













IMPORTANT NOTES ON VERBS & PRONOUNS

The following is an overview of Arabic tenses, pronouns, and how verbs are arranged under each entry. This will help you easily identify the tense of each verb in the Quran. Note that most Arabic verbs come from 3-letter roots, like كَتَبَ *kataba* ‘he wrote,’ which are the focus of this overview. Some verb roots have more than 3 letters, such as وَسَّوَسَ *was-wasa* ‘he whispered,’ سَاعَدَ *sâ-'ada* ‘he helped,’ and اطمأنَّ *'it-ma'an-na* ‘he felt at peace.’ These verbs follow the same rules listed below.

You are not expected to memorize all different verb forms in this dictionary. All you need to do is to familiarize yourself with tenses, persons (1st, 2nd, and 3rd person forms), and pronouns (singular, dual, and plural as well as masculine and feminine), as detailed below. The 1st person indicates the one(s) speaking, the 2nd person indicates the one(s) spoken to, and the 3rd person indicates the one(s) spoken about.

Past Tense

Typically, the past tense starts with the root with no prefixes attached to the beginning of the root, unlike the present form which starts with a prefix and ends with a suffix, such as كَتَبُوا *kata-bo* ‘they wrote’ and يَكْتُبُونَ *yak-tubûn* ‘they write.’

مَتَكَلِّمٌ 1 st person	مُخَاطَبٌ 2 nd person		غَائِبٌ 3 rd person	
<i>katab-tu</i> كَتَبْتُ I wrote	<i>katab-ta</i> كَتَبْتَ you wrote		<i>kata-ba</i> كَتَبَ he wrote	
<i>katab-na</i> كَتَبْنَا we wrote	<i>katab-tuma</i> كَتَبْتُمَا you both wrote		<i>kata-bâ</i> كَتَبَا they both wrote	
	<i>katab-tum</i> كَتَبْتُمْ you all wrote		<i>kata-bo</i> كَتَبُوا they all wrote	
	<i>katab-ti</i> كَتَبْتِ you wrote		<i>kata-bat</i> كَتَبَتْ she wrote	
	<i>katab-tuma</i> كَتَبْتُمَا you both wrote		<i>kata-bata</i> كَتَبَتَا they both wrote	
	<i>katab-tunn</i> كَتَبْتُنَّ you all wrote		<i>katabn</i> كَتَبْنَ they all wrote	

Present Tense

In the present form, one of these letters ن - أ - ت - ي is added to the beginning of the root, such as نَكْتُبُ *nak-tubu* ‘we write.’ Note that some past tense verbs may start with one of the letters of ن - أ - ت - ي because it’s part of the root, not as a prefix indicating present form. For example, نَفَعَ *nafa'a* ‘he benefited’ starts with a ن. The present form is يَنْفَعُ *yan-fa'u* ‘he benefits’ after adding the ي that signifies present tense.







مُتَكَلِّم 1 st person	مُخَاطَب 2 nd person	غَائِب 3 rd person
<i>ak-tubu</i> أَكْتُبُ I write	<i>tak-tubu</i> تَكْتُبُ you write	<i>yak-tubu</i> يَكْتُبُ he writes
<i>nak-tubu</i> نَكْتُبُ we write	<i>tak-tubân</i> تَكْتُبَانِ you both write	<i>yak-tubân</i> يَكْتُبَانِ they both write
	<i>tak-tubûn</i> تَكْتُبُونَ you all write	<i>yak-tubûn</i> يَكْتُبُونَ they all write
	<i>tak-tubîn</i> تَكْتُبِينَ you write	<i>tak-tubu</i> تَكْتُبُ she writes
	<i>tak-tubân</i> تَكْتُبَانِ you both write	<i>tak-tubân</i> تَكْتُبَانِ they both write
	<i>tak-tubn</i> تَكْتُبْنَ you all write	<i>yak-tubn</i> يَكْتُبْنَ they all write

Note that one of the different *tashkil* marks (ʾ/-/ـ) may appear on the last letter of a present verb, depending on that verb's grammatical condition, but the meaning will always be the same. For example, *يَكْتُبُ* - *يَكْتُبِ* - and *يَكْتُبْ* *yak-tub* all mean 'he writes.' Also, note that negation can cause a vowel to be deleted from a verb, such as *يَقُولُ* *ya-qûl* 'he says' and *لَمْ يَقُلْ* *lam ya-qul* 'he did not say.' Don't be surprised when you see these different forms listed next to each other under some verb entries in this dictionary.

Future Tense

In the future tense, *سَ* *s* 'will soon' or *سَوْفَ* *saw-fa* 'will' is simply added before the present form. For example, *سَيَكْتُبُ* *sa-yak-tubu* 'he will write soon' and *سَوْفَ نَكْتُبُ* *saw-fa nak-tubu* 'we will write.'

Imperative (order or request)

مُخَاطَب 2 nd person			
<i>'uk-tubi</i> اُكْتُبِي write!		<i>'uk-tub</i> اُكْتُبْ write!	
<i>'uk-tuba</i> اُكْتُبَا both write!		<i>'uk-tuba</i> اُكْتُبَا both write!	
<i>'uk-tubn</i> اُكْتُبْنَ all write!		<i>'uk-tubo</i> اُكْتُبُوا all write!	

How verbs are arranged under each entry

Order	Explanation	Example #1	Example #2
1	Past tense, starting with 3 rd person, 2 nd person, then 1 st person. Each section starts with singular, dual, then plural.	- kafarat كَفَرَتْ - kafara كَفَرَ - kafar-ta كَفَرْتَ - kafaro كَفَرُوا - kafar-tu كَفَرْتُمْ - kafar-tum كَفَرْتُمْ kafar-na كَفَرْنَا	qâ-lâ قَالَتْ - qâ-la قَالَتْ - qâ-lâ قَالَتْ - قَالَتْ qâ-lâ - قَالَتْ qâ-lâ quln قُلْنَ - qul-tum قُلْتُمْ - qul-ta قُلْتَ - قُلْتُ qul-lo قَالُوا - قَالُوا qul-na قُلْنَا - قُلْنَا qul-tu قُلْتُمْ - قُلْتُمْ
2	Present tense, starting with 3 rd person, 2 nd person, then 1 st person	- yak-furûn يَكْفُرُونَ - yak-fur يَكْفُرُ - tak-fur تَكْفُرُ - yak-furo يَكْفُرُوا - tak-furûn تَكْفُرُونَ - tak-furo تَكْفُرُوا nak-fur نَكْفُرُ - ak-fur أَكْفُرُ	- yaqû-lo يَقُولُوا - yaqû-lâ يَقُولَا - yaqû-lu يَقُولُ taqû-lo تَقُولُوا - taqû-lu تَقُولُ - yaqû-lûn يَقُولُونَ naqû-lu نَقُولُ - aqû-lu أَقُولُ - taqû-lûn تَقُولُونَ - تَقُولُونَ naqû-lu - نَقُولُونَ
3	Future tense	sa-yak-furûn سَيَكْفُرُونَ	- sa-yaqû-lûn سَيَقُولُونَ - sa-yaqû-lu سَيَقُولُ sa-naqû-lu سَنَقُولُ
4	Order, which is always in the 2 nd person (e.g., ‘say!’)	'uk-furo أَكْفُرُوا - 'uk-fur أَكْفُرُ	qûlo قُولُوا - qûlâ قُولَا - qûli قُولِي - قُلْ qul
5	Past passive voice (e.g., ‘it was said ...’)	kufir كُفِرَ	qîl قِيلَ
6	Present passive voice (e.g., ‘it is said ...’)	yuk-far يُكْفَرُ	yu-qâl يُقَالُ
7	Future passive voice (e.g., ‘it will be said ...’)	sa-yuk-far سَيُكْفَرُ	sa-yu-qâl سَيُقَالُ

Note that when a present tense verb signifying dual or plural is preceded by negation or some particles (like *ḥat-ta* ‘until’) the *-ân* (dual suffix) and *-ûn* (plural suffix) are changed to *â* (dual) and *û* (plural) respectively, following Arabic grammatical rules. For example,

- *yak-tubûn* “they write” and *lam yak-tubo* “they did not write.”
- *yak-tubân* “they both write” and *ḥat-ta yak-tubâ* “until they both write.”
- *tak-tubûn* “you all write” and *la tak-tubo* “do not write.”
- *tak-tubân* “you both write” and *lan tak-tubâ* “you both will not write.”












Exercise

Connect each section of **Group B** to the tense it represents in **Group A**

Group A	Group B
1. Past	- <i>yagh-firûn</i> يَغْفِرُونَ - <i>yagh-firo</i> يَغْفِرُوا - <i>yagh-fir</i> يَغْفِرُ (a) <i>nagh-fir</i> نَغْفِرُ - <i>tagh-firo</i> تَغْفِرُوا - <i>tagh-fir</i> تَغْفِرُ
2. Present	<i>sa-nagh-fir</i> سَنَغْفِرُ (b)
3. Future	<i>gh-far-na</i> غَفَرْنَا - <i>gha-fara</i> غَفَرَ (c)
4. Imperative (request)	<i>yugh-far</i> يُغْفِرُ (d)
5. Past passive voice	' <i>igh-fir</i> اِغْفِرُ (e)
6. Present passive voice	<i>sa-yugh-far</i> سَيُغْفِرُ (f)
7. Future passive voice	<i>ghufir</i> غُفِرَ (g)

(Answer key: 1-c, 2-a, 3-b, 4-e, 5-g, 6-d, 7-f)

Attached & Detached Pronouns

مَتَكَلِّمٌ 1 st person		مُخَاطَبٌ 2 nd person		غَائِبٌ 3 rd person			
<i>khalaqa-ni rab-bi</i> مَلَأَنِي رَبِّي my Lord created me	<i>ana</i> أَنَا I	<i>kalaqa-ka rab-buka</i> خَلَقَكَ رَبُّكَ your Lord created you	<i>an-ta</i> أَنْتَ you		<i>khalaga-hu rab-buhu</i> خَلَقَهُ رَبُّهُ his Lord created him	<i>huwa</i> هُوَ he	
<i>khalaga-na rab-buna</i> خَلَقَنَا رَبُّنَا our Lord created us	<i>nah-nu</i> نَحْنُ we	<i>kalaqa-kuma rab-bukuma</i> خَلَقَكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا your Lord created you both	<i>an-tuma</i> أَنْتُمَا you both		<i>khalaga-huma rab-buhu-ma</i> خَلَقَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا their Lord created them both	<i>huma</i> هُمَا both	
		<i>kalaqa-kum rab-bukum</i> خَلَقَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ your Lord created you all	<i>an-tum</i> أَنْتُمْ you all		<i>khalaga-hum rab-buhum</i> خَلَقَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ their Lord created them	<i>hum</i> هُمْ they	
		<i>kalaqa-ki rab-buki</i> خَلَقَكَ رَبُّكَ your Lord created you	<i>an-ti</i> أَنْتِ you		<i>khalaga-ha rab-buha</i> خَلَقَهَا رَبُّهَا her Lord created her	<i>hiya</i> هِيَ she	
		<i>kalaqa-kuma rab-bukuma</i> خَلَقَكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا your Lord created you both	<i>an-tuma</i> أَنْتُمَا you both		<i>khalaga-huma rab-buhu-ma</i> خَلَقَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا their Lord created them both	<i>huma</i> هُمَا both	
		<i>kalaqa-kun-na rab-bukunn</i> خَلَقَكُنَّ رَبُّكُنَّ your Lord created you all	<i>an-tunn</i> أَنْتُنَّ you all		<i>khalaga-hun-na rab-buhunn</i> خَلَقَهُنَّ رَبُّهُنَّ their Lord created them	<i>hun-na</i> هُنَّ they	