

The four ways a word says "raf"

Bāb Ma'rifat 'Alāmāt al-l'rāb, first part. Lesson 3 named the four cases. This one shows that a case is not one sign but several — raf' alone has four — and that *which* sign a word uses tells you what kind of word it is.

THE TEXT

لِلرَّفْعِ أَرْبَعُ عَلَامَاتٍ: الضَّمَّةُ، وَالْوَاوُ، وَالْأَلِفُ، وَالنُّونُ.
فَأَمَّا الضَّمَّةُ فَتَكُونُ عَلَامَةً لِلرَّفْعِ فِي أَرْبَعَةِ مَوَاضِعَ:
فِي الْإِسْمِ الْمُفْرَدِ، وَجَمْعِ التَّكْسِيرِ، وَجَمْعِ الْمُؤَنَّثِ السَّلَامِ،
وَالْفِعْلِ الْمُضَارِعِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّصِلْ بِآخِرِهِ شَيْءٌ.
وَأَمَّا الْوَاوُ فَتَكُونُ عَلَامَةً لِلرَّفْعِ فِي مَوْضِعَيْنِ:
فِي جَمْعِ الْمَذَكَّرِ السَّلَامِ، وَفِي الْأَسْمَاءِ الْخَمْسَةِ،
وَهِيَ: أَبُوكَ، وَأَخُوكَ، وَحُمُوكَ، وَفُوكَ، وَذُو مَالٍ.
وَأَمَّا الْأَلِفُ فَتَكُونُ عَلَامَةً لِلرَّفْعِ فِي ثَنِيَةِ الْأَسْمَاءِ خَاصَّةً.
وَأَمَّا النُّونُ فَتَكُونُ عَلَامَةً لِلرَّفْعِ فِي الْفِعْلِ الْمُضَارِعِ
إِذَا اتَّصَلَ بِهِ ضَمِيرٌ ثَنِيَّةٌ أَوْ ضَمِيرُ جَمْعٍ
أَوْ ضَمِيرُ الْمُؤَنَّثَةِ الْمُخَاطَبَةِ.

Li-r-rafi' arba'u 'alāmātin: aḍ-ḍammatu, wa-l-wāwu, wa-l-alifu, wa-n-nūn. Fa-ammā ḍ-ḍammatu fa-takūnu 'alāmātan li-r-rafi' fī arba'ati mawāḍi'a: fī l-ismi l-mufradi, wa-jam'i t-taksiri, wa-jam'i l-mu'annathi s-sālimi, wa-l-fi'li l-muḍāri'i l-ladhī lam yattaṣil bi-ākhirihī shay'. Wa-ammā l-wāwu fa-takūnu 'alāmātan li-r-rafi' fī mawḍi'ayni: fī jam'i l-mudhakkari s-sālimi, wa-fī l-asmā'i l-khamsati, wa-hiya: abūka, wa-akhūka, wa-ḥamūka, wa-fūka, wa-dhū mālin. Wa-ammā l-alifu fa-takūnu 'alāmātan li-r-rafi' fī tathniyati l-asmā'i khāṣṣatan. Wa-ammā n-nūnu fa-takūnu 'alāmātan li-r-rafi' fī l-fi'li l-muḍāri'i idhā ttaṣala bihi ḍamīru tathniyatīn aw ḍamīru jam'in aw ḍamīru l-mu'annathati l-mukhāṭabah.

Raf' has four signs: the ḍamma, the wāw, the alif, and the nūn.

As for the **ḍamma**, it is a sign of raf' in four places: in the singular noun, in the broken plural, in the sound feminine plural, and in the present-tense verb to whose end nothing has been attached.

As for the **wāw**, it is a sign of raf' in two places: in the sound masculine plural, and in the Five Nouns — which are *abūka*, *akhūka*, *ḥamūka*, *fūka*, and *dhū mālin*.

As for the **alif**, it is a sign of raf' in the dual of nouns only.

As for the **nūn**, it is a sign of raf' in the present-tense verb when a dual pronoun, a plural pronoun, or the pronoun of the feminine addressee has been joined to it.

FOUR SIGNS, AND WHAT EACH ONE GIVES AWAY

Sign		Where it marks raf'	So the word is
الضمة	ḍamma	singular noun · broken plural · sound feminine plural · bare muḍāri'	could be either — this one is the default
الواو	wāw	sound masculine plural · the Five Nouns	a noun , and a plural or one of five
الألف	alif	the dual of nouns — <i>only</i>	a dual noun . Nothing else.
النون	nūn	muḍāri' with a dual, plural or feminine-addressee pronoun joined	a verb , with a pronoun attached

Three of the four are letters, not vowels. That is the correction this chapter makes to the impression lesson 3 leaves.

And the last three columns read as diagnostics: the sign tells you the case *and* the number *and*, in two rows, the word-class.

THE ḌAMMA'S FOUR PLACES, WITH A WORD EACH

The place	Example	Why it qualifies
Singular noun	الْأَعْمَالُ	<i>Wait</i> — this is a broken plural, not a singular. It belongs to the second row, and it is in hadith 1.
Broken plural	الْأَعْمَالُ	Plural of 'amal, formed by reshaping the word rather than adding an ending. Ḍamma on the end.
Sound feminine plural	النِّيَّاتُ	The -āt ending. In hadith 1 it appears as <i>bi-l-niyyāti</i> — in khafḍ, because the bā' acted on it.
Bare muḍāri'	يَضْرِبُ	Nothing joined to its end, so the ḍamma stands.

The first two rows are deliberate. Both point at the same word, because a reader who has just met the term "singular noun" will reach for the first familiar word and get it wrong. الْأَعْمَالُ takes a ḍamma — but not for the reason they think.

WHY ONE VERB IS MARKED BY A VOWEL AND THE NEXT BY A LETTER

The verb	Its sign of raf'	What happened
يَضْرِبُ	the ḍamma	Nothing is attached to its end, so it falls under the ḍamma's fourth place.
يَضْرِبَانِ	the nūn	A dual pronoun joined it. The ḍamma has nowhere to sit; the nūn carries the raf' instead.
يَضْرِبُونَ	the nūn	A plural pronoun joined it. Same story.
تَضْرِبِينَ	the nūn	The pronoun of the feminine addressee joined it.

One rule seen from two ends: "*the muḍāri' to whose end nothing has been attached*" and "*the nūn, when a pronoun has been joined*" are the same sentence read forwards and backwards.

NOW YOU — NAME THE SIGN

Each of these is in raf'. Write **which of the four signs** marks it, and **which place in the matn** puts it there. The first is from hadith 1, which you have already parsed; the other four are new.

الْأَعْمَالُ · الْمُسْلِمُونَ · أَبُوكَ · الزَّيْدَانِ · يَذْهَبُ

Word	The sign	The place in the matn
الْأَعْمَالُ		
الْمُسْلِمُونَ		
أَبُوكَ		
الزَّيْدَانِ		
يَذْهَبُ		

Three of the five are marked by a letter, not a vowel — and two of those three carry the **same** letter for two different reasons. Finding which two, and why the reasons differ, is the whole exercise.

Lesson by Sh. Sibghatullah · **From** Al-Ājurrūmiyya, Bāb Ma'rifat 'Alāmāt al-l'rāb · Translation and analysis: Alyph Academy. Not yet checked by a second scholar. · The matn is public domain; this sheet is our own work and free to copy. Found an error? hello@alyphacademy.org