The CJKI Arabic Learner’s Dictionary
القاموس العربي الإنجليزي للمتعلمين
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The CJKI Arabic Learner’s Dictionary, or CALD, is a brand-new work that serves as
the ultimate reference for the learner of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). It answers the
urgent need for an easy-to-use dictionary, compact enough to be easily carried around,
yet detailed enough to satisfy the practical needs of the serious learner. Compiled with
the aid of modern computational lexicography, this unique work enables learners to
gain a full understanding of the core vocabulary of MSA.

As the number of Arabic learners in the world increases rapidly, a lack of effective
learner’s dictionaries puts these learners at a severe disadvantage compared to those of
other major world languages such as French and Spanish. Existing Arabic dictionaries
suffer from serious shortcomings, often featuring large numbers of archaisms and
excluding newer words and expressions. Equally concerning, traditional dictionaries
require a knowledge of Arabic grammar for effective lookup, limiting their use to
intermediate and advanced learners.

CALD has been carefully designed by a team of lexicographers and language educators
to avoid these pitfalls, presenting beginning and intermediate Arabic learners with a
practical and user-friendly guide to MSA. Below is a selection of features that set this
dictionary apart.

Meticulous sense and headword selection

- Each headword has been carefully chosen by a team of lexicographers based on
corpus analysis and relevance to learners.
- Up-to-date entries include recent words such as blog and ATM.
- Rare, archaic and unimportant headwords and senses have been omitted.
- Word senses have been listed in order of importance to reflect modern usage.
- Key multiword expressions like Middle East have been included as headwords
  (other dictionaries include these only as examples, if at all).
Comprehensive, learner-friendly entries

- Word senses are fully illustrated by example sentences written for learners (rather than complex examples drawn directly from corpora).
- All words and examples are fully romanized using CARS, a learner-oriented romanization system that displays word stress and neutralized vowels.
- Subentries include useful word combinations such as fixed expressions.
- Thorough grammatical information includes parts of speech (omitted in many dictionaries), verb transitivity, participles, plurals, case endings, and more.
- Prepositions used with intransitive verbs are made explicit for each sense.

Ease of use

- Alphabetical ordering ensures that even beginners can quickly locate entries without a knowledge of Arabic word roots and patterns.
- Cross-references for common spelling variants increase ease of lookup.
- An intuitive design and attractive layout ensure a pleasant user experience.
- A compact format allows for maximum portability and convenience.

CALD is based on a systematic approach and a firm theoretical foundation that emerged from several decades of experience in compiling bilingual learner’s dictionaries, many of which have become standard reference works. Modern linguistic theory has been effectively integrated with computational lexicography to produce what is simply the most useful and easy-to-use Arabic learner’s dictionary ever published.

For more details, please see the white paper at:

This dictionary is scheduled for completion in 2015.

The CJK Dictionary Institute

The CJK Dictionary Institute, Inc., headed by Jack Halpern, specializes in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean lexicography. In addition to producing high-quality learner’s dictionaries including the Kodansha Kanji Learner’s Dictionary (Kodansha, 2013), CJKI is one of the world’s prime sources for CJK and Arabic lexical data, contributing to modern information processing technology with state-of-the-art digital resources.