Throat letters: sounds English does not have (1)

In this lesson you will learn

- The six letters that come from the throat
- The three parts of the throat they come from
- How to tell similar throat letters apart
- Why getting them right protects the meaning

How to use this sheet. Watch the video for this lesson first if you can. Then work through these pages out loud, at your own pace. Come back to them through the week.

Scan to hear every sound from this lesson, or go to **salehabibi.org/learn/throat-letters**

Sounds from the throat

This lesson is about six letters that English either doesn't have or doesn't use in the same way. They all come from the throat. They take practice, so don't expect to get them in one go. A few minutes a day works better here than one long session.

Think of the throat in three parts: the deepest part, nearest the chest. The middle. And the top, nearest the mouth. Two letters come from each part.

Part of the throat	Letters	How it feels
deepest part	أَ ءَ ه	The first is a short, clean catch in the throat. The second is a soft breath, with nothing scraping.
middle	عَ حَ	For the first, the throat tightens and you use your voice. The second is breath only, like breathing on glasses to clean them, but stronger and tighter.
top	غَ خَ	The first is close to a soft gargle, with voice. The second comes from the same place with breath only, like the ch in the Scottish word loch.

Read the table from right to left inside each row: the first letter named in "How it feels" is the one on the right.

Throat letters: sounds English does not have (1), continued

Practise them in pairs

Each pair is easy to mix up. Say the right one, then the left one, slowly. Feel where each one comes from. Then swap the order. Use the practice page to hear them as often as you need.

حَ	or	هَ	
عَ	or	أَ	
غَ	or	خَ	
خَ	or	حَ	

Why it matters

These are not just a matter of accent. Swap one for another and you can change the word. The first word of the second ayah of Al-Fatihah has the strong breath from the middle of the throat. Said with the soft breath from the deepest part, it is no longer the right word. Here it is with a word from Surah Al-Falaq.

1:2 ٱلْحَمْدُ 113:5 حَسَدَ

Read it yourself

Read each row out loud from right to left. Then check yourself on the practice page.

خَ	غَ	حَ	عَ	هَ	أَ
غَ	أَ	عَ	خَ	هَ	حَ

Check yourself

Which part of the throat does each letter come from? Write deepest, middle or top.

6	5	4	3	2	1
ح	غ	ء	خ	ه	ع
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Answers 1 middle · 2 deepest · 3 top · 4 deepest · 5 top · 6 middle