

25 verbs, three tenses

Past, present with b-, future with rah: one grid, the 25 verbs you use every day, five exercises. Say every form out loud.

NAME _____

DATE _____

A. ONE VERB, THREE TENSES

SHIRIB / YISHRAB · TO DRINK

Palestinian verbs have a past form and a present form. The rest is small words in front: **b-** for now and habits, **rah** for the future. Learn this grid and you can conjugate most verbs.

PERSON	PAST	PRESENT (B-)	FUTURE (RAH)	ARABIC (PRESENT)
ana I	shribt	bashrab	rah ashrah	بشرب
inta you (m)	shribt	btishrah	rah tishrah	بتشرب
inti you (f)	shribti	btishrabi	rah tishrabi	بتشربي
huwwe he	shirib	bishrah	rah yishrah	بيشرب
hiyye she	shirbat	btishrah	rah tishrah	بتشرب
ihna we	shribna	binishrah	rah nishrah	بنشرب
intu you (pl)	shribtu	btishrabu	rah tishrabu	بتشربوا
humme they	shirbu	bishrabu	rah yishrabu	بيشربوا

Notice: **inta** and **hiyye** share one present form (btishrah); **ana** and **inta** share one past form (shribt). The short i of shirib drops as soon as an ending comes: shribt, shirbat, shirbu.

b- = now and habits

bashrah = I drink and I am drinking. **bashrah 'ahwe kull yom** = I drink coffee every day. Drop **b-** after **biddi**, **lazim**, **mumkin**: **biddi ashrah**, **lazim aruh**, **mumkin ashrah?**

rah = future

Put **rah** before the form without **b-**: **rah ahkilak bukra** = I'll call you tomorrow. **rah nruh 'al-bahr** = we're going to the sea.

The bare form asks for a decision: **aruh halla?** = shall I go now?

Negation: ma or mish

Put **ma** before a verb: **ma shribt** (I didn't drink), **ma bashrah** (I don't drink). You will also hear **-sh** at the end: **ma bashrahsh**.

Future and non-verbs take **mish**: **mish rah ashrah**, **mish fahim**, **mish hon**.

Say it like Jerusalem

- ق is a glottal stop: 'al, bi'ul, 'ahwe. In villages you will hear it as k (kal, kahwe), and in the south and among Bedouin as g (gal, gahwe). Many villagers also turn k into ch: kif → chif.
- j is a hard English j, as in "jam": **jit**, **ijat**. In Beirut and Damascus it sounds like the s in "pleasure".
- We = **b(i)n-**, not **mn-**: Palestinians say **binishrah**, where Beirut and Damascus say **mnishrah**. The past "she" ends in **-at** (shirbat, ijat), not **-it** as in Beirut or Cairo.

IMPERATIVE

ADD -I TO A WOMAN, -U TO A GROUP

ruh! go (f: ruhi) · **ta'al!** come (f: ta'ali) · **kul!** eat (f: kuli) · **ishrab!** drink (f: ishrabi) · **isma'!** listen (f: isma'i) · **istanna!** wait (f: istanni). Negative command: **la truh!** don't go.

Ex. 1 Complete the grid: rakab / yirkab (to ride, get on)

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Three forms are given in green. Fill in the rest with the pattern of shirib above. Say each form as you write it. Tip: rakab keeps its vowels in the past (rakabt), only hiyye drops one: rakbat.

PERSON	PAST	PRESENT (B-)	FUTURE (RAH)
ana	rakabt		
inta			
inti			
huwwe		birkab	
hiyye			
ihna			rah nirkab
intu			
humme			

B. THE 25 VERBS

• = IRREGULAR

Past and present are given for **huwwe** (he), the form dictionaries use. Build the others with the grid on page 1. Tick a verb once you can say both forms without looking.

ENGLISH	PAST (HE)	PRESENT (HE)	ARABIC	EXAMPLE
☐ go	rah •	biruh	بيروح	baruh 'ash-shughl I go to work
☐ come	aja •	biji	بيجي	hiyye ijat imbarih she came yesterday
☐ do, make	'imil	bi'mal	بيعمل	shu bti'mal? what are you doing?
☐ eat	akal •	bokil	بوكل	akalt msakhan I ate musakhan
☐ drink	shirib	bishrab	بيشرب	bashrab shai bi-na'na' I drink tea with mint
☐ know	'irif	bi'rif	بيعرف	ma ba'rif I don't know
☐ want	kan biddo	biddo	بده	biddi mayy I want water (no b-; biddak, biddik = you want)
☐ say	'al •	bi'ul	بيقول	shu 'ult? what did you say?
☐ see	shaf •	bishuf	بيشوف	shuft el-film? did you see the film?
☐ speak, talk	haka •	bihki	بيحكي	bahki 'arabi shwayy I speak a little Arabic
☐ understand	fihim	bifham	بيفهم	fhimt! got it!

☐ learn	t'allam	bit'allam	يتعلم	bat'allam falastini I'm learning Palestinian
☐ work	ishtaghal	bishtghil	يشتغل	btishtghil wein? where do you work?
☐ live (in)	sakan	biskun	يسكن	sakin fi berlin I live in Berlin (participle, f: sakne)
☐ sleep	nam •	binam	ينام	nimt badri I slept early
☐ wake up	fa' •	bifi'	يفيق	bafi' es-sa'a sab'a I wake up at seven
☐ buy	ishtara	bishtri	يشترى	ishtareit khubz I bought bread
☐ pay	dafa'	bidfa'	يدفع	khalas, ana badfa' no, I'm paying
☐ take	akhad •	bokhud	بوخذ	khud servees take a shared taxi
☐ give	a'ta •	bi'ti	يعطي	a'tini el-hsab give me the bill
☐ love, like	habb	bihibb	يحب	bahibb el-ma'lube I love maqluba
☐ read	'ara	bi'ra	يقرا	ba'ra 'arabi I read Arabic
☐ wait	istanna	bistanna	يستنى	istanna shwayy! wait a moment!
☐ walk, leave	mishi	bimshi	يمشي	yalla nimshi come on, let's go
☐ can	'idir	bi'dar	يقدر	ma ba'dar I can't

The irregular ones •

- **Hollow verbs** (a long vowel in the middle) shorten it before a consonant ending: rah → **ruht** (I went), shaf → **shuft**, 'al → **'ult**, nam → **nimt**, fa' → **fi't**. The present keeps the long vowel: baruh, bashuf, ba'ul, banam, bafi'.
- **akal, akhad** (eat, take): past akalt, akhad; present with o: **bokil, bokhud** (ana bokil, inta btokil). **aja** (come) is the odd one out: **jit** (I came), **ijat** (she came), present baji, biji.
- **Verbs ending in -a** (haka, a'ta, ishtara, 'ara, istanna) take **-eit** for ana and inta: hakeit, a'teit, ishtareit. The present ends in -i or -a: bihki, bi'ti, bistanna.

C. EXERCISES

Ex. 2 Past, now or future?

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Tick P (past), N (now / habit) or F (future). The b- or the rah tells you.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 rah ashuf el-film bukra. ☐ P ☐ N ☐ F | 2 bashrab 'ahwe kull yom. ☐ P ☐ N ☐ F |
| 3 ruht 'ala 'amman es-sane el-madye. ☐ P ☐ N ☐ F | 4 hiyye btishtghil fi bank. ☐ P ☐ N ☐ F |
| 5 akalna ma'lube imbarih. ☐ P ☐ N ☐ F | 6 rah nihki 'arabi ba'd sane. ☐ P ☐ N ☐ F |
| 7 humme bi'rfu el-jawab. ☐ P ☐ N ☐ F | 8 ishtareit khubz es-subh. ☐ P ☐ N ☐ F |

Ex. 3 Change the tense

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Rewrite the verb in the tense in brackets.

- 1 ana bokil (past) → _____
- 2 ana shuft (future) → _____
- 3 rah aruh (now) → _____
- 4 hiyye shirbat (now) → _____
- 5 huwwe binam (past) → _____
- 6 intu dafa'tu (future) → _____

Ex. 4 Say no

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Negate each sentence. ma or mish?

- 1 bashrab → _____
- 2 rah aruh → _____
- 3 'indi wa't → _____
- 4 huwwe biddo → _____
- 5 shuft → _____
- 6 ana fahim → _____

Ex. 5 Your day

Write five sentences about yourself: two about yesterday (past), two about every day (b-), one about tomorrow (rah). Use at least five different verbs from page 2.

1 · IMBARIH (YESTERDAY)

2 · IMBARIH

3 · KULL YOM (EVERY DAY)

4 · KULL YOM

5 · BUKRA (TOMORROW)

With a partner: ask **shu 'milt imbarih?** (what did you do yesterday?) and **shu rah ti'mal bukra?** (what will you do tomorrow?). To a woman: **shu 'milti, shu rah ti'mali.** Note one answer each, then switch.

PARTNER · IMBARIH

PARTNER · BUKRA

Done? Speaking check

- ☐ I said the whole shirib grid out loud, all three tenses.
- ☐ I can say past and present of 15 verbs from page 2 without looking.
- ☐ I told my partner (or my mirror) my five sentences from Ex. 5 without reading.

Answer key

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

Ex. 1 **Past:** rakabt · rakabt · rakabti · rakab · rakbat · rakabna · rakabtu · rakabu · **Present:** barkab · btirkab · btirkabi · birkab · btirkab · binirkab · btirkabu · birkabu · **Future:** rah arkab · rah tirkab · rah tirkabi · rah yirkab · rah tirkab · rah nirkab · rah tirkabu · rah yirkabu. (Accept bnirkab for binirkab.)

Ex. 2 1 F · 2 N · 3 P · 4 N · 5 P · 6 F · 7 N · 8 P

Ex. 3 1 akalt · 2 rah ashuf · 3 baruh · 4 hiyye btishrab · 5 huwwe nam · 6 intu rah tidfa'u

Ex. 4 1 ma bashrab · 2 mish rah aruh · 3 ma 'indi wa't · 4 huwwe ma biddo · 5 ma shuft · 6 ana mish fahim. (Forms with -sh are also correct: ma bashrabsh, 'indish wa't, biddosh, ma shuftish.)

Ex. 5 Open answer. A model: 1 imbarih ruht 'ash-shughl. · 2 akalt msakhan w shribt shai. · 3 kull yom bafi' es-sa'a sab'a. · 4 bat'allam falastini kull yom. · 5 bukra rah ashuf film ma' sahbi.

TEACHER'S NOTES

- Timing: about 50 minutes for the full sheet. It splits well into two lessons: tenses (A, B, Ex. 1 to 3) and negation plus speaking (Ex. 4 and 5).
- Drill the shirib grid chorally before Ex. 1: you say the person, the class says all three forms. Then let pairs do the same with rakab before anyone writes.
- Common mistakes: keeping b- after biddi, lazim and mumkin (biddi bashrab); correct it every time to biddi ashraf. Learners who know Lebanese or Syrian material bring in mnishrab and 'am; in Jerusalem it is binishrab and the plain b- form. Learners with MSA use sa- or sawfa instead of rah.
- Ex. 4: ma before verbs and mish before everything else is the one negation rule beginners need. Accept the -sh forms; they are normal in Palestinian speech, but ma alone is always understood.
- Transliteration follows common usage, not an academic standard: ' = glottal stop (the Jerusalem ق), ' = 'ayn, j as in English "jam", kh as in Scottish "loch", h for both ح and ه.

NEXT WORKSHEET

Worksheet 5: Palestinian words and phrases. 100 core words in groups, 20 everyday expressions, a 7-day plan with tick boxes. Free at yallahspeak.com/worksheets/palestinian-arabic.

To tell an AI partner about your day in Palestinian Arabic and get your verb forms corrected as you speak, try the Yallah Speak app (free to start, iOS and Android).