**Arabic**

**Notes on the language and tips for teaching ELL students.**

Arabic is a language spoken throughout the *Arab world* \*. Classical Arabic (the language of literary texts) and Standard Modern Arabic (the language of newspaper, news broadcasts, and speeches) are the same across the Arab world. Spoken colloquial Arabic varies from country to country, sometimes significantly.

These notes are based on Egyptian Arabic but should apply to most other Arabic dialects.

1. **English consonant sounds missing in Arabic**:

[P]: like [*Pin, cap, purpose, pause]* does not exist in Arabic, Arabic speakers would replace it with the *b* sound.

[g]: like [*Girl, green, grass, flag]* does not exist in colloquial Arabic except in Egyptian Arabic.

[v]: like [*Vest, village, view, cave*] does not exist in Arabic and tends to be replaced by the *f* sound.

[ʈʃ]: like [*Choose, cheese, church, watch*] does not exist in Arabic and would be replaced by the English [ʃ] *sh* sound.

[r]: like [*Road, roses, river, ring, and ride*]. There is an r sound in Arabic but it is different from the English r (which is unique), the Arabic r is a rolled r like an Italian or Spanish r.

[dʒ]: like [Joy, juggle, juice, stage] does not exist in Arabic, for most dialects it would be replaced by the [ʒ] sound [Television]. Neither one of these sounds exist in Egyptian Arabic.

2. **Consonant sounds not used in colloquial Arabic even though they exist in Modern Standard Arabic:**

[θ]: like [*Thought, Think, Bath*] does exist in the Arabic alphabet (ث) and the sound is used in Modern Standard Arabic but tends to be replaced by the *s* sound in colloquial Arabic.

[ð]: like [*There, those, brothers, others*] does exist in the Arabic alphabet (ذ ) and the sound is used in Modern Standard Arabic but tends to be replaced by the *z* sound in colloquial Arabic.

3. **Vowel sounds that might be difficult for Arabic speakers:**

[ʊ]: short vowel like [*Put, look, should, cook, book*]

[ɒ]: short vowel like [Rob, top, watch, squat, sausage]

[ɜ]: long vowel like [Nurse, heard, third, turn]

In general, problem vowel sounds are more difficult to identify, even if the exact sound might not exist in Arabic, a close enough sound often exists.

**4. Some general information:**

**Reading and writing:** Arabic is written from right to left.

**Object pronouns:** Object pronouns (me, you, us, him, her, them) are used when you do something directly *to* someone or something else. In Arabic, these pronouns are suffixes attached to the verb. For example the verb to hit is *darab* then *he hit* *him* is *darab****o*** (note that the subject pronoun *he* is not used in Arabic if it is clear who the subject it)

**Possessive pronouns:** Possessive pronouns (my, your, his, her, our, their) are used to indicate ownership of something. In Arabic, as with object pronouns, these take the form of suffixes attached to the noun that of the object owned.For example, the word for house is *beit*, *my house* is *beit****i*** , *his house* is *beit****o*** , etc.

**Usage of the verb to be:** The verb *to be* is not used in the present tense, so to say *they are students* you would be saying *they students*, however the verb is used for the past or the future.

**5.** **Two online English to Arabic translators:** Both of these seem to use a more formal Arabic than colloquial Arabic which is a bit of a disadvantage, but they can still be helpful.

Yandex Translate

<https://translate.yandex.com/translator/English-Arabic>

Google Translate

<https://translate.google.com/#en/ar/>

\*The Arab World consists of 22 countries in the Middle East and North Africa: Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania,

Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.