

Unit 14

The verb: past tense, singular, dual & plural

To **conjugate** a verb is to show its various forms for the singular, dual and plural - masculine and feminine, in a particular tense.

Below is a chart with the complete conjugation of the verb **كَتَبَ** in the past tense. To conjugate a verb is to show its various forms.

In the past tense, all changes to the verb are made by adding suffixes to the root word.

The suffixes tell who did the action. For example, the suffix **ت** indicates 'I' and the suffix **نَا** indicates 'We'.

You may use the chart below as a reference. You are not expected at this stage to remember all the endings of the verb in the past tense before going on. However, the sooner you know them the better.

Plural		Dual		Singular	
they wrote	كَتَبُوا	they wrote	كَتَبَا	he wrote	كَتَبَ 3.m.
they wrote	كَتَبْنَ	they wrote	كَتَبَتَا	she wrote	كَتَبَتْ 3.f.
you wrote	كَتَبْتُمْ	you wrote	كَتَبْتُمَا	you wrote	كَتَبْتَ 2.m.
you wrote	كَتَبْتُنَّ	you wrote	كَتَبْتُمَا	you wrote	كَتَبْتِ 2.f.
we wrote	كَتَبْنَا	we wrote	كَتَبْنَا	I wrote	كَتَبْتُ 1.m & f.

From the above chart, you will see that verbs are classified according to:

- Number** - singular, dual or plural
- Gender** - masculine or feminine
- Person** - 3rd, 2nd or 1st person.

(They are also classified according to **tense** (e.g. past or present), **voice** (active or passive) and **mood** - but we will explain what these mean later.)

Number

We already know from Section One, that words in Arabic can be singular, dual or plural. Singular refers to one, dual refers to two, and plural refers to more than two. This applies to verbs as well.

In the last Unit, we dealt with the singular forms of the verb in the past tense. The dual forms do not occur very frequently. The verbs in lines 2 and 5 opposite are dual.

In the plural of the past tense, notice that there is an alif written, but not pronounced, at the end of the masculine, 3rd person form: **كَتَبُوا** they wrote. In the Madīnah Mus-haf, a small circle is placed above this alif to show that it is not pronounced.

Notice the difference in pronunciation and meaning between **كَتَبْنَ** they (f.) wrote, and **كَتَبْنَا** we wrote.

Hint: The verbs in the second person past tense all have the same endings as their respective separate pronouns.. Repeating each verb with its pronoun may help in memorizing, e.g. **أَنْتِ كَتَبْتِ أَنْتِ كَتَبْتِ أَنْتُمْ كَتَبْتُمْ**

Faith and good works

Faith and good works are frequently mentioned together in the Qur'an. It is not sufficient to believe in God. Belief has to be supported and confirmed by righteous action. Noone lives in a vacuum. Either one does good deeds, or remains idle and lazy, or does wrong and evil deeds.

The words

ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

- those who 'have believed and done good works' (lines 11 & 12 opposite) occur more than fifty times together in the Qur'an.

He made darkness and light. 6: 1	جَعَلَ الظُّلْمَتِ وَالنُّورَ	1
They both made partners unto Him. 7: 190	جَعَلَا لَهُ شُرَكَاءَ	2
And they made partners unto God. 13: 33	وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ	3
And He found you wandering and guided (you). 93: 7	وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَى	4
And they (both) found one of Our servants (lit. a servant from Our servants). 88: 65	وَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا	5
They found their merchandise. 12: 65	وَجَدُوا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ	6
The messenger has believed. 2: 285	ءَامَنَ الرَّسُولُ	7 ■
Surely, I believed in your Lord. 36: 25	إِنِّي ءَامَنْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ	8
Our Sustainer! We have believed... 5: 83	رَبَّنَا ءَامَنَّا	9 ■
What have they created of the earth? 35: 40	مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ	10 ■
And those who have believed...	وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا	11 ■
...and have done good works...	وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ	12
...those are the companions of Paradise. 2: 82	أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ	13
And those who have disbelieved and denied Our signs...	وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا	14 ■
...those are the companions of the Fire. 2: 39	أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ	15

Notes for text above

- **Line 7:** The verb *ءَامَنَ* in line 7 is a Form IV verb; other past tense forms of this verb occur in lines 8, 9 and 11.
- **Line 9:** The word *رَبَّ* is accusative. In addressing someone, the accusative is used:
 - (i) when the word has an attached pronoun as in *رَبَّنَا*, *Our Sustainer!*
 - (ii) when it is followed by a word in the genitive, e.g.

يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ - *O company of jinn and mankind!*

Otherwise, the nominative is used: a single dammah for words in the singular e.g.

يَا مُحَمَّدُ , *O Muhammad!*

■ **Line 10:** The preposition *مِنْ* is translated as 'of'.

■ **Lines 11 & 14:** *الَّذِينَ* *those who*, is the masculine plural of *الَّذِي*, *the one who*.