

Unit 29

Active and Passive Participles

The active participle in Arabic refers both to the action and the doer of the action.

The active participle is treated as a noun which can have the various gender, number and case endings.

The passive participle in Arabic is also treated as a noun.

The Active Participle

In the English sentence, 'He is writing' - the word 'writing' is known as the active participle of the verb 'to write'. The active participle in English ends in '-ing'.

In Arabic the active participle of a simple three-root (Form I) verb like كَتَبَ is of the pattern كَاتِبٌ. An alif is added to the first root letter; the second root letter takes a kasrah.

The active participle in Arabic refers both to the action and the doer of the action. Thus:

Meaning	Active Participle	Verb
writing, a writer	كَاتِبٌ	كَتَبَ
worshipping, a worshipper	عَابِدٌ	عَبَدَ
disbelieving, a disbeliever	كَافِرٌ	كَفَرَ

With the adding of the ta' marbutah, the active participle becomes feminine. The active participle often takes the sound plural endings:

Plural (acc. & gen.)	Plural (nom.)	Singular
عَابِدِينَ عَابِدَاتٍ	عَابِدُونَ عَابِدَاتٌ	عَابِدٌ m. عَابِدَةٌ f.

The plural of active participles can also be the broken plural:

Broken Plural	Sound Plural	Singular
عُلَمَاءُ كُفَّارٌ	عَالِمُونَ كَافِرُونَ	عَالِمٌ كَافِرٌ

Argument sustained

A dominating theme of the Qur'an is the reasoned and sustained argument for the Oneness of God, the Creator of all the worlds. The question (line 5) put to disbelievers and sceptics sets out simply and powerfully the case. They can only have three options:
i. Either they were created out of nothing - by 'spontaneous creation', as it were;
ii. Or, they created themselves;
Clearly these two options are to be rejected as impossible. The conclusion - the third option - is clear: the human being, the world and all that is in it owe their existence to a Creator outside themselves. It is significant that the word used uniquely for the Creator in the Qur'an is al-Khaliq.

The Passive Participle

In the English sentence 'It was written' - the word 'written' is known as the passive participle of the verb 'to write'.

In Arabic, the passive participle of a Form I verb is of the pattern مَفْعُولٌ. Passive participles take the sound plural endings. Examples of passive participles are:

Meaning	Passive Participle	Verb
written	مَكْتُوبٌ	كَتَبَ
witnessed	مَشْهُودٌ	شَهِدَ
known	مَعْلُومٌ	عَلِمَ

The passive participle is also treated like a noun. With the adding of the ta' marbutah, the passive participle becomes feminine. The passive participle takes the sound plural endings:

	Plural (acc. & gen.)	Plural (nom.)	Singular
gathered	مَجْمُوعِينَ مَكْتُوباتٍ	مَجْمُوعُونَ مَكْتُوباتٌ	مَجْمُوعٌ m. مَكْتُوبَةٌ f.

Our Sustainer! Verily, You are the gatherer of people on a day about which there is no doubt. 3: 7

That is a day to which (all) mankind (shall be) gathered and that is a day (that shall be) witnessed. 11: 103

And behold! Your Lord said to the angels: I (shall be) appointing a khalifah on earth. 2: 30

Say: Allah is the Creator of everything. 13: 16

Is it that they were created without anything, or (were) they the creators (of themselves)? 52: 35

There is no god but He, the Knower of the Unseen and the observable. 59: 22

Indeed, in that are signs for those who know. 30: 22

Among His servants, only those who have knowledge fear God. 35: 28

The first people and the last (will) certainly be gathered... 56: 49- 50

The Hajj is (performed in) known months. 2: 197

And he entered his garden while he (was) being unjust to himself. 18: 35

And We did not wrong them, but they - they were the wrongdoers. 43: 76

And whoever has been killed unjustly, We have given power to his wali. 17:33

In their possessions is a known right (share) for the one who asks and the deprived. 70: 25

Indeed the recitation of the Qur'an at dawn is ever witnessed (by all that is sacred). 17: 78

1 رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ جَامِعُ النَّاسِ لِيَوْمٍ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيهِ

2 ذَلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَّجْمُوعٌ لَّهُ النَّاسُ وَذَلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَّشْهُودٌ

3 وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

4 قُلِ اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

5 أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ

6 لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ

7 ■ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

8 ■ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

9 ■ إِنَّ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ لَمَجْمُوعُونَ

10 الْحَجَّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَاتٌ

11 وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ

12 وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِن كَانُوا هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

13 ■ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوَلِيِّهِ سُلْطَانًا

14 فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ

15 ■ إِنَّ قُرْءَانَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا

Notes for text above

■ **Line 7:** Distinguish between *عَالَمِينَ* those who know, and *عَالَمِينَ*, worlds. A fat-hah or a kasrah can make a really big difference.

■ **Line 8:** *إِنَّمَا* only, applies to *الْعُلَمَاءُ* which is the subject of the sentence. The fear of God is a quality

only of those who have true knowledge.

■ **Line 13:** Waliy may be translated as 'protector' or 'defender of rights'. It is usually taken to refer here to 'next of kin' or the government or ruling authority.

■ **Line 15:** The verb *كَانَ* has the sense of 'was' and 'continues to be' and so is translated here as 'is ever'.