

Unit 12

Sentences

beginning with a root word

A **verb** is the doing or the action word in a sentence.

The **tense** of a verb refers to the time of an action.

Each sentence on the opposite page begins with a verb in the past tense. (Tense refers to the time of an action.) Each verb has only the three root letters and therefore means 'He + the past tense'.

Notice again that all the verbs come first in these sentences and that the word 'He' is built into each verb.

Sentences

A sentence is a word or group of words which makes complete sense.

In Section One, we read sentences in Arabic without verbs which made complete sense.

We learnt that sentences beginning with a noun are called '**nominal sentences**'.

Verbal Sentences

It is common in Arabic for sentences to begin with a verb. Sentences which begin with a verb are called 'verbal sentences'. An example of such a sentence is:

خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْأَرْضَ God created the earth.

In the above sentence, the verb is خَلَقَ .

The **subject** of a sentence is the part which says who or what you are talking about. You can know the subject of a sentence by asking the question 'who?' or 'what?' **before** the verb. If you ask, 'who created?' the answer - 'God' - is the subject of the sentence.

The subject of a sentence in Arabic is in the **nominative** case. The word اللَّهُ in the above sentence is therefore nominative. It is also singular and so ends with a dammah.

A '**direct object**' of a sentence is the person or thing which is directly affected by the verb. In the above sentence the object is 'the earth'. You know the direct object by asking the question 'what?' or 'whom?' **after** the verb. If you ask, 'created what?' the answer - 'the earth' - is the object of the sentence.

In Arabic, the object of a sentence is in the **accusative**. الْأَرْضَ is therefore accusative and ends with a fat-hah.

Word order

In Arabic, when the subject of the verb is specified, like اللَّهُ in the sentence above, the verb normally comes first, followed by the subject and then the rest of the sentence.

We can see this in sentence 8 opposite. The subject of the sentence 'Musa' follows the verb.

Be prepared for quite a different word order in Arabic phrases and sentences from what you are used to in English.

In the English translation opposite, words between brackets are added to complete the meaning of a sentence. There is no corresponding Arabic for the words in brackets.

Note on line 10 opposite: الطَّاغُوتِ

There is no single word for Taghut in English. Taghut may refer to idols or any false objects of worship, or any evil practices which take a person away from the straight path of obedience to God. It may also refer to tyrannical rulers or systems.

رَبِّ

There is no single word in English for Rabb. Rabb means 'one who owns something and looks after it well'. We may translate it as 'Cherisher and Sustainer' when it refers to God. Often only the word 'Lord' or the word 'Sustainer' is used for Rabb, but we should always bear in mind its wider meaning.

He gathered wealth. 104: 2	1	جَمَعَ مَالًا
He created the earth. 20: 4	2	خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ
He entered the city. 28:15	3	دَخَلَ الْمَدِينَةَ
He went out from it (the city). 28: 21	4	خَرَجَ مِنْهَا
He called (upon) his Sustainer. 39: 8	5 ■	دَعَا رَبَّهُ
So he called (upon) his Sustainer. 44: 22	6 ■	فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ
And he remembered God much. 33: 21	7	وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا
So Musa returned to his people. 7: 150	8 ■	فَرَجَعَ مُوسَىٰ إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ
He did righteous work. 18: 88	9	عَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا
He has worshipped false gods. 5: 60	10	عَبَدَ الطَّاغُوتَ
So He forgave him. 28:16	11	فَغَفَرَ لَهُ
Who has done this with our gods? 21:59	12 ■	مَنْ فَعَلَ هَذَا بِآلِهَتِنَا
He said: I (am) better than he. 38: 76	13 ■	قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ
He found beside her sustenance. 3: 37	14	وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا
This (is) what the Beneficent has promised. 36: 52	15 ■	هَذَا مَا وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَنُ

مَالٌ	wealth
مَدِينَةٌ	city
طَّاغُوتٌ	false gods
رَجَعَ	to return

Notes for text above

- **Line 5:** The verb دَعَا is known as a weak verb. The alif in دَعَا stands for the letter و. The root letters of دَعَا are د ع و.
- **Lines 6 & 8:** The letter فَ and, and so, is always attached to the following word. The word مَوْسَى does not change. It has the same form for all cases.
- **Line 12:** The word بِ + آلهة + نَا = بِآلهَتِنَا

- 'with our gods'.

- **Line 13:** The verb قَالَ 'he said' is known as a hollow verb. It is like the verb كَانَ, 'he was'. The root letters of قَالَ are ق و ل.
- The root letters of كَانَ are ك و ن.
- **Line 15:** The particle مَا means 'what'. Note that مَا can also mean 'not', negating the verb in the past tense.