

Lesson 1, Pronunciation Guide

The letters shown below are meant to be pronounced each in one unique way. The letters shown in **bold** are the ones you need to get acquainted with since they are either pronounced different or have a new sound to English.

Due to having less Latin letters than the sounds required three arrangements are made:

1- A unique characteristic of Lebanese is the use of a short “Hamze” in the middle of the word. Words such as “Mas`ul”, “War`a”, or “Ra`m”, should be treated as if you are pronouncing 2 separate words.

2- When using double of a consonant, like “rr” or “tt” etc.. you stress on that letter in the words. When doubling one of the vowels: *a, e* or *o*, using *aa, ee* or *oo* the vowel is pronounced longer.

3- When you are not able to pronounce the Lebanese letters: “**Ḍ**”, “**Ḡ**”, “**Ḥ**”, “**Ḱ**”, “**Ṣ**”, “**Ṭ**” and “**Ẓ**”, the closest letter to substitute will be: D, G, H, K, S, T, Z respectively.

As for the letter X, if you were not able to pronounce it, you can just “X” it out from the word. For example the word *xale* (means high), is very close to the Lebanese pronunciation if pronounced *ale*.

Letter	English Pronunciation	Lebanese word	Meaning
A	A in car	Ana	I/ I am
‘	Very short A	War`a	Paper
B	B in bed	Beb	Door
C	Sh in she	Cajra	Tree
D	D in door	Dabke	Lebanese folkdance
Ḍ	Hard D	Bayda	Egg
E	ai in main	Sitte	Six
F	F in frog	Finjen	Cup
G	G in glass, grass, green and gold	Giitar	Guitar*
Ḡ	G stretching tongue out	Ḡariib	Stranger
H	H in home	Hawa	Air
Ḥ	Hard H (H stretching tongue base)	Ḥilo	Sweet/beautiful
I	i in Bill	Inta	You for male
II	ee in feed	iid	Hand
J	G in Beige without your tongue touching your jaw	Jabal	Mountain
K	K in kool	Kiif?	How?
Ḱ	J in <i>Spanish</i>	Ḱibiz	Bread
L	L in land	Laban	Yogurt
M	M in man	Mreye	Mirror
N	N in name	Nar	Fire
O	O in open	Moz	Banana
P	P in Peter	Pardon	Sorry/Excuse me**
Q	Hard k	Qaṭar	Qatar, the country***
R	R in orange	Ras	Head
S	S in Sam	Sama	Sky
Ṣ	Hard S	Ṣura	Picture
T	T in toy	Tor	Bull
Ṭ	Hard T	Ṭarii`	Raod/way
U	oo in cool	Jura	Hole/ Ditch
V	V in Victory	Video	Video*

W	W in word	Warde	Rose
X	A stretching tongue base	Xen	Eye/Spring
Y	Y in yellow	Yamiin	Right (hand)
Z	Z in Zebra	Zahra	Flower
Zv	Hard Z	Buza	Ice cream

Frequently used phrases and expressions

The most frequently used expression in Lebanese is a distinguished character of modern Lebanese. Many English or French words are used here. You can replace any phrase in this section with its French or English equivalent in a regular Lebanese conversation.

Hi, Hello	Marhaba
How are you doing? (addressing male)	Kiifak?
How are you doing? (addressing female)	Kiifik?
I'm fine (male)	Mniih
I'm fine (female)	Mniiha
This is (masculine)/ (feminine)	Hayda / Hayde
Yes	E
No	La'
Thanks	Yislamo/ <i>Merci</i> ** (French)
Welcome	Ahlen
Please	Iza betriid/ <i>Please</i> * (English)
Excuse me	Iza betriid/ <i>Pardon</i> ** (French)
Sorry	<i>Pardon</i> ** (French)
Bye	<i>Bye</i> * (English)
Good (masculine)/ (feminine)	Mniih / Mniiha
Very good	Ktiir mniih
OK	OK*
Now	Halla'
Later	Baxden
Waw	Yay
Here	Hon

Meeting people

Introducing people: George, Salwa & Paul

George: Paul, I would like to introduce Salwa
Salwa, This is Paul.
Paul is a student, he studies at college.
He is from California, originally from Beirut.

George: Paul, bhibb xarrfak xa Salwa.
Salwa, hayda Paul.
Paul talib, xam yidros bil jemxa.
Paul min California, w aslo min Bayrut.

Siham: Hi, Paul, nice to meet you.

Siham: Marhaba Paul, tcirrafna

Paul: Welcome Salwa, nice to meet you

Paul: Ahlen Salwa, tcirrafna.

George: Salwa is visiting from Lebanon, she will stay at our place for two months.

George: Salwa jeye zyara min Libnen, w rah tib'a xinna cahren.

words from other languages used in Lebanese: * English, ** French, *** Arabic