Arabic A2, lesson 5: negation: لا، لم، لن، ليس

A2 Lesson 5 of 18

You say “no” correctly: in the present, past, future and before an adjective.

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
لَا	*lā*	not (present)
لَمْ	*lam*	not (past)
لَنْ	*lan*	not (future)
لَيْسَ	*laysa*	is not
أَبَدًا	*abadan*	never
شَيْءٌ	*shayʾ*	something

ARABIC	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
أَحَدٌ	*aḥad*	someone
مَشْغُولٌ	*mashghūl*	busy
مُتْعَبٌ	*mutʿab*	tired
مَرِيضٌ	*marīḍ*	ill
جَاهِزٌ	*jāhiz*	ready
سَهْلٌ	*sahl*	easy
صَعْبٌ	*ṣaʿb*	difficult
لَكِنْ	*lākin*	but
لِأَنَّ	*li-anna*	because

KARIM

هَلْ أَنْتِ مُتْعَبَةٌ؟

hal anti mutʿaba?

Are you tired?

SALMA

لَا، لَسْتُ مُتْعَبَةً، وَلَكِنِّي مَشْغُولَةٌ.

lā, lastu mutʿaban, wa lākinnī mashghūla.

No, I am not tired, but I am busy.

KARIM

هَلْ ذَهَبْتِ إِلَى الْمَدْرَسَةِ أَمْسِ؟

hal dhahabti ilā l-madrasa amsi?

Did you go to school yesterday?

SALMA

لَا، لَمْ أَذْهَبْ لِأَنِّي مَرِيضَةٌ.

lā, lam adhhab li-annī marīḍa.

No, I did not go because I am ill.

KARIM

وَهَلْ سَتَذْهَبِينَ غَدًا؟

wa hal sa-tadhhabīna ghadan?

And will you go tomorrow?

SALMA

لَنْ أَذْهَبَ، سَأَنَامُ فِي الْبَيْتِ.

lan adhhaba, sa-anāmu fī l-bayt.
I will not go, I will sleep at home.

Four negations depending on the tense

In the **present**: لَا + present: لَا أَذْهَبُ (I do not go).

In the **past**: لَمْ + present with a final sukun: لَمْ أَذْهَبْ (I did not go).

In the **future**: لَنْ + present with a final "a": لَنْ أَذْهَبَ (I will not go).

Before a noun or an adjective: لَيْسَ and its forms لَسْتُ (I am not), لَسْتَ, لَسْتِ, لَيْسَ (he is not), لَيْسَتْ (she is not). What follows takes "an": لَسْتُ مُتْعَبًا.

Examples

ARABIC	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
لَا أَذْهَبُ	*lā adhhabu*	I do not go
لَمْ أَذْهَبْ	*lam adhhab*	I did not go
لَنْ أَذْهَبَ	*lan adhhaba*	I will not go
لَسْتُ مُتْعَبًا	*lastu mutʿaban*	I am not tired



Ibrahim explains

Memory aid: lā = now, lam = already past, lan = not in the future.

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