

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

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- Inspiration for this page was drawn from the Japan Foundation of Los Angeles’s “Speak Japan” website.

