

Pronouns, questions & "I have"

The grammar you need to build your own sentences in Syrian Arabic: I and you, my and your, I have, and the seven question words. Say every Arabic line out loud.

NAME _____

DATE _____

A. PERSONAL PRONOUNS, AND "I HAVE" _____ (M) TO A MAN · (F) TO A WOMAN

Two words for "you" in the singular: enta to a man, enti to a woman, and ento for a group. "I have" is not a verb: 'and (at) plus the endings from section B.

ENGLISH	ARABIC	SAY IT
☐ I	أنا	ana
☐ you (m)	إنت	enta
☐ you (f)	إنتِ	enti
☐ he	هو	huwwe
☐ she	هي	hiyye
☐ we	نحن	nehna
☐ you (plural)	إنتو	ento
☐ they	هني	henne

ENGLISH	ARABIC	SAY IT
☐ I have	عندي	'andi
☐ you (m) have	عندك	'andak
☐ you (f) have	عندكِ	'andek
☐ he has	عنده	'ando
☐ she has	عندها	'anda
☐ we have	عنا	'anna
☐ you (pl) have	عندكن	'andkon
☐ they have	عندهن	'andon

In a sentence: ana min esh-Sham (I'm from Damascus) · enta suri? (are you Syrian?) · hiyye latife (she is kind) · 'andi ekhwe (I have siblings) · 'andak wa't? (do you have time?)

B. MY, YOUR, HIS: POSSESSIVE ENDINGS _____

No separate word for "my" or "your": you attach an ending to the noun. A feminine noun ending in -a changes to -t first. Same on names: ismi, ismak, ismek, ismo, isma.

KTAB = BOOK (MASCULINE)		
my book	كتابي	ktabi
your (m) book	كتابك	ktabak
your (f) book	كتابكِ	ktabek
his book	كتابه	ktabo
her book	كتابها	ktaba
our book	كتابنا	ktabna
your (pl) book	كتابكن	ktabkon
their book	كتابهن	ktabon

SAYYARA = CAR (FEMININE, ENDS IN -A)		
my car	سيارتي	sayyarti
your (m) car	سيارتك	sayyartak
your (f) car	سيارتكِ	sayyartek
his car	سيارته	sayyarto
her car	سيارتها	sayyarta
our car	سيارتنا	sayyaretna
your (pl) car	سيارتكن	sayyaretkon
their car	سيارتهن	sayyareton

C. "I DON'T HAVE" AND "THERE IS"

Negate 'and with a simple **ma** in front, no ending needed. "There is" is **fi**, "there isn't" is **ma fi**. You will say **ma fi mushkle** ten times a day.

MA = NOT		FI = THERE IS · MA FI = THERE ISN'T	
I don't have	ma 'andi	Is there water?	fi mai? في ماي؟
you (m) don't have	ma 'andak	Is there a problem?	fi mushkle?
you (f) don't have	ma 'andek	No problem	ma fi mushkle
he doesn't have	ma 'ando	There's no sugar	ma fi sukkar
I have no money	ma 'andi masari	Is there wifi?	fi wifi?

D. THE SEVEN QUESTION WORDS

In Damascus the question word usually comes **first**: **shu ismak?** (what your name?), **wein enta?** (where you?). The end position is heard too, especially with **min wein**: **enta min wein?**

ENGLISH	ARABIC	PRONUNCIATION AND EXAMPLE
☐ what?	شو؟	shu? shu ismak? = what's your name? · shu hada? = what's this?
☐ where?	وين؟	wein? wein enta? = where are you? · min wein = from where
☐ when?	إيمتى؟	eimta? eimta el-film? = when is the film?
☐ why?	ليش؟	laish? laish la? = why not?
☐ who?	مين؟	min? min hada? = who is this?
☐ how?	كيف؟	kif? kif el-hal? = how are things? · kifak? = how are you?
☐ how many? / how much?	كم؟ / قديش؟	kam? / 'addeish? kam akh 'andak? = how many brothers do you have? · 'addeish hada? = how much is this?

Pronunciation

- ع (') starts 'andi: a sound from deep in the throat. Say a deep "a" and keep going; skip it and 'andi becomes "andi", which sounds foreign. ق in 'addeish is a glottal stop, as in "uh-oh".
- Damascus endings are soft: **huwwe**, **hiyye**, **henne**, and "his" is **-o** (ktabo, ismo). Question words carry the stress: **SHU** ismak? **WEIN** enta?

E. EXERCISES

Ex. 1 Pick the pronoun

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One pronoun per gap, each used once.

ana	enta	enti	huwwe	hiyye
nehna	ento	henne		

- _____ ismi Karim. (I)
- _____ min esh-Sham? (you, m)
- _____ doktora. (she)
- _____ ashabi. (they)
- _____ bel-'ahwe. (we)
- _____ bta' rfi inglizi? (you, f)
- _____ min Halab. (he)
- _____ min wein? (you, plural)

Ex. 3 Ask the question

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Write the question (to a man).

- ana min almanya. → _____
- ana ismi Omar. → _____
- ana bel-beit. → _____
- hada be-alfein. → _____
- el-film bukra. → _____
- hada akhi. → _____

Ex. 2 Make it mine

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Attach the right ending. ktab book · beit house · sayyara car · ism name · shanta bag

- your (f) book → _____
- our house → _____
- their car → _____
- his name → _____
- my bag → _____
- her house → _____
- your (m) car → _____
- your (pl) name → _____

Ex. 4 Negate it

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Make each sentence negative with ma or ma fi.

- 'andi wa't. → _____
- fi sukkar. → _____
- 'andak sayyara. → _____
- 'anda ekhwe. → _____
- fi mushkle. → _____

F. PARTNER INTERVIEW

PAIRS · 10 MINUTES

Ask your partner the eight questions below and note the answers in transliteration, then switch roles. Questions are written to a man; to a woman, use the (f) form in brackets. Working alone? Answer each question about yourself out loud, then about a friend.

شو اسمك؟

إنت من وين؟

shu ismak? (f) shu ismek?

enta min wein? (f) enti min wein?

What's your name?

Where are you from?

A _____ B _____

A _____ B _____

كيفك؟

kifak? (f) *kifek?*

How are you?

A _____ B _____

كم أخ وأخت عندك؟

kam akh w ukht 'andak? (f) *'andek*

How many brothers and sisters do you have?

A _____ B _____

عندك سيارة؟

'andak sayyara? (f) *'andek*

Do you have a car?

A _____ B _____

وين ساكن؟

wein saken? (f) *wein sakne?*

Where do you live?

A _____ B _____

بتعرف إنكليزي؟

bta' ref inglizi? (f) *bta' rfi*

Do you know English?

A _____ B _____

شو بدك تشرب؟

shu baddak teshrab? (f) *shu baddek teshrabi?*

What do you want to drink?

A _____ B _____

Useful answers: 'andi akh wahed w ukht wahde (one brother, one sister) · ana saken bi-Berlin (f: sakne) · eh, shwei (yes, a little) · baddi shai / 'ahwe / mai.

Ex. 5 Write about your partner

___ / 4

Four sentences about your partner with huwwe / hiyye and the endings -o / -a. Read them out loud.

1 · HIS / HER NAME: HUWWE ISMO ... / HIYYE ISMA ...

2 · WHERE FROM: HUWWE MIN ... / HIYYE MIN ...

3 · SIBLINGS OR CAR: (MA) 'ANDO ... / (MA) 'ANDA ...

4 · HOME: HUWWE SAKEN BI ... / HIYYE SAKNE BI ...

Bonus Ask about things in the room

Point and ask: shu hada? (what is this?) · la-min hada? (whose is this?) · fi ... hon? (is there ... here?). Answer in full sentences: hada ktabi. · eh, fi. / la, ma fi.

QUESTION I ASKED

ANSWER I GOT

Done? Speaking check

- ☐ I said all eight pronouns and the 'andi forms out loud three times.
- ☐ I asked all eight interview questions without reading the Arabic.
- ☐ I read my four sentences from Ex. 5 to someone.

Answer key

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

- Ex. 1** 1 ana · 2 enta · 3 hiyye · 4 henne · 5 nehna · 6 enti · 7 huwwe · 8 ento
- Ex. 2** 1 ktabek · 2 beitna · 3 sayyareton · 4 ismo · 5 shanti · 6 beita · 7 sayyartak · 8 ismkon
- Ex. 3** 1 enta min wein? (or min wein enta?) · 2 shu ismak? · 3 wein enta? · 4 'addeish hada? · 5 eimta el-film? · 6 min hada?
- Ex. 4** 1 ma 'andi wa't. · 2 ma fi sukkar. · 3 ma 'andak sayyara. · 4 ma 'anda ekhwe. · 5 ma fi mushkle.
- Ex. 5** Open answer. Model: hiyye isma Lina. · hiyye min almanya. · 'anda akh wahed w ma 'anda sayyara. · hiyye sakne bi-Berlin.

Interview Open answers. Accept any understandable transliteration; what matters is that the question was asked and answered in Arabic.

TEACHER'S NOTES

- Timing: about 45 minutes. Sections A to C with Ex. 1 and 2 (20 min), section D with Ex. 3 and 4 (10 min), interview plus Ex. 5 (15 min). The interview also works alone as a 15-minute warm-up in a later lesson.
- The interview is the centrepiece. Let pairs report back to the class in the third person ("hiyye isma ..., 'anda ..."). That forces huwwe / hiyye and the -o / -a endings, which is the whole point of the sheet.
- Ex. 4 is the key exercise. Damascus negates with a plain ma (ma 'andi, ma fi), without the -sh ending of Egyptian (ma 'andish). Students who learned some Egyptian or Palestinian first often add it; correct gently.
- Common mistakes from textbooks: Fusha forms like 'indi, laysa 'indi, ayna, madha, limadha. Correct to 'andi, ma 'andi, wein, shu, laish.
- Regional variants students will meet: nahna (Beirut) next to nehna, hinne next to henne, aymta next to eimta. All are understood. "your (m)" -ak and "your (f)" -ek look the same in Arabic script without vowel marks; this sheet adds a kasra to the (f) form.

NEXT WORKSHEET

Worksheet 4: Syrian Arabic verbs. The verbs you need every day in past, present and future, with the Damascus 'am for "right now". Free at yallahspeak.com/worksheets/syrian-arabic.

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