

QFI and British Council Arabic Speaking Competition

Competition Guide

2023

Introduction

The British Council and QFI are inviting students to showcase their talents in the Arabic language at our Arabic Speaking Competition. The online format will be judged by a panel of fluent Arabic speakers and aims to:

- Raise the profile of Arabic as a modern world language
- Increase student's motivation for learning Arabic
- Develop vocabulary and improve pronunciation and speaking skills
- Raise confidence for oral examinations
- Inspire students to discover more about Arab cultures
- To celebrate the skills of young people who are studying Arabic language

Arabic Speaking Competition 2023

Individual learners of Arabic aged 10-18 are to perform an oral presentation to an online panel of judges, communicating at a language level appropriate to their learning. The performance will be followed by some questions from the judges, depending on the student's level. Performances may last up to a maximum of 2 minutes, but can be shorter, especially for beginners.

The competition will be followed by the winners being announced at a National Arabic Speaking Celebration Event in May/June 2023.

Format of competition

Participating students will need to prepare a two-minute presentation in Modern Standard Arabic on a topic from the given list. See below for themes.

The judges will then ask them questions in Modern Standard Arabic relating to their presentation. The number of questions asked will vary based on the student level. More advanced categories may be asked more questions. The questions will be selected from a list given to the judges beforehand and will be closely related to the entrants chosen theme.

We will also make use of our images relating to each topic which can be used as a prompt by the judges for questions or by the students as a visual to describe. This is intended particularly for beginners level and for non-heritage learners. We encourage beginner students to apply and hope that this will be an opportunity for them to show what they know in Arabic.

1. Categories

The link teacher (applicant teacher who is the main link between the school and the competition) should ensure the students are entered for their appropriate category level. This competition is for fun, to encourage the spark of learning, and allow children to shine and show off their language skills. This should be done within the appropriate category, to be fair to them, their learning, and to other competitors.

The categories are based on the amount of hours of taught Arabic the student has completed (these hours do not necessarily have to have taken place in school). This is only a guide and teachers should place their students as they deem appropriate. The judging panels reserve the right to recategorize students if they feel they should.

NB we hope that this guide gives enough indication to teachers as to where their students would be. If you have any questions or queries regarding this please do not hesitate to ask.

Category	Time spent learning Arabic
Beginner	up to 30 hours
*Beginner +	up to 30 hours
Primary Beginner	up to 30 hours
*Primary Beginner +	up to 30 hours
Intermediate	up to 80 hours
*Intermediate +	up to 80 hours
Primary Intermediate	up to 80 hours
*Primary Intermediate +	up to 80 hours
Advanced	more than 100 hours
*Advanced +	more than 100 hours
Primary Advanced	more than 100 hours
*Primary Advanced +	more than 100 hours
Fluent Arabic speaker (age 10-12)	students from Arabic speaking countries whose mother tongue is Arabic and who speak Modern Standard Arabic fluently
Fluent Arabic speaker (age 13-15)	students from Arabic speaking countries whose mother tongue is

	Arabic and who speak Modern Standard Arabic fluently
Fluent Arabic speaker (age 16-18)	students from Arabic speaking countries whose mother tongue is Arabic and who speak Modern Standard Arabic fluently

*These students may speak some Arabic dialect at home but are learning MSA for GCSE or A level

2. Themes

Students will choose from one of six themes for their presentation. These themes are accompanied by an image prompt (these are available to download from the website in advance of the competition days) which may help beginners to show us the language that they know.

The themes are:

- 1 My family
- 2 My house/home
- 3 My classroom/school
- 4 Shopping/around town
- 5 A day in my life
- 6 Celebrations

3. Eligibility

Students aged 10-18 from any school in the UK can apply through their teacher for the competition. Supplementary/Weekend schools and Private Tutors are also eligible to enter students. Students should not enter as individuals, only through a teacher.

4. Timeline

Competition Stage	Timeframe
Applications open	December 2022
Applications close	Monday 16 January 2023
Webinar for Teachers explaining logistics of how	Monday 23 January 1600 (TBC)

the competition day will work	
Consent forms submitted to TeachingArabic@britishcouncil.org	1 February 2023
Individual competition on Teams	Various dates and times between 1 February 2023 and 15 March 2023*
Winners announced	April 2023
Winners event	May/June 2023 (TBC)

*please indicate on your entry form ideal dates/times for your students. We cannot guarantee to meet everyone's needs but this will help us with timetabling

5. How to Apply

Please complete this [online application form](#). Make sure you have read all the relevant documents and completed the necessary permissions (including parental consent forms etc) which can be downloaded from the website. Entry deadline is 16 January 2023 and the deadline for submission of consent forms is 1 February 2023.

The online competition will be using [Microsoft Teams](#), the software used by the British Council. You can find more information about how to use Teams [here](#), as well as the standards for data protection etc. Consider downloading the Microsoft Teams App on a mobile phone as a plan B back up in case connection goes wrong on the day.

There will be a support webinar before the competition where we will run through the order of the day, you can test your equipment/connection and ask technical questions. This will be especially useful if you have never used Microsoft Teams before – we can show you all the functions and you can practice how to access online. The details of this session will be communicated in the Joining Instructions via email, once your place in the competition has been confirmed.

6. Joining instructions

Once you have submitted your entry form and all the attachments, and they have been checked and verified by the British Council team to meet the competition criteria, the link teacher will receive Joining Instructions via email.

2. On the day of the competition

1. Joining from school

Give yourselves time to set up space and equipment. You and the competing student should arrive 10 mins early, before your chosen timeslot start time.

The teacher will be emailed a Microsoft teams link. Click on the Microsoft teams link to join the competition of that timeslot. Other schools may share one timeslot.

If your Wi-Fi or internet connection is not working well, consider tethering a mobile phone, or downloading the Microsoft Teams App.

If you are having any problems with your Wi-Fi or Microsoft Teams connection, email us on TeachingArabic@britishcouncil.org. There might be a possibility of reallocating your entry to the end of that session or rearranging the timeslot for another day/time.

Slots will be given to students depending on which level they are entering. There will be separate days/times for each entry level. The application form asks you to indicate preferred times for each student. You may want to request times when the Arabic teacher is in school or during their timetabled Arabic lesson. We will endeavour to allocate times as per each student's preference, but this cannot be guaranteed.

Each school will enter the 'Virtual Competition Room' where the judges are, one by one, and the student should introduce themselves to the lead judge. When they introduce themselves to the judges, they only need to give their first name as an identifier and this is the only personal information to be shared, apart from presentation and discussion in Arabic, that is part of the judged competition.

When the student has finished their slot, please press the red 'Leave' button to quit the session.

Following the performances, judges scores will be collated and moderated, and results will be communicated to link teachers by email and all entrants will receive a certificate of participation.

2. If the student cannot be at school on the day of the online competition, here are the steps to follow for how to compete remotely:

- Follow your own school rules for online safety. The student should use your school's IT guidance to join the competition online from home if they have to.
- If students normally have to blank their video for school lessons, they can do it also for the competition but we prefer students to be on camera during their session.
- The link teacher will receive an individual weblink for the online competition slot. You should forward this to the student at home (using the normal channels that you communicate for schoolwork).

- All under-18s have to have an accompanying adult with them in the room during the whole competition session while they are presenting to the judges, as they are unknown adults. This can be either a parent/guardian (in person) or you as accompanying teacher (joining online at the same time as the student to the competition link and staying for the whole time).
- When the student has finished their slot, both the student and the teacher should press the red 'Leave' button to quit the session.
- The entry form asks you to select preferred days and times for each student. We will endeavour to match these requests to sessions. We will be offering some weekend sessions for supplementary school students.

3. Judges

The Competition will be judged by an experienced group of judges who are either native Arabic speakers, or fluent second language Arabic Speakers. Judging panels for each category will consist of up to 3 judges.

4. Scoring criteria

The judges are looking for real communication and presentation not rehearsed performance. The winner of each category will be someone who has really got to grips with Modern Standard Arabic language appropriate to their level of learning.

Each individual will be assessed by three independent judges, each scoring against the following criteria:

Element	Area scored
Short Presentation and questions (20 points in total)	Communication (up to 5 points) Fluency (up to 5 points) Vocab and grammar (up to 5 points) Pronunciation (up to 5 points)

Scores of the three judges will be averaged and moderated in a meeting after all performances have taken place.

10. Safeguarding

THE ACCOMPANYING TEACHER MUST FOLLOW THEIR OWN SCHOOL'S CHILD PROTECTION, BEHAVIOURAL STANDARDS, SAFEGUARDING and IT REGULATIONS

The teacher will be the designated accompanying adult for all under-18s in the competition and must physically be in the same room with the students at all times. The only exception to this is if the child is self-isolating and has to access the competition online from home – see notes above on this.

The student will be interacting with British Council team members and the panel of judges. These are unknown adults to the student. The accompanying teacher is responsible for ensuring the safety, comfort, and behaviour of the student in this interaction.

Make sure you follow your own school's procedures for safeguarding and child protection, as well as for Coronavirus related to bubbles etc. If you need other adults in the room, please arrange for that.

The accompanying teacher is responsible for organising a safe space and equipment for the student to be able to join the competition online.

The space should be prepared and made safe, with no trip hazards (including computer cables etc). The student should be able to face the camera, with head and shoulders in the shot, so their voice can be heard by the judges – please use a microphone where possible.

The teacher will receive the link to connect using Microsoft Teams and it must be the teachers (not the student) that connects and joins online at the time of the competition. Students must not connect independently without the accompanying teacher in the same room as them.

The chat function will be enabled on Teams. This is a channel of communication between the teacher and the British Council team, in case of technical problems or needed clarifications related to how the competition works. It can be used to report anything you don't feel comfortable or safe about.

Anyone (teacher, student, parent) that would like to report something they don't feel comfortable or safe about can also directly contact the British Council organising team on TeachingArabic@britishcouncil.org.

Do not record your interview sessions. Due to GDPR regulations, we will not be recording these sessions either.

Do not share the questions or topics from the judges' panel online or in social media, as other entrants might see them in advance, and this will undermine the competition process.

11. Special Needs

Please make us aware of any special requirements you or your students need while submitting your **application** and we will do what we can to accommodate your needs. You can also email us TeachingArabic@britishcouncil.org with plenty of time for us to help support you.

12. Some Useful Tips

- Room / Space. Find a room at school where there is good internet/Wi-Fi connection and you won't be interrupted (other students coming in and out, school bell ringing etc) and external noise is minimised.
- The student's head and shoulders are visible on the screen. They should be between 1 - 4 metres away from the device
- Think about acoustics and echo –can the student be heard well through the device?
- We recommend using a plain or generic background image if you want to keep your background private. Alternatively, you can blur the background.
- Preferably use a laptop/computer that will connect to Microsoft Teams using video. Find the download link for Teams in section 5 above.
- If using a mobile phone, make sure it's propped on a still surface and is landscape
- Consider using a microphone (or headphones with a microphone) so the voice is clearer
- Use your school email address to access Microsoft Teams, not a private email.
- Make sure any phone calls are made from a blocked number so teachers' personal contact details are not visible.
- Encourage students to think about presentation and communication skills
- Have at least one run-through with students using the equipment. Their focus and attention should be on their Arabic, not on how to use a microphone.

Terms and Conditions for Entering the Competition

1. General Terms and Conditions

- 1.1. Schools are responsible for checking the eligibility of all students. Any student or group that does not meet the entry criteria will not be offered a place at the heats. Entries that aren't eligible at the closing date may not be changed after the closing date.
- 1.2. It is the teacher's responsibility to make sure all the relevant consent forms are submitted at the time of application. Failure to do so might result in students not being able to take part in the competition.
- 1.3. Provision has been made for students to take part in the competition from home, if self-isolating or in lockdown. Safeguarding and child protection standards must be followed also in this case.
- 1.4. By entering the Competition, the submitting member of staff agrees that the work is that of the student(s). Plagiarism will not be accepted, and performances must be original. The submitting member of staff also agrees that to the best of their knowledge each student complies with the entry criteria for the particular category that they have entered. If it transpires that inaccurate information has been provided which changes a student's eligibility, then said student may be disqualified. We reserve the right to make further enquiries into the background of the candidate, if suspicions arise regarding their eligibility.
- 1.5. Responsibility cannot be accepted for entries that are incomplete, delivered incorrectly, corrupted or those not received for whatever reason. Evidence of entering is not proof of receipt. If the school does not receive this within 5 working days of the closing date, they must contact TeachingArabic@britishcouncil.org immediately to check that their entry has been received.
- 1.6. Eligibility Criteria - Individual Language Ability
 - The Beginner categories are open to students who have been learning Arabic for up to 30 hours of study time.
 - The Intermediate categories are open to students who have been learning Arabic for up to 80 hours of study time.
 - The Advanced categories are open to students who have been learning Arabic and have more than 100 hours of study time.
 - The Native fluency category is intended for mother tongue students
 - With regards to each and every category, should a candidate demonstrate a level of Modern Standard Arabic deemed by the Judges to be too advanced for their category on the day, they reserve the right to verify the background of the candidate and

ultimately disqualify them if the teacher responsible has not adhered to the criteria for eligibility.

2. Prizes

All entrants will receive a certificate of participation from the British Council and Qatar Foundation International (QFI). We will offer a prize to the category winners. Due to Covid-19 complications and the fast-changing circumstances, we are not able to provide details yet on the prizes for the different categories.

3. Privacy Notice

The British Council will use the information that you are providing for organising the Arabic Speaking Competition Event. The legal basis for processing your personal data is consent/Contract (T&Cs). We may need to pass this information on to the following partners concerning with organising this event:

United Kingdom British Council offices and colleagues.

Qatar Foundation International colleagues in UK and USA

The British Council complies with the UK Data Protection Act 2018 and laws in other countries that meet internationally accepted standards. You have the right to ask for a copy of the information we hold on you, and the right to ask us to correct any inaccuracies in that information. If you have concerns about how we have used your personal information, you also have the right to complain to a privacy regulator. For detailed information, please refer to the privacy section of our website, www.britishcouncil.org/privacy