

## Lesson Fifteen: The Superlative Noun

### [اسم التفضيل]

#### PRINCIPLE ONE

The *superlative noun* (اسم التفضيل) indicates the *highest degree* or the *comparative* of the quality described by the base letters. For example, the letters ف-ع-ل mean “to do” and its *superlative noun* أفعل refers to “one who does the most” or “one who does more.”

#### PRINCIPLE TWO

The masculine singular of the *superlative noun* is constructed by placing the three base letters on the pattern of أفعل (table 15.1). For example, replacing the *fā'* ( ف ), *‘ain* ( ع ), and *lām* ( ل ) positions in this pattern with ك-ب-ر (*to be big*) forms أكبر (*a male who is biggest or a male who is bigger*). This pattern is *ghair munsarif* (غير منصرف) and therefore neither permits a double vowel [*tanwīn*] nor a single *kasrah* on its last letter.

#### PRINCIPLE THREE

The masculine form of the *superlative noun* uses the standard dual, and it uses both the sound plural and the broken plural (table 15.1). The broken plural of the masculine *superlative* is *ghair munsarif* (غير منصرف).

#### PRINCIPLE FOUR

The feminine form of the *superlative noun* is constructed by placing the three base letters on the pattern of فُعَلَى.<sup>34</sup> For example, replacing the *fā'* ( ف ), *‘ain* ( ع ), and *lām* ( ل ) positions in this pattern with ك-ب-ر (*to be big*) forms كُبْرَى (*a female who is biggest or a female who is bigger*). This form undergoes changes in *grammatical states* without reflecting a change at the

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<sup>34</sup> Although the final letter of this word resembles a *ya'*, it is an *‘alif maqsurah*. This letter, like the standard *‘alif*, causes extension of the letter before it. Thus, the feminine form of the *superlative noun* is pronounced *fu'la*.

end of the word. Therefore, the pattern of the word is the same for all three *grammatical states* (*table 15.2*).

#### PRINCIPLE FIVE

The feminine form of the *superlative noun* uses the standard dual, and it uses both the sound plural and the broken plural (*table 15.2*).

#### ESSENTIAL NOTE

The conjugations of the *superlative noun* must be memorized (*tables 15.1 and 15.2*) before moving to the next lesson.

TABLE 15.1

## THE MASCULINE SUPERLATIVE NOUN

MASCULINE				
BROKEN PLURAL	SOUND PLURAL	DUAL	SINGULAR	
أَفَاعِلُ males who do more (or the most)	أَفْعُلُونَ males who do more (or the most)	أَفْعَلَانِ two males who do more (or the most)	أَفْعَلٌ a male who does more (or the most)	رَفْعٌ
أَفَاعِلَ males who do more (or the most)	أَفْعَلِينَ males who do more (or the most)	أَفْعَلَيْنِ two males who do more (or the most)	أَفْعَلٍ a male who does more (or the most)	نَصْبٌ
أَفَاعِلِ males who do more (or the most)	أَفْعَلِينَ males who do more (or the most)	أَفْعَلَيْنِ two males who do more (or the most)	أَفْعَلٍ a male who does more (or the most)	جَرٌّ

TABLE 15.2

## THE FEMININE SUPERLATIVE NOUN

FEMININE				
BROKEN PLURAL	SOUND PLURAL	DUAL	SINGULAR	
فُعُلٌ females who do more (or the most)	فُعُلَيَاتُ females who do more (or the most)	فُعُلَيَانِ two females who do more (or the most)	فُعُلَى a female who does more (or the most)	رَفْعٌ
فُعُلًا females who do more (or the most)	فُعُلَيَاتٍ females who do more (or the most)	فُعُلَيْنِ two females who do more (or the most)	فُعُلَى a female who does more (or the most)	نَصْبٌ
فُعُلِ females who do more (or the most)	فُعُلَيَاتٍ females who do more (or the most)	فُعُلَيْنِ two females who do more (or the most)	فُعُلَى a female who does more (or the most)	جَرٌّ