

Arabic

Letters of the Alphabet

Initial	Medial	Final	Alone	Romanization
ا	ا	ا	ا	omit (see Note 1)
ب	ب	ب	ب	b
ت	ت	ت	ت	t
ث	ث	ث	ث	th
ج	ج	ج	ج	j
ح	ح	ح	ح	ḥ
خ	خ	خ	خ	kh
د	د	د	د	d
ذ	ذ	ذ	ذ	dh
ر	ر	ر	ر	r
ز	ز	ز	ز	z
س	س	س	س	s
ش	ش	ش	ش	sh
ص	ص	ص	ص	ṣ
ض	ض	ض	ض	ḍ
ط	ط	ط	ط	ṭ
ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ	ẓ
ع	ع	ع	ع	' (ayn)
غ	غ	غ	غ	gh
ف	ف	ف	ف	f (see Note 2)
ق	ق	ق	ق	q (see Note 2)
ك	ك	ك	ك	k
ل	ل	ل	ل	l
م	م	م	م	m
ن	ن	ن	ن	n
هـ	هـ	هـ ، ه	هـ ، ه	h (see Note 3)
و	و	و	و	w
ي	ي	ي	ي	y

Vowels and Diphthongs

اَ	a	اَ	ā (see Rule 5)	اِي	ī
اُ	u	اِي	á (see Rule 6(a))	اُو	aw
اِ	i	اُو	ū	اِي	ay

Letters Representing Non-Arabic Consonants

This list is not exhaustive. It should be noted that a letter in this group may have more than one phonetic value, depending on the country or area where it is used, and that the romanization will vary accordingly.

گ	g	چ	ch	ف	v
گ	G	چ	zh	ف	v
پ	P	ژ	zh	ف	v

Notes

1. For the use of *alif* to support *hamzah*, see rule 2. For the romanization of *hamzah* by the consonantal sign ' (alif), see rule 8(a). For other orthographic uses of *alif* see rules 3-5.
2. The *Maghribī* variations ف and ف are romanized *f* and *q* respectively.
3. ö in a word in the construct state is romanized *t*. See rule 7(b).

RULES OF APPLICATION

Arabic Letters Romanized in Different Ways Depending on Their Context

1. As indicated in the table, و and ی may represent:

(a) The consonants romanized *w* and *y*, respectively.

waḍ'	وضع
'iwaḍ	عوض
dalw	دلو
yad	يد
ḥiyal	حیل
ṭahy	طهی

(b) The long vowels romanized *ū*, *ī*, and *ā* respectively.

ūlá	اولی
ṣūrah	صورة
dhū	ذو
īmān	ایمان
jīl	جیل
fī	فی
kitāb	کتاب
saḥāb	سحاب
jumān	جمان

See also rules 11(a) and 11(b)(1-2).

(c) The diphthongs romanized *aw* and *ay*, respectively.

awj	اوج
nawm	نوم
law	لو
aysar	ايسر
shaykh	شيخ
'aynay	عيني

See also rules 11(a)(2) and 11(b)(3).

2. | (*alif*), و and ى when used to support ء (*hamzah*) are not represented in romanization. See rule 8(a).
3. | (*alif*) when used to support *waṣlah* (ِ) and *maddah* (َ) is not represented in romanization. See rules 9 and 10.
4. | (*alif*) and و when used as orthographic signs without phonetic significance are not represented in romanization.

fa'alū	فعلوا
ulā'ika	اولانك
'ilman wa-'amalan	علما وعملا

See also rule 12 and examples cited in rules 23-26.

5. | (*alif*) is used to represent the long vowel romanized *ā*, as indicated in the table.

fā'il	فاعل
riḍā	رضا

This *alif*, when medial, is sometimes omitted in Arabic; it is always indicated in romanization. See rule 19.

6. Final ى appears in the following special cases:

(a) As ى (*alif maqṣūrah*) used in place of ِ to represent the long vowel romanized *ā*.

ḥattá	حتّى
maḍá	مضى
kubrá	كبرى
Yaḥyá	يحيى
musammá	مسمى
Muṣṭafá	مصطفى

(b) As ى in nouns and adjectives of the form *fāṭīl* which are derived from defective roots. This ending is romanized *ī*, not *īy*, without regard to the presence of َ (*shaddah*). See rule 11(b)(2).

Raḍī al-Dīn

رضى الدين

Compare the *faʿīl* form of the same root الرضى [without *shaddah*] *al-Raḍī*.

- (c) As ى in the relative adjective (*nisbah*). The ending, like (b) above, is romanized *ī*, not *īy*.

al-Miṣrī

المصري

Compare المصرية *al-Miṣrīyah* and see rule 11(b)(1).

7. *ö* (*tā' marbūṭah*)

- (a) When the noun or adjective ending in *ö* is indefinite, or is preceded by the definite article, *ö* is romanized *h*. The *ö* in such positions is often replaced by *o*.

ṣalāh

صلاة

al-Risālah al-bahīyah

الرسالة البهية

mir'āh

مرآة

Urjūzah fī al-ṭibb

ارجوزة فى الطب

- (b) When the word ending in *ö* is in the construct state, *ö* is romanized *t*.

Wizārat al-Tarbiyah

وزارة التربية

Mir'āt al-zamān

مرآة الزمان

- (c) When the word ending in *ö* is used adverbially, *ö* (vocalized *ō*) is romanized *tan*.

See rule 12(b).

Romanization of Arabic Orthographic Symbols Other than Letters and Vowel Signs

The signs listed below are frequently omitted from unvocalized Arabic writing and printing; their presence or absence must then be inferred. They are represented in romanization according to the following rules:

8. *ء* (*hamzah*)

- (a) In initial position, whether at the beginning of a word, following a prefixed preposition or conjunction, or following the definite article, *ء* is not represented in romanization.

When medial or final, *ء* is romanized as ' (alif).

asad

أسد

uns

أنس

idha

إذا

mas'alah

مسألة

mu'tamar

مؤتمر

dā'im

دائم

mala'a

ملاً

khaṭi'a

خطئ

(b) ء, when replaced by the sign ّ (*waṣlah*) and then known as *hamzat al-waṣl*, is not represented in romanization. See rule 9 below.

9. ّ (*waṣlah*), like initial ء, is not represented in romanization. See also rule 8(b) above. When the *alif* which supports *waṣlah* belongs to the article ال, the initial vowel of the article is romanized *a*. See rule 17(b). In other words, beginning with *hamzat al-waṣl*, the initial vowel is romanized *i*.

Riḥlat Ibn Jubayr	رحلة ابن جبير
al-istidrāk	الأستدراك
kutub iqṭanat'hā	كتب أقتتها
bi-ihtimām 'Abd al-Majīd	بأهتمام عبد ألمجيد

10. ~ (*maddah*)

(a) Initial Ā is romanized *ā*.

ālah	آلة
Kullīyat al-Ādāb	كلية الآداب

(b) Medial Ā, when it represents the phonetic combination 'ā, is so romanized.

ta'ālif	تأليف
ma'āthir	مآثر

(c) ~ is otherwise not represented in romanization.

khulafā'	خلفاء
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11. ّ (*shaddah* or *tashdīd*)

(a) Over و:

- (1) وّ, representing the combination of long vowel plus consonant, is romanized *ūw*.

adūw	عدو
qūwah	قوة

See also rule 1(b).

- (2) وّ, representing the combination of diphthong plus consonant, is romanized *aww*.

Shawwāl	شوّال
ṣawwara	صوّر
jaww	جو

See also rule 1(c).

(b) Over ى:

(1) Medial ىِ, representing the combination of long vowel plus consonant, is romanized *īy*.

al-Miṣrīyah

المصريّة

See also rule 1(b).

(2) Final ىِ is romanized *ī*. See rules 6(b) and 6(c).

(3) Medial and final ىِ, representing the combination of diphthong plus consonant, is romanized *ayy*.

ayyām

أيّام

sayyid

سيّد

Quṣayy

قصيّ

See also rule 1(c).

(c) Over other letters, ى is represented in romanization by doubling the letter or digraph concerned.

al-Ghazzī

الغزّيّ

al-Kashshāf

الكشّاف

12. *Tanwīn* may take the written form ىِ, ىِ (ىِ), or ىِ, romanized *un*, *an*, and *in*, respectively. *Tanwīn* is normally disregarded in romanization, however. It is indicated in the following cases:

(a) When it occurs in indefinite nouns derived from defective roots.

qāḍin

قاضٍ

maʿnan

معنٍ

(b) When it indicates the adverbial use of a noun or adjective.

ṭabʿan

طبعاً

fajʿatan

فجأةً

al-Mushtarik waḍʿan

المشترك وضعاً

wa-al-muftariq ṣuqʿan

والمفترق صقاً

Grammatical Structure as It Affects Romanization

13. Final inflections of verbs are retained in romanization, except in pause.

man waliya Miṣr

من ولي مصر

maʿrifat mā yajibu la-hum

معرفة ما يجب لهم

ṣallā Allāh ʿalayhi wa-sallam

صلى الله عليه وسلم

al-Luʿluʿ al-maknūn fī ḥukm

للؤلؤ المكنون في حكم

al-akhbār ʿammā sayakūn

الاخبار عما سيكون

14. Final inflections of nouns and adjectives:

- (a) Vocalic endings are not represented in romanization, except preceding pronominal suffixes, and except when the text being romanized is in verse.

Ma'had Mawlāya al-Ḥasan	معهد مولاي الحسن
uṣūluhā al-nafsīyah wa-ṭuruq	اصولها النفسية وطرق تدريسها
tadrīsihā	
ilā yawminā hādhā	الى يومنا هذا

- (b) *Tanwīn* is not represented in romanization, except as specified in rule 12.

- (c) *ö* (*tā' marbūṭah*) is romanized h or t as specified in rule 7.

- (d) For the romanization of the relative adjective (*nisbah*) see rule 6(c).

15. Pronouns, pronominal suffixes, and demonstratives:

- (a) Vocalic endings are retained in romanization.

anā wa-anta	انا وانت
hādhihi al-ḥāl	هذه الحال
mu'allafātuhu wa-shurūḥuhā	مؤلفاته وشروحاتها

- (b) At the close of a phrase or sentence, the ending is romanized in its pausal form.

ḥayātuhu wa-'aṣruh	حياته وعصره
Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm, afkāruh,	توفيق الحكيم، أفكاره، آثاره
āthāruh	

16. Prepositions and conjunctions:

- (a) Final vowels of separable prepositions and conjunctions are retained in romanization.

anna	ان
annahu	انه
bayna yadayhu	بين يديه

Note the special cases: *مما mimmā*, *ممن mimman*.

- (b) Inseparable prepositions, conjunctions, and other prefixes are connected with what follows by a hyphen.

bi-hi	به
wa-ma'ahu	ومعه
lā-silkī	لاسلكى

17. The definite article:

- (a) The romanized form *a/* is connected with the following word by a hyphen.

al-kitāb al-thānī	الكتاب الثاني
al-ittiḥād	الاتحاد
al-aṣl	الاصل
al-āthār	الآثار

- (b) When **إل** is initial in the word, and when it follows an inseparable preposition or conjunction, it is always romanized *a/* regardless of whether the preceding word, as romanized, ends in a vowel or a consonant.

ilá al-ān	إلى الآن
Abū al-Wafā'	أبو الوفاء
Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣrīyah	مكتبة النهضة المصرية
bi-al-tamām wa-al-kamāl	بالتمام والكمال

Note the exceptional treatment of the preposition **ل** followed by the article:

lil-Shirbīnī	للشربيني
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See also rule 23.

- (c) The **ل** of the article is always romanized *l*, whether it is followed by a “sun letter” or not, i.e., regardless of whether or not it is assimilated in pronunciation to the initial consonant of the word to which it is attached.

al-ḥurūf al-abjadīyah	الحروف الابجدية
Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī	أبو الليث السمرقندي

Orthography of Arabic in Romanization

18. Capitalization:

- (a) Rules for the capitalization of English are followed, except that the definite article *a/* is given in lower case in all positions.
- (b) Diacritics are used with both upper and lower case letters.

al-Ījī	الايجي
al-Ālūsī	الالوسي

19. The macron or the acute accent, as appropriate, is used to indicate all long vowels, including those which in Arabic script are written defectively. The macron or the acute accent, as the case may be, is retained over final long vowels which are shortened in pronunciation before *hamzat al-waṣl*.

Ibrāhīm	إبراهيم ، ابرهيم
Dā'ūd	داؤود ، داود
Abū al-Ḥasan	أبو الحسن
ru'ūs	رؤس
dhālika	ذلك
'alá al-'ayn	على العين

20. The hyphen is used:

- (a) To connect the definite article *a/* with the word to which it is attached. See rule 17(a).
- (b) Between an inseparable prefix and what follows. See rules 16(b) and 17(b) above.

(c) Between *bin* and the following element in personal names when they are written in Arabic as a single word. See rule 25.

21. The prime (') is used:

(a) To separate two letters representing two distinct consonantal sounds, when the combination might otherwise be read as a digraph.

Ad'ham	ادهم
akramat'hā	اكرمتها

(b) To mark the use of a letter in its final form when it occurs in the middle of a word.

Qal'ah'jī	قلعة جي
Shaykh'zādah	شيخ زاده

22. As in the case of romanization from other languages, foreign words which occur in an Arabic context and are written in Arabic letters are romanized according to the rules for romanizing Arabic.

Jārmānūs (<i>not</i> Germanos <i>nor</i> Germanus)	جارمانوس
Lūrd Ghrānfil (<i>not</i> Lord Granville)	لورد غرانفيل
Īsāghūjī (<i>not</i> Isagoge)	ايساغوجي

For short vowels not indicated in the Arabic, the Arabic vowel nearest to the original pronunciation is supplied.

Gharsiyā Khayin (<i>not</i> García Jaén)	غرسيا خين
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Examples of Irregular Arabic Orthography

23. Note the romanization of الله, alone and in combination.

Allāh	الله
billāh	بِالله
lillāh	لِالله
bismillāh	بِسْمِ الله
al-Mustanṣir billāh	المستنصر بالله

24. Note the romanization of the following personal names:

Ṭāhā	طه
Yāsīn	يس ، يسن
'Amr	عمرو
Bahjat	بهجت ، بهجة

25. ابن and بن are both romanized *ibn* in all positions.

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Rabī	احمد بن محمد بن ابي الربيع
Sharḥ Ibn 'Aqīl 'alá Alfīyat Ibn Mālik	شرح ابن عقيل على الفية ابن مالك

Exception is made in the case of modern names, typically North African, in which the element بن is pronounced *bin*.

Bin Khiddah

بن خده

Bin-'Abd Allāh

بنعبد الله

26. Note the anomalous spelling مائة, romanized *mi'ah*.