



## The Past-Tense Verb

### الفِعْلُ الْمَاضِي

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

So welcome everyone to the 3<sup>rd</sup> presentation. This is going to be a little different than the previous two presentations and also the upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> one. The previous two were introducing the core concept and they were elaborating on the big mistake. I spoke about the 80/20 principle and about the central theme, the human emotions and facial expressions and the overall framework of how the language works basically. Part of that framework, is these major verbs. You need to know the major verbs. You cannot begin any reading until you are exposed to at least 2 out of the 3 we have in total. 2 are extremely important and the 3<sup>rd</sup> one could be taught later after the book has begun. So if you remember in the previous presentation (the 4 stages of growth), we divided the verb into 3 major types:

- ماضِي (past-tense verb) – اسْتَنْصَرُوا was an example of past-tense verb
- مُضَارِع (present and future tense verb)
- أَمْر (command and imperative verb)

Every verb in the Arabic language has 14 variations. There are going to be 14 conjugations and let me speak a little about what a conjugation is and the emphasis on tables and why we need tables. Once we are done with this concept then we can get into the implementation and I can start developing the table for you. It is going to make a lot more sense once you know the reasoning behind it.

### Why verb tables?

- Contrast to English:
  - Regardless of the pronoun, in other words, regardless of who you are talking about (if you are talking about a male or if you are talking about a female or if you are talking to a male or if you are talking to a female or if it is a group of males or group of females), In English the verb remains the same.  
Eg: He slept, she slept, they slept, you slept, I slept, we slept. (no change in “slept”). So the

verb does not get impacted by the change in gender, plurality and the person of the one doing the verb.

- The other reason is that in English there are only 6 pronouns (he, she, they, you, I, we) and so there are only 6 conjugations. That is because a lot of them are recycled more than once. So regardless of whether you are speaking to a male or speaking to a female, you say “you”. Regardless of whether it is “one” or a “group”, you still say “you”. But in Arabic we are going to have different ones.

It is the opposite of these two reasons that warrants a heavy emphasis on verb tables in Arabic and we have a whole science that talks about that and it is called صرف (morphology).

○ So In Arabic :

- The pronoun in Arabic is written alongside the verb to the point that it (verb and pronoun together) looks like a single word. We saw this in اسْتَنْصَرُوا when we were dissecting this word and drawing out all the 7 meanings that were coming from there. If you remember, the masculine gender, the plurality and the person of the one doing the verb, all of that was coming from the و at the end. Now if I want to talk about “a group of females”, I would do it differently (it will not be with the و but a different letter).
- The other reason is that there are 14 conjugations in Arabic (as opposed to 6 in English). So when you have something that looks like it is being repeated 14 times with slight differences then that warrants a table.

### Why 14 conjugations?

So let us speak about the layout and let us speak about the 14 and then we will spend the rest of the presentation, Inshallah, developing and filling the slots on all 14 of them. First try to internalize some of the concepts before we begin developing the table. Inshallah that way, as soon as you will hear the conjugations you will be able to retain them and this is my objective through this 3<sup>rd</sup> presentation. I want you to walk away from this presentation having memorized the entire table. Inshallah, we will see whether I can fulfill on that promise or not and I want you to comment underneath the video and tell me your percentage on how much of it you were able to retain just by watching the presentation. So let us go ahead with the layout first.

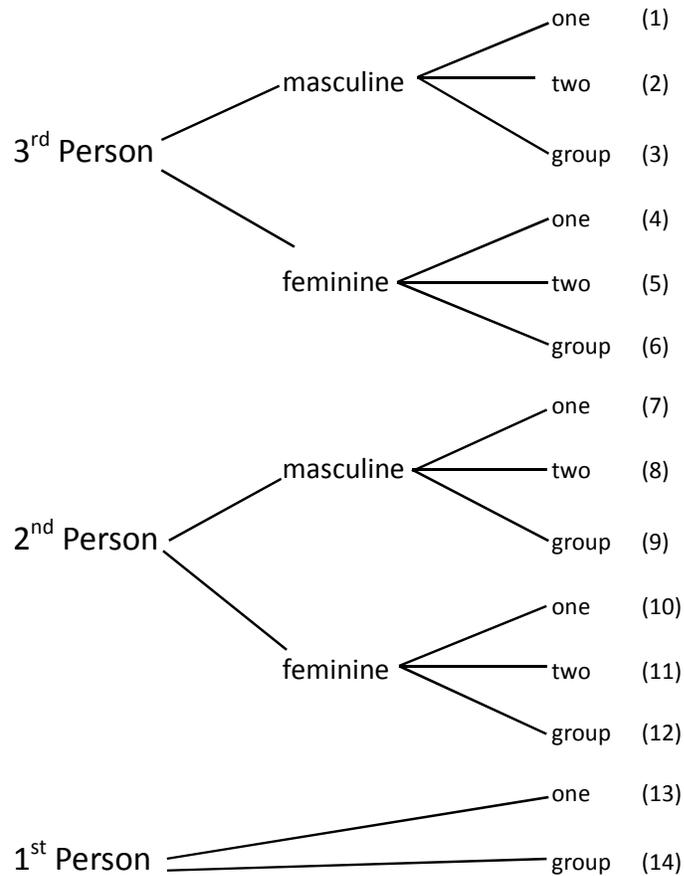
There are 3 factors that result in our large number of 14 conjugations:

1) PERSON :

- Third Person = speaking **about** the doer of the verb
- Second Person = speaking **to** the doer of the verb
- First Person = **You are** the doer of the verb

2) GENDER: Masculine and Feminine

3) PLURALITY : Single, Dual, Plural (Arabic has a dual which other languages don't)



So let us start seeing this now...

**Table layout - 3<sup>rd</sup> Person**

Person	Gender	Plurality	English Equivalent	Conjugation #
3 <sup>rd</sup>  (i.e. speaking <b>about</b> someone)	Masculine	Singular	He	1
		Dual (2)	They (2 males)	2
		Plural (3+)	They (3 or more males)	3
	Feminine	Singular	She	4
		Dual (2)	They (2 females)	5
		Plural (3+)	They (3 or more females)	6

So as you see above 3<sup>rd</sup> person creates 6 conjugations based on gender and plurality (he – they – they - she – they – they). So I want you to lift your head off the screen and say “he – they – they - she – they – they”. Try to internalize this. So you are speaking about: one male, two males, group of males, one female, two females, group of females. Obviously the Arabic verb would be given to you by the end of the presentation Inshallah. Right now we are just explaining the table layout.

**Table layout - 2<sup>nd</sup> Person**

Okay so now we see the same 6 repeated again but this time the person changes and you are not speaking about them but you are speaking **to** them.

Person	Gender	Plurality	English Equivalent	Conjugation #
2 <sup>nd</sup>  (i.e. speaking <b>to</b> someone)	Masculine	Singular	You (1 male)	7
		Dual (2)	You (2 males)	8
		Plural (3+)	You (3 or more males)	9
	Feminine	Singular	You	10
		Dual (2)	You (2 females)	11

		Plural (3+)	You (3 or more females)	12
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So whether you are speaking to one male, two males, group of males, one female, two females or group of females, you will say “you”. So there are 6 “you’s”.

From the top: “he -they-they-she-they-they-6 you’s”. Remember that!

### Table layout - 1<sup>st</sup> Person

For the first person (when the speaker is the doer of the verb), we would expect there to be 6 also. So the total number should be 18. However there are only 14. How does that happen? So in Arabic there is an overlap that happens in the first person. Regardless of whether you are a male or a female, if you are doing a verb and you want to speak about yourself doing the verb, you would say “I”. “I slept”, “I hit”, “I helped”. The same actual Arabic word would be used for singular male or female. Also, the dual becomes irrelevant. So instead of 18 we end up with only 14.

Person	Gender	Plurality	English Equivalent	Conjugation #
1 <sup>st</sup> (i.e. speaking <u>about</u> oneself)	Masculine/ Feminine	Singular	I	13
		Plural (2+)	We (2 or more people)	14

So “he – they – they – she – they – they - 6 you’s – I – we”.

This is pretty much it! This is our table layout and this is what we would be recycling again and again. So spend 5-10 minutes to properly understand that table layout. First of all why we need the table? 1) Because our number is large. Why is our number large? Our number is large because we have duals and we have very little overlap as opposed to English, which doesn't have a dual and has a lot of overlap.

2) The second reason why we need tables is because the verb and pronoun are written together to the point that it looks like a single word. So what you see essentially is you see the same word repeated so many times but with slight differences.

So this part of the presentation is now over and we can now develop the ماضي (past-tense) verb. So when you sign up for the premium program Inshallah and we continue with the science and we start developing the مضارع (present/future) verb and also the أمر

(command) verb, the table layout will be the same. That doesn't change. However, what fills the slots, changes. So right now the words that will be used to fill these 14 slots are ماضي specific. The ones for the مضارع would be different, in other words مضارع has its own method of construction which fundamentally differs from the method I am introducing to you today. So let us begin with ماضي (past-tense) now.

### **Developing the 3-lettered, past-tense verb in active voice**

Now, every verb will be either active or passive (we'll return back to this towards the end of the presentation but let me just tell you a little right now):

**Active** means the verb is attributed to the **doer**. That letter at the end of the verb is signifying the gender, the plurality and the person of the **doer**. So we are speaking about the doer of the verb is a male or a female, the doer of the verb is either one, or two or group, or we are speaking about the doer of the verb or we are speaking to the doer of the verb or ourselves are the doer of the verb.

**Passive** is when the doer is suppressed. We are not speaking about the doer but instead we are concerned about the **object**. So now that letter at the end of the verb is not signifying the gender or the plurality or the person of the doer but instead the object. Ex: "they were helped", "she was helped", "you were helped", "I was helped", "we were helped".

More on that later. First of all, everything I speak about in the next 10 minutes will be Active specific. Once I am done with the active, I will talk about the passive. If I spend 10-15 minutes on active, I will spend 1 minute on the passive. That is called leveraging, because everything is the same except very slight differences. So صرف is not about memorization.

صرف is about noting slight differences. There is a degree of memorization by necessity, like what we are doing right now. But it is very minimal. It is not about memorization it is more to do with understanding.

So the model pattern for the past-tense verb in 3 lettered verbs (without extras) in active voice is "فعل" - ف ع ل. What that means is that you would get your 3 letters from the dictionary, whatever they may be. And as we just spoke about this in the first presentation, that meanings in Arabic are achieved by gathering the letters of the alphabet into groups of 3. So you will get thousands of groups if you did that. Every group of 3 has an associated meaning. But because they are consonants and consonants on their own are not pronounceable, we are going to need vowels. Depending on what configuration of vowels

you add to the letters, you are going to get more meaning. There is one meaning that comes from the letters and there are additional meanings that come from the pattern (from the vowels). So if you were to convey active voice in the past-tense with a 3 lettered verb, this is how you would do it : **فَعَلَ**. All the letters would have a fatha ( َ ).

Examples: he helped **نَصَرَ** ; he sat **جَلَسَ**

Notice that apart from the 3 base letters, there is no particular ending where the “he” is implied. Rather it is understood. The reason is because the rest of them would have endings. There are 14 in total and 13 of them would have designated letters to represent the pronoun. So if you see none of those letters are there then by default the verb means “he”.

### Conjugation #1 : **فَعَلَ**

- So this is “he (one male)” - 3<sup>rd</sup> person, masculine, singular. Ex : he helped **نَصَرَ**

### Conjugation # 2 : **فَعَلَا**

- You just add an Alif ( ا ) to **فَعَلَ** in order to indicate 2 and it will become “they (2 males)” - 3<sup>rd</sup> person, masculine, dual.

Ex: They (2 males) helped - **نَصَرَا** ; They (2 males) sat - **جَلَسَا**

(Now lift your head and without looking say : **فَعَلَا** ; **فَعَلَ** )

### Conjugation # 3 : **فَعَلُوا**

- If you are speaking about a “group of males” (3<sup>rd</sup> person, masculine, plural) you are going to add a و at the end of the verb and that و would be saakin. The 3<sup>rd</sup> letter of the verb ( ل ) would receive a damma ( ُ ). It also has an Alif ( ا ) at the end but that Alif is not pronounced. It is silent and there is a particular wisdom behind why that Alif is there, (if you think you know why then go ahead and post in the comment and we will see. I don't want to spend too much time on it).

Examples : They (3 or more males) helped - **نَصَرُوا** ; they (3 or more males) sat - **جَلَسُوا**

So now we have our 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine conjugations all done and we will now move to 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine conjugations (# 4, 5, 6).

**Conjugation # 4 : فَعَلَتْ**

- The way to do that would be to add a ت at the end of the verb and the ت has a sukoon (◌ْ). This is 3<sup>rd</sup> person, feminine, singular.

Ex: She helped - نَصَرَتْ ; She sat - جَلَسَتْ

**Conjugation # 5: فَعَلْتَا**

- This is by adding a ت and an Alif (ا). Now we are speaking about two females - 3<sup>rd</sup> person, feminine, dual.

Examples: They (2 females) helped - نَصَرْتَا ; They (2 females) sat - جَلَسْتَا

This is a point to pause and go over all the 5 conjugations and repeat them without looking. Inshallah by the end of the presentation you will know all 14, provided that you stay with me here. So try to say these 5 conjugations about 5 times and once you are comfortable with it then you can continue with the remaining conjugations.

**Conjugation # 6: فَعَلْنَ**

- Now in this conjugation something unique happens that hasn't happened until now. So what has happened is that the ل position of the verb, the 3<sup>rd</sup> base letter, receives a sukoon (◌ْ) and the designated pronoun (or the suffix), which is ن, is added after the sukoon. This sukoon on ل will now maintain until the end of the table. This is 3<sup>rd</sup> person, feminine, plural.

Ex: They (3 or more females) helped - نَصَرْنَ ; they (3 or more females) sat - جَلَسْنَ

Now, the next 6 conjugations, which are the 2<sup>nd</sup> person conjugations (the 6 “you’s”), they will all be فَعَلْ (with a sukoon on ل) as we just told you above, and you will add the pronouns: تَنْ , تُمَا , تِ , تُمْ , تُمَا , تِ in the following manner (try to say these endings a few times):

“ <u>one male</u> ”	add ت	<b>Conjugation # 7 :</b> فَعَلْتَ
“ <u>two males</u> ”	add تُمَا	<b>Conjugation # 8:</b> فَعَلْتُمَا
“ <u>group of males</u> ”	add تُم	<b>Conjugation # 9:</b> فَعَلْتُمْ
“ <u>one female</u> ”	add تِ	<b>Conjugation # 10:</b> فَعَلْتِ
“ <u>two females</u> ”	add تُمَا	<b>Conjugation # 11:</b> فَعَلْتُمَا
“ <u>group of females</u> ”	add تُنَّ	<b>Conjugation # 12:</b> فَعَلْتُنَّ

Notice that conjugation # 8 and #11 are recycled. Someone might ask how do you tell which one is which then? The answer is: that question is purely hypothetical. It doesn't really exist in real life because even in English you don't really make that distinction whether you are speaking to a male, speaking to a female. There is overlap and you use “you” for all of them. Basically the context would distinguish because you will have physical people in front of you.

So at this stage you might want to lift your head and say all 12 conjugations and move forward when you feel comfortable saying them from memory.

### **Conjugation # 13 :** فَعَلْتُ

- so for the “I” (1<sup>st</sup> person, singular) you will add تُ to فَعَلَ . It is a little interesting because ت was used quite a few times. We had ت , تِ , تْ and now we have تُ with damma. So try to remember that.

Ex: I helped - نَصَرْتُ ; I sat - جَلَسْتُ

### **Conjugation # 14 :** فَعَلْنَا

- for the “We” (1<sup>st</sup> person, plural) you will add ن and an Alif ( ا ) to فَعَلَ . Ex: We helped - نَصَرْنَا ; We sat - جَلَسْنَا

Person	Gender	Plurality	English	Arabic	Conj. #
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Masculine	Sing.	He	فَعَلَ	1
		Dual	They (2M)	فَعَلَا	2
		Plural	They (3+ M)	فَعَلُوا	3
	Feminine	Sing.	She	فَعَلَتْ	4
		Dual	They (2F)	فَعَلْنَا	5
		Plural	They (3+F)	فَعَلْنَ	6
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Masculine	Sing.	You (1M)	فَعَلْتَ	7
		Dual	You (2M)	فَعَلْتُمَا	8
		Plural	You (3+M)	فَعَلْتُمْ	9
	Feminine	Sing.	You (1F)	فَعَلْتِ	10
		Dual	You (2F)	فَعَلْتُمَا	11
		Plural	You (3+F)	فَعَلْتُنَّ	12
1 <sup>st</sup>	Masculine/ Feminine	Sing.	I	فَعَلْتُ	13
		Plural	We	فَعَلْنَا	14

At this time you might just want to internalize all of that and say it quite a few times. I will suggest focusing on the middle 6 first (#7 through 12) and nailing those down first. Make sure you are 100% with those 6. Once you have those then go back and remove gaps in understanding and try to get those top 6, combining with the middle 6 you already have, and you are 90% of the way there. Then just wrap it up with the last 2.

All of this we talked about was active. In other words, when speaking about the doer. So all of the suffixes at the end are literally pronouns speaking about the gender, plurality and the person of the one doing the verb. If you want to turn this into passive and say “he was helped, they were helped, she was helped, I was helped” etc. Then you make some modification to the first and second letter and this same table would become a passive table.

### Developing the 3-lettered, past-tense verb in passive voice

So a passive voice (مَجْهُول), is achieved by doing two modifications :

- 1) The second to last base letter gets a kasra.
- 2) The very first base letter would receive a damma

} فُعِلَ

The rest of the table stays exactly the same as in active voice.

He was helped	نُصِرَ
They (2M) were helped	نُصِرَا
They (3+M) were helped	نُصِرُوا
She was helped	نُصِرَتْ
They (2F) were helped	نُصِرَتَا
They (3+F) were helped	نُصِرْنَ
You (1M) was helped	نُصِرْتَ
You (2M) were helped	نُصِرْتُمَا
You (3+M) were helped	نُصِرْتُمْ
You (1F) was helped	نُصِرْتِ
You (2F) were helped	نُصِرْتُمَا

You (3+F) were helped	نُصِرْتُمْ
I was helped	نُصِرْتُ
We were helped	نُصِرْنَا

And there you have your past-tense, 3 lettered verb, passive voice table down as well.

Those pronouns at the end are the same pronouns as in active, however, they are not signifying the doer anymore. They are now representing the object and the doer is not even there. The doer is suppressed. So for example: in نُصِرُوا if the question is posed “who helped?” the answer is “we don't know”. All we know is that the people who received the help were males, but we have no idea of who the helper was.

So now we have 2 tables. The فَعَلَ table and the فُعِلَ table. The ل ع ل ف letters are models. It is like X, Y, Z in algebra. So in actual usage you will be replacing these letters with the base letters of the actual verb. So I don't want you to be translating them. Just understand the association. If you really want to translate then substitute those letters with نَصَرَ and go ahead and translate that to your heart's content.

### Negative verbs (مَنْفِي)

Now for both these active and passive verbs, If you want to create negatives out of them then you would put a ما at the front.

Active

مَا فَعَلَ

Passive

مَا فُعِلَ

#### Examples:

He did not help مَا نَصَرَ

He was not helped مَا نُصِرَ

She did not help مَا نَصَرَتْ

She was not helped مَا نُصِرَتْ

We did not help مَا نَصَرْنَا

We were not helped مَا نُصِرْنَا

So now we have 4 tables: مَا فُعِلَ, مَا فَعَلَ, فُعِلَ, فَعَلَ

And to end this presentation I am going to go ahead and recite all these tables in that order. Just listen and try to follow and watch the presentation a couple of times and try to recite the tables from memory. In order to solidify this, half an hour or 20 minutes is well worth the effort to be able to do this, because this is not isolated. This clearly belongs to the 4% of the language that has the broadest application. These verbs will begin occurring as soon as the reading text begins and you start seeing the verbs in the book. They are going to have different endings and you are going to need to know what those endings mean. Sometimes the verb will be active, sometimes it will be passive, sometimes negative sometimes not. So all of this is really important. Also, what we just did right now would also be done with the second major verb (the present/future one) but then the slots will be filled with different verbs and the method of construction would be different.

So the way we do it is, firstly we explain and develop the table conceptually, as I just did it for you. The second step is to begin seeing the verbs in the context of the storybook. The more you see it the more intimately familiar you will get with them. The third is to practice verb recitation and we do that in our live sessions in our premium program.