

Lesson 5

Singular and Plural

1. In Arabic, words are of three categories with regards to number:

✿ singular (وَاحِدٌ أَوْ مُفْرَدٌ), indicating one, e.g. (رَجُلٌ) – one man.

✿ dual (تَنْبِيْةٌ), indicating two, e.g. (رَجُلَانِ) – two men.

✿ plural (جَمْعٌ), indicating more than two, e.g. (رِجَالٌ) – more than two men.

2. The dual¹² is formed by adding (— اِنِ) to (حالة الرفع) - the nominative case¹³ or (— اَيْنِ) to (حالة النصب والجر) - the accusative or genitive cases¹⁴.

Examples:

(مَلِكٌ) – one king, (مَلِكَانِ) or (مَلِكَيْنِ) – two kings

¹² Although the author has referred the student to a future lesson, at this point, it will be sufficient for him to remember that there are two forms of the dual: one is with alif and nūn and the second with yā and nūn. Lesson 10 will explain where to use which one.

¹³ حالة الرفع – This will be discussed in Lesson 10.2.

¹⁴ حالة النصب والجر – This will be discussed in Lesson 10.2.

(مَلِكَةٌ) – one queen, (مَلِكَتَانِ) or (مَلِكَتَيْنِ) – two queens.

Note 1: In the prevalent books of Arabic Grammar and Morphology, the terms (اِن) and (اَيْن) are not written. Instead, these terms are expressed in detail as (أَلْفٌ مَا قَبْلَهَا) and (يَاءٌ مَا قَبْلَهَا مَفْتُوحَةٌ وَوُجُوهُ مَكْسُورَةٌ) and (مَفْتُوحَةٌ وَوُجُوهُ مَكْسُورَةٌ). We have chosen the former method for the sake of brevity.

Note 2: To pronounce (اِن) and (اَيْن), one can read the fathah with the sound of an alif and say (آن) and (آين). Such signs will come frequently later on. Pronounce them in this manner wherever one comes across them.

3. Plurals are of two types:

- (a) (الْجَمْعُ السَّالِمُ) – the sound plural
- (b) (الْجَمْعُ الْمَكْسَرُ) – the broken plural

The sound plural is one in which the singular form of the word remains intact (sound) with some addition at the end. It is of two types:

- (i) Masculine (مُذَكَّرٌ) – in which (وُجُوهُ) in (حَالَةُ الرَّفْعِ) - the

nominative case¹⁵ or (مُسْلِمِينَ) in the accusative and genitive cases are appended, e.g. (مُسْلِمًا) – one Muslim, (مُسْلِمُونَ) or (مُسْلِمِينَ) – many Muslims.

(ii) Feminine (مُؤَنَّثَاتٍ) – in which (مُسْلِمَاتٍ) in the nominative case or (مُسْلِمَاتٍ) in the accusative and genitive cases are appended, e.g. (مُسْلِمَةً) – one (female) Muslim, (مُسْلِمَاتٍ) or (مُسْلِمَاتٍ) – many (female) Muslims.

The broken plural is one in which the form of the singular word is broken, that is, changed. It has no fixed rule for making it. Sometimes alphabets are added or deleted and sometimes there is merely a change in the ḥarakāt¹⁶.

Examples:

(نَهْرًا) → (أَنْهَارًا), (رَجُلًا) → (رِجَالًا), (وَزِيرًا) → (وُزَرَاءُ), (كِتَابًا) → (كُتُبًا), (خَشَبًا) → (خَشَبًا). The broken plural will be discussed in detail in Lesson 12.

Note 3: The (الْجَمْعُ السَّالِمُ) - sound plural of some feminine

¹⁵ This will be discussed in Lesson 10.2.

¹⁶ Fathah, dammah, kasrah, etc.

words is like the masculine plurals, e.g. the plural of (سَنَةٌ) – year, is (سِنُونٌ) or (سِنِينَ) and sometimes (سَنَوَاتٌ).

Note 4: The (نون) that appears at the end of the (تَثْنِيَّةٌ) - dual form and the (الْجَمْعُ الْمَذَكَّرُ السَّالِمُ) - sound masculine plural is called (نُونٌ إِعْرَابِيَّةٌ)¹⁷. See Lesson 10.

4. Some nouns are singular in form but refer to a whole group. There is no singular for them as well because they are not plurals in reality. Such nouns are called (اسْمُ الْجَمْعِ).

Examples:

(قَوْمٌ) – a nation, (رَهْطٌ) – a group.

These words are generally used like plurals in sentences, e.g. (قَوْمٌ صَالِحُونَ) – a pious nation.

5. You have learnt in lessons 3 and 4 that the adjective corresponds with its noun in (اعراب), being definite or indefinite and in gender. Now remember that the adjective has to correspond with its noun in number as well.

¹⁷ Since the word (نُونٌ) is feminine in Arabic, the adjective also has to be feminine, namely (إِعْرَابِيَّةٌ).

However, when the noun being described is (جَمْعٌ غَيْرِ عَاقِلٍ) – the plural of an unintelligent being¹⁸, whether masculine or feminine, the adjective is generally singular feminine (واحد مؤنث), although it is sometimes plural. One can say (أَيَّامٌ مَعْدُودَةٌ) as well as (أَيَّامٌ مَعْدُودَاتٌ).

Vocabulary List No. 4

Word	Meaning
الْآتِي	future
آيَةٌ	sign, verse of the Qur'an
بَيِّنَةٌ	clear, manifest
الْجَارِي	current (present)
الْمَاضِي	past
حَارَةٌ	quarter, section of a city
خَادِمٌ	servant
خَبَّازٌ	baker

¹⁸ Intelligent beings are humans, angels and jinn. All other creations fall in the category of unintelligent beings (غَيْرِ عَاقِلٍ).

خَيَّاطٌ	tailor, seamstress
تَعَبَانٌ	tired, exhausted
زَعْلَانٌ	displeased
شَهْرٌ	month
كَسْلَانٌ	lazy
لَاعِبٌ	playing
لَامِعٌ	shining
مَبْسُوطٌ	cheerful
مُجْتَهِدٌ	diligent
مُسَدَّدٌ	supported
مَشْغُولٌ	busy, preoccupied
مُظْلَمٌ	dark
مُعَلِّمٌ	teacher
مُنِيرٌ	bright
نَجَّارٌ	carpenter

Exercise No. 4

(A) Translate these phrases into English

- (1) الْمُعَلِّمُ الصَّالِحُ (2) الْمُعَلِّمَتَانِ الصَّالِحَتَانِ (3) الْمُعَلِّمُونَ الصَّالِحُونَ
(4) مُعَلِّمَاتٌ مُجْتَهِدَاتٌ (5) اللَّيْلَةُ الْمُظْلَمَةُ (6) قَمَرٌ مُنِيرٌ (7) الشَّمْسُ
الْمُنِيرَةُ (8) الْعَيْنَانِ اللَّامِعَتَانِ (9) السَّنَةُ الْمَاضِيَةُ (10) الشَّهْرُ الْجَارِيُ
(11) الْأَنْهَرُ الْجَارِيَةُ (12) حَارَاتٌ نَظِيفَةٌ (13) خِيَّاطَةٌ كَسْلَانَةٌ (14)
الْأَبْنَتَانِ اللَّاعِبَتَانِ (15) ابْنَتَانِ تَعْبَاتَانِ (16) رَجُلَانِ زَعْلَانَانِ (17)
السَّنُونَ الْآتِيَةُ (18) الْحَيَوَانَاتُ الصَّغِيرَةُ (19) النَّجَّارُونَ الْكَسْلَانُونَ وَ
الْخَادِمُونَ الْمُجْتَهِدُونَ (20) زَيْدٌ الزَّعْلَانُ (21) عَمْرُونَ¹⁹ الْمَبْسُوطُ
(22) آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ (23) خَشْبٌ مُسْنَدَةٌ

(B) Translate these phrases into Arabic

- (1) a shining eye (2) the two diligent men (3) the
preoccupied baker (4) the two tired carpenters (5) the bright
day (6) the beautiful seamstresses (7) the tired servants (8)
the lazy tailor (9) the flowing rivers (10) the large animals
(11) the current year (12) the past month (13) the past years

¹⁹ This is the name Àmr. The (و) differentiates it from (عُمَرُ).

(14) the cheerful servant

Test No. 2

- (1) What is a (مركَّبٌ)?
- (2) How many types of compounds are there? Define each one and provide examples.
- (3) What is (مركَّبٌ توصيفي)? What is each part of it called?
- (4) In which aspects does the adjective have to correspond with the noun? What are the exceptions? Explain with examples.
- (5) What are the signs of feminine words?
- (6) Which words are regarded as feminine without any signs?
- (7) In spite of having the signs of being feminine, which words are masculine?
- (8) What is the rule for making the dual and sound masculine plural forms?
- (9) What is (الجمع المكسر) and what is the rule for forming it?
- (10) What are the broken plurals of (نَهْرٌ), (رَجُلٌ) and (خَشَبٌ)?
- (11) What is the plural of (سَنَةٌ)?
- (12) What is the difference between (جمع) and (اسم جمع)?

(13) Form as many (مرکب توصيفي) as possible from the following nouns and adjectives:

عَسَلٌ ²⁰	لَبَنٌ ²¹	عِنَبٌ ²²	شَمْسٌ ²³	قَمَرٌ ²³
سُنُونٌ	رِجَالٌ	بُنْتَانٌ	أَرْضٌ	حَرْبٌ
نَافِعٌ	صَالِحٌ	حُلُوٌ	أَيَّامٌ	كُتُبٌ
	جَارِيَةٌ	مَاضِيَةٌ	مَدَوْرٌ ²³	مُنِيرٌ

²⁰ honey

²¹ milk

²² grapes

²³ round