

علم الصرف

Derived verb and
noun patterns

الأوزان

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Every derived Noun and Verb is made up of a certain set of base letters; these letters are called its **جذر** (root/stem).

Verbs can either have 3 base letters, or 4.

Nouns can have 3, 4, or 5.

Now these base letters can be augmented with extra letters, and they can be dropped or changed due to morphological rules as well. Derived words in the language are a combination of a set of base letters plus a given template called **الأوزان**.

For example, the word **إِسْلَام** is the base letters **س ، ل ، م** on the pattern **إِفْعَال**. The base letters give us a base meaning (safety) and the pattern gives us another associated meaning. In the case of **إِفْعَال** it has the meaning to do something to someone or something. Hence we get the meaning of 'to make someone safe or secure. More specifically, the word means **إِسْلَام** is the religion (of all the Prophet) which gives one safety and security in this life and the next.

So we can think of each word in the language as a set of base letters that have a specific template.

In the previous lessons we learnt about the 3 verb forms (past, present and command verbs) and 2 derived nouns (the active and passive participle)

But there are far too many templates in the language. So we have a layer of abstraction above templates which we call 'template sets'.

For example, the words

عَالَم , مِفْتَاح , غَفَّار

are instantiations of the patterns

فَاعِل , مِفْعَال , فَعَّال

using the base letters which have an associated meaning

(ع، ل، م)، (ف، ت، ح)، (غ، ف، ر)

respectively. And all of the templates have another associated meaning .

Below is a table of examples that will help bring these definitions into perspective. For each type of noun, we have chosen a particular pattern from its inventory of patterns as well as a sample gerund. We place the gerund on that pattern and explain the meaning of the resulting word.

Meaning	Example		One of the Patterns	Derived Noun
	Resulting Word	Sample Gerund		
one who hits i.e. hitter	ضَارِب	ضرب hitting	فَاعِل	إِسْمُ الْفَاعِلِ
one who travels a lot i.e. globetrotter	رَحَّالَة	رحيل traveling	فَعَّالَة	إِسْمُ الْمُبَالِغَةِ
that which is understood i.e. concept	مَفْهُوم	فهم comprehension	مَفْعُول	إِسْمُ الْمَفْعُولِ
one who knows i.e. the all-knowing	عَلِيم	علم knowing	فَعِيل	الْصِفَةُ الْمُشَبَّهَةِ
thing that is used to open i.e. key	مِفْتَاح	فتح opening	مِفْعَال	إِسْمُ الْأَلَةِ
place where people play i.e. playground	مَلْعَب	لعب playing	مَفْعَل	إِسْمُ الظَّرْفِ
more/most far i.e. further/furthest	أَقْصَى	قصو being far	أَفْعَل	إِسْمُ التَّفْضِيلِ

Below is a very similar chart. Here, however, we use the same base letters to illustrate all of the derived nouns. This gives a clear picture of the function of each of them.

Meaning	Example		One of the Patterns	Derived Noun
	Resulting Word	Gerund		
one who knows (scholar, scientist)	عَالِم	علم knowing	فَاعِل	إِسْمُ الْفَاعِلِ
one who knows a lot (erudite)	عَالَمَةٌ		فَعَّالَةٌ	إِسْمُ الْمُبَالِغَةِ
that which is known (known, fixed, determined)	مَعْلُوم		مَفْعُول	إِسْمُ الْمَفْعُولِ
one who knows intrinsically (the all-knowing)	عَلِيم		فَعِيل	الْصِفَةُ الْمُشَبَّهَةِ
that through which we know (God) (the world)	عَالَم		فَاعِل	إِسْمُ الْأَلَةِ
where/when we know (landmark)	مَعْلَم		مَفْعَل	إِسْمُ الظَّرْفِ
one who knows the most (most learned)	أَعْلَم		أَفْعَل	إِسْمُ التَّفْضِيلِ

Note: the meanings cannot be directly inferred; but this template system is helpful in trying to understand the meaning of derived words.

What are these extra letters

The template system covers the study of letters that are extra in a given word (i.e., part of the template and not the base letters). It is one of the most important skills for a student to be able to differentiate between base and extra letters. Without this skill, one will not even be able to look up words effectively in a dictionary.

Not every letter in the alphabet may act as extra. In fact, they include the following nine:

ء، ا، ة، ت، س، م، ن، و، ي

Some more terminology

The letters of a root word that are also found in its derivatives are referred to as the

(الأحرفُ الأصليُّ).

The letters that are found only in some of the Derivative Words are called

(الأحرفُ الرّائِدةُ).

For example, in the words: عَلِمَ، عَالِمٌ، مَعْلُومٌ، أَعْلَمَ, the three letters: (علم) are the *Original Letters* since they are found in its Root Word (عِلْمٌ) and each of the subsequent words. The remaining letters are *Additional Letters* because they are only found in some of these words, all of which are *Derivative Words* (المُشتَقّاتُ).