Arabic Letters and Sounds

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All languages have specific sounds that convey meaning when combined. Each sound has a specific place and manner of being produced in our mouths. The Arabic language has 28 specific phonemes, which are the building blocks of any Arabic word. In Arabic, unlike other languages such as English or French, each phoneme matches with a specific letter.

This diagram displays all 28 consonant letters of Modern Standard Arabic and where they are produced in the mouth.

ط = ت س = ص

د = ض ر ز

ل ن

ث ظ = ذ

ف

ب م و

ش ج ي

غ خ ء

ق

ع ح

ه ء

Lips Teeth Tongue

Labial	Labiodental	Interdental	Alveolar	Platal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal

Closest to the lips — **Farthest from the lips**

Sun letters: When using the Arabic definite article ال, the ل morphs into the initial consonant of the following word, resulting in a doubled consonant.

Moon letters: When using the Arabic definite article ال, the article ال remains the same and does not morph into the consonant that follows it.

Source: Ryding, K. (2014). Arabic: a linguistic introduction. Cambridge, United Kingdom; Cambridge University Press.