Lesson Fifteen: The Superlative Noun

PRINCIPLE ONE
The superlative noun \( \text{ اسم اللفظي } \) indicates the highest degree or the comparative of the quality described by the base letters. For example, the letters 
\( \text{ ف-ع-ل} \) mean “to do” and its superlative noun 
\( \text{ أفعل} \) 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 
\( \text{ أفعل} \) (table 15.1). For example, replacing the 
\( \text{ ف} \), ‘ain ( \( \text{ ع} \) ), and lam ( \( \text{ ل} \) ) positions in this pattern with 
\( \text{ ك-ب-ر} \) (to be big) forms 
\( \text{ أكبر} \) (a male who is biggest or a male who is bigger). This pattern is ghair munsarif 
\( \text{ غير منصرف} \) and therefore neither permits a double vowel [tanwin] nor a single kasrab 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 
\( \text{ غير منصرف} \).

PRINCIPLE FOUR
The feminine form of the superlative noun is constructed by placing the three base letters on the pattern of 
\( \text{ ففعلي} \). \( ^{34} \) For example, replacing the 
\( \text{ ف} \), ‘ain ( \( \text{ ع} \) ), and lam ( \( \text{ ل} \) ) positions in this pattern with 
\( \text{ ك-ب-ر} \) (to be big) forms 
\( \text{ أكبر} \) (a female who is biggest or a female who is bigger). This form undergoes changes in grammatical states without reflecting a change at the

\(^{34}\) Although the final letter of this word resembles a \( \text{ ya} \); 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 \( \text{ فعال} \).
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BROKEN PLURAL</th>
<th>SOUND PLURAL</th>
<th>DUAL</th>
<th>SINGULAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>فأَعْلُ</td>
<td>فأَعْلُونَ</td>
<td>فأَعْلُانَ</td>
<td>فأَعْلُ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>males who do more (or the most)</td>
<td>males who do more (or the most)</td>
<td>two males who do more (or the most)</td>
<td>a male who does more (or the most)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 15.2
THE FEMININE SUPERLATIVE NOUN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BROKEN PLURAL</th>
<th>SOUND PLURAL</th>
<th>DUAL</th>
<th>SINGULAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>فَعُلْ</td>
<td>فَعِلَاتٍ</td>
<td>فَعِلَانِ</td>
<td>فَعِلَ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>females who do more (or the most)</td>
<td>females who do more (or the most)</td>
<td>two females who do more (or the most)</td>
<td>a female who does more (or the most)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

males who do more (or the most)
males who do more (or the most)
two males who do more (or the most)
a male who does more (or the most)

females who do more (or the most)
females who do more (or the most)
two females who do more (or the most)
a female who does more (or the most)

females who do more (or the most)
females who do more (or the most)
two females who do more (or the most)
a female who does more (or the most)