Arabic numbers الأرقام

Two sets of digits: Arabic has its own digits, often called Eastern Arabic digits, and it uses 0 to 9 too. Learn the ten shapes below and you can read any price, page or bus number. ١٢٣ and 123 are the same number.

The ten digits

٠	١	٢	٣	٤	٥	٦	٧	٨	٩
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Easy to mix up

٠
is zero: just a small dot

٥
is five, even though it looks like our 0

٧ ٨
are 7, a V, and 8, the V upside down

١ ٩
are 1 and 9, the two that look like ours

Numbers run left to right

رقم الغرفة ١٢٥.

The room number is 125.
Read the words from right to left: raqm al-ghurfa, the room number. Then the number, from left to right, just like in English: ١, ٢, ٥, 125.

٢٥	١٢٥	١٩٩٠	٢٠٢٦
25	125	1990	2026

So in a line of Arabic, your eyes jump: right to left for the words, left to right for each number, then back to the words. Long numbers are written the same way as in English, the biggest part first.

Which digits where? You'll see both kinds, often side by side on the same sign, ticket or price tag. ١٢٣ is common in Egypt, the Levant, Iraq and the Gulf. Much of the Arab world, and especially North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia), mostly uses 0 to 9.

Why English says Arabic numerals: the digits 0 to 9 came from India, and reached Europe through Arab mathematicians and North Africa in the Middle Ages. So both sets of digits are Arabic in a way.

Zero to ten من صفر إلى عشرة

Start here: these eleven words build almost every other number. Say each one out loud, then cover the Arabic and say it from the digit.

Digit		Arabic	Say it	Sounds like
٠	0	صفر	**ṣifr**	a deep, heavy s, then ifr
١	1	واحد	**waaḥid**	waa, then a breathy ḥ, as if fogging up glasses
٢	2	اثنين	**ithnayn** formal: اثنان ithnaan	th as in think, then nayn
٣	3	ثلاثة	**thalaatha**	th as in think, twice
٤	4	أربعة	**arbaʿa**	ar-ba, a throat squeeze ʿ, then a
٥	5	خمسة	**khamsa**	kh as in Scottish loch
٦	6	ستة	**sitta**	hold the double t a moment
٧	7	سبعة	**sabʿa**	sab, a throat squeeze ʿ, then a
٨	8	ثمانية	**thamaaniya**	tha-maa-ni-ya, th as in think
٩	9	تسعة	**tisʿa**	tis, a throat squeeze ʿ, then a
١٠	10	عشرة	**ʿashara**	starts with the throat squeeze ʿ

Zero is ṣifr: صفر ṣifr gave English two words, zero and cipher. Both reached English from it by way of Latin, Italian and French.

Three to ten end in ة, said a: ثلاثة thalaatha, أربعة arbaʿa. This is the form for counting. Before some nouns the ة goes, and page 5 shows when.

Two forms of two: Arabic grammar changes a few number endings with their role in the sentence. You'll hear اثنين ithnayn most, in speech and in the dialects. اثنان ithnaan is the formal form, used for the subject of a sentence in careful Arabic, and many textbooks list it first. Both are correct, and the same goes for the tens on the next page.

People speak dialects: this sheet is Modern Standard Arabic, the Arabic of news, books and most subtitles, and it is understood everywhere. At home, people speak a dialect, and numbers sound a little different there. Two, for example, is itneen in Egypt and tneen in the Levant, and many dialects say th as t, so three is talaata in Egypt. The numbers are still easy to recognise once you know these.

Eleven to a million الأعداد الكبيرة

11 to 19: unit + ʿashar

11	12	13	14	15
أحد عشر	اثني عشر	ثلاثة عشر	أربعة عشر	خمسة عشر
aḥada ʿashar	ithnay ʿashar	thalaathata ʿashar	arbaʿata ʿashar	khamsata ʿashar
16	**17**	**18**	**19**	
ستة عشر	سبعة عشر	ثمانية عشر	تسعة عشر	
sittata ʿashar	sabʿata ʿashar	thamaaniyata ʿashar	tisʿata ʿashar	

13 to 19: thalaatha becomes thalaathata before ʿashar, ten.

The tens: 20 to 90

20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
عشرين	ثلاثين	أربعين	خمسين	ستين	سبعين	ثمانين	تسعين
ʿishriin	thalaathiin	arbaʿiin	khamsiin	sittiin	sabʿiin	thamaaniin	tisʿiin
formal عشرون ʿishruun	formal ثلاثون thalaathuun	formal أربعون arbaʿuun	formal خمسون khamsuun	formal ستون sittuun	formal سبعون sabʿuun	formal ثمانون thamaanuun	formal تسعون tisʿuun

-iin or -uun? most tens are the unit + -iin: ثلاثة thalaatha, ثلاثين thalaathiin. You'll hear the -iin form most, in speech, in the dialects and in numbers read out. The -uun form, ثلاثون thalaathuun, is the formal one, for the subject of a sentence in careful Arabic. Twenty comes from ten: عشرين ʿishriin.

21 to 99: the units come first

21	25	34	47
واحد وعشرين	خمسة وعشرين	أربعة وثلاثين	سبعة وأربعين
waaḥid wa-ʿishriin	khamsa wa-ʿishriin	arbaʿa wa-thalaathiin	sabʿa wa-arbaʿiin
58	**63**	**76**	**99**
ثمانية وخمسين	ثلاثة وستين	ستة وسبعين	تسعة وتسعين
thamaaniya wa-khamsiin	thalaatha wa-sittiin	sitta wa-sabʿiin	tisʿa wa-tisʿiin

One and twenty: Arabic says the units, then wa-, and, then the tens, like the old English four-and-twenty. خمسة وعشرين khamsa wa-ʿishriin is five and twenty. The و wa is written joined to the next word.

Hundreds, thousands, a million

100	200	300	500	800
مئة	مئتين	ثلاثمئة	خمسمئة	ثمانمئة
mi'a	mi'atayn	thalaathumi'a	khamsumi'a	thamaanimi'a
1,000	**2,000**	**3,000**	**10,000**	**1,000,000**
ألف	ألفين	ثلاثة آلاف	عشرة آلاف	مليون
alf	alfayn	thalaathat aalaaf	ʿasharat aalaaf	milyuun

Putting it together: biggest first, with wa- between the parts: 125 is مئة وخمسة وعشرين mi'a wa-khamsa wa-ʿishriin. The year 2026 is ألفين وستة وعشرين alfayn wa-sitta wa-ʿishriin.

Two spellings of 100: مئة and the older مائة are both common, and both are said mi'a. Two hundred and two thousand have their own dual form, the -ayn ending of two.

First, days, the clock الترتيب والأيام

First to tenth: masculine, with the feminine below

1	2	3	4	5
الأول al-awwal الأولى al-uulaa	الثاني ath-thaanii الثانية ath-thaaniya	الثالث ath-thaalith الثالثة ath-thaalitha	الرابع ar-raabiʿ الرابعة ar-raabiʿa	الخامس al-khaamis الخامسة al-khaamisa
6	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
السادس as-saadis السادسة as-saadisa	السابع as-saabiʿ السابعة as-saabiʿa	الثامن ath-thaamin الثامنة ath-thaamina	التاسع at-taasiʿ التاسعة at-taasiʿa	العاشر al-ʿaashir العاشرة al-ʿaashira

Shown with al-, the: ordinals usually come after the noun, like describing words, and match it: الدرس الأول ad-dars al-awwal, the first lesson; المرة الأولى al-marra al-uulaa, the first time. Most are the same consonants as the number: ثلاثة thalaatha, الثالث ath-thaalith. Only first is a new word.

The week counts from Sunday

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
الأحد al-aḥad day one	الاثنين al-ithnayn day two	الثلاثاء ath-thulaathaa' day three	الأربعاء al-arbiʿaa' day four	الخميس al-khamiis day five	الجمعة al-jumuʿa a gathering	السبت as-sabt not a number

Five days are numbers: Sunday is day one, and so on up to Thursday, day five: الخميس al-khamiis has the consonants of خمسة khamsa. Friday and Saturday have their own names. Say on Monday with يوم الاثنين yawm al-ithnayn, the day of Monday.

What time is it?

كم الساعة؟ kam as-saaʿa? What time is it? Word for word: how much is the hour?

1:00	الساعة الواحدة	as-saaʿa l-waaḥida
2:00	الساعة الثانية	as-saaʿa th-thaaniya
3:30	الساعة الثالثة والنصف	as-saaʿa th-thaalitha wa-n-niṣf
4:15	الساعة الرابعة والربع	as-saaʿa r-raabiʿa wa-r-rubʿ
5:45	الساعة السادسة إلا ربعا	as-saaʿa s-saadisa illaa rubʿan

The hour, then the feminine ordinal: الساعة as-saaʿa is the hour, so three o'clock is the third hour, الساعة الثالثة as-saaʿa th-thaalitha. One o'clock is the odd one, with الواحدة al-waaḥida. Add والنصف wa-n-niṣf for half past and والربع wa-r-rubʿ for a quarter past. For a quarter to, take the next hour and say إلا ربعا illaa rubʿan, minus a quarter.

Counting things العدد والمعدود

The honest grammar box: Arabic numbers change the noun after them, and 3 to 10 even flip gender. Here's the short version.

1 and 2	the noun does it alone: no number needed	كتاب	**kitaab** a book
		كتابين	**kitaabayn** two books: the -ayn ending of two
3 to 10	a plural noun, and the number flips gender	ثلاثة كتب	**thalaathat kutub** three books (masculine), so three takes ة
		ثلاث سيارات	**thalaath sayyaaraat** three cars (feminine), so three drops ة
11 to 99	back to a singular noun, often ending in -an	عشرين كتابا	**ʿishriin kitaaban** twenty books, word for word twenty book
100 and up	a singular noun again	مئة كتاب	**mi'at kitaab** a hundred books

Don't let this stop you: even native speakers simplify it in speech, and the dialects drop most of it. If you say three books with the wrong ending, people will understand you fine. Learn to recognise these forms, and the rest comes with listening.

Prices

Price tags use either kind of digit. Many countries use dinars, dirhams, riyals or pounds.

بكم هذا؟ bikam haadhaa?
How much is this?

كم السعر؟ kam as-siʿr?
What's the price?

خمسة دنانير khamsat danaaniir
five dinars: 3 to 10, a plural

عشرين دينارا ʿishriin diinaaran
twenty dinars: 11 to 99, a singular

مئة دينار mi'at diinaar
a hundred dinars

Phone numbers

Often said one digit at a time, and always written left to right:

٠٥٥ ١٢٣ ٤٥٦٧

صفر خمسة خمسة ṣifr khamsa khamsa, and so on.

Dates

Day, month, year, as in Britain:

١٣/١١/٢٠٢٦

13 November 2026. The year is said as one number:
ألفين وستة وعشرين alfayn wa-sitta wa-ʿishriin.

Number words you'll hear

رقم raqm a number: phone, room, bus	عدد ʿadad a number of, an amount	كم kam how many? how much?	نصف niṣf a half	ثلث thulth a third	ربع rubʿ a quarter	بالمئة bil-mi'a percent

Practice تمرين

How: write your answers on the lines, or say them out loud. Cover the answers at the bottom of the page until you're done.

A. Read the digits

Write each one in 0 to 9.

٨

١٤

٣٧

٦٠

٢٥٠

٧٠٥

٢٠٢٦

B. Write in Arabic digits

Write each one the Arabic way.

9

16

48

103

512

3000

C. Say it in Arabic

Say it, then check the answers below.

4

11

15

30

52

100

2000

Numbers go fast in real talk. In films and series, prices, times and phone numbers are where people speed up. Catch the -iin of the tens and the wa- between the parts, and the number falls into place.

Meet a word you don't know? In Kitsumi, hover any word in subtitles to see what it means.

Answers. A: 8, 14, 37, 60, 250, 705, 2026. B: ٩, ١٦, ٤٨, ١٠٣, ٥١٢, ٣٠٠٠. C: 4: أربعة arbaʿa; 11: أحد عشر aḥada ʿashar; 15: خمسة عشر khamsata ʿashar; 30: ثلاثين thalaathiin; 52: اثنين وخمسين ithnayn wa-khamsiin; 100: مئة mi'a; 2000: ألفين alfayn.