that can be placed next to each other to form words. As you have seen previously the uniqueness of the Arabic letters makes it that the Arabic movable alphabet will not contain 28 letters but rather at least 100 letters (22 letters x 4 forms + 6 semi-connecting letter x 2 forms).

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## Composing Words (3,5+ years old)

Thanks to the movable alphabet, the child will thus be able to write. Indeed, he/she can now use the code to compose words = CODING.

For this stage to be successful bi'idhni'Allah, make sure your child has started to gain a phonemic awareness<sup>11</sup> and has acquired a few letters (and their different forms).

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<sup>10</sup> Some commonly observed signs that your child has entered his sensitive period for writing & reading: pretending to write words and sentences by scribbling, pretending to read a storybook, identifying letters in their environment (this period can vary from one child to another).

<sup>11</sup> Been able to recognize the sounds in a word, cf. 'Sound Awareness' in **Stage 1: Language Acquisition**. Phonemes are the smallest mental units of sound.

### Preparation:

Display the movable alphabet by placing all the letters in alphabetical order on 4 rows from right to left (1<sup>st</sup> row for the 'beginning form', 2<sup>nd</sup> one for the 'middle' form, 3<sup>rd</sup> one for the 'final' form and last row for the isolated form).

It might be useful to add a reminder of the different connections for each row<sup>12</sup>.

Select items you have in your house and that the child is familiar with and follow the suggested progression outline. Alternatively, use images if you really can't find suitable objects.

Tell the child that you are going to write (compose) words in Arabic. Present one of the object and make sure the child knows how to say the word.

### Method:

Prompt the child,

'What are the sounds you hear in the word (+ word)?'

مَا هِيَ الْأَصْوَاتُ الَّتِي تَسْمَعُهَا فِي كَلِمَةٍ...

When the child has identified the first sound ask him/her to find the corresponding letter from the movable alphabet.

Point out that this is the first letter of the word and thus it is not connected with any letter before it. Invite child to choose which form of the letter would be most suitable. Do not correct the child at this stage.

Then ask,

'What do you hear after (+ first sound)?'

مَاذَا تَسْمَعُ بَعْدَ ...؟

As in the previous step prompt the child to find the corresponding letter and to choose the adequate form.

Proceed with the next sound until the word is complete.

Do not hesitate to exaggerate the sounds and direct the child's attention towards your mouth and pronunciation.

The child can check his work with the help of control cards (3-part cards).

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<sup>12</sup> cf **Stage 2: The Code**, STEP 2: Four letter-positions

### *Progression:*

**Step 1:** Simple words with 2 to 3 letters, all connecting letters, no long vowels.

**Step 2:** Words with 3 to 4 letters, introducing semi-connecting letters, no long vowels.

### ***Introducing semi-connecting letters***

- Choose one of the semi-connecting letters and display the 2 forms and display any other letter the child is familiar with along with its 4 forms.
- Prompt the child to observe the difference between these two letters.
- Point out that there isn't a 'connection' after the semi-connecting letter (these letters connect partially, only from the right).

**Step 3:** Words with 3 to 4 letters, all letters, introducing long vowels<sup>13</sup>.

**Step 4:** Words with similar sounds.

### ***Working with similar sounds***

- Review 2 letters that have similar sound using the 3-period lesson.
- Choose a word starting with each of the letter (using objects or picture cards) and ask the child to write them.
- Insist on the letter and exaggerate the pronunciation and direct the child's attention on your mouth as you pronounce.

**Step 5:** Any word that has more 4 letters words.

**Step 6:** Introduce words with special characters<sup>14</sup> and explain as you compose the words. Introducing special characters can also be done during the reading stage.

<sup>13</sup> This step can only be done once the long vowels have been introduced, cf. Stage 4: **Reading**.

<sup>14</sup> عى و ا ء ة لا

# Stage 4: Reading (Decoding)

In order for this stage to be successful bi'idhni'Allah, it is extremely important that the child has acquired sufficient vocabulary. Reading words that the child has never encountered won't allow to create the natural connection that the decoding process requires.

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## Reading Strategy

To support the decoding process we can use 3-part cards. These cards are great for children who are starting to read and are familiar with enough letters/vocabulary.

### How to use them?

#### 1<sup>st</sup> time:

To help the child understand how to use the cards, demonstrate first to him/her how to do it.

1. Place the picture cards (those without the written word) on a row next to each other and name each of the item as you place them<sup>15</sup>.
2. Take one label from the pile and start sounding each letter one after the other.
3. Repeat what you read and place it under the correct picture card.
4. Once you have gone through all the labels, take the picture cards with the written word (control card) and check all words were matched correctly<sup>16</sup>.

#### Advanced learner:

In order to make it a bit more challenging to the child (especially if he/she is very familiar with the picture cards) you can proceed a bit differently.

1. Don't show the images first and keep them in a pile.
2. Have the child pick a label and then read.
3. Have the child search in the picture cards pile for the correct picture.

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<sup>15</sup> This is to ensure that the child is indeed familiar with all the vocabulary presented. A 3-period lesson could be used here to reinforce the vocabulary.

<sup>16</sup> This step is not mandatory as it usually won't be necessary but can serve as a reference in case of doubt.

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## Reading Progression

We have divided the decoding process into different stages related to specific aspects of the Arabic language. These are color-coded to match our labels from the 3-part cards from our 'Live The Arabic Language' sets.

We recommend you introduce these concepts in the following order:

### #1: Pink Series - Short Vowels

#### How to introduce **short vowels**<sup>17</sup>?

1. Start by choosing one letter from the alphabet and place this letter three times, one with each vowel (with flashcards, movable alphabet or writing on a board).
2. Introduce the 3 short vowels through a 3-period lesson making sure to clearly show how your mouth pronounces each vowel.
3. Once you are done with this lesson, ask the child: What is the difference between the three letters? Point to one of the short vowels if the child doesn't see the difference and explain that the marks<sup>18</sup> are added to a letter to make different sounds: the sound /a/ as in **ca**t, /i/ as in m**e** and /u/ as in **yo**u, and that it can be added to any letter.
4. Take another letter and proceed again in the same way.

### #2: Blue Series - Sukoon

#### What is a **Sukoon**?

**Sukoon** refers to the absence of haraka. A letter with a sukoon can only be pronounced if following a vocalized letter.

This is symbolized by a circle on top of the letter: 

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<sup>17</sup> Check the section: Particularity of the Arabic Language '**Vocalisation**' in Key Concepts.

<sup>18</sup> We encourage to only introduce the terms *fatha*, *kasra* and *dhamma* after the child has seen a few letters.

This translates into a blend of the preceding letter and the one with sukoon. Prompt children to add the sound of the letter (without any haraka) to the vocalized letter before it when there is a sukoon.

كَلْبٌ = kalbun  
dog

قِرْدٌ = qirdun  
monkey

Children will learn as they read and practice words with sukoon. Provide numerous examples.

If your child struggles with sukoon, you can start with the long vowels first and then move onto sukoon. Understanding sukoon is however a prerequisite to understand the shadda (cf *Orange Series - Shadda*).

### #3: Green Series - Long Vowels

Each of the 3 short vowels have corresponding **long vowels**.

#### How to introduce long vowels?

Start with one long vowel at a time.

We will take as an example the long vowel for the fatha.

1. Review the short vowel: Display letters with the fatha. Make sure your child knows how to pronounce the vocalized letter properly and introduce (if you haven't yet) the name of the vowel 'fatha'.



This is a fatha /a/

هَذِهِ فَتْحَةٌ

2. Display two pictures (one that represents a word that has a short vowel and the other one that contains the corresponding long vowel) and pronounce the two words. Ask the child to listen and see if there is a difference in how the letter is pronounced.



If the child wasn't able to recognize the difference, point out that one is short and the other one is long and repeat the sounds by exaggerating.



3. Now write the words with the child starting with the one with short vowel. When you are writing the word with the long vowel tell the child that in order to make the long vowel sound we will add alif ا.
4. Read a few examples that contain the long vowel for the child to retain the information better.

Our **Green Series** use colors to highlight the long vowels and make it easier for the child to read.

بَاب

5. Proceed the same with the other long vowels.

6. Introduce special characters: لَآ - آ

#4: Orange Series - Shadda

**Shadda** is the doubling of a consonant with the first consonant having a sukoon.

1. Take an easy word containing a shade such as قِطَّة (you can use a picture of the word when possible).
2. Write the word with the child decomposing each sound. You should have written this:

قِطَّة

3. Now write the word correctly with the shadda (or alternatively use a label and ask the child what is different between what you initially wrote and the correctly written word). He/she should notice that the

letter isn't written twice and that there is a new mark on top of the letter. Guide the child to come to understand this.

4. Tell the child that when we have the same consonant twice next to each other and the first one has a sukoon we only write it once but add the shadda. Trace the shadda with your finger and prompt the child to do the same.
5. Practice with additional words.

### **Haraka and shadda:**

*Point out to the place of the harakat around the shadda;  
If the second consonant takes a fatha or dhamma, the vowel mark is placed on top of the shadda, whereas if it takes a kasra, the mark is placed under the shadda (between the consonant and the shadda) instead of its usual place below the consonant.*

تُورَةٌ  
a skirt

جَرِّبْ  
try!

قِطَّةٌ  
a cat

#5: Brown Series - Tanween (sentences)

Tanween is the double end-of-word vowel mark. It is used in particular to define the determination of names (whether it is a defined or undefined name) or their case<sup>19</sup>.

### **How to introduce tanween?**

1. Start by choosing one letter from the alphabet and place this letter 2 times. Place on the first one a short vowel and the corresponding tanween on the second.

فُ فُ

<sup>19</sup> It is not necessary at this stage to introduce these aspects to the child yet.

## Reading Progression

2. Use the 3-period lesson to teach the tanween marks while reviewing the short vowel.
3. Introduce the 3 tanween in the same way.
4. Once all have been presented, review together the 3 different tanween with a 3-period lesson.
5. Practice recognizing the tanween through reading, books.

At this stage, the child should have gained confidence and automatism to decode words and can be introduced progressively to full sentences.

Through the help of complete sentences, children will be able to practice and master them and even unconsciously understand the patterns of the grammatical aspects (definiteness and cases).

**IMPORTANT:** For the tanween al-fatha, we add an additional alif ا after the letter except when it ends with a ة (ta marbuta) or اء (alif and hamza).

هَذَا كَفَّكَ.      لَيْسَتْ قُبَّعَةٌ جَدِيدَةً.  
أَكُلُ كَفَّكَ.      أَشْرَبُ مَاءً.

### #6: Red Series - Hamza

The letter 'Alif - ا' is often considered as one letter. In our method, we however prefer to make a clear distinction between the alif and the hamza at the stage.

### Why such a distinction?

First of all, it is to avoid confusing the child. Indeed when we introduce the long vowels, we tell the child that we will add an alif to the short vowel to make it long. If the child has associated the alif letter with both the alif ا and the hamza ء as in اء, he/she might then



write the long vowel the same way.

Then, it is because there are specific spelling rules for hamza.

### What are the rules for spelling hamza?

The hamza can be written in 4 different ways: on a **ا و ي** or on no seat<sup>20</sup> at all.

No seat	و	ي	ا
سَمَاءٌ A thing	لُؤْلُؤٌ Pearls	سَائِلٌ Liquid	أَكْتُبُ I write
قِرَاءَةٌ A reading	تَثَاوُبٌ Yawning	بَيْتٌ A well	أُمِّي My mother
ضَوْءٌ A light	سُؤَالٌ A Question	سَيِّئٌ Bad	يَأْخُذُ He takes

#### Initial Hamza:

If the hamza is the first letter of a word, it will always sit on an alif.

This is also valid if the word is attached to the definite article **ال** or if it is directly attached to a preposition **لِ، فِ**.

أَنَا.      الْأَسْبُوعُ.      لِأَبِي.

#### Middle Hamza:

When the hamza is found in the middle of a word, its seat will depend on its short vowel and the short vowel preceding it according to the order of precedence as follow:

<sup>20</sup> The seat is the term used to indicate the long vowel that the hamza sits on.

Kasra > Dhamma > Fatha > Sukoon

1. **Kasra:** If the short vowel before the hamza is a kasra, then the seat is ا
2. **Dhamma:** If there is no kasra, and one of the vowels is a dhamma, the seat will be و
3. **Fatha:** If there is no kasra or dhamma, but there is a fatha, then the seat is ا
4. Long Vowels:

- If a hamza is preceded by a long vowel and carries a fatha or sukoon, then it will not have a seat. Otherwise the hamza's seat will correspond to the short vowel on the hamza.

*Exception: A hamza that is preceded by a ي will sit on a ا, no matter what is the short vowel of the hamza.*

سُئِلَ . سُؤَالَ . شَانِ . هَيْئَةً . — Precedence order

Final Hamza:

- If a hamza is the last letter in a word, then the preceding short vowel will determine the seat. The final short vowel of a word will never determine the seat.

*Remark: If the hamza is preceded by a long vowel or a sukoon, then there is no seat.*

نَشَأَ . شَاطِئًا . تَبَاطُؤًا .

# Stage 5: Writing (Handwriting)

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## Pre-writing

Various daily life activities contribute to preparing the hand of the child to write. Indeed, we often overlook simple life skills activities that promote hand-eye coordination as well as involve hand muscles that are preparing the ground for future writing work.

Life skills activities also help promote concentration, coordination and order that are also essential skills needed for writing.

Introducing handwriting by only offering a pencil to the child when his/her hand isn't ready can prove to be harmful to their writing skills.

Find here some activities that should be encouraged early on to help prepare the hand through art and practical life skills.

### Activities to strengthen the hand muscles:

- play dough, clay, catching and throwing a ball, brushing hair, brushing your teeth, eating with a spoon or fork, zipping pants, buttoning shirts, putting away toys...

### Activities that develop three-finger grip:

- activities with knobs such as knobbed puzzles, transferring with a spoon, scissors work, pin poking, pouring activities from right to left, tweezing
- painting: fingers, cotton buds, paintbrushes
- coloring (mandala)
- Metal insets<sup>21</sup> (or stencil tracing)

*Remember! Movements should be made from right to left for Arabic (you can also do the same activities from left to right if you have another language that requires this text orientation such as English, French, Spanish).*

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<sup>21</sup> Activity of tracing removable shapes that have straight-lined sides and curved ones to give their hands a chance to practice creating a variety of lines. Children are encouraged to create different patterns with colored pencils while staying inside the original traced lines.

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## Practicing Writing (4,5+ years old)

### Writing letters

There are a number of activities that contribute to preparing the tracing of letters specifically:

#### 1. Sandpaper letters

As seen previously, tracing the letters on sandpaper allows a muscular memory of the letter.

When it comes to Arabic, one letter can have up to 4 forms that can sometimes be very different in shape. Thus, it is extremely important for the child to practice tracing all the forms too.

- ➔ Choose one letter from the sandpaper letters. Review the pronunciation of the letter.
- ➔ Demonstrate to the child how to trace the letter using two fingers.

We will trace on the letter  
with our fingers

سَنَرَسُمُ فَوْقَ الْحَرْفِ بِأَصَابِعِنَا

- ➔ Invite the child to trace also.
- ➔ Provide the child with additional sandpaper letters for the other forms of the letters (or another sensorial option such as a relief glass liner or yarn). Demonstrate & invite again to trace.

#### 2. Sensorial tray for tracing

Children learn better when all their senses are used and thus combining sandpaper letters with sensorial trays<sup>22</sup> will enhance their learning in shaa Allah.

- ➔ Have the child trace 3 times the sandpaper letter with 2 fingers and then invite him/her to trace it in the sensorial tray.
- ➔ Proceed the same with the additional forms.

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<sup>22</sup> Place sand on a tray so it covers it all (but not too much so that when the child traces the letters the bottom of the tray appears). You can use a cake mold or pan and add essential oils too.

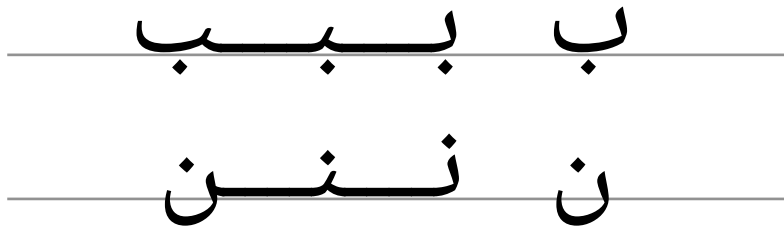
3. Dry erase board or chalkboard

With the use of the sandpaper letters, demonstrate to the child how to write the letters on a board.

- ➔ Start first by tracing again the isolated letter form on the sandpaper letter and then write it several times on a blank board in a straight, horizontal line.
- ➔ Erase the first letter with a small piece of sponge in the same manner you wrote it. You can now invite the child to erase the other letters you wrote and to attempt writing the letter him/herself.
- ➔ Proceed the same with the other forms of the letter.

*Progression: Blank board and then ruled board to guide the placement of letters.*

*Observation: It is interesting to work on similar shaped letters to point TO the similarities and differences, especially when it comes to the various forms for each letter.*



4. Paper and pencil

Make available to the child different types of papers to follow his/her progression: White paper, ruled, and then ruled with one line, ruled with two and more at the bottom to allow for the use of pictures, drawing.

Small notebooks can be especially interesting to avoid loose papers and follow the progression of the child.

We will write the letters on the paper سَنَكْتُبُ الحُرُوفَ عَلَى الوَرَقِ



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## Practicing Writing

- ➔ Write one letter and make sure the child knows the sound of the letter.
- ➔ Invite the child to write the letters in his notebook across the line next to the letter you wrote.

### **Going beyond letters**

*Progression: individual letters, words, pictures/drawings to label, phrases and finally sentences.*

#### 5. Copywork

Once children have attempted writing all the letters several times, you can invite children to copy words they have created with the movable alphabet onto their board or paper/notebooks. You can also use visual support found in their environment (labels, containers, packages, signs...) as well as story books.

When the child feels more confident, you could offer to copy some short poems, rhymes or even Quranic verses.

*Advanced level: Write a sentences or provide cards containing sentences and have the child read it. Have the child put the card face down and write the sentence from memory. The child can then turn the card and check what he/she wrote.*