

امتحان الكفاءة في اللغة العربية

ARABIC PROFICIENCY TEST

EXAMINEE HANDBOOK

Copyright © Raji M. Rammuny, 1992

GENERAL INFORMATION

The **Arabic Proficiency Test (APT)** is designed to distinguish various levels of proficiency in Arabic ranging from Novice High through Intermediate and Advanced to Superior. It consists of three separate sections: Listening and Reading Comprehension, Speaking, and Writing. The test is not based on any particular textbook or course of study, but on the kinds of language-use situations that would be encountered in real-life contexts in order to give an overall feeling of the authenticity of language to the test as a whole.

Each section contains a set of instructions printed in the test booklet, specifying the purpose of the test, the number of items it includes, the time needed to complete it, and one or more examples to explain how to do the items. Regardless of the number of years you have studied Arabic, you are encouraged to go as far as you can with the test. The "levels" as defined here do NOT necessarily correspond to the number of years or contact hours spent in studying Arabic.

You will be provided with a packet of materials which contains three test booklets (Listening and Reading Comprehension, Speaking, and Writing), two machine-scorable answer sheets including background questionnaires, and a blank tape on which your responses will be recorded during the administration of the Speaking section.

The total testing time to complete the three sections will be approximately 3 hours and 35 minutes. One hour and 50 minutes are to be allotted for the Listening and Reading Comprehension sections, 45 minutes for Speaking, and one hour for Writing. It is suggested that in order to finish each section, you work as quickly as possible and not spend too much time on any one item.

PREPARING FOR THE TEST

As stated in the General Information section, the APT is a test of general proficiency which is not based on any particular textbook or course of study and, therefore, does not require intensive Arabic study or review prior to taking the test. The best preparation for the test is to familiarize yourself with the general description of the test, the test directions in the individual sections, and sample test questions.

The following materials are prohibited in the testing room: books, dictionaries, personal recording devices, notes, and papers. Any cheating whatsoever will result in dismissal from the testing room and cancellation of your registration for the test.

Your score on the test will be based on the number of questions you answer correctly; so it will be to your advantage to answer every question, even though you may not be sure that your answer is correct. There is no penalty for guessing.

TEST DIRECTIONS AND SAMPLE QUESTIONS

A. LISTENING AND READING COMPREHENSION

This test is designed to evaluate your ability to understand spoken and written Arabic. The test consists of two sections, Listening Comprehension and Reading Comprehension.

1. Listening Comprehension

The Listening Comprehension section includes greetings, simple utterances, conversations, radio and TV announcements, short descriptions and narratives, and other types of passages of increasing difficulty, such as proverbs, jokes and poetry readings. All spoken passages have been selected from live recordings of radio and TV programs, lectures, discussions, and brief exchanges of educated spoken Arabic. These selections have been copied on a tape which will be played to you at the time of testing.

For the sample questions, the material enclosed in boxes represents spoken passages that will not appear in print.

Part One

This part consists of short recorded Arabic utterances. Each utterance is followed by a spoken question or statement about it in English. You have a few seconds after each item to choose the correct response from the four English options printed in the test booklet and mark it on your answer sheet. The following is a sample item.

تفضل القهوة.

What does the speaker want?

- (A) To drink coffee.
- (B) To invite the listener to a cafe.
- (C) To offer the listener some coffee.
- (D) To ask the listener for some coffee.

Of the four choices, C "to offer the listener some coffee" is the correct answer to the question. Therefore, if this were one of the test questions, you would darken the circle below the letter (C) on your answer sheet.

Note: In parts two and three of the Listening Comprehension test, the test items are based on a variety of short spoken authentic passages in Standard Arabic spoken by different speakers. The procedure of handling these two parts is the same as in part one. The following item is given for practice. Check the correct answers on page 8 after you have attempted to answer the practice questions.

ذكرت الصحف الفرنسية أن خطابا أرسل بالبريد الجوي من مستعمرة الصومال الفرنسي (جيبوتي حالياً) وصل إلى مدينة بوردو الفرنسية بعد ٢٥ سنة. كان جندي فرنسي يخدم في هذه المستعمرة قد بعث بهذه الرسالة إلى أخته التي تسكن في مدينة بوردو عام ١٩٦٥. كان عمر الأخت وقتها ١٧ سنة وقد أصبحت الآن (عام ١٩٩١) أما لأربعة أطفال.

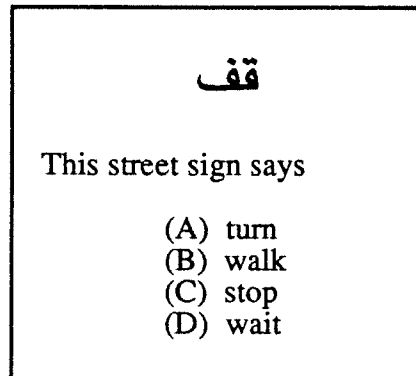
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. What kind of event is described above? | 2. According to this news item, the age of the girl in 1991 is |
| (A) Birth of quadruplets. | (A) 17 years |
| (B) Delay of a letter. | (B) 25 years |
| (C) Independence of Jibouti. | (C) 42 years |
| (D) Meeting between a soldier and his sister. | (D) 65 years |

2. Reading Comprehension

In the Reading Comprehension section, you will read and answer questions about a variety of types of written Arabic texts, ranging in length from short common printed texts, such as signs and messages, to long passages that deal with abstract topics. All of the texts in this section are authentic. In retyping them, to avoid unclear items that may result from photocopying, we have tried our best to preserve their original format and appearance.

Part One

This part consists of short common printed texts including street signs, messages, invitations, and advertisements. Each is followed by a statement or question in English along with four English choices. You are to mark on the answer sheet the space which corresponds to the best answer from among the four choices. Study the following sample item.



Of the four choices, the correct answer is (C). Therefore, if this were one of the test items, you would darken the circle below the letter (C) on the answer sheet

Note: Parts two and three contain several passages of varying length. Each passage is followed by more than one question or statement along with four choices. The only difference between the two parts is that the passages in part three are more challenging and that all the questions and statements along with the four choices based on each passage are in Arabic instead of English. The following are items given for practice. After you have attempted to answer the practice questions, check your answers by looking at the answer key on page 8.

3. What is the main topic of this passage?

- (A) The reasons for giving the title "Commander of the Faithful" to the Caliph Omar.
- (B) How Omar became caliph.
- (C) Biography of the Caliph Omar.
- (D) Major accomplishments of the Caliph Omar.

4. Which of the following is NOT mentioned in the passage about the Caliph Omar?

- (A) He was the first to be given the title "Commander of the Faithful".
- (B) He accompanied the Prophet when the latter immigrated to Medina.
- (C) He started the mail system.
- (D) He was the first to establish the Hijri Calendar.

كان عمر أول من وضع التاريخ الهجري، وأنشأ الدواوين لتنظيم أعمال الحكومة، وقرّر رواتب منتظمة للجند والموظفين، يأخذونها من بيت المال، وجعل لبلاده نقوداً خاصة . وهو أول من أوجد نظام البريد لنقل الرسائل، وأقام دور الضيافة، وحفر الترغ وأقام الجسور بالعراق ومصر . وهو أول من أنشأ نظام الحراس في الليل، وأول من سمي أمير المؤمنين .

جاء يوماً اعرابي إلى رسول الله وشده من ثوبه شدةً مؤلماً حتى ترك أثراً في عنقه، ثم قال: أعطني يا محمد، فانك لا تعطيني من مالك ولا من مال أبيك. فابتسم النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وقال: المال مال الله وأنا عبده ورسوله، وسوف يفعل بك مثلاً فعلت بي. فقال الاعرابي: لا، لأنك لا تجزي السيئة بالسيئة ولكن تعفو وتسامح. فأعطاه النبي مالا وعفا عنه.

5. ماذا أراد الاعرابي من الرسول؟

- (A) أن يعطيه ثوباً.
- (B) أن يعفو عنه ويسامحه.
- (C) أن يصلّي معه.
- (D) أن يمنحه بعض المال.

6. الحكمة من هذا النص

- (A) عدم الإساعة إلى الآخرين
- (B) مقاومة الشرّ بالخير
- (C) تقديم الإحسان إلى من يستحقه
- (D) إكرام الضعيف

B. SPEAKING

The purpose of the Speaking section is to evaluate your ability to speak Arabic fluently and accurately. This section of the test lasts approximately 48 minutes and consists of four parts. All the instructions and questions given in each part, with the exception of the test questions in Part One, are recorded both on tape and printed in the test booklet. In addition, you will use pictures and text found in a test booklet to answer some of the test questions. You will be requested to record your responses on a separate cassette tape which will be provided at the time of the test.

During the test you will be asked to put yourself in various contexts in the Arab world. There is no need to accommodate your Arabic to the geographic dialects of the different Arab countries. Use that type of Arabic which is **linguistically** and **socially** appropriate for each situation.

The speaking tasks you will be asked to perform will range in difficulty from easy to considerably more challenging. You are not expected to be able to answer all questions with equal facility. However, you should try to speak as much and as well as possible in response to each question. The amount of time provided for your response will vary depending on the complexity of the question or the situation. Feel free to stop talking when you feel you have given a complete response. A short beep signal will indicate that you have three seconds to bring your response to an appropriate close before the next question begins. Two times are indicated in parentheses at the end of each item. The first time is the amount of time you will have to think about each question. When that time is up, you will hear a question or statement in Arabic, and you may then begin to speak. Do not speak until you hear the question or statement in Arabic. The second time in the parentheses indicates the amount of time you will have to respond to the question.

Part One: Personal Conversation

In this part, you will have a conversation with a native speaker of Arabic. This person would like to find out some things about your background, activities, and interests. For each question asked by the Arabic speaker, listen carefully and answer during the pause immediately following the question. You will have between 5 and 25 seconds to respond, depending on the information requested. Remember to say as much as you can in response to each question. The sample question below, enclosed in a box, does not appear in print.

- صباح الخير.

- تكلم لنا عن حياتك الدراسية .

Part Two: Picture-Based Questions

The examinee looks at a picture or series of pictures in the test booklet and speaks in response to spoken/written instructions. The tasks include such undertakings as giving directions, describing a place or activities in a familiar setting, or telling a story. In some cases the picture guides the response; in others it serves as a source of ideas for the examinee. For each question in Parts 2 - 4, you will have 15 to 30 seconds to prepare your answer and between one minute to one minute and 45 seconds to respond, depending on the complexity of each question.

Part Three: Topic Questions

In this part, you will be instructed to talk about five different topics. You will hear the topics on the tape, in English, and they will also be written in the test booklet. The topics require the examinee to organize information. The examinee is placed in a situation in which he/she has to describe personal preferences, explain a process step by step, state advantages and disadvantages, hypothesize on a formal topic or speak to persuade, and support an opinion.

Example:

An Arab student named Hamdi, who has recently arrived in the United States asks you how to go about opening a checking account in a bank. You will have 15 seconds to prepare your response. Then, after Hamdi asks his question you will have one minute and 15 seconds to **suggest where he might begin to get information and people he might want to contact.**

(15 sec/1 min 15 sec)

Part Four: Situation Questions

In the last part, five descriptions of real-life situations are identified. In each case, you are asked to imagine that you are actually in that situation and to respond in a linguistically and socially appropriate manner. The situations include making polite conversation, offering an apology, giving advice, making a formal introduction, and making simple requests.

Example:

You are attending a conference on "Ways to improve business and trade relations between the Arab world and the United States" in Cairo. At the end of the conference you are invited to have dinner with an Egyptian businessman named Mr. Badawi and his family at their home. Before you leave their home, you want to thank the Egyptian family for their invitation and generosity. After Mr. and Mrs. Badawi thank you for coming to the dinner, **tell them that you have enjoyed the evening and learned alot about Arab customs during your short visit with them.**

(20 sec/1 min 20 sec)

C. WRITING

The Writing test is intended to measure your ability to produce written Literary Arabic. The tasks you will be asked to perform range from writing short notes and messages and filling out simple forms with basic information, to more challenging tasks involving writing a letter and an original composition. Your writing will be evaluated on spelling, punctuation, adequate length, appropriate use of vocabulary and grammar, as well as on clarity, organization, coherence, and facility in using Arabic.

Part One

This part contains five items involving simple tasks focusing on high frequency lexical items and structures.

Example:

During your short stay in Riyadh, you visited a former professor of yours, but he was not in the office. Leave him a note in Arabic (about 10 words) informing him of your visit and that you are planning to study at the Arabic Language Institute at King Saud University for one year.

Part Two

In this part, you will be asked to write a letter of about 70 words in response to a newspaper advertisement.

Part Three

In this part, you will be requested to choose one of four topics involving discussion, argumentation or hypothesis, and to prepare the requested writing task in literary Arabic in approximately 100 words. Your composition will be graded on the basis of quality of content, continuity of thought, sound argument, spelling, grammatical accuracy and fluency.

Example:

Some people believe that the rights and duties of women should be equal to those of men. Others say women should have their full rights and duties but their rights and duties are different from those of men. State your position on this issue and explain your rationale for taking this position.

Answers to Practice Questions

- | | | |
|------|------|------|
| 1. B | 2. C | 3. D |
| 4. B | 5. D | 6. B |