

Arabic in a Jiffy

About Arabic:

- Arabic is written from right to left.
- It has 28 letters, and is written in cursive script, so that most letters connect to the following letters. A few letters, however, do not connect to the following letter (these are shown in the table with **).
- Arabic does not normally write short vowels, only long ones. Sometimes, however, they do occur in foreign words and names. Note that the letter A (alif) does not sound like the long a in baby, but like a long drawn-out short a, as if you were saying fantAAAAstic!
- There are some sounds and letters that exist in English but not in Arabic, such as v, p, short e, short o, hard g and the blend ch.
- There are some sounds/letters that exist in Arabic but not in English as well. These include hamza (glottal stop), 'ayn, ghayn, emphatic S, D, T, and Z, qaf, kha, and dhal. The sounds sh and th, which are blends in English, are single letters in Arabic.
- Any word that starts with a vowel must use the letter a/alif at the beginning. If it's a short vowel, that's all you need; if it's a long ee or u, that letter follows the a/alif.

Decode Arabic Script:

Below are written a number of common American names in Arabic.
Can you figure out what they are?

ليندا

اليزابث

جورج

توماس

تيفني

نيل

ماري

Decode a secret message in Arabic!

The Arabic script is used to write many languages besides Arabic itself, including Persian, Urdu, Uyghur and, in the past, Ottoman Turkish, Swahili, and Hebrew. The great Jewish scholar Maimonides used to write both Arabic in Hebrew letters and Hebrew in Arabic letters!

What would English look like if it were written in the Arabic script? Use the Arabic Alphabet chart to decipher the text below.

ذيس لاند ايز يور لاند
ذيس لاند ايز ماي لاند
فروم كاليفورنيا
تو ذي نيو يورك ايلاند
فروم ذي ردود فارست
تو ذه كولف ستريم واترز
ذيس لاند واز مايد فور يو اند مي

To write your name in Arabic, follow these steps!

1. Write your name phonetically, not as it is normally spelled.

Hints:

If your name contains a letter that doesn't occur in Arabic, substitute b for p, k for hard g, w for v, and sh or t + sh for ch.

For long i in English, you can use the letters a + y.

If you have a short vowel in your name, you may either ignore it or add it in!

Don't worry about doubled letters in English.

Example: Jennifer -> J N I F R

2. Now reverse the letters to write the sounds of your name from right to left.

Example: R F I N J

3. Under each letter, write the corresponding Arabic letter. Remember to connect them, unless they have a double ** next to them in the chart!

Example:

R F I N J
جنيفر