

Feminine Gender (المؤنث)

a) The usual feminine ending is ة (closed Ta – التاء المربوطة)

e.g. فاطمة, بقره a cow, قرية a village, سلامة safety.

However, two feminine nouns have a long ت (open Ta – التاء المفتوحة) at the end. They are: أخت sister, بنت daughter.

b) The second feminine ending is known as *alif maqṣūrah* (ألف مقصورة) short *alif* which is ي pronounced as ā, e.g. ليلى, سلمى (names of women), صغرى (smaller, f.), كبرى (greater, f.).

c) The third feminine ending is called *alif mamdūdah* (ألف ممدودة), long *alif* which is *hamzah* preceded by *alif*, e.g. أسماء (name of a woman), عمياء (blind woman), حسناء (beautiful woman).

d) There are, however, feminine nouns that do not have any of these endings. They may be classified in the following categories:

1. Names of women, e.g.

زينب, هند, مريم

2. Females, e.g.

أم mother, عروس bride, أتان she ass.

3. Parts of the body that are double, e.g.

عين eye, يد hand, أذن ear,
ذراع arm, رجل foot, leg ساق shank.

4. Names of towns and countries, e.g.

مصر Egypt, سوريا Syria, الهند India.

5. Some everyday words, e.g.

دار house, نار fire, ريح wind,
سماء sky, شمس sun, حرب war,
أرض earth, نفس soul, طريق way, path.

All the nouns that do not fall in these categories are masculine. You may also say that all nouns are masculine except those that belong to these categories.