

Greetings & meeting people

Hello, how are you, good morning, thank you and goodbye the way people say them in Beirut. Vocabulary, pronunciation, a café dialogue and five exercises. Read every Arabic line out loud.

NAME _____

DATE _____

A. VOCABULARY _____ (M) TO A MAN · (F) TO A WOMAN · (PL) TO A GROUP

Tick the box once you can say the phrase from the English alone. Learn the (m) form first; usually only the ending changes for a woman.

GREETINGS & GOODBYES		
ENGLISH	ARABIC	PRONUNCIATION
☐ Hi / hello	مرحبا	marhaba reply: marhabtein (two hellos back)
☐ Welcome	أهلا وسهلا	ahla w sahla reply: ahla fik (m) · ahla fiki (f)
☐ Peace be upon you (formal hello)	السلام عليكم	es-salamu 'aleikon reply: w 'aleikon es-salam
☐ Good morning	صباح الخير	sabah el-kheir reply: sabah en-nur · sabah el-ward
☐ Good evening	مساء الخير	masa el-kheir reply: masa en-nur
☐ How are you?	كيفك؟	kifak? (m) · kifik? (f) · kifkon? (pl)
☐ Good, thank God. And you?	منيح الحمد لله، وإنْتَ؟	mnih el-hamdella, w-enta? (f) mniha ... w-ente?
☐ Bye (said by the one who leaves)	بخاطرك	bkhatrak (m) · bkhatrik (f)
☐ Goodbye (said by the one who stays)	مع السلامة	ma' es-salame
☐ Good night	تصبح على خير	tesbah 'ala kheir (f) tesbahi · reply: w-enta men ahlo

MEETING SOMEONE

ENGLISH	ARABIC	PRONUNCIATION
☐ What's your name?	شو اسمك؟	shu esmak? (m) · shu esmik? (f)
☐ My name is ...	أنا اسمي ...	ana esmi ...
☐ Nice to meet you	تشرّفنا	tsharrafna reply: w-ana aktar (me more)
☐ Where are you from?	إنت منين؟	enta mnein? (m) · ente mnein? (f)
☐ I'm from Germany	أنا من ألمانيا	ana men almanya
☐ I'm learning Arabic	عم بتعلّم عربي	'am bet'allam 'arabi
☐ Do you speak English?	بتعرف إنكليزي؟	bta'ref inglizi? (f) bta'rifi
☐ I don't understand	مش فاهم	mesh fehem (m) · mesh fehme (f)
☐ Slowly, please	على مهلك، إذا بتريد	'ala mahlak, iza betrid (f) 'ala mahlik, iza betride

B. PRONUNCIATION

Three sounds that make it Lebanese

- ج is soft, like the s in "pleasure", written j in this sheet. Beautiful is **jamil**, said "zhamil". Never a hard g as in Egypt.
- ق is usually a glottal stop, the small catch in the middle of "uh-oh". Written '. Coffee is **'ahwe**, not "qahwa".
- A final -a often turns into -e: **ma' es-salame**, **'ahwe**, **ente**. After throat sounds like ح and ع it stays -a: **mniha**, **marhaba**.

Beirut also mixes in French without thinking twice: **bonjour**, **merci**, **ça va?** The famous all-in-one greeting is **hi**, **kifak**, **ça va?**

A. VOCABULARY (CONTINUED)

SMALL WORDS YOU WILL USE EVERY HOUR

ENGLISH	ARABIC	PRONUNCIATION
☐ Yes / no	إيه / لأ	eh / la'
☐ Okay, fine	ماشي / تمام	mashi / tamem

☐ Let's go, come on	يالا yalla
☐ Very	كثير ktir ktir helo = very nice
☐ Really?	عن جد؟ 'an jadd?
☐ I'd like ... / I want ...	بدي ... baddi ... baddi 'ahwe = I'd like a coffee
☐ No problem	ما في مشكلة ma fi mushkle
☐ Thank you	ميرسي / شكراً / يسلمو merci / shukran / yeslamo yeslamo = bless you, warm and very local
☐ You're welcome	عفواً / تكرم 'afwan / tekram (f) tekrame

"I love you" and other warm words

بحبك	بحبك	حبيبي / حبيبتي
bhebbak	bhebbik	habibi / habibti
I love you (to a man)	I love you (to a woman)	my dear (m / f)

Friends and family also say **ta'borne** (تقبرني), literally "may you bury me", meaning "I love you so much I want to go before you". It sounds dark in English and is pure affection in Beirut.

C. EXERCISES

Ex.1 Match the situation to the phrase

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Write the letter next to each situation.

1. You enter a bakery in the morning. _____	A	tsharrafna	تشرّفنا
2. Someone asks how you are. _____	B	bkhattrak	بخاطرک
3. You have just been introduced. _____	C	sabah el-kheir	صباح الخير
4. Someone speaks too fast. _____	D	'ala mahlak	على مهلك
5. Someone thanks you. _____	E	mnih el-hamdella	منيح الحمد لله
6. You get up and leave the café. _____	F	'afwan	عفواً

Ex. 2 Fill the gaps

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Two women meet, then two men. Use each word from the box once.

mnein	esmak	mniha	kifik	eh	ana
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A marhaba, _____ ? B _____ el-hamdella, w-ente?

A enta _____ ? B ana men lebnen.

A shu _____ ? B _____ esmi Karim.

A enta men Beirut? B _____ , men Beirut.

Ex. 3 Man or woman?

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Each line is said to a man. Rewrite it so it is said to a woman. The first one is done for you.

0 kifak? → kifik?

1 shu esmak? → _____

2 enta mnein? → _____

3 bta'ref inglizi? → _____

4 'ala mahlak → _____

5 bkhatrak → _____

D. DIALOGUE: AT A CAFÉ IN BEIRUT

Sara is learning Arabic. Rami runs a small café in Hamra. Read the dialogue twice out loud, once as Sara and once as Rami. Then answer the questions below.

Rami أهلا وسهلا! تفضلي. **ahla w sahla! tfaddale.**
Welcome! Come in, have a seat.

Sara مرحبا! إذا بتريد، بدّي قهوة. **marhaba! iza betrid, baddi 'ahwe.**
Hi! A coffee, please.

Rami تكرمي. إنت منين؟ **tekrame. ente mnein?**
Of course. Where are you from?

Sara أنا من ألمانيا. عم بتعلم عربي. **ana men almanya. 'am bet'allam 'arabi.**
I'm from Germany. I'm learning Arabic.

Rami عن جد؟ بتحكي منيح كتير! **'an jadd? btehke mnih ktir!**
Really? You speak really well!

Sara لأ، شوي بس. على مهلك، إذا بتريد. **la', shway bass. 'ala mahlak, iza betrid.**
No, just a little. Slowly, please.

Rami	تمام، تمام. شو اسمك؟	tamem, tamem. shu esmik? Okay, okay. What's your name?
Sara	أنا اسمي سارة. وإنت؟	ana esmi Sara. w-enta? My name is Sara. And you?
Rami	رامي. تشرفنا يا سارة.	Rami. tsharrafna ya Sara. Rami. Nice to meet you, Sara.
Sara	وأنا أكثر. يسلمو! يلا، بخاطرك.	w-ana aktar. yeslamo! yalla, bkhatrak. Nice to meet you too. Thanks! Okay, bye.
Rami	مع السلامة يا سارة!	ma' es-salame ya Sara! Goodbye, Sara!

Ex. 4 Understanding the dialogue

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Answer in English or in Arabic.

- What does Sara order?

- Where is Sara from?

- Why does Sara say "‘ala mahlak"?

- Who says bkhatrak, and why?

Ex. 5 Your turn: introduce yourself

PAIR WORK

Write four lines about yourself, using the phrases from section A. Say them out loud three times without reading. Then meet a partner: greet, ask name and origin, and say goodbye. Swap who leaves, so you both say bkhatrak once.

1 · GREETING AND "HOW ARE YOU?"

2 · YOUR NAME

3 · WHERE YOU ARE FROM, AND THAT YOU LEARN ARABIC

4 · "NICE TO MEET YOU" AND A GOODBYE

Done? Speaking check

- ☐ I said every phrase in section A out loud at least three times, with a soft j and a glottal stop for ق.
- ☐ I read the dialogue as Sara and as Rami.
- ☐ I said my introduction from Ex. 5 without reading it, and used bkhatrak when I left.

Answer key

For teachers and self-learners. Remove this page before handing the sheet out in class.

Ex. 1 1 C · 2 E · 3 A · 4 D · 5 F · 6 B

Ex. 2 kifik · mniha · mnein · esmak · ana · eh

Ex. 3 1 shu esmik? · 2 ente mnein? · 3 bta'rfi inglizi? · 4 'ala mahlik · 5 bkhatrik

Ex. 4 1 A coffee ('ahwe). · 2 Germany (almanyā). · 3 Rami speaks too fast; she asks him to slow down. · 4 Sara says bkhatrak because she is leaving; Rami says ma' es-salame because he stays.

Ex. 5 Open answer. A model answer: marhaba! kifak? · ana esmi Lina. · ana men almanyā w 'am bet'allam 'arabi. · tsharrafna! yalla, bkhatrak.

TEACHER'S NOTES

- Timing: about 45 minutes for the full sheet, or section A plus the dialogue as a 20-minute warm-up.
- The dialogue works well in pairs. Swap roles after the first read. Ask students to replace Sara's name and country with their own on the second read.
- Ex. 3 is the key exercise: the (m)/(f) ending (-ak / -ik, enta / ente, bta'ref / bta'rfi) is the one grammar point beginners need from day one.
- bkhatrak vs ma' es-salame trips up almost every learner: the person leaving says bkhatrak, the person staying answers ma' es-salame. Act it out at the door.
- French words (bonjour, merci, ça va) are normal Beirut speech, not a mistake. Accept them, but make sure students also know the Arabic. Outside Beirut you will hear ق as a real q in some villages (Druze areas) and more Arabic, less French.
- Transliteration: ' = glottal stop, ' = 'ayn, kh as in Scottish "loch", j as in "pleasure", e and o where Lebanese has them (kifak, ente, ahlo).

NEXT WORKSHEET

Worksheet 2: Numbers, prices & time. Count to 1000, read a price tag, haggle at the market and tell the time in Lebanese. Free at yallahspeak.com/worksheets/lebanese-arabic.

To practise this dialogue with an AI partner who answers in Lebanese Arabic and corrects your pronunciation word by word, try the Yallah Speak app (free to start, iOS and Android).