

Purpose of Vowel signs in Arabic

- The way ‘vowels’ give direction to the words in English language ‘harakaat’ do the same job in Arabic.
- There are 3 vowel signs in Arabic called as ‘harakaat- حَرَكَات’ (singular – حَرَكَة-harakat) which literally means “movements”. They can be both short and long.
- In order to eliminate the repeated usage of ‘ا’, ‘و’ and ‘ي’ (which give direction to the words in Arabic) 3 short vowel signs are used, also known as ‘harakaat- حَرَكَات’ The three long vowels (ā = ا, ū = و, ī = ي) are considered as letters in their full right and feature as such in the alphabet.

Vowel signs in Arabic

Arabic name	Harakat sign	Denoted by	Urdu name	Arabic harakat	Example 1	Example 2
Fatah (فَتْحَة)	◌َ	'a'	zabar	ا	سَ	حَ
Kasra (كَسْرَة)	◌ِ	'i'	zer	ي	سِ	حِ
Dhamma (ضَمَّة)	◌ُ	'u'	pesh	و	سُ	حُ

Other signs in Arabic and their purpose

• Sukūn (سُكُون) is the absence of a vowel sound. It is represented by a circle above a consonant. In this example you would say the letter سُن (s) just like in مَسْجِد pronounced as “masjid”, which means mosque in Arabic. There is no direction of sound of the letter ‘س’ hence it will be read along with previous letter.

• Shadda (شَدَّة) when a consonant occurs twice without a vowel sound in between, it is written only once and the Shadda (ّ) which is similar to a small “w” shape as shown above is placed over it .Whenever shadda comes over a letter then it will be read along with the previous letter. Shadda is used above a letter to avoid it writing twice.

Example - عَرَبِيَّة in this word shadda is on ‘ي’

Note – In Arabic books ‘kasrah(zer)’ comes below shadda and not below the letter. Example - مُزَمِّل -- muzammil --- kasrah is below shadda of م and not below م

- In Arabic every noun in its original form will have two dhammas (◌[◌]) on it . Eg:- كِتَابٌ (kitaabun).
- The sound at the end of the word having 'تَنْوِينٌ (tanveen)' will be that of 'ن'- it's sound comes when recited but not when written.

Tanveen sign	Type	Name	Also called as	Location
◌◌	2 fatah-s	Fatahtaani/ fatahtayni	Tanveen bil fatah	Always at the end of the word
◌◌◌	2 kasra-s	Kasrataaani/ kasratayni	Tanveen bil kasrah	Always at the end of the word
◌◌◌◌	2 dhamma-s	Dhammataani/ dhammatayni	Tanveen bid dhammah	Always at the end of the word