

Sarf

Sarf is the science of Classical Arabic which deals with:

1. patterns of vowelization which indicate tense of a verb
2. designated endings which reflect the *gender*, *plurality*, and *person* of the Subject (the one doing the verb)

Gender: There are two genders in Arabic: *Masculine* and *Feminine*. Unlike English, there is no neutral gender in Arabic. All nouns are masculine unless they are defined feminine, either by general agreement e.g. *Umm* (Mother), *shams* (Sun), or by the the ending **ة** which is called *ta marbuta*.

Plurality :In Arabic there are three ways of describing the number of nouns: *single*, *dual*, and *plural* (*more than 2*).

Person: Similar to English, there are three persons in Arabic: *1st*, *2nd*, and *3rd*

According to the above scheme the Subject of a verb can cause 18 (2 x 3 x 3) changes to the patterns of vowelization and designated endings of that verb. These are listed below:

3rd person Masculine Singular/Dual/Plural **3**

3rd person Feminine Singular/Dual/Plural **3**

2nd person Masculine Singular/Dual/Plural **3**

2nd person Feminine Singular/Dual/Plural **3**

1st person Masculine Singular/Dual/Plural **3**

1st person Feminine Singular/Dual/Plural **3**

However, the 1st person Masculine Singular/Dual and 1st person Feminine Singular/Dual are condensed as one; thus, the total is reduced by 4, bringing it to 14. A complete listing of these is given in the table below (note: this is taken from page 20 of Hussain Abdul Sattar's Book, **Fundamentals of Classical Arabic**, available [here](#)).

| PERSON | GENDER | PLURALITY | BASE | | SUFFIX | | ACTIVE VOICE |
|--------|---------------------------|-----------|------|---|--------|---|--|
| 3rd | Masculine | Singular | فعل | | | ⇒ | فَعَلَ He/It (S/M) did |
| 3rd | Masculine | Dual | فعل | + | ا | ⇒ | فَعَلَا They (D/M) did |
| 3rd | Masculine | Plural | فعل | + | وا | ⇒ | فَعَلُوا ¹⁰ They (P/M) did |
| 3rd | Feminine | Singular | فعل | + | ت | ⇒ | فَعَلَتْ She/It (S/F) did |
| 3rd | Feminine | Dual | فعل | + | تا | ⇒ | فَعَلْتَا They (D/F) did |
| 3rd | Feminine | Plural | فعل | + | ن | ⇒ | فَعَلْنَ They (P/F) did |
| 2nd | Masculine | Singular | فعل | + | ت | ⇒ | فَعَلْتَ You (S/M) did |
| 2nd | Masculine | Dual | فعل | + | تُما | ⇒ | فَعَلْتُمَا You (D/M) did |
| 2nd | Masculine | Plural | فعل | + | تُمْ | ⇒ | فَعَلْتُمْ You (P/M) did |
| 2nd | Feminine | Singular | فعل | + | تِ | ⇒ | فَعَلْتِ You (S/F) did |
| 2nd | Feminine | Dual | فعل | + | تُما | ⇒ | فَعَلْتُمَا You (D/F) did |
| 2nd | Feminine | Plural | فعل | + | تُنَّ | ⇒ | فَعَلْتُنَّ You (P/F) did |
| 1st | Masculine and Feminine | Singular | فعل | + | تُ | ⇒ | فَعَلْتُ I did |
| 1st | Masculine and Feminine | Plural | فعل | + | نَا | ⇒ | فَعَلْنَا We did |

M=Masculine F=Feminine S=Singular D=Dual P=Plural