Top 30 Essential Arabic Verbs for Beginners

Welcome to your essential vocabulary guide from Arabic with Esa! Verbs are the heartbeat of the Arabic language. Mastering a core set of action words allows you to quickly express complete ideas, construct sentences, and build conversational fluency.

In Arabic lexicography and classical grammar, verbs are conventionally listed in their past-tense 3rd-person masculine singular form (which translates literally to "he did", e.g., Akala = "he ate"). This form represents the simplest root structure of the word without added prefixes or suffixes, serving as the foundational dictionary entry. For convenience in beginner study, we translate these entries using the standard English infinitive form (e.g., "To eat").

Quick Study Tips for Memorizing Arabic Verbs

- **Identify Root Letters:** Most Arabic verbs stem from a core 3–letter root (e.g., ك-ت-ب for writing). Recognizing root patterns makes acquiring new related vocabulary significantly easier.
- **Practice in Context:** Avoid memorizing words in isolation. Combine each verb with a simple noun or preposition to build short, practical expressions.
- **Pay Attention to Harakat (Vowels):** Short vowel markings (Fatha, Kasra, Damma) change the exact pronunciation and tense of a verb. Always practice reading with full vowels.
- **Maintain Daily Consistency:** Review 5 to 6 verbs per day with active repetition rather than attempting to memorize all 30 at once.

Essential Verbs Table

#	Past Tense (3rd Masc)	Present Tense (3rd Masc)	Transliteration	English Meaning
1	أَكَلَ	يَأْكُلُ	Akala / Ya'kulu	To eat
2	شَرِبَ	يَشْرَبُ	Shariba / Yashrabu	To drink
3	كَتَبَ	يَكْتُبُ	Kataba / Yaktubu	To write
4	قَرَأَ	يَقْرَأُ	Qara'a / Yaqra'u	To read
5	ذَهَبَ	يَذْهَبُ	Dhahaba / Yadhhabu	To go
6	جَاءَ	يَجِيءُ	Jaa'a / Yajee'u	To come
7	نَامَ	يَنَامُ	Naama / Yanaamu	To sleep
8	قَامَ	يَقُومُ	Qaama / Yaqoomu	To stand up
9	جَلَسَ	يَجْلِسُ	Jalasa / Yajlisu	To sit
10	رَأَى	يَرَى	Ra'a / Yaraa	To see
11	سَمِعَ	يَسْمَعُ	Sami'a / Yasma'u	To hear

#	Past Tense (3rd Masc)	Present Tense (3rd Masc)	Transliteration	English Meaning
12	فَهِمَ	يَفْهَمُ	Fahima / Yafhamu	To understand
13	عَلِمَ	يَعْلَمُ	'Alima / Ya'lamu	To know
14	لَعِبَ	يَلْعَبُ	La'iba / Yal'abu	To play
15	دَرَسَ	يَدْرُسُ	Darasa / Yadrusu	To study
16	عَمِلَ	يَعْمَلُ	'Amila / Ya'malu	To work
17	قَالَ	يَقُولُ	Qaala / Yaqoolu	To say
18	سَأَلَ	يَسْأَلُ	Sa'ala / Yas'alu	To ask
19	أَجَابَ	يُجِيبُ	Ajaaba / Yujeebu	To answer
20	فَتَحَ	يَفْتَحُ	Fataha / Yaftahu	To open
21	غَلَقَ	يَغْلِقُ	Ghalaqa / Yaghliqu	To close
22	ضَحِكَ	يَضْحَكُ	Dahika / Yadhaku	To laugh

#	Past Tense (3rd Masc)	Present Tense (3rd Masc)	Transliteration	English Meaning
23	بَكَى	يَبْكِي	Baka / Yabkee	To cry
24	سَافَرَ	يُسَافِرُ	Saafara / Yusaafiru	To travel
25	رَكِبَ	يَرْكَبُ	Rakiba / Yarkabu	To ride
26	مَشَى	يَمْشِي	Masha / Yamshee	To walk
27	وَقَفَ	يَقِفُ	Waqafa / Yaqifu	To stop
28	بَدَأَ	يَبْدَأُ	Bada'a / Yabda'u	To start
29	إِنْتَهَى	يَنْتَهِي	Intahaa / Yantachee	To finish
30	أَخَذَ	يَأْخُذُ	Akhadha / Ya'khudhu	To take

Practical Example Sentences

Here is how you can immediately combine these base verbs with nouns and prepositions to create clear 3-word Arabic sentences:

- ذَهَبَ إِلَى المَدْرَسَةِ
  - Transliteration: *Dhahaba ila al-madrasah*
  - Meaning: He went to the school.

- قَرَأَ الطَّالِبُ الكِتَابَ
    - Transliteration: *Qara'a at-taalibu al-kitaab*
    - Meaning: The student read the book.
- شَرِبَ الوَلَدُ المَاءَ
    - Transliteration: *Shariba al-waladu al-maa'*
    - Meaning: The boy drank the water.
- كَتَبَ الرَّجُلُ الرِّسَالَةَ
    - Transliteration: *Kataba ar-rajulu ar-risaalah*
    - Meaning: The man wrote the letter.
- سَمِعَ الأُسْتَاذُ الصَّوْتَ
    - Transliteration: *Sami'a al-ustaadhu as-sawt*
    - Meaning: The teacher heard the sound.

Continue Your Learning Journey

Mastering these 30 verbs is an excellent milestone toward building fluency in understanding Arabic texts and spoken dialogue. Try creating your own sentences daily using these verbs alongside common everyday nouns!

To take your learning further with structured courses, live sessions, and tailored programs in Quranic Arabic, Spoken Arabic, and Islamic Studies, visit us at Arabic with Esa.