

The Lebanese Latin Letters System:



Letter	English Pronunciation	Example
A	A in car, far, bar and star	Ana
´	Hamze	War`a
B	B in bed	Beb
C	Sh in she	Cajra
D	D in door	Dabke
Ḍ	Hard D	Bayḏa
E	Soft 'e' = 'ai' in hair, fair and chair	Eedame
F	F in food, frog and free	Finjen
G	G in glass	Guitar
Ġ	Glottal G	Ġazel
H	H in home	Hawa
Ĥ	Hard H (H stretching tongue base)	Ĥilo
I	I in It and Sit	Inta, Kint
II	ee in feed, & ea in seat	Iid
J	G in Beige	Jabal
K	K in book	Kiifak
Ķ	J in Spanish	Ķibiz
L	L in Land	Laban
M	M in Man	Mreye
N	N in Name	Nar
O	O in Open	Moz
P	P in Piano	Pardon
Q	Hard K	Qadiica
R	R in Orange	Ras
S	S in Sam	Sama
Ṣ	Hard S	Ṣura
T	T in Toy	Tijara
Ṭ	Hard T	Ṭarii`
U	oo in cool, & ue in blue	Jura
V	V in Victory	Video
W	W in Word	War`a
X	A voiced pharyngeal fricative "Xayn"	Xadel, Xrift
Y	Y in Yellow	Yamiin
Z	Z in Zebra	Zahra
Ẓ	Hard Z	Maẓbut

Note: Pay special attention to the letters in bold.



Lebanese Language Institute
www.lebaneselanguage.org
 email: info@lebaneselanguage.org
 Mail: P.O. Box 273140, Tampa, FL 33688

Lebanese Language Institute



TA NĤAFIṢ XA LIĠITNA

The Lebanese language Institute is a non-profit organization that is committed to preserve our language by developing, maintaining and supervising the resources for researching, teaching and promoting the Lebanese language, its Lexicon, grammar and writing system.

www.lebaneselanguage.org

FAQ About the Lebanese language:

-What is the origin of the Lebanese language?

The current form of the spoken Lebanese language has its origins in the Phoenician and Aramaic languages, which were spoken in the whole region of the Levant until about 800 A.D. In the following periods, people were speaking several dialects of the Aramaic language. The Arabic language infiltrated the spoken dialects and modified their form with the advent of the Islamic expansions.

Eventually, the people of Lebanon blended the Aramaic dialects with the Arabic language. From the 17th to the 20th century, some Turkish was incorporated, but with minimum effects on the language.

The Lebanese language developed within this time frame into its current form, where some French and English were introduced within the past century. The effects of the Phoenician language are still visible in the etymology and even sometimes in the sentence structure of the spoken Lebanese.

-How does the Lebanese language differ from the Aramaic language?

The Aramaic language gave structure to the Lebanese Language, where the grammar of one Aramaic dialect, the Syriac, is very close to that of the Lebanese language. It also gave the Lebanese language its etymological structure. The Aramaic is also at the basis of other Semitic languages that developed in the Levant, such as the Hebrew and the Arabic. Although some people refer to the Lebanese language as "Neo-Aramaic", these are two different languages. Except for the Aramaic words that are used as-is in the Lebanese language, many words were transformed over the centuries.

-How does the Lebanese language differ from the Arabic Language?

The Lebanese and the Arabic language are both of Semitic roots. Arabic borrowed a lot of words from Aramaic, and so did Lebanese. This common feature between Lebanese and Arabic often leads to confusion. Lebanese and Arabic have much vocabulary in common, just as Spanish and Italian do. However, if people learn Arabic, they will not be able to speak Lebanese, and vice versa. Although some people refer to Lebanese as "Lebanese Arabic", these are two different languages. Word pronunciation from the original Aramaic into Lebanese and into Arabic took slightly different routes.

-Who Speaks Lebanese?

There are about 4 million people in Lebanon, and millions more in the Diaspora.

-Who understands Lebanese?

Due to its status as one of the most popular languages of television and entertainment, most of the people in the Arab world understand Lebanese. Lebanese songs and television production attract over 200 million viewers from the region between the Arabic/Persian Gulf in the Middle East to Morocco in Africa. This also applies to the immigrants in the Americas and around the world from this region.

-If I speak Lebanese, what languages can I understand?

Lebanese is very close to the regional languages of similar roots. People who speak Lebanese easily communicate with people who speak Palestinian, Syrian, and Jordanian, except those who speak Bedwin.

-How many dialects does the Lebanese language have?

Traditionally, six main dialects are commonly recognized: Northern Lebanese, Central-Mountain Lebanese, Southern Lebanese, Traditional-Beiruti Lebanese, Biqaxii Lebanese and Durzi Mountain Lebanese. Modern Lebanese has been dominating over the rest of the dialects during the past few decades. Most of the Lebanese today, in all Lebanese regions, speak modern Lebanese.

-Which form of Lebanese do you teach?

We teach the Modern Lebanese that is spoken by most of the Lebanese today; the one used mainly in conversation and on television. If you learn Lebanese as it is tutored on our website, you will speak like most of the Lebanese do nowadays. Since the Lebanese language has dialects rather than accents, every single Lebanese has his/her own accent, based on the dialect they originally spoke. Learning Modern Lebanese will allow you to speak Lebanese without any accent from the regional dialects.

-If I learn Arabic, will I be able to speak Lebanese?

No. The Arabic language is not the native language of any nation today, and is not spoken as the first language anywhere. Despite some similarities in structure and vocabulary between Arabic and Lebanese, they are still two different languages just as Italian and Spanish are. People in Lebanon learn Arabic when they go to school and study the language for years. They practice it by reading books and newspapers. But they learn Lebanese from their daily life conversations and from the mass media. If you want to speak Lebanese, learn Lebanese.