

L3

Auxiliary Signs (حركات)

Since Arabic expresses only long vowels by special characters, a system of auxiliary signs is developed to signify short vowels. Normally the auxiliary signs do not appear in texts, since the reader who is acquainted with the morphology of Arabic is able to read correctly without them. The auxiliary signs are mainly used in the Quran and children's books and these kinds of texts are called vocalized.

Short vowels

Harakāt (حَرَكَات), the plural of *harakah* (movement), are from the Arabic signs and include the short vowels: *fatha* (َ), *kasra* (ِ) and *Damma* (ُ).

1- **Fatha**: A short oblique stroke (َ) written on top of the letter, denoting that the consonant is followed by a short a.

Example: طَلَب

Fatha, followed by *Alif*: long ā as in طَالِب

2- **Kasra**: A short oblique stroke (ِ) written below the consonant, denoting that the consonant is followed by a short i.

Example: مِلَل

Kasra, followed by *yā'*: long ee as in كَبِير

3- **Damma** (ضَمَّة) is one of the three short *harakāt* (vowels)

Damma (ُ), A sign similar in shape to a small *wāw* (و) written on top of the letter.

Example: مُدُن

Damma followed by *wāw*: long ū as in نُون

Other signs

Sukūn: A small circle (◌◌) on top of the letter as in نَحْنُ denoting that the consonant is not followed by any vowel.

Fatha: ◌َ

Kasra: ◌ِ

Damma: ◌ُ

Sukūn: ◌◌

Shaddah: A sign (◌◌◌) on top of the letter denoting that the consonant is doubled and is pronounced in a bit prolonged way; as in مُعَلِّمٌ.

Fatha and *Damma* are written on top of *Shadda*, whereas *Kasra* may be placed either below *Shadda* or below the doubled letter as in: مُعَلِّمٌ / مُعَلِّمِ

Madda: A sign (◌◌◌) on top of *Alif*, *Yā'* or *wāw* denoting a longer vowel.