

## Arabic

عربي

**Spoken in:** Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Gaza Strip, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, West Bank, Yemen by a majority, many other countries as a minority language.

**Region:** Arab World

**Total Speakers:** 225 million (Ethnologue, native speakers of all dialects); 286 million (population of Arab countries, CIA World Factbook, 2004 est.), excluding Arab minorities in other countries and bilingual speakers.

**Genetic classification:** Afro-Asiatic Semitic Central South Arabic

**Official Language of:** Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian National Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen. Arabic is also the official language of International organizations: United Nations, Arab League, Organization of Islamic Conference, and African Union.

Arabic belongs to the Semitic family of languages, which also includes Hebrew, Syriac, Aramaic, and several languages of Ethiopia, such as the Amharic and the Tigrinya. Arabic and Hebrew are the only Semitic languages that are still used today both in their written and spoken forms.

Arabic is one of the world's largest languages, as well as an important language to religion and literature. Arabic is the written language of more than 200 million people, but spoken Arabic varies more than it does for most other languages, for example Arabic-speaking Moroccans might not be able to talk easily with Arabic-speaking Yemenis.

Arabic is written with its own alphabet, which consists of 28 letters, and is written from right to left. The shape and structure of the letters make it natural to write Arabic in this direction. In written Arabic, unlike in English, French and other European languages, there has been no change at all in the alphabet, in spelling, or in the majority of the vocabulary, in, at least, four millenniums.

While it is universally written, read, and understood in its standard (or formal) form, spoken Arabic has undergone regional and dialectal variations. Colloquial Arabic is diverse from region to region. For instance, the diversity within the family of dialects spoken in the Levantine (Syria, Jordan, Palestine, and Lebanon) resembles the diversity between British and American English. The same can be said of the family of dialects spoken in Iraq and the Gulf (Arabic) countries.

The Arabic language was, and still is, easily capable of creating new words and terminology in order to adapt to the demands of new scientific and technological discoveries.

Currently SSWAHS Health Care Interpreter Service employs 5.5 FTE Arabic interpreters 2 FTE Arabic/Assyrian interpreters and 25 sessional interpreters.

## Arabic alphabet

Arabic		Transcription	
أ	أَلِف	a	ʾalif
ب	بَاء	b	bāʾ
ت	تَاء	t	tāʾ
ث	ثَاء	<i>t̤</i>	<i>t̤āʾ</i>
ج	جِيم	ǧ	ǧīm
ح	حَاء	ḥ	ḥāʾ
خ	خَاء	ḫ	ḫāʾ
د	دَال	d	dāl
ذ	ذَال	<i>d̤</i>	<i>d̤āl</i>
ر	رَاء	r	rāʾ
ز	زَاي	z	zāʾ
س	سِين	s	sīn
ش	شِين	š	šīn
ص	صَاد	ṣ	ṣād
ض	ضَاد	ḍ	ḍād
ط	طَاء	ṭ	ṭāʾ
ظ	ظَاء	ẓ	ẓāʾ
ع	عَيْن	ʿ	ʿayn
غ	غَيْن	ǧ	ǧayn
ف	فَاء	f	fāʾ
ق	قَاف	q	qāf
ك	كَاف	k	kāf
ل	لَام	l	lām
م	مِيم	m	mīm
ن	نُون	n	nūn
و	وَاو	w	wāw
ي	يَاء	y	yāʾ
ه	هَاء	h	hāʾ