Arabic A2, lesson 1: the past tense: I, you, he, she

A2 Lesson 1 of 18

You tell what you did yesterday with past-tense verbs: I, you (man, woman), he, she.

Vocabulary | Dialogue | Grammar | Exercises

Pronunciation is written in Latin letters (ā, ī, ū = long vowels; ḥ, ṣ, ḍ, ṭ, ẓ = emphatic consonants; ʿ = the letter ع). The Arabic is always fully vowelled.

ARABIC	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
ذَهَبَ	*dhahaba*	he went
أَكَلَ	*akala*	he ate
شَرِبَ	*shariba*	he drank
دَرَسَ	*darasa*	he studied
قَرَأَ	*qaraʾa*	he read
كَتَبَ	*kataba*	he wrote

ARABIC	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
لَعِبَ	*laʿiba*	he played
نَامَ	*nāma*	he slept
فَتَحَ	*fataḥa*	he opened
عَمِلَ	*ʿamila*	he worked
فَعَلَ	*faʿala*	he did
أَمْسِ	*amsi*	yesterday
مُبَكِّرًا	*mubakkiran*	early
مُتَأَخِّرًا	*mutaʾakhkhiran*	late

KARIM

مَاذَا فَعَلْتِ أَمْسِ؟

mādhā faʿalti amsi?

What did you do yesterday? (to a woman)

SALMA

ذَهَبْتُ إِلَى السُّوقِ.

dhahabtu ilā s-sūq.

I went to the market.

KARIM

وَمَاذَا أَكَلْتِ؟

wa mādhā akalti?

And what did you eat?

SALMA

أَكَلْتُ سَمَكًا وَشَرِبْتُ عَصِيرًا.

akaltu samakan wa sharibtu ʿaṣīran.

I ate fish and drank juice.

KARIM

وَأَنَا دَرَسْتُ فِي الْمَكْتَبَةِ.

wa ana darastu fī l-maktaba.

And I studied in the library.

SALMA

وَأُخْتِي نَامَتْ مُبَكِّرًا.

wa ukhtī nāmat mubakkiran.

And my sister slept early.

The past tense: singular endings

The basic past form is the “he” form: **ذَهَبَ** (he went). For the other persons add an ending:

ذَهَبَ (he), **ذَهَبَتْ** (she: add تْ), **ذَهَبْتَ** (you, man: تَ), **ذَهَبْتِ** (you, woman: تِ), **ذَهَبْتُ** (I: تُ).

Arabic has one past form for “he ate”, “he has eaten” or “he had eaten”; the context (for example **أَمْسِ**, yesterday) gives the time.

Examples

ARABIC	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
ذَهَبْتُ إِلَى السُّوقِ	*dhahabtu ilā s-sūq*	I went to the market
أَكَلْتِ سَمَكًا	*akalti samakan*	you ate fish (woman)
هُوَ كَتَبَ الدَّرْسَ	*huwa kataba d-dars*	he wrote the lesson
هِيَ قَرَأَتْ كِتَابًا	*hiya qaraʾat kitāban*	she read a book

Ibrahim explains



Remember the five endings: -a (he), -at (she), -ta (you, m), -ti (you, f), -tu (I).

All lessons

Next lesson