

علم الصرف

The Command verb



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The command verb (الفعل الأمر)

Definition:

The command verb is that verb that seeks the initiation of an action or state in an imperative manner, particularly when the speaker is of greater distinction than the person who is being addressed.

These verbs are derived from the active present/imperfect tense verbs and can be divided into 2 types

1) الامر الحاضر (The second person command verb)

2) الامر الغائب و المتكلم (The third and first person command verb)

How theses verbs are constructed?

1) The second person command verb

These are the most common type and most widely used command verbs. They are constructed from the 2nd person forms of the present tense verbs:

Present tense verb table for the 2nd person

Person	Gender	Plurality	English Equivalent	Arabic	صيغه
2nd	Masculine	Singular	You (M)	تَفْعَلُ	7
		Dual (2)	You (M2)	تَفْعَلَانِ	8
		Plural (>2)	You (M>2)	تَفْعَلُونَ	9
	Feminine	Singular	You (F)	تَفْعَلِينَ	10
		Dual (2)	You (F2)	تَفْعَلَانِ	11
		Plural (>2)	You (F>2)	تَفْعَلْنَ	12

The process of construction these verbs are as follows:

1. Remove the prefix ت. Which is the sign of being a present tense verb مضارع .

Unlike the tables we've covered thus far, all these forms are not variation of the present tense but in fact a different verb type. In other words it has its own conjugation table.

2. When the sign of مضارع is dropped and the first letter of the remaining verb starts off with a Sukoon, we add a همزة الوصل connecting hamza. The harka on the hamza could either be a Dhamma or kasra [If the second base letter of the present tense verb is a Dhamma then the hamza will take a Dhamma otherwise it will take a kasra]

3. If the verb ends with a Dhamma then we replace this with a Sukoon

4. The نون at the end of the verb is dropped except for the نون of femininity used to indicate feminine plurality

Command verb table for the 2nd person

Person	Gender	Plurality	English Equivalent	Arabic	صيغة
2nd	Masculine	Singular	You (M)	إِفْعَلْ	7
		Dual (2)	You (M2)	إِفْعَلَا	8
		Plural (>2)	You (M>2)	إِفْعَلُوا	9
	Feminine	Singular	You (F)	إِفْعَلِي	10
		Dual (2)	You (F2)	إِفْعَلَا	11
		Plural (>2)	You (F>2)	إِفْعَلْنَ	12

Examples

مَنْعَ - يَمْنَعُ (فَعْلَ - يَفْعَلُ)

امْنَعْ (تَمْنَعُ)، اِمْنَعَا (تَمْنَعَانِ)، اِمْنَعُوا (تَمْنَعُونَ) اِمْنَعِي (تَمْنَعِينَ)، اِمْنَعَا (تَمْنَعَانِ)، اِمْنَعْنَ (تَمْنَعْنَ)

صَرَبَ - يَضْرِبُ (فَعْلَ - يَفْعَلُ)

اَضْرِبْ (تَضْرِبُ)، اَضْرِبَا (تَضْرِبَانِ)، اَضْرِبُوا (تَضْرِبُونَ)، اَضْرِبِي (تَضْرِبِينَ)، اَضْرِبَا (تَضْرِبَانِ)، اَضْرِبْنَ (تَضْرِبْنَ)

نَصَرَ - يَنْصُرُ (فَعْلَ - يَفْعَلُ)

اَنْصُرْ (تَنْصُرُ)، اَنْصُرَا (تَنْصُرَانِ)، اَنْصُرُوا (تَنْصُرُونَ)، اَنْصُرِي (تَنْصُرِينَ)، اَنْصُرَا (تَنْصُرَانِ)، اَنْصُرْنَ (تَنْصُرْنَ)

2) The third and first person command verb

These types of commands are constructed from the 3rd person and 1st person. In some cases they are figurative e.g. commanding oneself to do something.

Present tense verb table for the 3rd person and first person

Person	Gender	Plurality	English Equivalent	Arabic	صيغة
3 rd	Masculine	Singular	He	يَفْعَلُ	1
		Dual (2)	They (M2)	يَفْعَلَانِ	2
		Plural (>2)	They (M>2)	يَفْعَلُونَ	3
	Feminine	Singular	She	تَفْعَلُ	4
		Dual (2)	They (F2)	تَفْعَلَانِ	5
		Plural (>2)	They (F>2)	يَفْعَلْنَ	6
2nd	Masculine	Singular	You (M)	تَفْعَلْ	7
		Dual (2)	You (M2)	تَفْعَلَانِ	8
		Plural (>2)	You (M>2)	تَفْعَلُونَ	9
	Feminine	Singular	You (F)	تَفْعَلِينَ	10
		Dual (2)	You (F2)	تَفْعَلَانِ	11
		Plural (>2)	You (F>2)	تَفْعَلْنَ	12
1st	Masculine and Feminine	Singular	I (M/F)	أَفْعَلْ	13
		Plural (≥2)	We (M/F≥2)	نَفْعَلْ	14

The process of construction these verbs are as follows:

1. We add a لام الأمر (The ل of commanding) to the beginning of the present tense verb. The ل has a kasra (unless it is preceded by a conjunction such وَ and فَ)
2. If the verb ends with a Dhamma then we replace this with a Sukoon
3. The نون at the end of the verb is dropped except for the نون of femininity used to indicate feminine plurality

Command verb table for the 3rd person

Person	Gender	Plurality	English Equivalent	Arabic	صيغة
3 rd	Masculine	Singular	He	لِيَفْعَلْ	1
		Dual (2)	They (M2)	لِيَفْعَلَا	2
		Plural (>2)	They (M>2)	لِيَفْعَلُوا	3
	Feminine	Singular	She	لَتَفْعَلْ	4
		Dual (2)	They (F2)	لَتَفْعَلَا	5
		Plural (>2)	They (F>2)	لِيَفْعَلْنَ	6

Command verb table for the 1st person

Person	Gender	Plurality	English Equivalent	Arabic	صيغة
1st	Masculine and Feminine	Singular	I (M/F)	لِأَفْعَلْ	13
		Plural (≥2)	We (M/F≥2)	لِنَفْعَلْ	14

Examples

(مَنْعَ يَمْنَعُ)

لِيَمْنَعِ، لِيَمْنَعَا، لِيَمْنَعُوا، لَتَمْنَعِ، لَتَمْنَعَا، لِيَمْنَعَنَّ، لِأَمْنَعِ، لَنَمْنَعِ

(ضَرْبَ يَضْرِبُ)

لِيَضْرِبْ، لِيَضْرِبَا، لِيَضْرِبُوا، لَتَضْرِبْ، لَتَضْرِبَا، لِيَضْرِبَنَّ، لِأَضْرِبْ، لَنَضْرِبْ

(نَصْرَ يَنْصُرُ)

لِيَنْصُرْ، لِيَنْصُرَا، لِيَنْصُرُوا، لَتَنْصُرْ، لَتَنْصُرَا، لِيَنْصُرَنَّ، لِأَنْصُرْ، لَنَنْصُرْ

Meanings of the 14 conjugations of the command verbs

الفعل الأمر		#
He must do!	لِيَفْعَلْ	1
They (2 males) must do!	لِيَفْعَلَا	2
They (group of males) must do!	لِيَفْعَلُوا	3
She must do!	لِتَفْعَلْ	4
She (2 females) must do!	لِتَفْعَلَا	5
She (group of females) must	لِيَفْعَلْنَ	6
You (male) do!	افْعَلْ	7
You (2 males) do!	افْعَلَا	8
You (group of males) do!	افْعَلُوا	9
You (female) do!	افْعَلِي	10
You (2 females) do!	افْعَلَا	11
You (group of females) do!	افْعَلْنَ	12
I must do!	لِأَفْعَلْ	13
We must do!	لِنَفْعَلْ	14

* **Note** - Technically speaking, The 1st person and 3rd person command verbs are still considered present tense verbs because the sign of the present tense verb (the prefix) remains. The ل is a particle that is used to convert the present tense verb into a command.

The command verb, or the امر , is different from other verb conjugations previously covered in the sense that a command is usually directed towards a second person e.g eat! or stop!; thus, the construction of 2nd person command verb in Arabic is different from that of other conjugations of the same. Also, at first, it seems rather odd that we can even have a command verb in 1st or 3rd person conjugations. However, examples like He must eat! and They must abstain! do give us good examples of command verbs in persons other than second.

Based on the above information we see that the 2nd person active command verb requires special attention. In fact, it's construction rules are a bit different than those of 1st & 3rd person active command verb as explained in the lesson on construction of command verbs.

The subject of the command verb

The subject of the command verb remains during the process of constructing the command verb from the present tense verb. If it is hidden, it remains hidden and if it is apparent then it remains apparent.

Passive forms:

Passive command verbs do exist but are rarely used and predominately used figuratively.