

# Why should I Learn Arabic?

## Connect!

Arabic connects you to hundreds of millions of speakers around the globe.

Arabic, counting its many varieties, is the fifth-most spoken language in the world, with over 200 million native speakers of Arabic and more than 400 million total speakers of the language.

*Arabic connects you to Arab-American communities.*

In the United States, more than 1 million Americans speak Arabic at home, making it the fastest growing second language in the US since 2010. These 1 million are among an estimated 3.6 million Americans total of Arab origin. These people make up diverse communities that represent different religions (primarily Christian and Muslim), countries of origin, and cultures, including first-generation immigrants and families who have been in the US for generations.

*Arabic connects you to adherents of the world's 3rd largest Religion*

The Arabic language also holds special a significance for Muslims around the world who make up 23% of the world's population. Although most of these 1.6 billion Muslims do not speak Arabic as a native language, many Muslims learn Arabic as a language of religious study and prayer.

*Arabic is a bridge to international affairs and global politics*

Arabic is one of the six official UN languages, and it is the official or co-official language of 27 countries. Developments in the Arabic-speaking world have played an outsize role in the news and diplomacy of recent events.

## Distinguish yourself!

*Arabic will set you apart*

By learning Arabic, you will distinguish yourself as a student who is willing to break the mold and try something different from the norm. This fact alone is enough to set yourself apart when applying for colleges, scholarships, and special programs.

*Arabic will help you find a job*

Knowledge of Arabic and familiarity with Arab culture will offer expanded access to careers in fields such as business, diplomacy, journalism, defense, public policy, health care and more. In careers that involve interaction with native Arabic speakers, knowing even a relatively small amount of Arabic can go a long way in increasing your credibility and ability to build strong relationships.



### *Arabic is a Critical Need Language*

Because Arabic is a Critical Need Language, many branches of the U.S. government highly value job applicants who know Arabic. Learning less commonly taught and critical-need languages such as Arabic helps prepare you to meet the needs of a globally oriented society in the 21st century.

### **Widen your World!**

#### *Arabic creates global citizens*

In the 21st century, knowing a foreign language such as Arabic can help prepare you to become a globally engaged and connected citizen. As the world becomes more interconnected and interdependent, multicultural competency, international awareness and language fluency will be ever more important.

#### *Arabic promotes understanding of diverse cultural perspectives*

Learning the Arabic language and the cultures linked with it can expose you to a diverse range of perspectives and opinions that would otherwise be unavailable. Learning about other cultures can help you in understanding your own culture and expressing your own perspective on the world.

#### *Learning Arabic promotes understanding*

Learners of a second language develop a more positive attitude towards the target language and speakers of that language.

Muslim-Americans – a category of people often conflated with Arab-Americans – are exposed to a disproportionate number of the hate crimes in the US: more than 14% of hate crimes in 2013 targeted Muslims despite the fact that Muslims make up less than 1% of the population. Learning the Arabic language and accessing Arab culture in all of its diversity can help increase mutual understanding and combat prejudice.

#### *Arabic opens a world of culture*

Learning Arabic exposes you to a universe of art, culture and heritage from Arab countries. The wide diversity of Arab cultural products, ranging from deep-rooted traditions (such as calligraphy and geometric design) to vibrant contemporary forms (such as popular music and video activism) will enrich your understanding of the world.

### **Build your Skills!**

#### *Learning languages makes you perform better in school*

Students who study a second language demonstrate improved academic performance in a variety of fields and by a variety of measures.

#### *Learning languages can improve cognitive abilities*

Learning languages and a bilingual environment help improve cognitive abilities, especially at a young age.



### *Learning Arabic can expand your thinking*

The Arabic alphabet is phonetic, with each letter representing a single sound, yet mastering it will require you to think in new ways about sounds and how they combine to form words. The structure of Arabic words is logical and yet very different from the European languages that are usually studied in schools. The process of learning Arabic – in and of itself – will require critical thinking and creativity.

### **General Citations for this Section**

- Ideas and some content for this page were drawn from this report from the Chicago Council on Global Affairs about teaching Arabic in Chicago.
- Inspiration for this page was drawn from the Japan Foundation of Los Angeles’s “Speak Japan” website.



# How Can I Become a K-12 Arabic Language Teacher?

## How do I become a certified teacher?

If you are interested in teaching at a college or university, you will most likely need an advanced degree. Most institutions require a Master's degree to teach in adjunct positions and a PhD for tenure-track positions.

If you are interested in teaching at a private K-12 school, inquire with that school about their certification requirements. Many do not require specific certification.

If you are interested in teaching at a public K-12 school, you will need to learn about acquiring Arabic certification in the state where you wish to teach. Here are some resources to start your search:

- [LangCred.org](http://LangCred.org) – This website offers a searchable database of state-by-state information about language.
- [Teach.org](http://Teach.org) – This website offers a tool for discovering a pathway towards becoming a licensed teacher, alongside other resources.

## Where can I find postings for Arabic teaching jobs?

Here is a list of websites and email groups where schools seeking Arabic teachers post job notices:

- [Arabic K12 Bulletin](#) – this is a periodic email bulletin sent to K-12 Arabic teachers or those interested in the field. It includes a section on employment opportunities. To subscribe, write to [arabick12@gmail.com](mailto:arabick12@gmail.com).
- [Arabic-L Mailing List](#) – this email mailing list includes various topics related to Arabic Linguistics and Arabic Language Teaching, including job opportunities, and is sponsored by Brigham Young University. To subscribe to ARABIC-L, send a message with the text: “subscribe ARABIC-L your name” to [ARABIC-L@LISTSERV.LINGUISTLIST.ORG](mailto:ARABIC-L@LISTSERV.LINGUISTLIST.ORG)
- [American Association of Teachers of Arabic – Employment Opportunities – Schools or universities post teaching opportunities on the website of this professional organization.](#) Most of the posts are for university-level positions, but there are also K-12 institutions posting jobs here.
- [National Foreign Language Resource Centers](#) – These centers around the country often serve as places to exchange information about employment opportunities for less commonly taught languages.



# How Can I Find Arabic Teaching and Curriculum Resources?

One of the greatest challenges for K-12 Arabic educators has been identifying high quality curriculum and supplemental materials that are age-appropriate for this less-commonly-taught language. This page lists a number of resources that schools and teachers may wish to learn more about, including paid and free materials. It is always wise to seek out experienced educators teaching at your level to advise on what the most up-to-date resources are.

- Al-Masdar – QFI has developed Al-Masdar (“The Source”), a clearinghouse for Arabic language and cultural resources. There is a specific page for for Arabic language teaching resources sorted by topic and a page for for Arabic society and culture resources sorted by topic, as well as a general resources search page that can be limited by multiple criteria.

## General Resources

- ACTFL “Standards” – The ACTFL World Language Readiness Standards is a collection of content standards for language learning. “The ... Standards ... create a roadmap to guide learners to develop competence to communicate effectively and interact with cultural understanding.” Understanding these Standards and the principles that underlie them is an essential foundation for implementing, adapting, or developing level-appropriate Arabic learning materials.



# How can I improve as an Arabic teacher and network with others?

Attending professional development opportunities such as trainings or conferences is an important way to improve as an educator, especially in the fast-growing field of Arabic education.

An important side-benefit of such programs or conferences is being able to network with and learn from teachers from schools around the country. Arabic teachers from a variety of schools tout the benefits of talking and collaborating with other teachers. Meeting with like-minded colleagues can offer excellent opportunities to share ideas or even jointly develop plans or materials.

Attending these programs may require the support (financial or otherwise) of your school administration or funding sources from outside of your school. Here is a list of programs that may be of interest:

## **STARTALK programs**

- STARTALK offers a number of programs each summer that train and support Arabic teachers. Click [here](#) to view the STARTALK program database or the Arabic teacher programs offered in 2015 as a sample.
- Professional Development and Training Programs for Teachers

- QFI has gathered a list of variety of teacher professional development summer professional development opportunities for 2015 that may be of interest to Arabic teachers. Search for opportunities on the list that seem interesting to get the most up-to-date information.
- Concordia Language Villages runs a series of academic-year professional development workshops for Arabic teachers that combine webinars with in-person sessions.
- The Aldeen Foundation offers online Arabic teacher training workshops throughout the school year.

## **Professional Associations and Conferences**

The conferences of professional associations where Arabic teachers gather are an excellent opportunity for meeting and networking with other teachers.

- QFI supports a number of regional Arabic teachers' councils around the USA, including councils based in Washington DC, Michigan, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York.
- ACTFL - The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages holds an



annual national conference at which many Arabic teachers gather. The ACTFL Arabic special interest group (SIG) also gathers at this conference.

- There are a number of regional language teaching councils that hold conferences around the country that may be of interest
  - NECTFL is a conference for language teachers in the Northeast US region and attracts a number of Arabic teachers each year.
  - MIWLA is the Michigan World Language Association, which holds a conference in an area with a large number of Arabic teachers.
  - Search for your own state or regional language association to connect with other language teachers and seek out the Arabic teaching community in your area.
- AATA - The American Association of Teachers of Arabic is a professional organization for Arabic teachers that meets yearly at the Middle East Studies Association conference.
- NCOLCTL - The National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages advocates for the teaching of LCTLs and holds a yearly conference.



# What are the first steps to starting an Arabic program?

## Research existing programs

Seek out and communicate with leaders at existing K-12 Arabic programs. Ideally, you will be able to find other Arabic programs in your region who know about local circumstances, as well as leaders at schools further afield that have a similar profile to yours and that may serve as models.

This step is especially important for administrators interested in offering Arabic who lack a background in Arabic language or foreign language pedagogy. K-12 Arabic is a fast-developing field and, in practice, there is a wide variety of approaches to teaching the language and culture. Talking with multiple teachers and administrators working in different environments will leave you prepared to develop a vision for a program that follows best practices and suits your school's circumstances. In addition to researching programs independently, email QFI to learn about schools and leaders you may want to contact.

## Talk with local stakeholders

Research and reach out to local stakeholders who may be able to support your efforts. These people could include school families who are interested in internationally oriented curricular offerings at the school, or Arab-Americans who are part of your school

community or living in the area. People from these groups can become allies in the building of an Arabic program and help find potential Arabic teachers. As they may also be potential beneficiaries of an Arabic program, it is important to hear from such people about what their goals and hopes for a program would be.

## Identify an administrative leader and administrative support

Any successful K-12 Arabic program will need a building leader – usually the principal – who can take on the task of growing and building the school's Arabic program within a unified vision. This person should be the one who takes the initiative to start the program and who will serve as liaison between teacher(s), students, parents, school district and funding sources as the program continues. Especially in its initial years, starting an Arabic program will demand an entrepreneurial spirit.

In order to sustain an Arabic program, a network of administrative support is as important as any single leader. While a point-person is necessary, especially in the early stages, a program led by a charismatic individual runs the risk of falling apart if that person departs before it is well established.



## Create a vision for Arabic at your school or district

An administration should be able to answer the question “why Arabic?” both in general and also specifically for their school: “How will teaching Arabic contribute to the wider vision and impact of our school?” The administration should articulate a long-term vision for how an Arabic program will be part of the school’s mission and how it will support students’ education. This vision-creation work will be the first step of the wider advocacy work that should accompany the introduction of a new and potentially unfamiliar language. Successful Arabic programs have found it useful to link the vision for an Arabic program with existing elements of the school’s mission or vision, including elements such as:

- 21st century education
- Global citizenship
- International or intercultural education

Arabic is a vastly under-taught language relative to the number of Arabic speakers globally, despite growth in college-level and K-12 language offerings since 2000. Offering Arabic at your school can help to meet a dire need for the teaching of a critical-need world language, while also setting your school apart from the norm.

Despite its uniqueness, however, Arabic as a course offering should be more than just a distinguishing “feather in the cap” for a school; it should fit integrally with the school’s purpose and serve the students’ education.



# What should our school consider and plan for before starting an Arabic program?

With a vision in place, the next step is creating a long-term, concrete plan for implementation. Introducing any new language program into a school or district is a major undertaking that will take years to implement fully, and a plan is especially important with less commonly taught languages such as Arabic. Here are some of the questions and considerations for planning recommended by successful K-12 Arabic programs and leaders in the field.

## Think long-term

Teachers and administrators at schools where Arabic is well-established report a start-up phase of at least five years, during which time the program will need extra support. What administrative and other resources will be necessary to see the project of establishing an Arabic program through to its completion?

## Consider a district-wide plan for the future

Think about how an Arabic program at a single school could expand into other schools: is there a possibility for an Arabic learning “pipeline” from Kindergarten through 12th grade? What would such a development take in terms of policy and logistical support?

## Make a plan that considers other language offerings

Consider how offering Arabic would have an impact on any existing language classes and student enrollment: draw up a detailed (if tentative) multi-year plan for language offerings, sections, target enrollments, and language faculty.

- At how many levels, and in which grades, does the school hope that Arabic will eventually be offered?
- If students have a choice of which language to study, how will this new offering potentially influence student enrollments in all of the school’s languages?
- Will the existence of Arabic, if an elective, be reliant on a minimum number of enrolled students? Some schools have found it necessary to support under-enrolled Arabic classes during the first few years of existence in order to let the program find its footing.
- Will other language offerings be removed or phased out in order to introduce Arabic? Some of the most successful K-12 Arabic programs exist at schools where Arabic is one of a small number of languages



offered. This situation allows Arabic to get the enrollment and administrative support necessary to grow. In contrast, schools with many language offerings have often struggled to have their Arabic programs gain traction.

### Secure funding

An administration must be willing to marshal and allocate financial resources to support and establish their new Arabic program. There are a few potential sources of funding for jump-starting or supporting Arabic programs, yet these sources are by definition limited and cannot sustain an Arabic program by themselves. The school leader must seek out ways to find and allocate the resources for a teacher's salary, along with the necessary classroom space, administrative attention, and advocacy efforts that a new language program will need.

Teachers at successful Arabic programs have pointed to the importance of some discretionary funds for supporting special events such as field trips that allow students to gain real-world exposure to Arabic language and culture, arguing that this may be especially important because of Arabic's unfamiliarity.

Here are some ideas that other schools have used to overcome funding challenges and successfully start Arabic programs:

- Coordinate with more than one school and share an Arabic teacher's salary between the schools. In these cases, care must

be taken to ensure that the teacher is integrated into the school communities, despite not being a full time teacher.

- If you have a native Arabic speaker who teaches another subject at your school, recruit this teacher to teach Arabic in addition to their initial subject. Some of the most successful and long-lasting K12 Arabic programs in the country have been built on this model, with teachers of Math or French (for example) starting Arabic sections. These teachers, besides already being certified, are familiar with age-appropriate teaching methods and with the school community.
- Phase out another language offering at your school as you introduce Arabic. This option would involve difficult decisions but programs that have done this have a strong record of sustainability and success.
- Seek out partners from outside of the school. Some organizations or programs (such as QFI and TCLP) offer limited grants to help schools teaching Arabic. Other organizations, such as Arabic departments at local universities or civil cultural groups may be able to offer in-kind support to the program through teacher training or special event hosting.

### Plan for integrating Arabic into the life of the school

An Arabic program has a much stronger chance of success when it is integrated into the life of the school in multiple ways. These



steps show the community that this new program is “for real,” rather than a fleeting experiment. Here are some best practices gathered from schools with Arabic programs:

- Dedicate a classroom for Arabic. This allows the Arabic teacher to decorate their space, creating an ideal environment for learning and showing students that the language belongs at the school.
- Make the teacher part of the school community. It is important to include the Arabic teacher (often the only Arabic teacher) in the language department and all-faculty meetings and events, even if he or she is starting out as a part-time or multi-school teacher. In addition to welcoming and encouraging the Arabic teacher, this inclusion also sends a signal to the community about the importance of Arabic.
- Create language credential options. A language diploma that students receive for completing a certain number of years of Arabic gives credibility and prestige to the program. This has been especially successful when integrated into other existing programs, such as International Baccalaureate.
- Create linked offerings for students. A number of schools have found success in sustaining their Arabic programs by offering related classes or student clubs. If the Arabic teacher can also offer a Middle East region subject class (such as a history or culture course), this provides a good

opportunity to familiarize students with the region and build interest in the language. An Arabic culture or arts club, held during a free period or after school, can also be an effective way to attract students to the language and expand the benefits of cultural understanding that come from having Arabic at your school.

- For more advocacy ideas that will help integrate Arabic into your school, please see this page.



# How can we promote the teaching of the Arabic language in our region or at our school?

Arabic, as a less commonly taught language that is unfamiliar to many, is often in need of special advocacy and support. This means communicating about the benefits of Arabic education with potential students, parents, school administrators, local Arabic-speaking community groups, and the wider community. Below are listed advocacy ideas and suggestions, along with anecdotes of successful strategies employed by existing Arabic programs.

## Why is advocacy important?

### *Starting a new program*

In places where an Arabic program does not exist, advocacy can include calling attention to the importance of world language instruction at the K-12 level, and specifically the importance of prioritizing the teaching of critical-need languages such as Arabic in strategic plans and budgets. This work should be with principals, school district officials, teachers, and even local university professors who may be able to offer support for a K-12 Arabic program.

### *Supporting an existing program*

For existing Arabic programs, advocacy activities are essential to help recruit new students, inform parents about Arabic, and

raise awareness in the wider school community about what is happening in Arabic class. Below is a collection of real-world advocacy examples drawn from the experience of teachers and administrators working at successful Arabic programs in K-12 settings around the country.

## General Strategies for conducting advocacy

### *Let what is happening in the classroom show*

Advocacy for an existing Arabic program should be founded upon what is happening in the classroom: good advocacy relies on good teaching. When students learn communicative skills applicable to the real world and are educated to respect the diversity of Arab culture, advocacy can be understood as the simple work of showing to the world outside the classroom what they are learning and how this experience affects them.

### *Give students themselves a role in advocacy whenever possible*

Teachers and administrators at successful Arabic programs report that the most effective advocates for Arabic language programs are the students themselves. Whatever the focus of a particular advocacy activity may be, letting current or former Arabic language students take the lead in organizing, narrating



and/or demonstrating sends a very powerful message about the impact of teaching Arabic. Students sharing their experiences learning Arabic with relatives, community members, classmates, and school officials is a very effective way to garner interest and support, with the secondary benefit of spreading understanding of Arabic language and culture beyond the classroom.



# What are Real-World Advocacy Ideas?

## Recruit Students and Families

*Present about the Arabic program to potential students: “What is Arabic?”*

**Objective:** Introduce potential students to the Arabic language in general and the Arabic program at our school in particular

**Description:** A group of current or former Arabic students visits a classroom made up of students who will have the opportunity to enroll in Arabic (or apply to attend a school that offers Arabic) in the following year. If a classroom visit is not possible, this kind of activity may work better as a lunch or after-school meeting. Students can present information about:

- The Arabic language in general and reasons for learning it
- Specific opportunities and special features of the program
- A short mini-lesson about something in Arabic to catch the interest of students and show them what Arabic class would be like.
- Here are some possible mini-lessons of different length and complexity:
- Teach the Arabic numbers and/or Hindi-Arabic numerals 1 through 10

- Teach a line or verse of a simple Arabic song, perhaps accompanied by a music video
- Teach enough Arabic letters for participants to write their names in Arabic

**Materials:** *It would be helpful to have PowerPoint or other visual aid that gives the key information, in addition to whatever materials are needed for a mini-lesson.*

**Suggestions:** It is important to ensure prior administrative support for a classroom visit and presentation of this variety, from both schools if applicable. Students leading this presentation will need to practice the presentation and lesson before they conduct it, depending on their age and abilities it may be helpful for them to “team-teach” with their teacher.

**Sources:** Lindblom Math and Science Academy in Chicago, IL; Cholla High Magnet School in Tucson, AZ; Roland Park Country School in Baltimore, MD.

*Put on an information session or an “Open House” event for potential families*

**Objective:** Inform potential or incoming families about the Arabic program at your school



**Description:** For schools where students or families must apply to the school, an information session or open house is an essential advocacy event, which ideally is part of a wider all-school open house evening. In addition to being a forum for disseminating essential information about the Arabic program at the school, an open house event is a good opportunity for current students to demonstrate what they have learned.

**Suggestions:**

- Offering Arab food to participants is a great way to welcome guests as well as introduce an important aspect of Arab culture. One school with experience running these kinds of events had success soliciting donations of Arab food from a local restaurant.
- When presenting Arabic to potential families and students, it is important to counteract the narrative, often pre-formed in people's minds, that Arabic is impossibly difficult and demands a specific type of student.

**Sources:** Arabic Immersion Magnet School in Houston, TX; Lindblom Math and Science Academy in Chicago, IL; Buckingham Browne & Nichols School in Cambridge, MA.

*Use Social Media*

**Objective:** distributing information and building interest for an Arabic program.

**Description:** Creating an Arabic Program account on Twitter or another social media service can be effective way to find supporters, keep interested parents and students updated with information, and build excitement for an Arabic class.

**Anecdote:** The principal of the newly founded Arabic Immersion Magnet School in Houston, TX, had the responsibility of attracting families of children to apply to her school within Houston's school choice system. She found that explaining and promoting her program via Twitter was an exceptionally effective tool for recruiting families, as well as for finding other supporters or potential teachers.

**Inspire your Arabic students within and beyond the school**

Planning enrichment events and activities for current Arabic students is an important part of advocacy. Such events can enrich the curriculum, motivate students to learn more, and build a positive vibe for the Arabic program in and around your school.

*Create an Arab culture club*

**Objective:** Allow students of multiple skill-levels to engage with Arabic culture in an in-depth way.

**Description:** An Arab culture club that meets weekly at a separate time from classes does not replace the cultural learning that happens in the classroom but rather deepens it in some distinct ways:



- A club can bring together students from different levels of Arabic, allowing for students to learn from each other and build a positive “program spirit”
- A club can include students not enrolled in Arabic classes but who are interested in or curious about Arab culture
- A club allows students more time than may be available in class to delve into a particular performative or productive cultural activity

**Suggestions:** A club could include activities such as:

- Cooking Arab food and/or creating a cookbook
- Performing arts activities (dance, singing, theater, drumming)
- Arts or handicraft projects such as calligraphy or traditional embroidery

**Source:** Cholla High Magnet School in Tucson AZ; Buckingham Browne & Nichols School in Cambridge, MA.

### *Engage with Local Arab-American Cultural Resources*

**Objective:** empower students to connect with local Arabic-speaking communities in their own region and apply their language skills in the real world

**Description:** Field trips to Arab neighborhoods, restaurants, or cultural centers are an excellent way to show students that the language and cultural skills that they are learning in the classroom have a practical application in the real world. Out-of-classroom experiences stick in the memory of students and can help form a strong impetus to learn more.

### **Suggestions:**

- If visiting an Arab neighborhood in which there are signs written in the Arabic script, create a scavenger hunt in which students must search for particular letters or words.
- If visiting a restaurant at which Arabs work, talk to the employees ahead of time and ask them to speak with your students only in Arabic. This kind of visit can be integrated into a unit about food and eating out.
- Invite an Arab performer or artist to come and present to your Arabic classes or the wider school community.

**Preparation:** Depending on the resources available in your region, the logistics of such a visit could vary significantly in terms of how complicated and expensive this kind of activity is. Even if there are no such cultural resources in your immediate area, it is worth investigating the possibility of finding funds to travel to such resources.

**Sources:** ideas drawn from all administrators and teachers interviewed.



*Conduct cultural exchange projects with students from the Arab world*

**Objective:** students connect via the internet with their peers from Arab countries to interact, learn from each other, and work on a joint cultural project.

**Description:** Connecting with students living in an Arab country is a very powerful way to motivate students and show the practical impact of learning a language. This could take the form of a pen-pal interaction, or an internet-based collaborative arts or performance project.

**Anecdote:** Administrators and teachers at Lindblom Math and Science Academy in Chicago have coordinated with the Global Voices Initiative to connect students in their Arabic classes with high school students learning English in Morocco and Jordan. The students from Chicago wrote original plays in Arabic that were performed by the Arab students, while they performed the plays that the Arab students had written in English.

*Bring back program graduates to talk to current students*

**Objective:** inspire current students by letting them see how learning Arabic has influenced former students.

**Description:** Once an Arabic program has been around for a few years, bringing back former students to talk to younger students about their experience learning Arabic in retrospect

is a very powerful motivator. Students who have gone on to study Arabic in college or have been able to use Arabic in the “real world” are particularly effective. This lets students (especially those just starting their studies) see that learning Arabic is possible and that there are benefits to advancing in Arabic.

**Suggestions:**

- Even if the Arabic program has not been around a long enough time to have graduates, participants from a higher grade-level coming to talk to younger students may also be inspiring.
- Even if program graduates have not gone on to use their Arabic after graduation, it can be helpful to hear from graduates about their reflections on studying Arabic in retrospect.

**Sources:** Cholla High Magnet School in Tucson, AZ; Lindblom Math and Science Academy in Chicago, IL.

*Organize multi-school Arabic language events*

**Objective:** motivate students and inspire a wider Arabic-learning community

**Description:** Seek out other schools that teach Arabic in your area, including public and private schools, and work with teachers and administrators there to organize joint events. The nature of these events would depend on the language levels of the classes at each school and the inclinations of each program, and would ideally allow students to display their language and cultural skills. Possible



event elements include:

- An Arabic food potluck feast, in which the different representatives bring different dishes.
- An Arabic poetry recitation forum or competition. Students who have learned a poem (or a section thereof) in class will perform a memorized recitation.

**Source:** Lindblom Math and Science Academy in Chicago, IL.

### **Advocate for Arabic at school and in the wider community**

*Create an Arabic gallery*

**Objective:** increase visibility of the Arabic program by creating a gallery of student work in a public place in the school

**Description:** Use bulletin boards or display cases to showcase student work, ideally with something visually captivating such as calligraphy or Islamic designs. Incorporating text in English with descriptions and context helps to demystify Arabic to the school community and pique the curiosity of other students.

**Source:** Cholla High Magnet School in Tucson, AZ; Charlestown High School in Boston, MA.

Set up a booth at a local festival

**Objective:** empower students to share their knowledge while informing the wider community about Arabic and Arab culture

**Description:** Students plan and create a

booth at a local international or multicultural festival. Students and teacher(s) can share their knowledge by offering some Arab food, displaying student work, explaining to festival attendees about the Arabic language and studying Arabic, and even teach visitors how to write their names in the Arabic script. This kind of engagement with the wider community is a great way to fight misinformation and negative stereotypes about Arabic while also empowering students.

**Source:** Cholla High Magnet School in Tucson, AZ

*Plan an “Arabic Night”*

**Objective:** welcome students’ families and the school community to celebrate Arabic language and culture with your students.

**Description:** Involve your students in the planning of a yearly “Arabic Night” in which there will be Arabic food, presentations by students, and perhaps a guest performer or speaker. This kind of event is a great opportunity to let students from different levels work together, to show off students’ achievements, and to welcome students’ families. By inviting the school community, these kinds of events are an excellent way to demystify learning Arabic and to conduct community outreach.

**Suggestions:**

- Involving students in the planning of this event will give them ownership and pride over the event itself and of their accomplishments in Arabic class.



- Consider inviting a guest speaker or performer who can add a cultural element and an element of excitement to the night. This option may require funds for an honorarium.

**Sources:** Buckingham, Browne & Nichols School in Cambridge, MA; Lindblom Math and Science Academy in Chicago, IL.

*Present to school officials about learning Arabic*

**Objective:** advocate for Arabic programs at the district level by arranging for students to present to school officials.

**Anecdote:** Arabic students at Cholla High School in Tucson, AZ had the opportunity to present about what they are learning and teach a small lesson to school district officials. Students spoke from the dais about the impact of studying Arabic on their lives and taught the officials how to write their names in the Arabic script. Teacher Nour Jandali said that the experience was empowering and inspirational for the students themselves, at the same time as making a very strong impression on the district officials about the importance of world language education.

### **Respond to negative stereotypes**

Some Arabic programs around the country have faced criticism based on misunderstandings or negative stereotypes about Arabic, Islam and Arabs. Here are some suggestions from experienced teachers and

administrators in the field about what to do when this kind of criticism becomes an issue:

#### *Focus on the positive reality*

A powerful way to minimize the likelihood of negative criticism based on falsehoods is to emphasize the positive reality of teaching Arabic in public statements and pronouncements. The Arabic Immersion Magnet School in Houston, TX, has faced criticism from Islamophobic protesters, including in the form of picketers outside the building on the opening day of school in 2015. Principal Kate Adams says that the best response to such criticism has been no direct response, but rather continuing to present publicly the positive reality of the school, detailing students' experiences and showing how learning Arabic language and culture can positively influence their futures.

#### *Let administrators "run interference"*

Principal Frank Armenta of Cholla High Magnet School in Tucson, AZ, in comments echoed by a number of other teachers and administrators, emphasized how important it is that principals take on the burden of responding directly to criticism if necessary, letting the teachers continue to do their work of educating. This kind of support could be as simple as holding conversations with parents who are curious, unsure, or even skeptical of what is going on in Arabic classes.



# How do I fund an Arabic Program at my school?

The following are possible sources of funding for schools, teachers, and students of Arabic. QFI makes no guarantee about the accuracy or completeness of the listed opportunities; interested parties should contact the organizations directly.

## Funding opportunities for schools

- *QFI School Grants*

QFI provides limited support to schools in the U.S. to establish or expand in-school Arabic language and culture programs in K-12 public and public charter schools.

<http://qfi.org/grants/schools-and-institution-opportunities/grants-to-schools/>
- *STARTALK*

The National Foreign Language Center invites proposals from schools, postsecondary institutions, school districts, state and regional educational agencies, language associations, and community-based organizations to participate in the STARTALK project. STARTALK offers students (K-16) and teachers of these languages creative and engaging summer learning experiences. Schools, districts, and universities can apply to host and facilitate a STARTALK-funded summer learning program.

<https://startalk.umd.edu/public/>
- *Teachers of Critical Languages Program (TCLP)*

Teachers of Critical Languages Program (TCLP) is designed to increase the study and acquisition of important world languages in U.S. schools by bringing Egyptian teachers to the U.S. to teach their native language and culture for an academic year. Additionally, U.S. schools have the potential to form partnerships with Egyptian schools and classrooms. TCLP offers both fully- and partially-sponsored partnerships with schools.

<http://tclprogram.org/>
- *ACTFL Melba D. Woodruff Award*

The ACTFL Melba D. Woodruff Award for Exemplary Elementary Foreign Language Program recognizes outstanding elementary schools with foreign language programs for students K-6. To be eligible, a program must be at least 5 years old, take place during the school day, and be open to all students. The winner will receive \$500 to use toward the program.

<http://www.actfl.org/about-the-american-council-the-teaching-foreign-languages/awards/other-awards/the-actfl-melba-d>



## General funding opportunities for schools

- *Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Charitable Foundation*

Schools (including Charter, Public, Public charter, and Homeschools) serving residents of Memphis, Miami, or New York City may apply for the Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Charitable Foundation, which provides grants to charitable organizations to benefit education. Grants have mainly been focused on foreign language in the past. Application deadline each year falls in February.

<https://www.wellsfargo.com/private-foundations/adams-charitable-foundation>

- *The AT&T Foundation*

“AT&T supports programs that address quality-of-life issues, with an emphasis on improving education and advancing community development.” AT&T places special emphasis on under-served or minority-majority communities.

[http://about.att.com/sites/diversity/our\\_communities](http://about.att.com/sites/diversity/our_communities)

- *The Walmart Foundation Community Grant Program*

The Wal-Mart Foundation offers a number of grant opportunities. The Community Grant Program offers grants ranging from from \$250 to \$2,500 to support the programming of organizations, including schools.

<http://giving.walmart.com/foundation>

- *The Edward E. Ford Foundation*

The Edward E. Ford Foundation awards grants to secondary schools on a high cost-share basis. All grants require a matching component.

<https://www.eeford.org/grants/recent-grants/index.aspx>

- *The Ford Motor Company Fund Capital Grant Program*

The Ford Motor Company Fund gives grants in five categories, including education, arts and humanities, and civic engagement. Organizations and schools can be awarded up to \$100,000 for the use in capital projects, meaning toward building or renovating space or infrastructure.

<https://corporate.ford.com/company/community/capital-grant-program.html>

- *Brinker International*

Brinker International believes in giving back to communities that host one of their restaurant names, including Chili’s, Corner Bakery Café, Big Bowl Asian Kitchen, Flyer’s Island, Rockfish Seafood Grill, Taco Cabana, and more. Their main areas of giving are health, social services, arts and education, and diversity. Giving may include grants or in-kind donations.

<http://www.brinker.com/company/givingback.asp>



## General funding opportunities for schools (cont'd)

- *National Endowment for the Humanities*

The National Endowment for the Humanities offers a wide variety of grants, some of which could be applied to Arabic language program proposals.

<http://www.neh.gov/grants>

- *W. K. Kellogg Foundation*

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation funds a variety of programs focusing on civil engagement through education. Their mission focuses on optimal child development, and therefore funding is concentrated on early childhood development. Check previous projects for ideas of what is viable and what is not.

<http://www.wkcf.org/>

## Funding opportunities for Teachers

- *QFI Teacher Initiative Grants*

QFI awards Teacher Initiative Grants to teachers of Arabic in K-12 public or public charter schools in the United States or Canada. Grant funds may be used to purchase materials and other resources to enhance the teaching and learning of Arabic, as well as to support school-related cultural or community events.

<http://qfi.org/programs/arabic-language-and-culture/teacher-initiative-grants-2>

- *Dora Johnson Awards*

QFI funds the Dora Johnson Awards in partnership with the ACTFL Arabic SIG to provide funding up to \$1,000 to K-12 Arabic language educators to attend the annual ACTFL convention. Preference is given to first-time attendees and presenters. Applications usually due in August or September.

<http://qfi.org/programs/arabic-language-and-culture/teacher-professional-development/>

- *QFI Teacher Fellowships*

QFI offers Teacher Fellowships for current or prospective K-12 Arabic teachers to become certified in Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language. Fellowships provide up to \$25,000 toward tuition, fees and textbooks for programs that lead to a licensure or certification to teach Arabic in U.S. public or public charter schools. Applications are due in January each year.

<http://qfi.org/programs/arabic-language-and-culture/teacher-fellowships/>

- *Qatar Professional Development Workshops*

QFI partners with Concordia Language Villages to offer intensive K-12 Arabic teacher training workshops during the school year. Participants attend 2 workshops in October and April and 3 webinars. Most costs, including travel, lodging and meals, are covered.

<http://www.concordialanguagevillages.org/adult-programs/educator-programs/workshops-consulting/qatar>



## Funding opportunities for Teachers

(cont'd)

- *The Arab Academy Scholarship (ACTFL)*

ACTFL offers the Arab Academy Scholarship for 3 ACTFL members for 3 months of access to the online Arabic program, in addition to 1 weekly one-on-one speaking class. In addition, Arab Academy offers onsite scholarships for 2 ACTFL members for 8 weeks of Arabic language in its center in Cairo.

<http://www.actfl.org/assessment-professional-development/scholarships-and-grants/arab-academy-scholarship>

- *Fulbright*

Fulbright offers a number of research grants and teacher assistantships for professionals wishing to diversify their experience. Grant periods are generally 9 months. Programs are available in Bahrain, Kuwait, Morocco, Jordan, Oman, and U.A.E.

<http://us.fulbrightonline.org/countries/selectedregion/22>

- *Dora Johnson Awards*

QFI funds the Dora Johnson Awards in partnership with the ACTFL Arabic SIG to provide funding up to \$1,000 to K-12 Arabic language educators to attend the annual ACTFL convention. Preference is given to first-time attendees and presenters. Applications usually due in August or September.

<http://qfi.org/programs/arabic-language-and-culture/teacher-professional-development/>

- *Leo Benardo Award for Innovation in K-12 Language Education (ACTFL)*

QFI awards Teacher Initiative Grants to teachers of Arabic in K-12 public or public charter schools in the United States or Canada. Grant funds may be used to purchase materials and other resources to enhance the teaching and learning of Arabic, as well as to support school-related cultural or community events.

<http://qfi.org/programs/arabic-language-and-culture/teacher-initiative-grants-2>

- *Award for Excellence in Foreign Language Instruction Using Technology (ACTFL)*

The ACTFL Award for Excellence in Foreign Language Instruction Using Technology is presented annually to recognize an ACTFL member who integrates technology in the foreign language classroom. Winners will receive \$500. Applicants must have at least five years of teaching experience. Teachers and administrators are welcome to apply.

<http://www.actfl.org/about-the-american-council-the-teaching-foreign-languages/awards/other-awards/actfl-award-excellence>

- *Nelson Brooks Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Culture (ACTFL)*

The Nelson Brooks Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Culture is given each year to one ACTFL member who integrates the teaching of foreign culture into the classroom curriculum. Winners will receive a \$500 award.

<http://www.actfl.org/about-the-american-council-the-teaching-foreign-languages/awards/other-awards/the-actfl-nelson>



## Funding opportunities for Teachers

(cont'd)

- *Florence Steiner Award for Leadership in Foreign Language Education (ACTFL)*

The Florence Steiner Award honors an ACTFL member who has demonstrated service to his or her school, community, and state. Winners will receive a \$500 award. Applicants must have over 5 years of teaching experience. Teachers and administrators are welcome to apply.

<http://qfi.org/programs/arabic-language-and-culture/teacher-initiative-grants-2>

- *University of Arizona Lesson Plan Competition*

The Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Arizona sponsors a Middle Eastern Lesson Plan Competition. The winner receives \$200 and resources to use toward his or her classroom. All K-12 teachers are welcome to submit a Middle East-themed lesson plan.

[http://cmes.arizona.edu/outreach/lesson\\_plan\\_competition](http://cmes.arizona.edu/outreach/lesson_plan_competition)

- *STARTALK*

STARTALK offers opportunities for teachers to grow their professional experiences. Teachers can visit the STARTALK website to find a local program in which they can participate. Programs are funded by STARTALK, and are hosted by local schools and communities.

<https://startalk.umd.edu/public/about>

- *The NEA Foundation (Learning and Leadership Grants and The Big Help Grants)*

The National Education Association Foundation funds over 150 types of grants. The Learning and Leadership Grants fund professional development opportunities. The Big Help Grants program is dedicated to the development and implementation of ideas, techniques, and approaches for addressing five key concerns -- health and wellness, education, service, environmental awareness, and bullying.

<http://qfi.org/programs/arabic-language-and-culture/teacher-professional-development/>

## Funding for Students (K-12)

- *QFI Summer Scholarships*

QFI provides need- and merit-based scholarships to K-12 students to attend designated summer intensive Arabic programs. Awards range from partial to full scholarships to programs at Concordia Language Villages' Al-Waha, Middlebury Summer Arabic Academy, and California State University San Bernardino. Scholarship applications are managed by the individual programs directly.

<http://qfi.org/programs/arabic-language-and-culture/summer-arabic-programs/>



## Funding for Students (K-12) (cont'd)

- *QFI Arabic Study Awards*

QFI provides tuition support and professional development to outstanding graduating high school seniors and undergraduate students committed to furthering their knowledge of Arabic. Multiple award categories for merit- and need-based awards. Applications are due in April each year.

<http://qfi.org/programs/youth-engagement/academic-excellence/arabic-study-awards/>

- *National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y)*

Provides merit-based scholarships for eligible high school students (ages 15-18) to learn less commonly taught languages in summer and academic-year overseas immersion programs. All levels of proficiency are welcome to apply, including new students of Arabic. NSLI-Y hosts Arabic programs in Oman, Morocco, and Jordan.

<http://www.americancouncils.org/programs/nsli-y>

- *STARTALK*

STARTALK programs typically last 2-4 weeks over the summer and provide intensive Arabic instruction, field trips, and an emphasis on learning about Arab culture. Most programs are free to attend or have subsidized costs.

<https://startalk.umd.edu/public/>

- *The YES Abroad program*

Provides merit-based scholarships for eligible high school students to develop a perspective of a Muslim culture first-hand. Participants spend an academic year attending a high school while living with a host family in select countries with significant Muslim populations. YES Abroad offers programs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Macedonia, Malaysia, Morocco, Philippines, Senegal, Thailand, and Turkey.

<http://exchanges.state.gov/us/program/kennedy-lugar-youth-exchange-study-yes-abroad>

