



## Community-Based Program

### Background Information

**Institution:** Pacific Arabic Resources

**Program address:** 55 New Montgomery St. Ste. 713, San Francisco, CA 94105

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### Contact person

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**Title:** Executive Director

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**Levels:** Primarily geared towards adults, though school and middle school students enroll from time to time

### Languages/dialects taught:

- Modern Standard Arabic
- Levantine Arabic (dialect of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Palestinian territories)
- Egyptian Arabic
- Tunisian Arabic
- Moroccan Arabic
- Gulf Arabic
- Iraqi Arabic
- Amharic
- Tamazight (Berber languages)

### Program Description

**Purposes and goals of the program:** As a secular, non-political institution Pacific Arabic Resources is committed to offering the most comprehensive Arabic language study in the Bay Area. Since our founding in 2000, we have expanded to offer other Afro-Asiatic languages as well as culture and history courses in English.

**Type of Program:** Full language immersion and a summer-intensive program

**Program Origin:** The program was founded in 2000.

## **Staff**

**Instructors' and administration's expectations for the program:** Instructors expect students to study vocabulary and reading exercises at home and come to class prepared to immerse themselves in speaking and hearing Arabic. Our classes are taught in almost complete Arabic immersion, with only a small block of time set aside in each class for introduction and discussion of difficult grammatical concepts in English.

## **Students**

**Students:** Heritage speakers, 10-20%

**Countries of origin:** Our heritage speakers have roots across the Middle East and North Africa, and many were born in or have relatives in France. Of our non-heritage speakers, Jews—born American and Israeli—form a strong contingent. The rest of our student body reflects the diversity of the Bay Area, as many students have roots in East Asia, South Asia, and Latin America.

**Total student enrollment:** 200 to 300 at any one time

**How the program identifies heritage speakers:** Students new to the school fill out a form indicating their prior exposure to Arabic and reasons for studying the language.

**How the program determines the language background and language proficiency of students:** Oral assessment interviews and a written placement test are sometimes administered. Other students choose to sit in on a couple of different classes to get a feel for where they fit in before enrolling.

**Students' expectations of the program:** Our students come with a variety of motivations. Many express a desire to become fluent in Arabic, and stay in our school for years, becoming highly proficient. Others only want to study for a few months to prepare for a trip.

**Additional comments:** Students at the Pacific Arabic are very diverse in terms of their ethnic background as well as their motivation for studying Arabic. Common reasons for studying here include communication with relatives, communication with spouse's family, travel, work, and academic interest.

## **Instructors**

**Number of instructors in the program:** 10

**Languages in which instructors are proficient:** Modern Standard Arabic, a variety of Arabic dialects, Amharic, Tamazight, French, English

**Credentials:** American schools do not generally offer credentials in Arabic language education, and teaching styles in the Arab world are quite different from the interactive style that we expect here, so we cannot rely on credential requirements to hire effective teachers. Our teachers generally have some combination of prior teaching experience and academic background in Arabic literature, linguistics, and translation, but our hiring decisions are based heavily on a prospective teacher's performance in a sample class. In the course of our hiring process, all instructors have to teach one 90-minute class meeting to demonstrate their teaching style and academic grasp of Arabic grammar.

**Professional development opportunities instructors have:** We offer in-house workshops on immersion teaching and experiential learning, and teachers are encouraged to share lesson plans and activities with one another at our bi-monthly meetings as well as through e-mail.

## Instruction

**Total contact hours per week:** 1.5 hours

**Times per week:** 1-2 times a week depending on the course, the summer intensive program meets 5 days a week

**Student grouping:** By Arabic proficiency level, though students of slightly different levels come together in our content and skills classes, such as Media Arabic and Authentic Materials.

**Hours devoted to language teaching:** 100% in our language classes which we teach in immersion so Arabic is spoken at least 80% of class time, even at lower levels. Even when a cultural topic is being discussed, language learning takes place simultaneously.

**Hours devoted to culture teaching:** Varies; in beginner levels, no more than 10% of the time. In upper levels most of the take-home readings are cultural in nature, and these become the subject of much of classroom discussion, taking perhaps 50% or more of class time.

## Language skills

**Skills developed by the program:** Listening, speaking, reading, and writing

## Culture

**Aspects of culture taught:** Geography, history, festivals, customs, religions, film, music, calligraphy, and painting

## Methodologies

**Methodologies and instructional strategies used in the program:** Immersion teaching. Teachers speak only Arabic for 80% or more of class time, leaving a brief period for English-based discussion of new grammatical concepts. Students will be expected to come to class having studied the vocabulary, dialogues, and grammar—ready to listen carefully and employ what they have learned. Our faculty has been trained in the use of gestures, props, charades, cognates, context clues, and other non-verbal signals to ensure that students can still follow the flow of the class.

## Materials

**Textbooks:** Textbooks are written by current or former faculty and are not yet published for outside use. Each text includes one or two audio CDs recorded by our school.

- *A Taste of Arabic*
- *Levantine Arabic for Everyone Parts 1 and 2*, Kiif Haalik
- *Tunisian Arabic for Everyone Parts 1 and 2*, Ash Hwalik
- *Moroccan Arabic for Everyone Parts 1 and 3*, La Bas
- *Al-Kitaab Fii Taallum al-Arabiyya Part 1-3 A Textbook for Arabic*; 2004, 2006, 2007, Georgetown University Press

**Other materials used for instruction:** Hand-outs, newspaper clippings, etc.

**Technology used for instruction:** Students are required to listen to our audio CDs to complete dictation exercises and to supplement reading exercises. They are also required to watch the *Al-Kitaab* DVDs as a complement to that textbook.

## Assessment

**Assessments used to evaluate students' progress:** Weekly quizzes, chapter test, and teacher observations

## Articulation

**Connections with other institutions:** The Arab Cultural and Community Center of San Francisco often refers students to us, and we operate a table at their annual Arab Cultural Festival.

## What the program has in place

**Financial support the program receives:** Our program functions through student tuition alone.

## Special challenges

**Challenges the program has experienced:** It is difficult to hire qualified teachers of the Arabic language. When we have a position open, it is often months before it can be filled.

**Additional support the program would like to receive:** We would like for potential students and teachers to be able to find out about our school through CAL. In addition, we would like to know about instructor development and new insights into methodology for teaching Arabic.

**Additional Insights:** We are driven entirely from student demand. If a sufficient number of students want to learn something we are not currently offering—a different dialect, higher level of Modern Standard Arabic, a new subject area—we will offer it!