

Emory Resources on the Middle East

Middle Eastern Language Puzzles

This unit introduces students to texts in Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and Hebrew. Through a series of deciphering exercises, students learn some basic facts about Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and Hebrew numerals, alphabets, and other linguistic features. At the same time, they develop skills in analysis, critical thinking, and problem-solving.

Exercise I: Text I is the opening of a chapter in a modern Turkish novel. Using only this text, answer the following questions.

1. Which way does the writing go, from left to right or from right to left? How can you tell?

2. Are the numerals used in Turkish the same as the ones we use in English?

3. What punctuation signs are used?

4. How many letters are in the Turkish alphabet? List them below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____
21. _____
22. _____
23. _____
24. _____
25. _____
26. _____
27. _____
28. _____
29. _____
30. _____

5. How does the Turkish alphabet differ from the English alphabet?

Exercise II. Text II is the index of a Turkish history book. Answer the following questions.

1. What are the letters of the Turkish alphabet?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____
21. _____
22. _____
23. _____
24. _____
25. _____
26. _____
27. _____
28. _____
29. _____
30. _____

2. How does this compare with your answer in Exercise I?

3. What does °NDEKS mean? _____

4. What might UMUMÎ mean? Guess. _____

5. What kind of word is °NDEKS? What kind of word is UMUMÎ? What Turkish grammatical rule can you derive from the title UMUMÎ °NDEKS?

6. Do you recognize any of the terms in the index? Give five and guess their meanings.

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____
- iv. _____
- v. _____

Exercise III. Text II is a list of tyrographical errors from the back of a Turkish history book. Answer the following questions based on this text.

1. What does Yanl^a•s mean? _____
2. What does Do,gru mean? _____
3. What does Sayfa mean? _____
4. What does Sat^ar mean? _____

Exercise IV. Text IV is an Arabic crossword puzzle from Lebanese newspaper. Answer the following questions.

1. In which direction does the script go, from left to right or right to left? How do you know?
2. What are the Arabic numerals? (and you thought you knew them already)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

3. What are the words for down (vertical) and across (horizontal)?
How can you be sure?

4. What are the words for crossword puzzle?

5. What is the paragraph directly under the crossword puzzle?

Exercise V. Text V is the table of contents from a Persian book about women's rights in Islamic law, published in Iran. Answer the following questions.

1. In which direction does the script go, from left to right or right to left? How do you know?

2. What are the Persian numerals?

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 20. _____ |

3. How do they differ from the numerals in Arabic?

4. What is the word for "introduction" ?

What is the word for "foreword" ?

5. What are the terms for the following:

- "First Part" ? _____
- "Second Part" ? _____
- "Third Part" ? _____
- "Fourth Part" ? _____
- "Fifth Part" ? _____
- "Sixth Part" ? _____
- "Seventh Part" ? _____
- "Eighth Part" ? _____
- "Ninth Part" ? _____
- "Tenth Part" ? _____
- "Eleventh Part" ? _____

6. What element do the words Second, Third, Eleventh have in common? _____

7. To what English suffix does this element correspond?

Exercise VI. Text VI is an Arabic word-search puzzle from a Lebanese newspaper. Answer the following questions.

[Hint: Most Arabic letters have two forms. When a letter stands alone or at the end of a word, it often has a long tail of some sort. When this same letter is followed by another, that long tail is cut off. This is because Arabic script is cursive, even in printed texts.]

1. How many letters are in the Arabic alphabet? List them below. If a letter has more than one form, list both forms next to each other.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____
- 11. _____
- 12. _____
- 13. _____
- 14. _____
- 15. _____
- 16. _____
- 17. _____
- 18. _____
- 19. _____
- 20. _____
- 21. _____
- 22. _____
- 23. _____
- 24. _____
- 25. _____
- 26. _____
- 27. _____
- 28. _____
- 29. _____
- 30. _____

2. What is the term that corresponds to "word search puzzle" ? _____

3. Do as much of the word search as you can. How many words can you find?

Exercise VII. Text VII is the table of contents from a Hebrew book. Answer the following questions.

1. What do you notice about numbers in Hebrew?
2. Does the writing go from left to right or right to left?
3. What is the Hebrew word for "Part"?

What is the Hebrew word for "Chapter"?

What is the Hebrew word for "Section"?

- _____
4. What is the Hebrew word for "first"?

What is the Hebrew word for "second"?

What is the Hebrew word for "third"? _____

What is the Hebrew word for "fourth"? _____

What is the Hebrew word for "fifth"? _____

What is the Hebrew word for "sixth"? _____

What is the Hebrew word for "seventh"? _____

- _____
5. What do the words in question #2 have in common?

1. How many letters are in the Hebrew alphabet? List them below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

21. _____
22. _____
23. _____
24. _____
25. _____
26. _____
27. _____
28. _____
29. _____
30. _____