

ARABIC ONLINE

اللغة العربية

Meanings of Verb Forms (continued)

Trilateral Roots

Form IV

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Form IV of Arabic Verbs (Active Voice)

أَفْعَلَ -	(af'al(a' .tr./intr	Causative He) made do)
		Reflexive Causative He) made himself do)

Also called the C-stem (C for "causative"), this structure is formed by prefixing an 'a- and dropping the short A after the first root letter. The 'a- is a *qat*" or a disconnecting *hamza(t)*,

which means that it will always be pronounced (details about the different types of *hamza(t)* .(are available on [this page](#)

.The '*a*'- prefix imparts a *causative* meaning just like the one described for form II

Causative

He) made (a/the performer) do)

OR

He) had (a/the performer) do)

Examples:

Form I		Form IV	
كَتَبَ	(<i>katab(a</i> he) wrote)	أَكْتَبَ	(<i>aktab(a'</i> he) made/had write)
ذَهَبَ	(<i>thahab(a</i> he) went)	أَذْهَبَ	(<i>athhab(a'</i> he) made/had go)
حَضَرَ	(<i>hadar(a</i> he) became) present he) came) →	أَحْضَرَ	(<i>ahdar(a'</i> he) made/had come) he) brought) →
خَرَجَ	(<i>kharaj(a</i> he) went/came out)	أَخْرَجَ	(<i>akhraj(a'</i> he) made/had go/come) out he) brought out) → he) drove out)
عَلِمَ	(<i>alim(a"</i> he) knew)	أَعْلَمَ	(<i>a"lam(a'</i> he) made/had know) he) informed) →

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خَبُرَ	(khabur(a he) was told)	أَخْبَرَ	(akhbar(a' he) made/had be told) he) told) →
لَبَسَ	(labis(a he) wore)	أَلْبَسَ	(albas(a' he) made/had wear) (.he) dressed (tr) →
تَعَبَ	(ta"ib(a he) became tired)	أَتَعَبَ	(at"ab(a' he) made tired)
طَعِمَ	(ta"im(a he) ate) he) tasted)	أَطْعَمَ	(at"am(a' he) made/had eat) he) fed) →
كَرَّمَ	(karum(a he) was/became) dignified	أَكْرَمَ	(akram(a' he) made be dignified) he) dignified) →
مَاتَ*	(maat(a he) died)	أَمَاتَ*	(amaat(a' he) made/caused to die)
رَأَى*	ra'aa he) saw)	أَرَى*	araaa' he) made see) he) showed) →
ضَاعَ*	(daa"(a he) was/became) lost, mislaid	أَضَاعَ*	(adaa"(a' he) made be lost, mislaid) he) lost, mislaid) →
جَابَ*	(jaab(a he) went through) (.he) voyaged (tr)	أَجَابَ*	(ajaab(a' he) made go through) he) answered) → :original sense he) helped to reach) →

* These are irregular verbs.

Like any other causative form, this form can also be reflexive.

Reflexive Causative

He) made himself do)

The reflexive causative verbs will mean nothing different from the form I verbs. They probably carry only an emphatic character.

Examples:

Form I		Form IV	
حَبَّ*	(<i>habb(a</i>	أَحَبَّ*	(<i>ahabb(a'</i>
	he) liked, loved)		he) made himself like,) love he) liked, loved) →
رَاذَ*	(<i>raad(a</i>	أَرَاذَ*	(<i>araad(a'</i>
	he) wanted)		he) made himself want) he) wanted) →
عَارَ*	(<i>aar(a"</i>	أَعَارَ*	(<i>a"aar(a'</i>
	he) lent)		he) made himself lend) he) lent) →
يَذَعُ	(<i>yana"(a</i>	أَيَذَعُ	(<i>ayna"(a'</i>
	he) ripened)		he) made himself ripen) he) ripened) →
شَرَقَتْ°	<i>sharaqat</i>	أَشَرَقَتْ°	<i>ashraqat'</i>
			she) made herself rise)

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she) cut)
she, the sun) rose)

she, the sun) rose) →
she) shined) →

* Irregular verbs.

I believe that the reflexive meaning of this form is not original but just a later development. This tendency to impart a reflexive meaning to all the causative verbs carried on even after the time of classical Arabic. For example, some form II verbs that were merely causative in classical Arabic became reflexive in the modern spoken dialects:

Classical Arabic		Modern Syrian Arabic	
غَلَطَ	he) made wrong)	غَلَطَ	he) was wrong)
(<i>rallat(a</i>		<i>rallat</i>	
عَمَّقَ	he) made deep)	غَمَّقَ	he) became deep)
(<i>ammaq(a"</i>		<i>rammaq</i>	

Also, like the other causative forms, this form has a transformative meaning. This is when these verbs are derived from nouns. It is like what we described for form II, but the difference here is that the transformative action will be most of the time reflexive.

Transformative

He) made be *noun*)

He) became *noun*)

He) *noun*-ized)

Examples:

Noun		Form IV	
ثَمَرٌ	(<i>thamar(un</i>	أَثْمَرَ	(<i>athmar(a'</i>

	(.fruits (sing. masc		he) fructified) he) yielded)
زَهَرَ	(zahr(un	أَزْهَرَ	(azhar(a'
	(.flowers (sing. masc		he) flower-ized) he) bloomed) →
شَجَرَ	(shajar(un	أَشْجَرَ	(ashjar(a'
	trees, plants (.sing. masc)		he) plant-ized) he) bloomed) →
صُبِّحَ	(subh(un	أَصْبَحَ	(asbah(a'
	(.a morning (masc		he) morn-ized) he) was in the) → morning
مَسَّاءٌ	(masaa'(un	أَمْسَى	amsaa'
	(.an evening (masc		he) even-ized) he) was in the) → evening
بَحَرَ	(bahr(un	أَبْحَرَ	(abhar(a'
	(.a sea (masc		he) sea-ized) he) headed into sea) → he) sailed)

Many of these verbs have equivalent form I verbs, but I don't believe they were derived from the form I verbs.

Finally, form IV has a specific causative prefix and its causative function is a very strong one, so this leaves no space for a factitious transformative meaning like that of form II and III (the figurative transformative).

Meanings of Form IV

he) made do)	Simple	to do	Causative .tr./intr
he) made himself do) (he) did (<i>emphatic</i>) →	Reflexive		
he) made be <i>noun</i>)	Simple	to be <i>noun</i> (Transformative)	
he) made himself be <i>noun</i>) he) became <i>noun</i>) →	Reflexive		

Etymology Note

The causative prefix '*a*-' comes originally from *ha*-.

هَفْعُلْ ← أَفْعُلْ

haf"al(a) → '*af"al(a)*

Cf. Hebrew *hif"eel* הפעיל.

Some classical Arabic verbs preserved the *ha*- causative prefix.

Examples:

(He) spilled	أَرَأَقْ	هَرَأَقْ
(He) illuminated	أَنَارَ	هَنَارَ
(He) made rest	أَرَأَحَ	هَرَأَحَ
(He) wanted	أَرَادَ	هَرَادَ

Both the *ha*- and '*a*-' forms of these verbs were possible in classical Arabic.

The *ha-* itself comes from *sa-*.

سَ فَعَلَ ← هَ فَعَلَ ← أَ فَعَلَ

saf"al(a) → *haf"al(a)* → *'af"al(a)*

This causative *sa-* prefix remains clear in the Arabic form X. There are also preserved *sa-* prefixes in some classical verbs of form IV:

(He) threw	أَلْقَى	سَلَقَى
(He) turned over (tr.) (He) turned away (tr.) → (He) transformed (tr.)	أَقْلَبَ	سَقْلَبَ
(He) foddered	أَعْلَفَ	سَعْلَفَ
(He) controlled, dominated	from the root: أ ط ر ؟	س ي ط ر ؟

It is believed by many people that the Arabic letter *s* was originally *sh*, but this doesn't appear to be true.

Form VII

We will talk about forms VII & VIII before the rest of the forms.

Form VII of Arabic Verbs (Active Voice)

ان فَعَلَ	<i>(infa"al(a)</i> .intr	Reflexive He) did himself)
		Agentless Passive

		He/it) was/became) ≡ done
--	--	------------------------------

This form contains the affix **-n-** and thus called the N-stem. The *hamza(t)* 'i- at the beginning is a connecting *hamza(t)*, which means that it will be pronounced only if it was the first thing coming out of the mouth (details about the different types of *hamza(t)* are available on [this page](#)).

The connecting *hamza(t)* was added to the beginning of many Arabic words for a merely phonological purpose, and it is not original part of these words. It does not carry any meaning. [This page](#) lists the types of words to which the connecting *hamza(t)* is added.

(Form With "Liaison" <i>Hamza(t)</i>	Original Form
انْ فَعَلَ	نْ فَعَلَ
(<i>infa"al(a'</i>	(<i>nfa"al(a</i>
Used when not preceded by other talking, the only written from	Used when preceded by other talking, but never written

Arabs used the connecting *hamza(t)* because they hated to start talking with a cluster of two consonants not containing a vowel in the middle (CC-). In Arabic terms, they hated to start with a "still" letter (a consonant not followed by a vowel).

Form VII has two meanings that are both **passive** meanings. Before we describe the meanings of form VII, we will talk about the passive verbs in Arabic in general.

Active vs. Passive

The difference between an active verb and a passive verb regards the direction of the action indicated by the verb with regard to the subject. That is, whether the subject of the verb receives the action or not.

In an active verb, the action is directed outward from the subject, which means that the subject performs the action but does not receive it.

In a passive verb, the action is directed toward the subject, which means that the subject receives the action.

Recipient of Action	Subject	Statement	
somebody	the man	The man gave a book	Active
the man	the man	The man was given a book	Passive

Three Types of Passive

Arabic has three different types of passive verbs. They are:

The Passive of the Unknown

The Passive Without Agent

The Reflexive

-
-
-

Passive of the Unknown

The first type is the type usually designated "passive." It is meant when the passive voice is mentioned without specification.

This type is called in Arabic الْمَبْدِيءُ لِلْمَجْهُولِ = "the built for the unknown" (this is where I derived my designation from). Some westerners refer to it as the "internal passive," because it is formed by changing vowels within the verbal structure.

For example,

Form VII	Form III	Form II	Form I	
(inf ^a al(a'	(faa ^a al(a	(fa ^{""} al(a	(fa ^{""} ?l(a	Active
(infu ⁱ il(a'	(foo ⁱ il(a	(fu ^{""} il(a	(fu ⁱ il(a	Internal Passive

Generally, the passive of the unknown is derived from perfective verbs by changing the vowel following the first root-letter to **u**, and the one between the final two letters of the verb to **i**. We will go through forming it in detail [later](#).

The passive of the unknown does not have an exact equivalent in English. Its literal meaning is the following:

he) did)

(fn^{""}?l(n

	(fu"il(a
he/it) was/became done by somebody) ≡	(fu"il(a

The passive of the unknown, or simply "the passive" as it is usually called, indicates a passive action plus an unspecified agent.

Passive Without Agent

The passive without agent is called in Arabic الْمُطَّأَوَّعُ = "the pliable." Verbs carrying this meaning are ones with an **-n-** affix, like form VII.

The passive without agent denotes a passive action (i.e. directed toward the subject) without saying anything about the fact that someone did it. In other words, it ignores the agent of the action, thus indicating less meaning than the passive of the unknown.

he) did)	(fa"?l(a
he/it) was/became done by somebody) ≡	(fu"il(a
he) was/became done) ≡	(infa"al(a'

Form VII (the agentless passive) is the principally used form of the passive voice in most of the modern spoken [dialects](#) of Arabic, but not in formal Arabic.

When forming an internal passive from form VII, the meaning will change to the passive of the unknown:

he) was/became done) ≡	(infa"al(a'
it) was/became done by somebody) ≡	(infu"il(a'

There is, of course, no verb without an agent, but I am using the "agentless passive" designation instead of simply saying "passive" because "passive" alone means the internal passive.

Reflexive

The reflexive encompasses the definitions of both the active and passive voices, as it indicates an action carried out by the subject and directed toward the subject in the same time. Thus, the subject of a reflexive verb is both a performer and a recipient of the action.

Reflexive verbs exist in English; consider the following example:

The glass broke

Subject: the glass

Action: breaking

Agent (performer): the glass

Recipient: the glass

The reflexive indicates a passive action plus the **self as an agent**. Verbs that carry this meaning in Arabic are verbs carrying the **-n-** affix (for simple, basic actions) and verbs carrying the **-t-** affix (for all kinds of actions). The **-t-** affix appears in forms V, VI, VIII & QII.

The **-t-** affix could also impart an agentless passive meaning in some classical dialects. **-t-** affixed verbs are the principally used form of the passive voice in some modern dialects of Arabic that show strong relations with classical south Arabian dialects (i.e. Egyptian Arabic).

When forming an internal passive from a reflexive verb, the meaning will change to the passive of the unknown.

Unknown, Agentless, & Reflexive

The best way to differentiate between the three types of the passive is by considering the following question:

Who did the action?

Or "who is the agent of the verb?"

In the passive of the unknown, there is an **unspecified agent** indicated.

In the passive without agent, there is **no agent** indicated.

In the reflexive, **the subject** is the agent of the action.

And all the three actions are directed toward the same target, which is the subject of the verb (hence they are all passive verbs).

Agent	Action	Statement	
somebody	breaking of glass	The glass was broken by somebody	Passive of the Unknown
---	breaking of glass	The glass was broken	Passive Without Agent
the glass	breaking of glass	The glass broke	Reflexive

an unspecified agent + an action indicates The internal passive

an action indicates The agentless passive

the self as agent + an action indicates The reflexive

And all the three actions are directed toward the the subject of the verb (passive).

Meanings of Form VII

1) Reflexive

This is probably the original meaning of the **-n-** affix, whereas the agentless passive meaning is just a later evolution.

The **-n-** affix can be translated simply as "himself." It is somewhat similar to the French or Latin word *se*.

Form VII	Form I
Reflexive (He) did himself	Basic He) did)

Naturally form VII will be [intransitive](#), i.e. it will not take an object, because it has an inherent

object already which is "himself."

Examples:

Form I		Form VII	
كَسَرَ	(<i>kasar</i> (a	انْكَسَرَ	(<i>inkasar</i> (a'
	(.he) broke (tr)		he) broke himself) (.he) broke (intr) →
فَجَرَ	(<i>fajar</i> (a	انْفَجَرَ	(<i>infajar</i> (a'
	(.he) split, burst (tr)		he) split, burst himself) he) burst, exploded) → (.intr
خَفَضَ	(<i>khafad</i> (a	انْخَفَضَ	(<i>inkhafad</i> (a'
	he) lowered)		he) lowered himself) he) descended) →
قَطَعَ	(<i>qata</i> "(a	انْقَطَعَ	(<i>inqata</i> "(a'
	he) cut)		he) cut himself) he) became cut) →
ضَمَّ*	(<i>damm</i> (a	انْضَمَّ*	(<i>indamm</i> (a'
	(.he) joined (tr)		he) joined himself) (.he) joined (intr) →
حَلَّ*	(<i>hall</i> (a	انْحَلَّ*	(<i>inhall</i> (a'
	he) untied,) (.dissolved (tr		he) untied, dissolved) himself he) untied,) → (.dissolved (intr

فَكَّ ۞	(fakk(a (.he) untied (tr)	انْ فَكَّ ۞	(infakk(a' he) untied himself (.he) united (intr) →
دَسَّ ۞	(dass(a (he) foisted (into)	انْ دَسَّ ۞	(indass(a' he) foisted himself ((into he) slipped (into)) → (.intr
حَازَ ۞	(haaz(a he) acquired) he) collected) toward	انْ حَازَ ۞	(inhaaz(a' he) collected himself) toward he) became biased) → toward he) favored) (.he) joined (intr)
قَادَ ۞	(qaad(a he) led, drove)	انْ قَادَ ۞	(inqaad(a' he) led, drove himself) he) became led,) → driven
حَدَّى ۞	hanaa (.he) bent (tr)	انْ حَدَّى ۞	inhanaa' he) bent himself) (.he) bent (intr) →
قَضَى ۞	qadaa (.he) ended (tr) he) determined)	انْ قَضَى ۞	inqadaa' he) ended, determined) himself he) became ended,) → determined
صَهَرَ	(sahar(a he) melted down) (.tr	انْ صَهَرَ	(insahar(a' he) melted himself) down he) melted down) →

قَلَبَ	(qalab(a	انْقَلَبَ	(.intr (inqalab(a'
	(.he) turned over (tr) he) turned away) (.tr he) turned inside) (.out (tr he) transformed) → (.tr		he) turned over) → (.intr he) turned away) → (.intr he) turned inside) → (.out (intr he) transformed) → (.intr
طَلَقَ	(talaq(a	انْطَلَقَ	(intalaq(a'
	he) sat free)		he) sat himself free) he) broke out) → he) became launched)

* Irregular verbs.

Reflexive form VII verbs are mostly made out of simple form I verbs that indicate basic actions, whereas the reflexive **-t-** affixed forms (V, VI, VIII & QII) are made out of all the kinds of verbs.

2) Passive Without Agent

This is probably a secondary meaning that evolved from the reflexive meaning. As described earlier, this does not really mean a verb without an agent, but it means a passive verb without any mention of an agent.

Agentless Passive

He) was/became done) ≡

Examples:

Form I		Form VII	
كَتَبَ	(katab(a	انْكَتَبَ	(inkatab(a'
	he) wrote)		he) was/became) ≡ written

جَذَبَ	(jathab(a he) pulled, attracted)	انْجَذَبَ	(injathab(a' he) was/became) ≡ attracted
فَتَحَ	(fatah(a he) opened)	انْفَتَحَ	(infatah(a' he) was/became) ≡ opened
غَلَقَ	(ralaq(a he) closed)	انْغَلَقَ	(inralaq(a' he) was/became) ≡ closed
زَعَجَ	(za"aj(a he) annoyed)	انْزَعَجَ	(inza"aj(a' he) was/became) ≡ annoyed
دَحَرَ	(dahar(a he) pushed, repelled)	انْدَحَرَ	(indahar(a' he) was/became) ≡ repelled

Naturally form VII will be made out of transitive from I verbs. However, there are very few of such verbs that are made out of intransitive verbs. In this case the form will have a different meaning which is the [reflexive causative](#).

Reflexive Causative

He) made himself do)

Examples:

Form I	Form VII
--------	----------

كَمَشَ	(<i>kamash(a</i>	انْ كَمَشَ	(<i>inkamash(a'</i>
	he) became tiny) he) vanished)		he) made himself become) tiny he) shrank) →
دَثَرَ	(<i>dathar(a</i>	انْ دَثَرَ	(<i>indathar(a'</i>
	he) faded away) he) accumulated) he) became covered)		he) made himself fade) away he) faded away) →

Meanings of Form VII

he) did himself)	Reflexive
he) was/became done)	Agentless Passive
he) made himself do)	Reflexive Causative (Rare)

Special Issues

Form VII contains in it a still *noon* (*-n-*). Still *noons*, or *noons* without a directly following vowel, have numerous special phonological rules in Arabic. One of these rules is the one called in Arabic "the assimilation" *الإِدْغَامُ*. This rule means that the still *noon* will sometimes assimilate into following letter, or in other words, it will be transformed into the letter that follows it.

Example, the defective verb:

مَحَى

mahaa

He) erased)

:When rendered in form VII

انْ مَحَىٰ ← اَمْ حَىٰ

inmahaa → '*immahaa*'

He) became erased)

.The still *noon* was transformed to a *meem*; the letter following it

In perfect classical pronunciation of Arabic, this phenomenon should happen whenever the

• ر ل م و ي :still *noon* was followed by any of the following letters

Perfect Pronunciation in Classical Arabic

الإِدْغَامُ The Assimilation

nr → -*rr*-

nl → -*ll*-

nm → -*mm*-

nw → -*ww*-

ny → -*yy*-

This states that the still الإِقْلَابُ . "Another comparable rule is called "the transformation
:>'noon should be transformed to a *meem* when followed by a *baa*

nb → -*mb*-

These rules are all verbal rules and are not shown in writing, and they are no longer
employed today except in reciting the Koran, the Islamic holy book. However, I mentioned
them here because traces of them can appear written in some classical verbs of form VII, like
:the above mentioned example

امحى° immahaa'

He) became erased)

.In such verbs, the optional rule of assimilation became obligatory for some reason

:Such verbs are rare. Here are some other archaic examples

Form I		Form VII	
رَأَى°	ra'aa	ارْأَى°	irra'aa'
	he) saw)		he) was seen) →
لَحَنَ°	(lahan(a	الْحَنَّ°	(illahan(a'
	(.he) made a tune (intr) he) made a) → grammatical mistake (.intr (.he) understood (tr) →		he) was understood) →
وَجَلَ°	(wajal(a	اوْجَلَ°	(iwwajal(a'
	he) feared more than) (.tr he) out-feared) ((somebody		he) was feared more) → than
يَسَّرَ°	(yasar(a	ايَّسَّرَ°	(iyyasar(a'
	he) made easy)		he) became easy) →

Note: in modern times, there have been people calling for form VII not to be made from roots

.beginning with certain letters such as *r, l, n, w, y*, etc

Etymology Note

The still *noon* in Semitic languages is one of the most commonly altered letters. Knowing the rules of still *noon* transformation in Arabic makes it easier to understand why this letter is so much changeable.

This rule **الإخفاء** "One additional rule that was not mentioned above is the rule of "hiding" says that a still *noon* should be pronounced nasally whenever followed by any of the following letters: **ث د ذ ز ج خ س ش ص ض ط ظ ف ق ك**.

Nasal pronunciation of still *noon* exists also in French, but it is not exactly like the Arabic one which makes the *noon* even less evident. Knowing this Semitic rule is valuable when looking into languages such as Hebrew, Syriac, or Akkadian, where the nasal *noon* was lost completely.

.Click on the Arabic word to hear the perfect classical pronunciation

Hebrew	Aramaic	Akkadian (Mesopotamian)	Ge'ez (Ethiopian)	Arabic	Proto-Semitic	English
<i>attāh'</i>	<i>atta'</i>	<i>atta'</i>	<i>anta'</i>	<i>(ant(a'</i>	<i>anta'*</i>	(.Thou (masc
<i>att'</i>	<i>att'</i>	<i>atti'</i>	<i>anti'</i>	<i>(ant(i'</i>	<i>anti'*</i>	(.Thou (fem
<i>af'</i>	<i>appāyā'</i>	<i>appu'</i>	<i>anf'</i>	<i>(anf(un'</i>	<i>anpun'*</i>	(.Nose (masc

Note: the asterisk * means that these are reconstructed words. Nobody knows what Proto-Semitic was like (this is the supposed mother Semitic language), people only guess

a = **إِنْس** (and the Arabic equivalent is *'ins(un* **אִישׁ** The word for a "man" in Hebrew is *'eesh* .human being." This is also an example of this phenomenon

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