

INFO SHEET - Arabic

Overview

- **Levels Offered:** 1st and 2nd year courses only
- **Minor Available:** No.
- **Placement Test:** Required for students with prior knowledge

Fun Facts

- Arabic is written from right to left using cursive (joined up) writing except for numbers, which are written left to right.
- about 700 AD, invaders from what is now the Middle East invaded the land that is today Andalusia (south of Spain) bringing their own language with them. Today you can evidence of this language mixed in with Spanish: "barrio", Spanish for "neighbourhood" comes from the Arabic "barri" which means "city limits"; "almohada", Spanish for "pillow" comes from "al-mikadda" in Arabic; and "Azúcar" which means "sugar" in Spanish comes from "as-sukkar" in Arabic.¹
- Arabic has 28 consonants, 3 long vowels and 3 short vowels known as diacritics that are written above or below letters

e.g. كَتَبَ [kataba] - he wrote
كُتِبَ [kutiba] - it was written
كُتُبَ [kutub] - books

Why you should study Arabic:

The Khan el Khalili souk is located in the heart of Cairo's Islamic district. Filled with merchants and artisans, the souk (which means "bazaar or marketplace" in Arabic) has been around for almost 2000 years and on any given day the cobbled streets are filled with the cries of souvenir vendors, fragrant smoke from barbecuing meat, and a general hubbub of tourists and locals buying and selling and haggling as they have done for centuries. And the language you

hear in these streets is Arabic, mostly Egyptian Arabic to be specific. How cool would it be to join the conversation?!

Of course, Arabic is not only spoken in Egypt. Across the Middle East region, a number of other dialects of Arabic are also used: North African, Egyptian, Sudanese, Levantine, Gulf, and Iraqi Arabic. All are variations based on Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), which comes from the classical Arabic found in the Qur'an, holy book of Islam. Some vocabulary is the same between MSA and these dialects, but simple expressions and terms vary.

At Carleton, Arabic classes place special emphasis on both the spoken/written language as well as cultural aspects of countries where Arabic is the dominant language.

In addition to its religious importance, Arabic is an important language for international relations and international business, and is one of the six official languages of the United Nations (UN).

Students who choose to take our Arabic classes come from a variety of backgrounds and have a variety of interests:

- reading early literature and poetry in the original Arabic
- pursuing religious study
- developing language skills for diplomatic/international postings
- travel and discover different Arabic cultures and regions

Others see proficiency as an asset for careers in human services, culture, medicine, culture, and more right here in Canada where Arabic speakers form an important part of our multicultural fabric.

One last note, our courses are NOT intended as language classes for students who already speak Arabic or have a significant background in the language. This sort of student is referred to as a Heritage language student and we do not offer Heritage language classes in Arabic.

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¹ spanishdict.com/blog/the-arabic-influence-on-the-spanish-language/