

3

Stages

How to Learn Arabic

Most people study Arabic in pieces. A grammar course here, a vocabulary app there, a book they never finish. The pieces never meet. This is the system that joins them, and the daily habit that makes it work.



Why do people fail at learning Arabic?

Sometimes it is effort. Arabic asks for real work and no method removes that. But plenty of people work for years and still cannot read a page, so effort alone does not explain it. Three other things account for most of it.

The first is no game plan. No clear target, no order to work in, so every session starts with a decision about what to do rather than the work itself. The second is studying the parts separately. Grammar in one place. Vocabulary in another. Reading postponed until some day when it will feel easier. The pieces never meet. The third is a lack of consistency. Four hours on Sunday and nothing until the following Sunday will teach you far less than twenty minutes a day.

Behind all of it is tawfiq from Allah. Nobody arrives at this language by their own arrangement of hours. Do your part with sincerity and ask Him to bless it. What follows is the part that is yours to do.

01

Study

The rules, in short daily lessons.

02

Read

Apply them the same day.
Vocabulary arrives on its own.

03

Review

Keep what you met, before it slips.

Three ways to use this guide

1. **Read it through once.** It takes about twenty minutes and it is short on purpose.
2. **Then find your stage.** If you study most days but still cannot read a page, your gap is Stage Two. If you read but nothing sticks, it is Stage Three.
3. **Set the smallest version you can hold.** There is a four week plan near the end. Start with that, not with the ideal version of yourself.

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This guide describes the method Nuqta Arabic is built on. The method is not ours alone. It follows what research on second language acquisition has held for decades: words are learnt in context, and kept by meeting them again. What the app adds is that the lessons, the reading and the review sit in one place and feed each other.

START HERE

If you only have five minutes, read page 19.

Be clear about what you want

Arabic is not one skill. It is four, and a learner who does not pick a target tends to make slow progress in all four at once.

Reading, writing, speaking and listening pull on different muscles. Before anything else, decide. Do you want to speak with family in Cairo? Read the Quran without leaning on a translation? Write essays? Follow a khutbah line by line? Each of these asks for a different mix of effort, and the mix matters more than the hours.

For most of our students the goal is not basic spoken Arabic. It is depth. They want to open the Quran and understand it. They want to sit in the gardens of tafsir and follow the discussion on an ayah. They want hadith, sirah and the classical sciences to feel like a home rather than a foreign country.

That is a higher bar than learning a few hundred words. It is also reachable, and it changes what you should practise. If the goal is reading the tradition, then reading is the thing to practise, from the first week, at whatever level you are actually at.

This guide assumes that goal. If yours is different, the three stages still hold. Only the material changes.

DECIDE NOW

Write your goal in one sentence, in the present tense, small enough to be true in six months. *I can read a page of hadith with a dictionary open twice.* That is a real target. *Fluency* is not.

IN ONE LINE

Pick the skill you actually want, then practise that skill. Most people practise a different one and wonder why the target moves away.

Grammar is the skeleton, not the body

Beginners often think Arabic *is* grammar. They start with case endings and verb forms and assume that once the rules are mastered, the language will fall into place.

Grammar matters. Without it a sentence collapses. But grammar on its own is a skeleton with no body. You cannot move it. You cannot live in it. There is an old saying about the language:

النَّحْوُ فِي الْكَلَامِ كَالْمِلْحِ فِي الطَّعَامِ

Grammar in speech is like salt in food.

Too little and the speech is unseasoned and unclear. Too much and it overwhelms what you came to taste. Salt is essential. Nobody sits down to eat salt.

The body of the language is its vocabulary. The words carry the meaning. Grammar lets the words stand up. The words are what you actually want.

IN ONE LINE

Lessons in Nuqta are short for this reason. A lesson exists to make the next page readable, not to make you a grammarian. You meet the rule again inside a real sentence within the hour, which is where it settles.

Vocabulary is an exposure problem, not a memory problem

This is where almost every Arabic student gets stuck, and the reason is simple.

You do not live in an Arabic speaking environment. You do not bump into the same word ten times in a week the way a child in Damascus does. You see a word once in a textbook, write it on a flashcard, and three weeks later it has dissolved.

There is nothing wrong with your memory. The word simply never came back.

Research on second language acquisition has been clear on this for a long time. The brain stores a word alongside the context it arrived in: where you read it, what was happening in the sentence, what the passage carried. Words learnt in isolation fade. Words learnt inside a story tend to stay.

Which means the fix is not a better flashcard app. The fix is more meetings, in more contexts, over more days.

Reading is the cheapest way to buy those meetings. A single page of Arabic at the right level gives you dozens of encounters with words you half know, all of them wrapped in meaning you can use to guess.

THE WHOLE IDEA

You are not trying to memorise Arabic. You are trying to meet it often enough that memorising becomes unnecessary.

IN ONE LINE

Everything after this page is one long answer to a single question: how do you meet the same words again tomorrow, without it feeling like work?

01

Study

Ten to fifteen minutes of structured lesson. One idea, taught with the Arabic you are about to meet. This is the skeleton, and it is the smallest part of your day.

In the app: the Study tab

A lesson is not there to make you fluent

It is there to make the next page readable. That is a much smaller job, and it is why a lesson can be short without being shallow.

Each lesson takes one idea and turns it over: the root system, the definite article, the difference between a noun sentence and a verb sentence. It shows the idea in Arabic you will actually meet, not in invented drill sentences. Then it asks you a few questions, so you find out whether you have it before you go looking for it in a text.

The Root System
نِظَامُ الْجُذُورِ

Arabic has a hidden code. Most words are built from just 3 root letters that carry a core meaning. Different patterns are wrapped around these letters to create an entire family of related words.

Take the root ك-ت-ب. These three letters carry the idea of 'writing'. Watch what happens when Arabic applies different patterns:

كَتَبَ
kataba

One idea at a time

Three root letters carrying a core meaning, then the patterns wrapped around them.

Arabic builds word families from a set of root letters. How many letters make up most Arabic roots?

2

3

4

5

Checked, not tested

A wrong answer is information about what to teach you next, not a verdict.

عِلْم
'ilm
knowledge
noun

Next Word

Words handed over first

New vocabulary is introduced before you are asked to use it.

DO THIS

Do one lesson. Do not do four. The system depends on you coming back tomorrow, not on today being impressive. A learner who does one lesson a day for a year has done more than a learner who does eight lessons twice.

What a good lesson does

It teaches one thing

A lesson with three ideas in it is three lessons badly taught. If you cannot say what the lesson was about in a sentence, it was too wide.

It uses real Arabic

The examples come from the Quran and from classical texts, because those are the sentences you are working towards. An invented example teaches you an invented language.

It hands you the words first

You meet the vocabulary, then you use it. Being asked to guess a word you were never shown is not challenge, it is friction.

It ends before you are tired

Short sessions repeated daily beat long sessions repeated rarely. This is not a motivational claim. It is how spacing works.

It points somewhere

The point of today's lesson is today's reading. If a lesson does not change what you can read, it has not finished.

It lets you be wrong

A lesson that never lets you fail tells you nothing about where you stand. The questions exist to find the edge of what you know, which is the only place learning happens.

IF YOU ONLY REMEMBER ONE LINE

Study is the smallest stage. It should take the least of your time and it should never be the reason you stop.

1

idea per lesson

10 to 15

minutes, then stop

Same day

read something that uses it

02

Read

Apply it the same day, on a real text at your level. This is where the hours go, and it is where vocabulary arrives without being memorised.

In the app: the Read tab and the Qur'an tab

You should be reading from the first week

The usual advice is to wait. Finish the grammar, build a base, then start reading. The trouble is that the base is built *by* reading, so waiting removes the thing that would have made the wait shorter.

Nuqta removes the wall instead. Arabic words are woven into English text you already understand, so you are never standing in front of a page you cannot enter. As your vocabulary grows the proportion shifts. More Arabic, less English, until the scaffolding is gone and you are reading the source.

Also on the authority of عُمَرَ (may الله be pleased with him) who said:

While we were one يَوْمٍ sitting with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) there appeared before us a man dressed in extremely white clothes and with very black hair. No traces of journeying were visible on him, and none of us knew him.

Arabic inside meaning you have

Three new words per sentence at most. Enough to stretch, never enough to drown.

DO THIS

Read for ten minutes after the lesson, while the idea is still warm. Do not look up every word. Look up the ones that block the sentence, and let the rest go past. They will come back.

Read

For You

Library

Pick up where you left off

The Forty Hadith of Imam Na...

الأربعون النووية

7%

Suggested Next

The Child and the Grocer

Story Beginner · 2 min

If I Lost It, I Would Lose It

Story Beginner · 2 min

Matches your vocabulary, great for building fluency

Chosen for where you are

Texts are suggested against the vocabulary you already hold, with a guided order to follow.

Stage Two · Read

11

Four levels, one ocean

Each level decides which kinds of word appear in Arabic. The text grows with you rather than waiting for you to be ready for it.

LEVEL	WHAT TURNS ARABIC	WHAT IT FEELS LIKE
01 قطرة Qatrah Droplet	Nouns.	You start recognising the people, places and things in every sentence.
02 نهر Nahr River	Mostly verbs and adjectives.	Actions and descriptions arrive. The language begins to move.
03 بحر Bahr Sea	Connectors and the small joining words.	Most of the sentence is Arabic. English is scaffolding, not structure.
04 مُحيط Muhit Ocean	Everything. Right to left, every word tappable.	You are reading the source, not a translation of it.

Move up when the current level stops costing you anything, not when you feel you ought to. A level that is slightly uncomfortable is doing its job. A level that stops you reading is not.

Words you have learnt stay in Arabic across every text, so the same passage becomes more Arabic each time you return to it. Your vocabulary compounds without you managing it.

70%

of the words on a page is roughly where reading stops being decoding and starts being reading.

Below 50%

A puzzle. You are translating, not reading.

70% and up

Comfortable with help. This is where to live.

Near 100%

Easy. Good for speed, poor for growth.

Nuqta shows you the share of words you already know before you open a text, so you can pick one that is worth the next twenty minutes.

Vocabulary you never sat down to memorise

When a word blocks a sentence, tap it. You get its meaning, its root, its part of speech, its case and the reason for that case, plus the sentence broken word by word. Then you keep reading.

That single tap does three things. It unblocks the sentence, which is why you came. It shows you the root, which quietly hands you the rest of the word family. And it puts the word into your review deck, so the meeting you just had is not the last one.

Do that for twenty minutes a day and vocabulary stops being a task on your list. It becomes a side effect of reading, which is the only way it has ever worked at scale.

DO THIS

Tap the words that block the sentence. Leave the ones you can guess. Guessing from context is not cheating, it is the skill.

الْحَمْدُ is due to اللَّهِ, Lord of all that exists, the

المَزِيدَ

al-mazīda

for an increase

PART OF SPEECH	noun
ROOT	ز ي د
CASE	accusative
REASON	direct object / مفعول به

Quranic · 2×

✓ Added to Review

IN THIS SENTENCE

وَأَسْأَلُهُ الْمَزِيدَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَكَرَمِهِ.

and I ask Him for an increase of His grace and

One tap, the whole word

Meaning, root, grammar, the sentence it sits in, and a place in your deck.

IN ONE LINE

A word you looked up because you needed it is worth ten words you looked up because they were on a list.

03

Review

Five minutes to keep what you met. Not everything, and not for ever. Only the words that are about to slip, on the day they are about to slip.

In the app: the Review tab

Even a word met in a beautiful passage will fade

Review is not optional. The only real question is how to do it without it eating the part of your day you actually enjoy.

Review

1

due today

2

total

0

mastered

Mastery

0%

ACTIONS

●

Review 1 card

Spaced repetition

●

Practice all words

Full deck review

Tips for Learning Arabic

×

1

Review vocabulary daily

Even five minutes a day keeps words fresh.

Consistency builds retention far more effectively than occasional long sessions

Only what is due

The deck shows what is due today and nothing else, so it stays small enough to finish.

Words you have not yet locked in go into a deck, and the schedule brings each one back just before you would have forgotten it. Get it right and the gap widens. Get it wrong and it comes back sooner. You are not reviewing your whole vocabulary, only the edge of it.

This is the part people skip, and skipping it is the single most expensive mistake in the whole system. Reading without review leaks. You meet a word, you understand the sentence, and a fortnight later the word is gone and the reading has to buy it again.

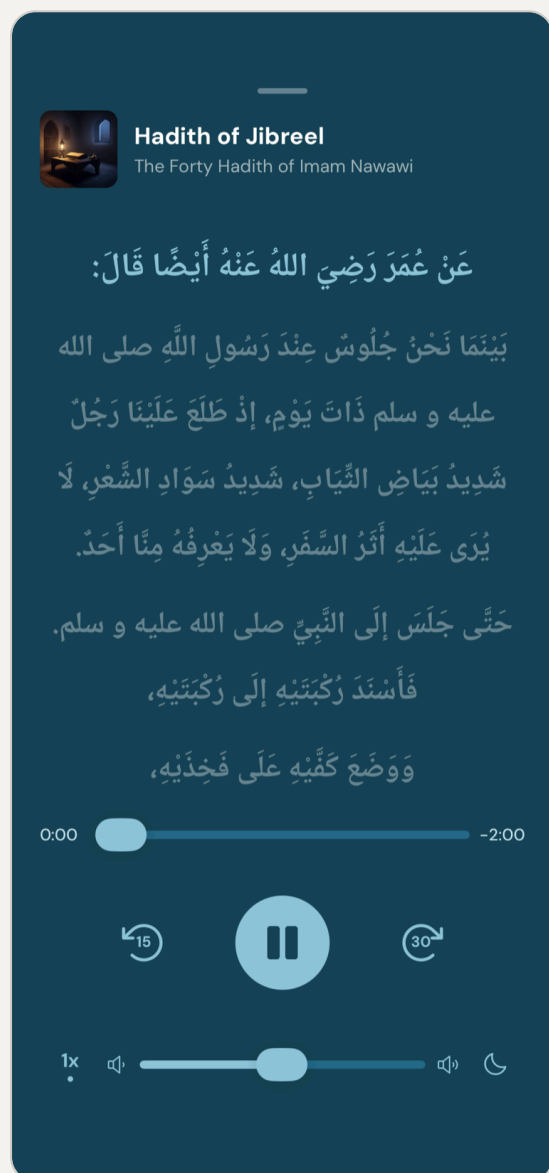
Five honest minutes a day is enough. On a day when everything else falls apart, do this one and let the other two go.

DO THIS

Clear the due cards before you read, not after. If you leave it to the end of the session it will be the thing that gets dropped.

Three things to review, not one

Most people think review means flashcards. Words are only the first of three, and the other two cost far less effort than they return.



Read it, then hear it

A passage you read on Monday can go into your ears on Thursday. If a word slips, tap it.

01 Words

The deck, daily, small. This is the maintenance layer and it is the one with a schedule attached, so it is the easiest to be honest about.

02 Topics

Go back to the lesson. When a construction keeps stopping you in reading, that is the signal to return to the topic that taught it, not to push harder through the text. Ten minutes on the lesson you half learnt is worth an hour of guessing.

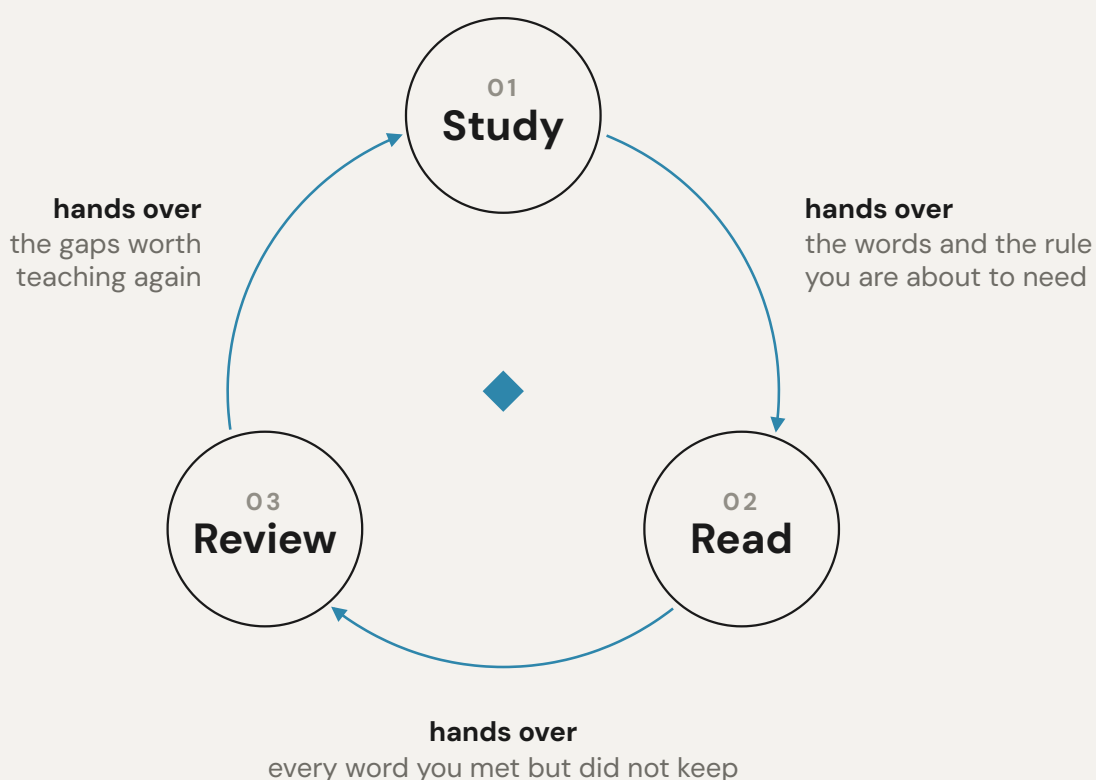
Reading tells you what to restudy. Nothing else in the system gives you that information so cheaply.

03 Whole texts

Listen to what you have already read. Listening to a text you have read is not passive. It is review at full speed. It rebuilds passive vocabulary, which is the vocabulary you understand without stopping to think, and passive vocabulary is what reading actually runs on.

The loop

The three stages are not a sequence you finish. They are a circuit. Each one produces exactly what the next one needs, and each one is weakened when its neighbour is missing.



Study without reading

gives you rules you cannot use, and they fade like any other unused knowledge.

Reading without review

leaks. You buy the same word four times and wonder why progress feels flat.

Review without reading

turns into a memory game. You know the card and still cannot read the page.

Twenty minutes, split three ways

This is the whole daily commitment. It is deliberately small, because the number that matters is not how long you sit down for. It is how many days you come back.



● Study

8 minutes. One lesson, then stop.

● Read

7 minutes. A passage at your level, tapping only what blocks you.

● Review

5 minutes. Clear the cards that are due.

The smallest honest day

Some days twenty minutes is not available. On those days do the review and nothing else. It takes five minutes, it protects everything you have already paid for, and it keeps the chain intact.

A five minute day is not a failure. A skipped day is not a catastrophe either. Two skipped days is where the trouble starts, so make the rule *never twice*.

Attach it to something

A habit that depends on remembering will not survive a busy week. Attach the session to something that already happens at a fixed time. After Fajr. On the commute. After the children are down.

Same time, same place, same order. The order matters more than the hour, because it removes the decision, and the decision is what you actually lose to.

Your first four weeks

Not a curriculum. A shape. The point of the first month is to prove to yourself that the loop turns, before you ask it to carry anything heavy.

WEEK	STUDY	READ	REVIEW
One	One lesson a day. Do not skip ahead even if it feels easy.	Five minutes at the first level. Nouns only. Expect it to feel like English.	Nothing yet. Let the deck fill.
Two	One lesson a day. Start noticing which rules keep returning.	Ten minutes. Finish a short passage rather than starting three.	Five minutes daily. The deck is now small and worth keeping small.
Three	One lesson a day. Restudy any topic that blocked you while reading.	Ten minutes, and move up a level if the current one costs you nothing.	Five minutes daily, plus listen once to a passage you have already read.
Four	One lesson a day.	Fifteen minutes. Try a page of Quran with the word breakdown open.	Five minutes daily. Check your retained word count for the first time.

AT THE END OF WEEK FOUR

Do not judge yourself on how much Arabic you know. Judge yourself on how many of the twenty eight days you showed up. That number is the only one that predicts the next twenty eight.

Five ways people break the loop

1. **Starting too big.** An hour a day for eleven days, then nothing for a month. The plan was never the problem. The size was. Twenty minutes you keep beats an hour you abandon, and it is not close.
2. **Waiting to be ready to read.** There is no threshold at which reading suddenly becomes appropriate. Reading is how you cross the threshold. Start below your level and let the text pull you up.
3. **Looking up every word.** A page with forty lookups is not reading, it is translating, and it is exhausting enough that you will not come back tomorrow. Look up what blocks the sentence. Let the rest pass.
4. **Letting the deck grow.** Skip review for two weeks and you return to a backlog that feels like a punishment, so you skip it again. Small and daily is the only version of review that survives contact with real life.
5. **Measuring the wrong thing.** Hours studied, lessons completed and books bought all feel like progress and predict nothing. Words retained and pages read are the honest numbers. Watch those two.

IN ONE LINE

Every one of these is a version of the same mistake: choosing the impressive option over the repeatable one.

What progress actually looks like

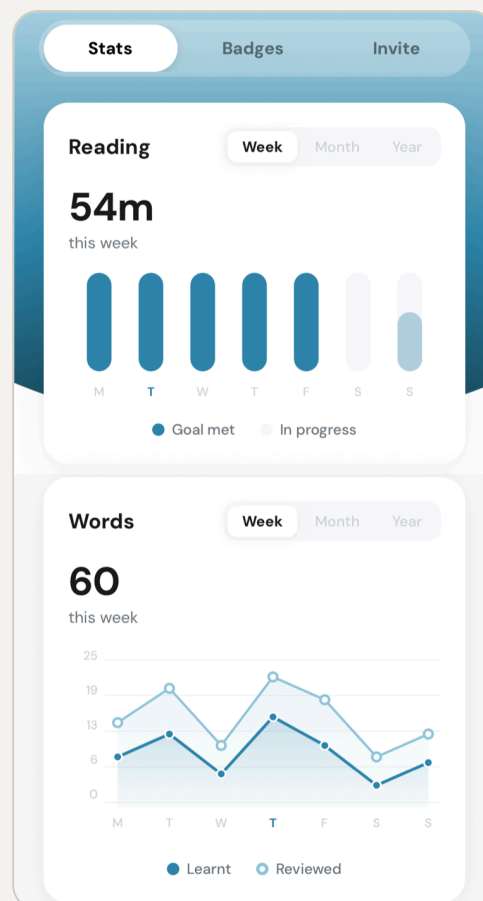
It rarely arrives as a breakthrough. It arrives as a page that takes eleven minutes instead of nineteen. As a word you do not tap, because you already know it. As the moment you notice you have read three sentences without translating them in your head.

Because it is gradual, it is easy to miss, and learners who cannot see progress stop. So watch the numbers that are actually connected to reading.

- ◆ **Words retained.** Not words seen. The ones that survived the schedule.
- ◆ **Minutes read.** The hours that do the real work.
- ◆ **Share of a page you know** before you open it, and whether it is climbing.
- ◆ **Days shown up.** The one that quietly produces the other three.

A FAIR TEST

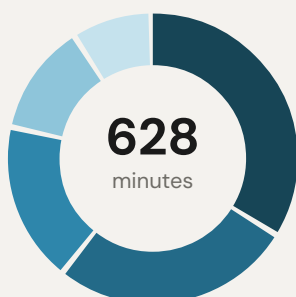
Save one page today. Do not study it. Come back in three months and read it again. That comparison will tell you more than any weekly graph.



Factual, not celebratory

Minutes read, then words learnt against words reviewed. No confetti.

READING BY GENRE · YEAR TO DATE



■ Stories	214 min	34%
■ Hadith	168 min	27%
■ Quran	112 min	18%
■ Seerah	78 min	12%
■ Scholarly	56 min	9%

EXAMPLE FIGURES

Every text you finish is grouped by category, so your hours land somewhere you can see.

Why so many never get there

Many learners study for years, through vocabulary apps or with a private teacher, and still cannot open a book and read it without a dictionary every other line.

Some of them did not do the work. Many of them did. What was missing was the system.

Most courses teach vocabulary lists, or grammar rules, or both in isolation. They never close the loop. There is no daily reading at the right level. There is no spaced review. There is no listening on familiar texts. Each piece works in its own corner and none of them feed each other.

Even students who travel abroad to immerse themselves often come home and watch what they learnt slip away within months. The trip gave them words. What they lost was the daily habit. Without consistency vocabulary leaks. With it, vocabulary compounds.

So do not chase speed. Chase consistency. Give Arabic a few months of honest daily practice and what was once a wall starts to soften into a window.

STAGE ONE

Study a little, every day. Ten to fifteen minutes. One idea.

STAGE TWO

Read at your level, the same day, and tap only what blocks you.

STAGE THREE

Review the words, the topics and the texts. Five minutes protects the rest.

وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

say, 'Lord, increase me in knowledge!'

SURAH TA HA 20:114

Real progress in this language, as in anything worth having,
comes with tawfiq from Allah. Show up daily, do your part with
sincerity, and ask Him to bless the effort.



Three stages, twenty minutes, and the willingness to come back.

Nuqta Arabic puts the lessons, the reading and the review in one place so that each one feeds the next. Structured lessons, graded texts that grow with your vocabulary, and a review deck built from what you have actually read. A curriculum built by experts.

nuqta.co

Built for Muslims who can read Arabic but want to finally understand it.