



Extension

Root Letters + The Active & Passive Participle

Root Letters

1. Arabic is a fairly straightforward language when it comes to constructing words / nouns from root letters.
2. All nouns and verbs in Arabic have specific root letters.
3. Root letters are the foundation, they provide the “base” (overall) meaning. The specific scale (وزن) of a word then provides a more individual/specific meaning.
4. Look at these examples of root letters:

4	3	2	1
ع ر ف	ش ر ب	ن ص ر	خ ل ق
To recognise	To drink	To help	To create

5. If root letters are (for example) put on the scale¹ of فَعَلَ¹, we get a meaning where the action was carried out in the past (past tense verb). Thus, فَعَلَ is the scale (pattern) for a “simple” past tense verb.

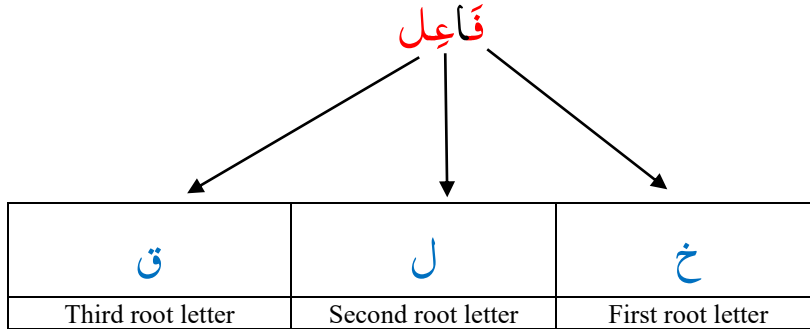
4	3	2	1
ع ر ف = عَرَفَ	ش ر ب = شَرِبَ	ن ص ر = نَصَرَ	خ ل ق = خَلَقَ
He recognised.	He drank.	He helped.	He created.

¹ The Harakah of the middle radical will depend on how the Arabs use it.

إِسْمُ الْفَاعِلِ

The Active Participle

1. If root letters are placed on the scale (وزن) of فاعِل, we get the “active participle”.
2. Example:



3. The ف ع ل are where the root letters will be placed (with the same Harakaat).
4. All other letters are regarded as “non-root letters”. They will remain the same. Thus, in the scale (وزن) of فاعِل, the Alif will remain the same, without any changes.
5. **Definition:** The active participle is a noun which indicates the one doing or undertaking an action described by the root letters.
6. For example, the root letters ن ص ه have the base meaning of “helping” (to help). When these root letters are placed upon the scale of فاعِل, it refers to the one doing the action denoted by the root letters ن ص ه, thus the word ناصِر refers to a “helper”.

7. Note these examples and pay particular attention to the meaning:

2		1
إِسْمُ الْفَاعِلِ The Active Participle.	Knowledge of how to create the Active Participle allows you to make many words very easily.	الْحُرُوفُ الْأَصْلِيَّةُ Root Letters.
خَالِق Creator (Allah)		خ ل ق To create
نَاصِر Helper / Someone helping		ن ص ر To help
شَارِب Drinker / Someone drinking		ش ر ب To drink.
كَاتِب Writer		ك ت ب To write.
سَائِل Questioner / Beggar		س ء ل To ask / question
حَافِظ Memoriser / Protector		ح ف ظ To memorize / protect
شَاكِر Grateful person		ش ك ر To be grateful / thankful.
كَافِر One who denies / Disbeliever.		ك ف ر To deny / disbelieve.
سَامِع One who listens / Listener.		س م ع To listen.
عَابِد One who worships / worshipper.		ع ب د To worship.

إِسْمُ الْمَفْعُولِ

The Passive Participle

1. If root letters are placed on the scale (وزن) of مَفْعُول, we get the “passive participle”. The root letters will be position on the ل ع ت letters, the remaining two letters (م و) remain the same.
2. **Definition:** The passive participle is a noun which indicates the one upon whom an action described by the root letters is carried out.
3. Note these examples and pay particular attention to the meaning:

3	2	1
إِسْمُ الْمَفْعُولِ The Passive Participle	إِسْمُ الْفَاعِلِ The Active Participle.	الْحُرُوفُ الْأَصْلِيَّةُ Root Letters.
مَخْلُوقٌ Created (i.e. creation)	خَالِقٌ Creator (Allah)	خ ل ق To create
مَنْصُورٌ Helped / Someone helped	نَاصِرٌ Helper / Someone helping	ن ص ر To help
مَشْرُوبٌ Drunk / Something drunk (i.e. a drink)	شَارِبٌ Drinker / Someone drinking	ش ر ب To drink.
مَكْتُوبٌ Written (i.e. a letter)	كَاتِبٌ Writer	ك ت ب To write.
مَسْئُولٌ Questioned / Asked	سَائِلٌ Questioner / Beggar	س ء ل To ask / question
مَحْفُوظٌ Memorised / Protected	حَافِظٌ Memoriser / Protector	ح ف ظ To memorize / protect
مَصْنُوعٌ Something that is made.	صَانِعٌ Maker.	ص ن ع To make

Note

Changing the active and passive participles from masculine to feminine is simply done by adding a ة.

Examples:

إِسْمُ الْمَفْعُولِ The Passive Participle		إِسْمُ الْفَاعِلِ The Active Participle.		
Feminine	Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	
مَنْصُورَةٌ	مَنْصُورٌ	نَاصِرَةٌ	نَاصِرٌ	1
مَشْرُوبَةٌ	مَشْرُوبٌ	شَارِبَةٌ	شَارِبٌ	2
مَكْتُوبَةٌ	مَكْتُوبٌ	كَاتِبَةٌ	كَاتِبٌ	3
مَسْئُولَةٌ	مَسْئُولٌ	سَائِلَةٌ	سَائِلٌ	4
مَحْفُوظَةٌ	مَحْفُوظٌ	حَافِظَةٌ	حَافِظٌ	5
مَسْئُولَةٌ	مَسْئُولٌ	سَائِلَةٌ	سَائِلٌ	6
مَعْلُومَةٌ	مَعْلُومٌ	عَالِمَةٌ	عَالِمٌ	7
مَفْتُوحَةٌ	مَفْتُوحٌ	فَاتِحَةٌ	فَاتِحٌ	8
مَعْبُودَةٌ	مَعْبُودٌ	عَابِدَةٌ	عَابِدٌ	9

Exercise 1

Using the root letters, construct the active and passive participles. Work out and write their respective meanings as well.

إِسْمُ الْمَفْعُولِ The Passive Participle	إِسْمُ الْفَاعِلِ The Active Participle.	الْحُرُوفُ الْأَصْلِيَّةُ Root Letters.	
		من ع To prevent.	1
		ع ق ل To understand / comprehend.	2
		ط ل ب To seek.	3
		ع ب د To worship.	4
		س ج د To prostrate.	5
		غ ف ه To forgive / pardon.	6
		ض ر ب To hit.	7
		ح م د To praise.	8
		ع ل م To know.	9
		ج ه ل To be ignorant.	10
		أ ك ل To eat.	11
		س م ع To listen / hear.	12
		ق ت ل To kill.	13

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