

# Persian, Step by Step, Root by Root

A gentle, etymology-driven introduction to Iranian Persian

Adhithya Rajasekaran

Starter edition — fourteen short chapters, with more being written.

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# Preface

This book teaches Persian one word at a time, and it teaches each word by taking it apart. It assumes no Persian and no Perso-Arabic script: every section takes one small expression, introduces only the letters and grammar that expression needs, connects it to words you may already know, and ends by asking for it back. Persian reads right to left — but you will be reading real words long before you have met the whole alphabet.

This is contemporary Iranian Persian. Romanization stays beside the script for now and fades as your reading grows. Where formal written and colloquial forms diverge, both are labelled rather than quietly averaged; Dari and Tajik are relatives of this language, not substitutes for it, and are not smuggled in here.

Persian vocabulary comes in historical layers. Some everyday words are inherited Iranian forms; many others arrived through Arabic and now follow Persian pronunciation and grammar completely. Etymology in this book is practical — it gives a word a handhold in your memory — and never a claim that a borrowed word is less fully Persian today.

This is a starter edition: fourteen short chapters, complete in themselves, with more being written.

## How to use this book

Every numbered section is one word, or one small phrase, and takes a few minutes — the length of a queue, an errand, or the walk to the bus. Read them in order the first time through: each section stands on the ones before it, and nothing is used before it has been taught. After that the book becomes reference, and you can open it anywhere.

Say the Persian out loud wherever you can. The prompts under *Your turn* are written to be spoken, and saying a word is most of what makes it stay. The questions under *Before you move on* carry their own answers in brackets: cover them, answer from memory, then look.

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## Chapter 1

# Greetings and responses

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 👁️ eyes (3) ✍️ pen (4) 🗣️ Hands-free start: first 1 of 8 lessons.

***By the end of this chapter:*** I can greet someone in Persian, respond courteously, answer yes or no, and copy one alef with a visible model.

*Hold a four-line greeting exchange, point to its right-to-left start, and copy one alef beside the visible model.*

### 1.1 سلام — hello, one joined word at a time

One greeting is enough for this lesson. Listen once: **salâm**.

**You'll want to know:** سلام

Persian runs **right to left**. Start at the right edge of سلام and let your eyes travel towards the left while you say *salâm*:

سلام — *salâm* — hello

Treat the joined word as one familiar greeting today. You do not need its four letter names, its joining rules, or the rest of the alphabet yet.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

**salâm** means “hello” and literally evokes peace. Persian borrowed it from Arabic, where the consonants **s-l-m** organize a family concerned with peace, safety, and wholeness. That same old Semitic family also

includes Hebrew *shalom*. The word is now thoroughly everyday Persian.

### Why it's said this way

Say **salâm** to one person or a group. It is neutral, friendly, and safe in most situations.

- See a neighbor: **Salâm!**
- Answer a greeting: **Salâm!**

### Writing — follow one visible stroke

Keep this model visible: **l**. With your finger, trace its one upright stroke from top to bottom. Do not copy it yet and do not hunt for it inside the joined word. The next two-minute lesson will name and copy this one shape.

### Your turn

- *Point to:* to the right edge, where Persian reading begins
- *Say it:* **salâm** once to greet, and once to answer

### Before you move on

Which direction does Persian run? (**Right to left.**) What old idea lives inside *salâm*? (**Peace, safety, or wholeness.**) Say the greeting once.  
Persian Online: the writing system

## 1.2 | — one stroke with the model present

Point to the right edge of سلام and say *salâm*. Keep this separate one-stroke model visible: **l**.

### Script — meet alef

The shape is **l**, named **alef**. Draw its one straight stroke from top to bottom, then lift. In *salâm*, alef carries the long â sound.

### Writing — one guided copy

Copy | once beside the model. Look back whenever you need. Say the long â as your pen reaches the bottom, then stop.

Do not hide the model, copy the whole greeting, or add a second letter today. One visible stroke is enough for a first Persian writing lesson.

#### Before you move on

Compare your copy with |. How many strokes? (**One.**) Which way did that stroke travel? (**Top to bottom.**)

## 1.3 | — one stroke with the model covered

Look at | once and say the long â. Then cover it.

### Writing — delayed copy

With the model covered, wait ten seconds, then draw | once from memory.

Ten seconds is long enough that your hand cannot be tracing a shape it can still see, and short enough that a stroke you made a minute ago is still there.

Only after the stroke is finished, uncover the model and compare.

#### Before you move on

One stroke is the easiest shape in the script to get right and the easiest to get **backwards**, and the page cannot tell you which you did.

So the question to ask yourself is not whether it looks right. It is: which end did your pen start from? Alef travels **top to bottom**. A stroke drawn upward lands in the same place and behaves differently the moment it has neighbours, which is why a single line is worth this much attention now rather than later.

## 1.4 | — the stroke from the sound

Cover every | on the page. Nothing to trace and nothing to uncover.

## Writing — dictation

Say the long *â* of *salâm* aloud, or play it, and write the letter that carries it. One stroke, top to bottom, on the right-hand side of the line.

A delayed copy asked your hand to remember a shape. This asks it to turn a **sound** into a shape, which is the thing writing is actually for, and the two do not always arrive together.

### Before you move on

Uncover the model and compare.

Now a warning worth having on the first day rather than the hundredth. What you wrote was alef standing for a **vowel**, and that is one of its two jobs. At the start of a word the same stroke often carries no long *â* at all — it is a stand for a short vowel to sit on, because Persian does not begin a word with a bare vowel.

So alef is not a letter with a sound. It is a letter with a **position**, and what it says depends on where it stands. Nothing in the dictation will tell you that; the word around it will.

## 1.5 ممنون — thank you

One more expression, and the exchange starts to work: *mamnun*.

### The letters in this word

ممنون — *mamnun* — thank you

Read it the way you read the greeting: from the right edge, as one whole word with its romanization beside it. One thing about the writing is worth noticing now, because it is true of nearly every Persian word you will meet: **the short vowels are not written**. The *a* in *mamnun* is part of the word you hear, not a mark you read. The letters themselves get their own lessons later; none is being asked of you today.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

*mamnun* literally describes someone as **grateful or obliged**, and in ordinary conversation it simply works as “thanks.” Persian received it from Arabic, where the consonant family **m-n-n** gathers ideas of favour and kindness — the same kind of three-consonant family that

gave you *salâm*.

### Why it's said this way

Build the smallest exchange there is, and treat each expression as one social move rather than a sentence to analyse:

- A: سلام — *salâm* — Hello.
- B: سلام — *salâm* — Hello.
- A: ممنون — *mamnun* — Thank you.

No grammar is due. Two people, three moves.

### Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *salâm* — *mamnun*, the two moves in order
- what *mamnun* literally describes — someone grateful or obliged

### Before you move on

Say *salâm* — *mamnun* without looking. What does *mamnun* literally describe? (**Someone grateful, or obliged to you.**)  
Which vowels does Persian writing leave out? (**The short ones.**)

## 1.6 به — yes

A greeting and a thank-you need an answer. Here is the polite one.

### The letters in this word

به — *bale* — yes

Three letters, and **both** of its vowels are among the short ones Persian leaves out — so the written word carries no vowel at all and the reader supplies *a* and *e*. That is the same habit you just met in *mamnun*, met

twice in one short word. Read the romanization and take the shape as a whole; no letter is being asked of you yet.

#### Why it's said this way

*bale* is the standard, polite “yes.” A more casual *âre* exists, but one clear affirmative is plenty for now.

- “Is this Persian?” — ***Bale***.
- “Are you ready?” — ***Bale, mamnun***. — Yes, thank you.

#### Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *bale*, once on its own
- *bale, mamnun* — yes, thank you

#### Before you move on

Answer “yes” in Persian once. (***Bale***.) Which sounds does the writing leave for you to supply? (**The short vowels — here both of them.**)

### 1.7 𐬀 — no

The other answer — and the smallest word in the chapter.

#### The letters in this word

𐬀 — *na* — no

Two letters and, once again, an unwritten short *a*. The second of the two is the shape that also ends *bale*, so part of this word is already familiar to your eye. Recognising a repeated shape is all that is asked; naming it is a later lesson’s job.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

*salâm* and *mamnun* both arrived from Arabic. *na* did not. It continues a very old **Indo-Iranian** negative, and relatives of it turn up right across the Iranian and Indo-Aryan languages. That is the first bridge from Persian towards Hindi and Urdu — not something to study now, just a reason this tiny word may feel oddly familiar when you meet those languages later.

### Why it's said this way

Change only the answer, and keep everything else the same:

- *bale* — yes
- نه — *na* — no

Ask yourself a harmless yes/no question and answer it both ways. The two written forms stand side by side at the end of the chapter, where every model is on the page at once.

### Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the pair, twice — *bale* ... *na*
- which of the chapter's four words is not a loan from Arabic — *na*

### Before you move on

Answer “no” in Persian. (***Na.***) Which of this chapter's words came from somewhere other than Arabic, and where from? (***na*** — **an old Indo-Iranian negative.**) Now say the whole chain once: **hello, thank you, yes, no.**

## 1.8 Chapter 1 — one tiny exchange, one tiny mark

Keep every model visible. Say سلام once to greet and once to answer.

## The exchange

Read each Persian line from right to left:

- A: سلام — *salâm*
- B: سلام — *salâm*
- A: ممنون — *mamnun*
- B: به or نه — *bale* or *na*

The later three words remain visible whole-word supports. Today you are proving the greeting and the page direction, not decoding every letter.

## Your turn

- *Say it:* the four-line exchange, choosing **bale** or **na**
- *Point to:* to the right edge where each Persian line begins
- *Copy:* 1 once beside the visible model, top to bottom
- *Say it:* the old idea behind **salâm** — “peace”

Before you move on

Greet once without help. Then compare your 1 with the model. No hidden-word spelling and no second letter: the chapter closes with one usable exchange and one supported stroke.

## Chapter 2

# Give your name

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

**By the end of this chapter:** I can say my name in Persian in one careful sentence, and I can hear the small linking -e that ties the name to its owner.

*One careful sentence with a slot for your own name: esm-e man ... ast, with the spoken ezafe doing the linking.*

### 2.1 اسم من ... است — my name is ...

Greet once, then answer yes and no. The next line gives you one careful sentence for your own name.

#### The exchange

Read the phrase from right to left, but say its words in this order:

اسم من ... است — *esm-e man ... ast*

- اسم *esm* = name. You already recognize ا, س, and م.
- The small spoken **-e** after *esm* links “name” to its owner. This linker is called **ezafe**. It is often not written in ordinary text.
- من *man* = I / me; after the linker it means “my.”
- است *ast* = is.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

**esm** is an Arabic loan related to Arabic *ism*, while **man** and **ast** belong to Persian's inherited Iranian core. One tiny sentence can therefore show two major layers of Persian vocabulary.

### Grammar Lens: one spoken link

Only one grammar idea is new: **noun + -e + owner**. The spoken **-e** links “name” to its owner, so *esm-e man* is literally “name-of me.” Do not turn that one pattern into a full grammar table yet.

### Your turn

Replace the dots with your name:

است سارا من اسم. — *esm-e man Sârâ ast*. — My name is Sara.

Say these aloud:

- **esm-e man Sârâ ast**
- replace **Sârâ** with your own name

In everyday speech, the ending is often shortened. Keep the careful full form for now; it makes every part visible.

### Before you move on

What links *esm* to *man*? The spoken **-e**, or *ezafe*. Say “My name is ...” once with your own name.

## Chapter 3

# Ask and Answer Names

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 👁️ eyes (1) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

*By the end of this chapter:* I can ask someone's name respectfully with shomâ, answer with my own, and tell them I am pleased to meet them.

*A six-line first meeting: greet, ask the name with respectful shomâ, answer with your own, and acknowledge with khoshvaghtam.*

### 3.1 شما / تو — two relationships inside “you”

Say **esm-e man ... ast** with your own name. To turn that sentence around, you next need a safe word for the other person.

#### The two words

| Persian | read  | use                                                    |
|---------|-------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| شما     | shomâ | one person<br>respectfully, or more<br>than one person |
| تو      | to    | one familiar person                                    |

In شما, meet ش *sh*; its three dots distinguish it from س *s*. Final ل carries long â. In تو, و has its *o* value rather than the long *u* it had in ممنون. Learn the sound from the whole word.

**Grammar Lens: begin respectfully**

Persian uses plural **shomâ** for respectful singular address, much as Russian uses *vy* and French uses *vous*. Use **shomâ** with an unfamiliar adult or in a first meeting. Use **to** after the relationship is familiar. English once made a similar distinction but now uses *you* for both.

**The word, taken apart — and its English cousins**

Persian **to** belongs to the ancient Indo-European familiar-“you” family: English **thou**, Latin *tū*, and Sanskrit *tvam* are relatives. The word is old; the social choice carried by it is current.

**Your turn**

Say these aloud:

- a new adult — **shomâ**
- a close friend — **to**
- the old family — **to, thou, tū, tvam**

**Before you move on**

Which form is safest when the relationship is new? (**Shomâ**.)

Which is the relative of English *thou*? (**To**.)

Source: Persian Online: Pronouns.

**3.2 چیست — “what is?” in one joined word**

Which “you” is safe for a new adult? (شما, *shomâ*.) Now add the question engine that will follow “your name.”

**You’ll want to know first — چیست**

چیست — *chist* — what is?

Read from the right: چ *ch*, ی long *i*, س *s*, ت *t*. چ is one of Persian’s four additions to the Arabic alphabet: it uses the same base shape as چ, with three dots below. Meet only this joined form now.

### Grammar Lens: two words compressed

**chist** is the careful fusion of **chi** “what” and **ast** “is.” The opening vowel of *ast* disappears when the pieces join:

*chi + ast* → **chist**

You already know full **ast** from *esm-e man ... ast*. This lesson changes no copula rule; it gives one high-frequency fused question form.

### Your turn

- Say it: **chi + ast** → **chist**
- Read it: چیست from چ to ت
- Say it: **chist?** — “what is?”

### Before you move on

What two pieces make **chist**? (**Chi + ast**.) Which new Persian letter opens it? (چ, *ch*, with three dots below.)

## 3.3 چیست؟ شما اسم — ask a name respectfully

Give the three ready pieces: **esm-e** “name-of,” **shomâ** respectful “you,” and **chist** “what is?”

### The exchange

چيست؟ شما اسم — *esm-e shomâ chist?* — **What is your name?**

The Persian order is transparent once the pieces are known:

name + **-e** + you + what-is?

The spoken ezafe turns **esm-e shomâ** into “your name.” **Chist** stays at the end. No new agreement or verb table is hiding here.

### Script: the question mark

Persian ends a written question with ؟. Its curve faces the opposite way from English ?, matching the right-to-left line. Read the sentence from its right edge; meet the punctuation at the far left.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **esm-e shomâ chist?**
- *Say it:* ask, then answer — **esm-e man ... ast**
- *Point to:* to ؟ at the end of the right-to-left question

Before you move on

Ask the question once without reading the romanization. Then answer with the careful name frame you already know.  
Source: Persian Online: Introducing Yourself.

## 3.4 خوشوقتم — pleased to meet you

Ask **esm-e shomâ chist?** and answer **esm-e man ... ast**.  
One warm response now closes that tiny meeting.

### The exchange

خوشوقتم — *khoshvaghtam* — **Pleased to meet you.**

Treat the joined word as one social move first. خ gives *kh*, like the sound in Scottish *loch*. ش gives *sh*. Persian commonly pronounces ق here with the merged *gh/q* sound of contemporary Iranian speech.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

- **khosh** — pleasant, happy; inherited Persian vocabulary.
- **vaqt** (pronounced *vaght* here) — time; an Arabic loan fully at home in Persian.
- **-am** — I am, the first-person ending.

So the word builds “pleasant-time-I-am” into the idiomatic feeling “I

am pleased.” The history is layered; the expression is ordinary modern Persian.

### Your turn

Say these aloud:

- **khoshvaghtam** as one smooth response
- the three pieces — **khosh + vaqt + -am**
- which piece came from Arabic — **vaqt**

Before you move on

Which response closes the introduction? (**Khoshvaghtam.**) Which three layers can you hear inside it? (**Khosh + vaqt + -am.**)  
Source: Persian Online: Introducing Yourself.

## 3.5 Practice — a complete Persian name exchange

Recall the four moves without adding anything: greet, ask, answer, acknowledge.

### The exchange

A: سلام! — *Salâm!* B: سلام! — *Salâm!* A: چیست؟ شما اسم —  
*Esm-e shomâ chist?* B: است سارا من اسم. — *Esm-e man Sârâ*  
*ast.* A: خوشوقتم. — *Khoshvaghtam.* B: ممنون. — *Mamnun.*

Every line is already known. **Shomâ** keeps the first meeting respectful; the answer returns to **man**. The question mark sits at the left end of the right-to-left question.

### Your turn

Say these aloud:

- both voices, using your own name

- the exchange again without romanization
- only the three name moves — question, answer, response

Before you move on

Run the meeting once from **salâm** to **mamnun**. If one line stalls, review that single micro-lesson rather than rereading the whole chapter.

## Chapter 4

# How Are You?

Modes: 🗣️ voice (6) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 6 lessons.

*By the end of this chapter:* I can ask how someone is in careful respectful Persian and answer that I am well, thank you.

*The careful wellbeing exchange in two moves: hâl-e shomâ chetor ast? answered khubam, mamnun.*

### 4.1 حال — the “state” in a wellbeing question

Run only the opening of the meeting you know: **salâm** and the name question. The next move asks about the other person’s present state.

#### You’ll want to know first — one useful word

حال — *hâl* — state, condition

Read from right to left: ح *h* + l long â + ل *l*. The first letter is a breathier *h* than English normally uses; a clear ordinary *h* is a safe beginner approximation. Keep the whole written word attached to its meaning.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Persian borrowed **hâl** from Arabic, then uses it with Persian grammar. You will soon say **hâl-e shomâ**, literally “the state of you.” That **-e** is the same spoken ezafe already learned in **esm-e shomâ**.

**Your turn**

- *Say it:* **hâl** — state or condition
- *Read it:* حال from right to left
- *Connect:* an Arabic-rooted noun inside Persian ezafe grammar

**Before you move on**

What does **hâl** name? (A state or condition.) Which familiar linker will attach an owner to it? (Ezafe **-e**.)  
Source: Persian Online: Greetings List.

**4.2 چطور — “how?” one layer at a time**

Say the Persian noun for a state or condition. (**Hâl**.) Now ask about the manner of that state with one question word.

**You’ll want to know first — the question word**

چطور؟ — *chetor?* — **how?** / **in what manner?**

You already met چ *ch* in چیست. Here it is followed by ط *t*, و *o*, and ر *r*. The short *e* is not written. Learn the sound from the whole word: *che-tor*.

**The word, taken apart — and its English cousins**

Persian Online takes چطور apart as Persian چه *che*, “what,” plus the Arabic loan طور *tor*, “manner.” The literal picture is “in what manner?” That layered history is useful memory, but **chetor** is one everyday Persian question word now.

**Your turn**

- *Say it:* **chetor?** — how?
- *Point to:* to familiar چ at the right edge
- *Rebuild:* **che** “what” + **tor** “manner”

Before you move on

Which part means “what”? (**Che.**) Which borrowed part means “manner”? (**Tor.**)

Source: Persian Online: Interrogatives.

### 4.3 است؟ چطور شما حال — ask “How are you?” respectfully

Recall **hâl** “state,” **shomâ** respectful “you,” **chetor** “how,” and careful **ast** “is.” The only assembly move is familiar ezafe.

#### The exchange

است؟ چطور شما حال — *hâl-e shomâ chetor ast?* — **How are you?**

Build it without translating English word for word:

state + **-e** + respectful-you + how + is?

The unwritten ezafe in **hâl-e shomâ** works exactly like **esm-e shomâ**. Persian asks, literally, “the state of you, in what manner is?”

#### Grammar Lens: one reliable careful form

This chapter asks you to produce the careful written form with **ast**. Everyday Iranian speech often contracts the end to *چتوره؟ chetore?*; recognize that preview, but keep the uncontracted line until the careful pattern is secure.

#### Your turn

- *Say it:* **hâl-e shomâ chetor ast?**
- *Trace it:* **hâl-e shomâ** — state-of-you
- *Choose:* careful production now — final **ast**

Before you move on

Ask once from memory. What already-known grammar holds **hâl** and **shomâ** together? (Ezafe -e.)  
Source: Persian Online: Greetings List.

#### 4.4 خوب — “good” and “well”

Ask **hâl-e shomâ chetor ast?** The smallest positive answer begins with one word.

You’ll want to know first — the answer word

خوب — *khub* — good, well

At the right edge, خ is *kh*, made farther back than English *h*. و carries long *u*, as it did in ممنون; final ب closes the word with *b*. Say it as one beat: *khub*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Persian’s everyday vocabulary is layered. **Hâl** and the **tor** inside **chetor** came through Arabic; **khub** belongs to the inherited Persian layer. All three are fully ordinary Persian now. History helps memory without ranking one layer as more authentic than another.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **khub** — good, well
- *Read it:* خ + long-*u* و + final ب
- *Contrast:* inherited **khub** beside borrowed **hâl**

Before you move on

Give the answer word once without romanization. Which letter carries its long *u*? (و.)  
Source: Persian Online: Greetings List.

## 4.5 ممنون خوبم، — “I am well, thank you”

Say **khub** “well,” then the thanks you learned in Chapter 1: **mamnun**. One small ending turns the first word into a full answer.

### The exchange

ممنون خوبم،. — *Khubam, mamnun*. — **I am well, thank you.**

The new final م is *m*. Attach it directly to خوب: خوب + م → خوبم. Persian script and speech both keep the answer compact.

#### Grammar Lens: one copula ending, not a table

The attached ending **-am** means “I am” here. Persian Online notes that خوبم by itself already means “I am fine”; the separate pronoun **man** is unnecessary. Learn only this useful first-person ending today. The rest of the copula set can arrive one form at a time later.

### Your turn

- *Build:* **khub + -am → khubam**
- *Say it:* **khubam, mamnun**
- *Point to:* to final م carrying “I am”

#### Before you move on

What does final **-am** contribute? (“I am.”) Do you need a separate **man** in this answer? (No.)

Sources: Persian Online: Verb “To Be” and Greetings List.

## 4.6 Practice — a Persian wellbeing exchange

Recall the two moves only: ask about the other person’s state, then answer “I am well, thank you.”

### The exchange

A: سلام! چطور شما حال است؟ *Salâm! Hâl-e shomâ chetor ast?* B:  
ممنون خوبم. *Khubam, mamnun.*

Every piece is already owned. The question reuses respectful **shomâ**, ezafe, and careful **ast**. The answer's final **-am** carries "I am," so no new pronoun is hiding between the lines.

#### Grammar Lens: keep the social choice visible

Use this careful question in a first meeting. You may hear shorter conversational forms, but producing one stable respectful line first prevents script, register, and contraction from arriving as one oversized step.

### Your turn

- *Say it*: both voices with the script visible
- *Say it*: both voices without romanization
- *Switch*: ask first, then answer after a pause

#### Before you move on

Run the exchange once from **salâm** to **mamnun**. If one side stalls, return to that single micro-lesson rather than rereading the chapter.

## Chapter 5

# Take Leave

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

*By the end of this chapter:* I can open a short Persian conversation, check how the other person is, and close it with *khodâ hâfez*.

*A four-line interaction with a beginning and an end: salâm, the wellbeing check, then khodâ hâfez from both voices.*

### 5.1 خدا — the Persian half of a farewell

Run the known wellbeing exchange once. The next chapter adds only the final social move: ending that interaction.

#### You'll want to know first — one word

خدا — *khodâ* — God

Read from right to left: خ *kh* + د *d* + ا long *â*. The short *o* is learned with the word rather than written as a separate letter. Keep the back-of-the-mouth **kh** gentle; clarity matters more than force.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Modern **khodâ** continues Middle Persian *xwadây*, “lord.” The everyday farewell will pair this inherited Persian word with an Arabic loan. That mixed history is normal Persian vocabulary, not an exception to memorize away.

**Your turn**

- *Say it:* **khodâ** — God
- *Read it:* خدا from the right edge
- *Connect:* modern **khodâ** ← Middle Persian *xwadây* “lord”

Before you move on

Which letter carries the final long â? (l.) Which vowel is heard but not written separately? (The short o.)  
Source: Wiktionary: خدا.

**5.2 حافظ — “guardian” or “protector”**

Read خدا and say **khodâ**. Keep it separate: this lesson adds only the second word behind the farewell.

**You’ll want to know first — one word**

حافظ — *hâfez* — **guardian, protector**

Read ح ا ف ا ح from right to left. ا carries long â. In contemporary Persian, final ط is pronounced **z** here, so say *hâ-fez*, not an English *th* sound. The short *e* is part of the learned word and is normally unwritten.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Arabic **ḥāfiẓ** is an active participle from the root **ḥ-f-ẓ**, “guard, preserve.” Persian borrowed the word and uses its Persian pronunciation **hâfez**. Keep the useful meaning first; the root is a memory hook.

**Your turn**

- *Say it:* **hâfez** — guardian, protector
- *Read it:* حافظ
- *Connect:* Arabic **ḥ-f-ẓ** — guard, preserve

Before you move on

What does **hâfez** contribute to the farewell? (The idea of guarding or protecting.)

Source: American Heritage Dictionary: *hafiz*.

### 5.3 خدا حافظ — goodbye

Retrieve **khodâ** and **hâfez** separately: “God” + “guardian.”  
Now let them become one everyday social move.

The two words — put the known pieces together

خدا حافظ — *khodâ hâfez* — goodbye

Persian normally writes the two spoken pieces together. Start with خدا, add حافظ, and read the joined spelling خدا حافظ from the right edge. Keep the two meaning layers available underneath the complete form.

#### Grammar Lens — a complete wish without a full sentence

The expression carries the protective sense “God [be] guardian,” but everyday speakers use the whole formula simply as **goodbye**. No new verb is required for beginner production. It is a broadly polite, reliable way to end the short respectful interaction built in Chapters 1–4.

#### Your turn

- *Build:* **khodâ** + **hâfez**
- *Read it:* joined خدا حافظ
- *Use:* say it only when the interaction ends

Before you move on

When do you use **khodâ hâfez**? (At parting, not at the opening.)  
Source: Persian Online: Greetings List.

## 5.4 Practice — open, check, and close

Without looking ahead, retrieve the expression for the beginning and the expression for the end. Do not add a new middle line.

### The exchange — the complete interaction

A: سلام! است؟ چطور شما حال! *Salâm! Hâl-e shomâ chetor ast?* B: ممنون خوبم. *Khubam, mamnun.* A: خدا حافظ. *Khodâ hâfez.* B: خدا حافظ. *Khodâ hâfez.*

Every line is already learned. **Salâm** opens; **khodâ hâfez** closes. The same farewell works for both voices, so no pronoun, agreement ending, or new register table is hiding inside the practice.

### Your turn

- *Choose*: meeting begins → **salâm**
- *Choose*: interaction ends → **khodâ hâfez**
- *Run through*: both voices once with script, once without romanization

#### Before you move on

Run the full exchange once. If the final line stalls, return only to the assembled-farewell lesson rather than rereading the chapter.

## Chapter 6

# Name a Verb, Find Its Stem

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

**By the end of this chapter:** I can name five core Persian verbs in their dictionary form, recognise the -tan/-dan ending that marks any Persian infinitive, and give the present stem that each verb carries beside it.

*The five pairs run back to back from memory — budan, raftan/rav-, âmadan/â-, goftan/gu-, dânestan/dân- — with the infinitive ending named and the stem produced for each.*

### 6.1 بودن — “to be,” and the ending every Persian verb wears

Chapter 4 ended on خوبم *khubam*, “I am well.” That **-am** carried “I am” with no verb beside it. This chapter names the verb it belongs to.

**You’ll want to know first — one verb**

بودن — *budan* — to be

Four letters, all of them already yours. From the right edge: ب *b*, و long *u*, د *d*, ن *n*. Persian و never joins to the letter on its left, so the word falls into two clumps, بو and دن — the same kind of break ل makes inside سلام.

### Grammar Lens: how a Persian verb announces itself

English names a verb with a word in front of it: *to be, to go, to know*. Persian names it with an ending on the back. Every Persian infinitive — every one, with no list of exceptions — finishes in *-تن* *-tan* or *-دن* *-dan*.

*بودن* is *bu + dan*. Whenever a Persian word ends in *-tan* or *-dan*, you are holding a verb in its naming form.

Persian rewards you here: one set of personal endings serves every verb. What it asks instead is one extra fact per verb — the next lesson is about that fact.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

**budan** continues Middle Persian *būdan*, from the Indo-European root *\*bheu-*, “to grow, to become, to be.” English **be** and **been** are that root, worn smooth. So are German *bin*, Latin *fuī* “I was” — the ancestor of English **future** — and Sanskrit *bhavati*.

The resemblance runs through Persian’s plainest words: مادر *mâdar* is **mother**, پدر *pedar* is **father**, برادر *barâdar* is **brother**, دختر *dokhtar* is **daughter**, نام *nâm* is **name**. Nobody borrowed these; both languages inherited them.

One caution to carry through the chapter: lookalikes lie. Persian بد *bad* does mean “bad,” but its history and the English word’s are unconnected. A cousin has to be traced, not guessed.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **budan** — to be
- *Read it:* بودن from the right edge, in its two clumps
- *Name:* the ending that marks a Persian infinitive — **-tan / -dan**
- *Connect:* **budan** ← *\*bheu-* → English **be, been**
- *Retrieve:* the ending on خويم that already meant “I am”

### Before you move on

How does a Persian verb announce that it is a verb? (It ends in *-tan* or *-dan*.) Which English word is **budan**? (**Be** — the same inherited

root.) Is Persian **bad** a cousin of English *bad*? (No; that one is coincidence.)

Source: Wiktionary: بودن.

## 6.2 رفتن — “to go,” and the second form that travels with it

Retrieve the Persian for “to be,” and the ending that marked it as a verb. That ending returns here, on a word that brings the extra fact Persian asks of you.

### You’ll want to know first — one verb

رفتن — *raftan* — to go

From the right edge: ر *r*, ف *f*, ت *t*, ن *n* — all four familiar, ر from چطور *chetor* and ف from حافظ *hâfez*. ر does not join leftward, so it stands alone and رفتن follows as one run. The ending is the *-tan* you met on بودن.

#### Grammar Lens: the second fact every Persian verb carries

Persian keeps two forms for each verb, and you learn them as a pair. The first is the infinitive, رفتن *raftan*. Strip its *-an* and you have رفت *raft*, the **past stem**; everything about yesterday is built on that. The second is the **present stem**, and it cannot be predicted from the infinitive. For *raftan* it is رو *rav*. Everything about now is built on *rav-*: *mi-ravam* “I go,” *mi-ravad* “she goes.” So the fact to store is not *raftan* alone but **raftan** → **rav-**, said in one breath. Get the pair and the whole verb opens: the endings that follow a stem are the same for every Persian verb.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

رفتن *raftan* continues Middle Persian *raftan*; its deeper Indo-European ancestry is genuinely unsettled, so no English cousin is claimed for it here.

The split itself needs no excuse — English does the same thing. *Go* and *went* are two unrelated words sharing one verb; so are *be* and *was*. English calls that irregularity and buries it in a list. Persian makes it

the ordinary shape of a verb and says so up front.

رو *rav* is short: ر, then و, with no join between them. Say the pair aloud until it sounds like one item — *raftan*, *rav*.

### Your turn

- *Say it*: **raftan** — to go
- *Say it*: the pair as one item — **raftan, rav**
- *Read it*: رفتن, then رو
- *Name*: the ending that made **raftan** an infinitive
- *Retrieve*: the Chapter 6 verb meaning “to be” — **budan**

Before you move on

Which two facts does a Persian verb ask you to store? (The infinitive and its present stem.) What is the pair for “to go”? (**Raftan, rav**.) Could *rav*- have been worked out from *raftan*? (No — which is why it is learned with the word.)  
Source: Wiktionary: رفتن.

## 6.3 آمدن — “to come,” and an alef that wears a hat

Say the pair for “to go” as one item. Now expect the same two-part shape from every verb that follows, including this one, which travels in the opposite direction.

### You’ll want to know first — one verb and one new shape

آمدن — *âmadan* — to come

The last three letters are old friends: م *m*, د *d*, ن *n*, and the *-dan* ending tells you at once that this is an infinitive. The first shape is new. Ā is plain l with a small wavy stroke over it, called *madde*, and it is what Persian writes when a word opens on long â. Plain l at the start of a word carries a short vowel — that is the l in اسم *esm*. The hat is the difference between *esm* and *âmadan*.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

**âmadan** was built from a prefix **â-**, “toward,” and the very old verb root *\*gwem-*, “to go, to come.” In Old Iranian that gave a form like *\*â-gmata-*, “come toward”; the *g* wore away, the *m* survived, and Middle Persian **âmad** is what was left.

That root is one of the family’s great travellers. English kept it almost bare as **come**. Latin turned it into *venīre*, which English then borrowed back dozens of times over: **advent**, **adventure**, **convene**, **convenient**, **event**, **invent**, **avenue**, **revenue**, **prevent**, **souvenir**. Sanskrit has *gacchati*, “goes.” So *âmadan* and *come* are not lookalikes; they are the same word, four thousand years apart.

The present stem is  $\bar{a} \hat{a}$  — a single letter — heard as *ây-* before an ending: *mī-âyam* “I come.” Store the pair as **âmadan**, **â-**. It comes from a different ancient root than the infinitive does, which is exactly why the two look nothing alike.

### Your turn

- *Say it*: **âmadan** — to come
- *Say it*: the pair as one item — **âmadan**, **â-**
- *Read it*: آمدن, starting at the hatted alef
- *Connect*: **âmadan** ← *\*gwem-* → English **come**, **advent**, **event**
- *Contrast*: **raftan**, **rav-** going out; **âmadan**, **â-** coming in

### Before you move on

What does the little hat on  $\bar{a}$  tell you? (The word opens on long **â**.) Which everyday English verb shares *âmadan*’s root? (**Come**.) And what is the pair for “to come”? (**Âmadan**, **â-**.) Source: Wiktionary: آمدن.

## 6.4 گفتن — “to say,” written with a letter Arabic does not have

Say the pair for “to come.” Then hold the shape in mind: a name, and a present stem that has to be learned beside it. Here

is a third verb built the same way.

## You'll want to know first — one verb and one new letter

گفتن — *goftan* — to say, to tell

Read from the right. The last three, ف *f*, ت *t*, ن *n*, close the word with the familiar *-tan*. The opening shape is گ *g*, called *gâf*: a long slanting stroke with a second slanting stroke laid above it.

Arabic has no *g*, so Persian made one. Persian adds four letters to the inherited Arabic set — پ *p*, چ *ch*, ژ *zh*, and گ *g* — and you have already read one of them, the چ inside چیست *chist*. Each is an Arabic letter with extra strokes: گ is the *k* shape wearing a second bar.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

The present stem is گو *gu*: گ then ُو, no join between them. *Mi-guyam* is “I say.” Store the pair as **goftan, gu-**.

Now the part that makes the pair unforgettable. Persian has an ordinary, everyday word for “conversation”: گفتگو *goftogu*. Pull it apart and it is the past stem گفت *goft*, a linking *-o-* meaning “and,” and the present stem گو *gu*. A conversation is literally *said-and-say*. The two halves of the verb, sitting next to each other in a noun you can hear on any Iranian news broadcast.

The verb is old. Old Persian, the language of Darius’s cliff inscriptions, already had the root *gaub-*, “to say, to call oneself.” Outside the Iranian branch its relatives are not securely established, so no English cousin is claimed here — and English *gab* and *gossip*, which look tempting, come from somewhere else entirely.

## Your turn

- *Say it*: **goftan** — to say
- *Say it*: the pair as one item — **goftan, gu-**
- *Read it*: گ, then گو, then گفتن
- *Build*: **goft** + *-o-* + **gu** → **goftogu**, conversation
- *Retrieve*: the pair for “to come” — **âmadan, â-**

### Before you move on

Which letter opens گفتن, and why is it not in Arabic? (گ *gâf*; Arabic has no *g* sound.) What two pieces of the verb hide inside **goftogu**? (The past stem *goft* and the present stem *gu*.) Say the pair. (**Goftan**, **gu-**)

Source: Wiktionary: گفتن.

## 6.5 دانستن — “to know,” and five pairs held together

Name the ending that marks a Persian infinitive. The last verb of the chapter wears it, and every letter in the word is one you can already read.

### You’ll want to know first — one verb and its stem

دانستن — *dânestan* — **to know**

From the right: د *d*, | long â, ن *n*, س *s*, ت *t*, ن *n*. Nothing new to decode, which is a good place to be six lessons into a script.

The present stem is دان *dân*: *mi-dânam*, “I know.” The pair is **dânestan**, **dân-** — and this stem is one you can watch working. دانش *dânes*h is “knowledge”; add گاه *gâh*, “place,” and you get دانشگاه *dânes*hgâh, **university** — a knowledge-place, built straight off the stem.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

**dânestan** belongs to the Indo-European root *\*gnō-*, “to know.” English inherited it three times over: **know**, and also **can** (originally “to know how”), **ken**, **cunning**, and **uncouth**, which is literally “un-known.” Latin’s *nōscere* sent English **notice**, **notion**, **note**, **recognise**, **cognition**, and **noble** — a noble person being a known one. Greek *gnōsis* gives **diagnosis**, **prognosis**, **agnostic**. Sanskrit has *jânâti*, “knows.”

One honest footnote: specialists still argue about how this root arrived in Persian wearing a **d**, when its Iranian relatives usually show a *z* or *zh*. The membership in the family is standard; the road it took is disputed, and this book flags that rather than smoothing it over. Persian’s other “know” is شناختن *shenâkhtan*, used for knowing a

person rather than a fact. Its stem شناس *shenâs-* shows the same root more plainly — it is the *gnos-* of *gnosis*, wearing Iranian clothes. And بودن *budan* has a present stem too: باش *bâsh-*. It waits for the chapter where the present tense arrives.

### Your turn

- Say it: **dânestan, dân-** — to know
- Say it: **raftan, rav-** — to go
- Say it: **âmadan, â-** — to come
- Say it: **goftan, gu-** — to say
- Say it: **budan** — to be
- Build: **dân** → **dânesh** → **dâneshgâh**, university
- Connect: **dânestan** ← *\*gnō-* → English **know, can, diagnosis**

### Before you move on

Which two things does a Persian verb ask you to store? (Its name in *-tan* or *-dan*, and its present stem.) Which English words share **dânestan**'s root? (**Know, can**, and the *gnosis* family.) Now run all five pairs once, out loud, without the page.

Source: Wiktionary: دانستن.

## Chapter 7

# Four Verbs of the Mind

Modes: ⇄ voice (4) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

**By the end of this chapter:** I can say think, understand, read and write in Persian, give the present stem of each, and tell which of the three ways a Persian verb is built each one uses.

*The chapter closes on neveshtan, nevis-, then runs its four verbs back to back — fekr kardan with kon-, fahmidan with fahm-, khândan with khân-, neveshtan with nevis- — and names which is a compound, which hands its stem over free, and which two had to be told. The five pairs from Chapter 6 run after them, so all nine are produced from memory in one sitting.*

## 7.1 کردن فکر — “to think,” written as two words

Name the two facts every Persian verb has asked you to store. This one brings a third shape: it is spelled as two words, and only the second is the verb.

**You’ll want to know first — one verb in two pieces**

کردن فکر — *fekr kardan* — **to think**

The first word, فکر *fekr*, is a noun: “thought.” From the right — ف *f*, ک *k*, ر *r*.

The second, کردن *kardan*, is the verb, and it means **to do, to make**. Its ending is the *-dan* you have collected since بودن *budan*. Word for word, the phrase is *thought to-do*.

### Grammar Lens: Persian asks less of you than you fear

Persian has **no grammatical gender**, so nothing has to agree. It has **no noun cases**: a noun keeps one shape everywhere. Its adjectives **never change**. And it has exactly **one** set of personal endings — *-am*, *-i*, *-ad*, *-im*, *-id*, *-and* — taken by every verb in the language. What it asks instead is the present stem, and this: many of its commonest verbs are **two words**. A noun sits in front, and a plain verb behind it does the grammatical work. کردن *kardan* is the workhorse — put almost any noun in front of it and you have a verb. You met the same instinct in خوشوقت *khoshvaghtam*, which welded *khosh*, “good,” to *vaqt*, “time.”

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

The halves come from opposite ends of Persian’s history. فکر *fekr* is a loan from Arabic فِكر *fikr*, “thought,” on the root *f-k-r*, and it takes Persian grammar completely.

کردن *kardan* is as Persian as a word gets: Old Persian *kar-*, “to do,” from the Indo-European root *\*k<sup>w</sup>er-*, “to make.” That root gave Sanskrit *karoti*, “he does,” and *karman*, “deed” — which English borrowed outright as **karma**. English has no inherited cousin here, so that is a borrowing, not a family resemblance, and this book says which is which.

The present stem is کن *kon*: *mi-konam*, “I do.” Store **kardan**, **kon-**, and note the opening ك *kâf* — the shape گ *gâf* is built from, as گفتن *goftan* wears it with a second bar.

### Your turn

- *Say it*: **fekr kardan** — to think
- *Split*: **fekr**, thought — **kardan**, to do
- *Say it*: the pair as one item — **kardan**, **kon-**
- *Read it*: ك in کردن, then گ in گفتن — one bar apart
- *Retrieve*: the two words welded inside **khoshvaghtam**
- *Name*: the ending that marks **kardan** as an infinitive

### Before you move on

Which half of **fekr kardan** is the verb, and what is its present stem? (**Kardan**; **kon-**.) Name two of the four things Persian does without. (Gender, cases, adjective agreement, a second set of endings.)

Source: Wiktionary: کردن.

## 7.2 فهمیدن — “to understand,” and the class that gives its stem away

Say the two words meaning “to think,” and which of them is the verb. Then say the pair for “to know.” This lesson adds the verb that sits between them.

### You’ll want to know first — one verb, one word this time

فهمیدن — *fahmidan* — to understand

One word, not two. From the right: ف *f*, ه *h*, م *m*, ی long *i*, د *d*, ن *n*. The ی is the letter you first read inside چیست *chist*.

Persian keeps دانستن *dānestan* and فهمیدن *fahmidan* apart the way English keeps *know* and *understand* apart. *Dānestan* stores a fact; *fahmidan* grasps a point.

### Grammar Lens: the one stem you never have to be told

Every verb so far handed you an unpredictable stem: *raftan* gave *rav-*, *goftan* gave *gu-*. Here is the relief.

When a Persian infinitive ends in -یدن *-idan*, its present stem is what is left once you take the *-idan* off. Nothing shifts. فهمیدن *fahmidan* minus *-idan* leaves فهم *fahm*: *mī-fahmam*, “I understand.” The pair is **fahmidan**, **fahm-**, and you could have worked it out yourself.

This is no small exception. **-idan** is the suffix Persian reaches for whenever it needs a new verb, so the predictable class is large and growing. The verbs that fight you are the old inherited ones.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

**فهم** *fahm* is Arabic — **فَهَمَ**, “understanding,” from the root *f-h-m*. Persian took the noun and did something Arabic would not: it glued a native Persian suffix onto it and made a verb. You have now watched Arabic words arrive three ways. **وقت** *vaqt*, inside *khoshvaghtam*, came as a noun and stayed one. **حال** *hâl* came as a noun and took Persian’s own linking grammar. **حافظ** *hâfez* came as a participle and became a name. And **فهم** *fahm* was turned into a Persian verb outright. Against all of them stands **خوب** *khub*, inherited Persian from the start, borrowed from nobody. Persian vocabulary is layered, and neither layer is less Persian than the other today.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **fahmidan** — to understand
- *Derive:* strip *-idan* from **fahmidan** → the stem **fahm-**
- *Contrast:* **dânestan** stores a fact; **fahmidan** grasps a point
- *Retrieve:* the pair for “to know” — **dânestan**, **dân-**
- *Name:* three Arabic arrivals — *vaqt*, *hâl*, *hâfez* — and one inherited word, *khub*
- *Read it:* the **ی** inside **فهمیدن**, the letter you first met in **چیست**

### Before you move on

How do you get the present stem of any *-idan* verb? (Take the *-idan* off.) Which of Persian’s layers did **fahm** arrive from, and which layer does **khub** belong to? (*Fahm* is Arabic; *khub* is inherited Persian.)

Source: Wiktionary: **فهمیدن**.

## 7.3 خواندن — “to read,” and a letter that is written but not said

Say the pair for “to understand,” and how you got its stem without being told. This verb is not so obliging — and its spelling

hides something.

### You'll want to know first — one verb with a silent letter

خواندن — *khândan* — **to read**

From the right: خ *kh*, و, | long â, ن *n*, د *d*, ن *n*. Six letters — but only five sounds. The و in second position is written and **not pronounced**. The word is *khândan*, never *khwândan*.

That خ opens خوب *khub*, “good,” where the و works as a vowel. Here it does nothing.

The silent و belongs to a small, closed set of words — always after خ, before |. Not a rule to apply, just words you recognize.

#### Grammar Lens: one verb, four English verbs

The present stem is خوان *khân* — same silent و, so *khân-*. *Mi-khânam*, “I read.” The pair is **khândan, khân-**.

Now the surprise. خواندن also means **to recite, to sing and to study**. English splits those jobs across separate words; Persian does not, and the reason is in the word’s history.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

**khândan** is from Proto-Iranian *\*hwanH-*, “to call,” from the Indo-European root *\*swenh₂-*, “**to sound**.” The four meanings become one idea: reading, reciting and singing all *make a text sound*. For most of history, reading was reading aloud.

Latin took the root as *sonus*, which English borrowed over and over: **sound, sonic, resonate, consonant, sonata**. Sanskrit has *svanati*, “it sounds.” And English inherited one word directly, without Latin’s help — **swan**, most likely “the sounding one.”

The silent و is a fossil of this: the Iranian root began *hw-*, and Persian spelled the cluster long after it stopped saying it. خدا *khodâ* comes from the same *xw-* family, continuing Middle Persian *xwadây* — gone from both mouths, surviving in one spelling.

One contrast to fix: the long â here is plain | because it sits inside the word. When a word *opens* on long â, Persian writes Ā with its hat, as آمدن *âmadan* does.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **khândan** — to read
- *Say it:* the pair as one item — **khândan, khân-**
- *Read it:* خواندن, sounding the خ and skipping the و
- *List:* the four jobs of one verb — read, recite, sing, study
- *Connect:* **khândan** ← \**swenh<sub>2</sub>*- → English **sound, swan**
- *Contrast:* ُ inside a word, ̄ when a word opens on long â

#### Before you move on

How many letters does خواندن have, and how many sounds? (Six and five.) Which four English verbs does it cover, and why those four together? (Read, recite, sing, study — its root means *to sound*.)  
Source: Wiktionary: خواندن.

## 7.4 نوشتن — “to write,” and four verbs of the mind held together

Say the pair for “to read,” and name the letter in it that is written but never said. Its natural partner closes this chapter.

### You’ll want to know first — one verb and its stem

نوشتن — *neveshtan* — to write

From the right: ن *n*, و *v*, ش *sh*, ت *t*, ن *n*. Here the و *is* pronounced — a plain consonant *v* — the exact contrast the last lesson set up.

The present stem is نویس *nevis*: *mi-nevisam*, “I write.” The pair is **neveshtan, nevis-**, as unpredictable as *raftan, rav-* was. Name the price plainly: **the stem of an inherited verb cannot be worked out, so it is learned in the same breath as the infinitive.**

Watch the stem earn its keep: نویس *nevis-* plus *-ande* gives نویسنده *nevisande*, “**writer**.” The stem, not the infinitive, is what Persian builds on.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

**neveshtan** is an Old Persian compound: **ni-**, “down,” plus the root *\*paiš-*, “to adorn, to mark, to paint.” To write was to *paint something down* — a verb Darius had carved into a cliff at Behistun.

The root is Indo-European *\*peyk-*, “to cut, to mark, to paint.” Latin made it *pingere*, and English has borrowed from that ever since:

**paint, picture, pigment, depict.** So *neveshtan* and *picture* are one root, one branch writing, the other painting.

Trace the *p* if you like a puzzle: it softened to *b* in Middle Persian *nibištan*, then to the *v* in *nevis-*.

### Grammar Lens: what this chapter has actually given you

Four verbs, three ways a Persian verb can be built.

**فکر کردن** *fekr kardan* is a **compound**: noun plus *kardan*. **فهمیدن** *fahmidan* is a **-idan verb**, stem free. **خواندن** *khândan* and **نوشتن** *neveshtan* are **inherited verbs**, stems you must be told.

Three shapes, one set of personal endings for all of them — the whole verb system in outline.

### Your turn

Run the chapter’s four, then the five that came before, without the page.

- *Say it:* **fekr kardan** — to think; **kardan, kon-**
- *Say it:* **fahmidan, fahm-** — to understand
- *Say it:* **khândan, khân-** — to read
- *Say it:* **neveshtan, nevis-** — to write
- *Say it:* **budan** — to be; **raftan, rav-; âmadan, â-; goftan, gu-; dânestan, dâ-**
- *Build:* **nevis** + *-ande* → **nevisande**, writer
- *Connect:* **neveshtan** ← *\*peyk-* → English **paint, picture**
- *Name:* the English cousins of **budan** and **dânestan** — **be** and **know**

**Before you move on**

Which of this chapter's four verbs is a compound, and which one hands you its stem for free? (**Fekr kardan**; **fahmidan**.) What did *neveshtan* originally mean? (To paint down.) Now say all nine pairs you hold, in any order.

Source: Wiktionary: نوشتن.

## Chapter 8

# Taking, Asking, Helping, Loving

Modes: ⇄ voice (4) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

**By the end of this chapter:** I can say take, ask, help and love in Persian, give the present stem where a verb has one, and sort all thirteen verbs I hold into compounds, -idan verbs and inherited verbs.

*The chapter closes on dust dâshtan — to have as friend — and its dâr- stem, then runs all thirteen verbs the track has taught: this chapter’s four, Chapter 7’s four, and Chapter 6’s five, each with its stem, sorted into the three shapes a Persian verb can take.*

### 8.1 گرفتن — “to take,” and a cousin you can hear

Say the pair for “to write.” Then get ready for a Persian verb whose English relative you will recognize the moment you hear it.

**You’ll want to know first — one verb and its stem**

گرفتن — *gereftan* — **to take**

From the right: گ *g*, ر *r*, ف *f*, ت *t*, ن *n*. The opening shape is گ *gâf*, the letter Persian added because Arabic has no *g* — the same one that opens گفتن *goftan*. Neither گ nor ر joins leftward, so the word arrives in three small pieces and closes on the familiar *-tan*.

The present stem is گیر *gir*: *mi-giram*, “I take.” The pair is **gereftan, gir-** — inherited, and so unpredictable, exactly as promised.

Persian uses it widely: to take, to get, to catch, to hold, to seize. It is a hand closing around something.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

**gereftan** continues Middle Persian *griftan*, from Old Persian *grab-*, “to seize,” from the Indo-European root *\*g<sup>h</sup>rebh<sub>2</sub>-*, “to grab, to seize.” Say *gir-* and *grip* one after the other. Say *gereftan* and *grab*. That is not a coincidence and it is not a loan in either direction — English and Persian both inherited the word from a common ancestor, and four thousand years later the consonants *g-r-b* are still sitting in both. English kept **grab**, **grip**, **grasp**, **grope** and **gripe**; German kept *greifen*; Sanskrit has *grhṇāti*, “he seizes”; Russian has *grabit’*, “to rob.” Collect the evidence you already hold. بودن *budan* is English **be**. تو *to* is English **thou** — the old familiar you, which English has nearly retired and Persian uses daily. Persian is not a distant relative of English in an unfamiliar script; it is a cousin. Persian has repaid the family too. English **bazaar**, **caravan**, **khaki**, **pyjama**, **lemon**, **spinach** and **paradise** all came from Persian — the last of them from Old Persian *paridaida*, “a walled garden.”

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **gereftan** — to take
- *Say it:* the pair as one item — **gereftan**, **gir-**
- *Read it:* گ opening گرفتن, then گ opening گفتن
- *Connect:* **gir-** → English **grip**; **gereftan** → English **grab**
- *Retrieve:* two cousins you already hold — **budan** is **be**, **to** is **thou**
- *Name:* three English words Persian gave away — **bazaar**, **khaki**, **paradise**

### Before you move on

Which English verbs are **gereftan**’s own relatives? (**Grab**, **grip**, **grasp**.) Did English borrow it from Persian? (No — both inherited it.) Say the pair once more. (**Gereftan**, **gir-**.)  
Source: Wiktionary: گرفتن.

## 8.2 پرسیدن — “to ask,” and the questions you could already ask

Say the pair for “to take.” Then put the respectful name question you have had since Chapter 3. You have been asking without owning the verb.

You’ll want to know first — one verb that behaves

پرسیدن — *porsidan* — to ask

From the right: پ *p*, ر *r*, س *s*, ی long *i*, د *d*, ن *n*. The opening پ *pe* is another letter Persian added — a ب *b* shape with three dots beneath instead of one.

Now the ending: -یدن *-idan*. Strip it, and the present stem remains: پرس *pors*. *Mi-porsam*, “I ask.” The pair is **porsidan**, **pors-** — the same free ride فهمیدن *fahmidan* gave you.

### Grammar Lens: asking a question and asking a person

Two chapters ago you learned to *put* a question — چیست؟ شما اسم *esm-e shomâ chist?*, چطور شما حال *hâl-e shomâ chetor ast?* Both work by word order and a question word, with no verb meaning “ask” in them.

That is the ordinary case, as in English: you do not say “I ask you what your name is,” you just ask it. پرسیدن is for *talking about* the asking.

The noun from the same stem is پرسش *porsesh*, “a question”: stem plus -ش *-esh*, the machine that turned دان *dân-* into دانش *dânes*, “knowledge.”

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

**porsidan** continues Middle Persian *pursīdan*, from Old Persian *pars-* — a word Darius used on stone — and beyond that the Indo-European root *\*prek-*, “to ask.” Sanskrit has *pr̥cchati*; German still says *fragen*. English is the interesting case. It **had** this root and lost it: Old English *frignan*, “to ask,” died out. Then English borrowed the root back from Latin, which had turned it into *precārī*, “to pray.” So English says **pray**, **prayer**, **precarious** — “held by prayer,” and so uncertain — and **deprecate**. A root the language once owned now

survives only as loans.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **porsidan** — to ask
- *Derive:* strip *-idan* → the stem **pors-**
- *Pair:* **porsidan**, **pors-** beside **fahmidan**, **fahm-** — both free
- *Contrast:* **gereftan**, **gir-** had to be told; these two did not
- *Build:* **pors** + *-esh* → **porsesh**, a question
- *Connect:* **porsidan** ← \**prek-* → English **pray**, **precarious**

Before you move on

Which two verbs so far gave you their stems for free, and what do they have in common? (**Fahmidan** and **porsidan** — both end in *-idan*.) Why does English say **pray** rather than an inherited word here? (It lost its own and borrowed the root back from Latin.)

Source: Wiktionary: پرسیدن.

## 8.3 کردن کمک — “to help,” and the machine on its second run

Say the pair for “to ask.” Then the two words meaning “to think,” and which half of them is the verb. That half is about to do the same job twice over.

**You’ll want to know first — one verb in two pieces, once more**

کردن کمک — *komak kardan* — **to help**

Two words, and you already know the second one. کمک *komak* is a noun, “help, assistance.” From the right: ک *k*, م *m*, ک *k* — the same *kâf* twice, once joined and once standing free at the word’s end.

Behind it sits کردن *kardan*, doing exactly what it did in فکر کردن *fekr kardan*. Noun in front, *kardan* behind, and the pair is a verb. Its present stem is still کن *kon-*: *komak mi-konam*, “I help.”

This is the point of the pattern. You are not learning a second verb; you are learning a second **noun** and dropping it into a slot you already own.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

کمک *komak* is neither inherited Persian nor Arabic. It came from **Turkic** — Azerbaijani *kömək*, “help,” from Proto-Turkic *\*kömek*. Turkic and Persian have been neighbours for a thousand years, and words crossed both ways.

So everyday Persian vocabulary holds three layers, and you have a word from each. خوب *khub*, “good,” is **inherited** Iranian. وقت *vaqt*, “time,” inside *khoshvaghtam*, is **Arabic**. کمک *komak* is **Turkic**. All three are ordinary Persian words today, and none is more Persian than the others.

The verb half is the oldest thing here: کردن *kardan* on the Indo-European root *\*k<sup>w</sup>er-*, “to make.” A Turkic noun and an Indo-European verb in one phrase — Persian’s history in three syllables.

One script note: the ک *kâf* opening *komak* is the shape گ *gâf* is built from, one bar apart.

#### Your turn

- *Say it*: **komak kardan** — to help
- *Split*: **komak**, help — **kardan**, to do
- *Match*: **fekr kardan** and **komak kardan** — one machine, two nouns
- *Say it*: the stem still in place — **kardan**, **kon-**
- *Sort*: **khub** inherited, **vaqt** Arabic, **komak** Turkic
- *Retrieve*: the two words welded inside **khoshvaghtam**
- *Read it*: ک in کمک, then گ — one bar apart

## Before you move on

Which half of **komak kardan** did you already know? (**Kardan**.)  
 Which of Persian's three vocabulary layers did **komak** come from?  
 (Turkic.) Name a word from each of the other two. (**Khub**,  
 inherited; **vaqt**, Arabic.)  
 Source: Wiktionary: کمک.

## 8.4 داشتن دوست — “to love,” which Persian says as “to have as friend”

Say the two words meaning “to help,” and the pair for “to ask.”  
 This last verb is a compound too — but not with *kardan*.

### You'll want to know first — one verb in two pieces, a new second half

داشتن دوست — *dust dâshtan* — to like, to love

دوست *dust* is a noun: **friend**. From the right, د *d*, و long *u*, س *s*, ت *t*.  
 داشتن *dâshtan* is the verb, **to have, to hold**. Its present stem is دار *dâr*:  
 the pair is **dâshtan, dâr-**.

So *dust dâshtan* is, word for word, **to have as friend**. *Dust dâram* is  
 “I love” — literally “I hold [it] a friend,” built out of friendship rather than  
 passion.

Notice what changed. کردن *kardan* made a noun into a *doing*. داشتن  
*dâshtan* makes it a *holding*. Two light verbs, one pattern.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Both halves are old, and both have English relatives.

دوست *dust* goes back through Old Persian *dauštā* to the Indo-European  
 root *\*ǵews-*, “to taste, to choose.” A friend is *the one chosen*. English  
 inherited it directly as **choose**; Latin took it as *gustus*, “taste,” giving  
 English **gusto** and **disgust**.

داشتن *dâshtan* continues Old Persian *dāraya-*, “to hold,” from *\*dʰer-*.  
 English has no inherited cousin here, but the root fills its borrowings:  
 Latin *firmus*, “held fast,” gave **firm**; Greek *thronos* gave **throne**;  
 Sanskrit built *dharma*, “that which holds the world together.”  
 So Persian builds “I love you” from *choose* and *hold*.

### Grammar Lens: what the two chapters add up to

Thirteen verbs now, and every one fits one of three shapes.

**Compounds** — *fekr kardan*, *komak kardan*, *dust dâshtan*: noun plus light verb. **-idan verbs** — *fahmidan*, *porsidan*: stem free. **Inherited verbs** — *budan*, *raftan*, *âmadan*, *goftan*, *dânestan*, *khândan*, *neveshtan*, *gereftan*: stem told, never guessed.

Behind all three: one infinitive ending; one set of personal endings; no gender, no cases, no agreement. The hard part of Persian is a list of stems.

### Your turn

All thirteen, from memory.

- *Say it*: **gereftan**, gir-; **porsidan**, pors-; **komak kardan**; **dust dâshtan**, dâr-
- *Say it*: **fekr kardan**, kon-; **fahmidan**, fahm-; **khândan**, khân-; **neveshtan**, nevis-
- *Say it*: **budan**; **raftan**, rav-; **âmadan**, â-; **goftan**, gu-; **dânestan**, dâñ-
- *Split*: **dust**, friend — **dâshtan**, to hold
- *Sort*: which three are compounds, which two are *-idan*, which eight are inherited
- *Connect*: **dust** ← \**ġews*- → English **choose**; **gereftan** → **grab**; **neveshtan** → **paint**

### Before you move on

What does *dust dâshtan* say word for word? (To have as friend.)

Which light verb makes a *doing*, and which makes a *holding*?

(**Kardan**; **dâshtan**.) Now name all thirteen, with a stem for each that has one.

Source: Wiktionary: داشتن دوست.



## Chapter 9

# Please: Water, Bread, Tea, Key

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

*By the end of this chapter:* I can politely ask for water, bread, tea, or my key in Persian, and I can name the four vocabulary layers those four words come from.

*The chapter closes on kelid, a Greek loan, then runs all four requests back to back — âb, nân, chây, kelid, each with lotfan — and reuses the ezafe from Chapter 2 to ask for kelid-e man, my key.*

### 9.1 آب — water, and Persian’s first “please”

The last chapter closed on داشتن *dâshtan*, “to have,” stem دار *dâr*. This chapter names what to ask for when you do not have it yet.

#### You’ll want to know first — one word

آب — *âb* — water

Two letters, both already yours: آ, alef with *madde*, from آمدن; then ب *b*.

#### Grammar Lens: your first Persian “please”

لطفاً آب. — *âb, lotfan.* — **Water, please.**

Name the thing you want, add لطفاً *lotfan*, and the request is complete — no verb required. لطفاً ends in a small hooked mark, ّ, called *tanvin*: an Arabic grammatical ending, pronounced *-an*, that survives in Persian only inside a short list of frozen Arabic adverbs borrowed

whole — لطفاً and تقريباً *taghriban*, “approximately,” are two of them — and plays no part in ordinary Persian spelling. This is the first request this track has built.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

آب continues Old Persian *āp-*, from Indo-European *\*h<sub>2</sub>ep-*, “water” — the root Sanskrit kept as *áp-*, still visible today inside a place-name: **Punjab** is usually explained as this same word, پنج آب *panj âb*, “five waters,” naming the region’s five rivers.

Hindi and Marathi’s everyday word for water, **pānī**, is not this word at all. Sanskrit holds a second, unrelated root for water too — **pā-**, “to drink,” from *\*peh<sub>3</sub>-*, the root hiding inside English **potion** and **poison** — and it is that second root modern Hindi and Marathi kept for everyday use. آب and **pānī** are not cousins; they are two different ancient words for the same thing, and Persian happened to keep the older one.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **âb** — water
- *Say it:* **âb, lotfan.** — water, please
- *Connect:* **âb** ← *\*h<sub>2</sub>ep-* → Sanskrit **áp-**, and the **-âb** inside **Punjab**
- *Contrast:* **âb** against Hindi’s **pānī** — two different old words, not cousins
- *Retrieve:* **dâshtan, dâr-** — “to have,” from the chapter just closed

### Before you move on

Ask for water politely. (**Âb, lotfan.**) What is the ّ at the end of لطفاً called, and where else does Persian use it? (*Tanvin*; only inside a few frozen Arabic adverbs.) Is Persian آب related to Hindi’s **pānī**? (No — two separate old words.)

Source: Wiktionary: آب; Wiktionary: لطفاً.

## 9.2 نان — bread, and a root this track cannot trace

Say لطفاً آب, (*âb, lotfan*). This chapter's second request names the other thing on every Persian table.

### You'll want to know first — one word

نان — *nân* — bread

لطفاً نان. — *nân, lotfan.* — Bread, please.

Three letters, all already yours: ن ا ن — *n*, long *â*, *n* again.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

نان continues Middle Persian **nân**, and there this word's trail runs cold: no secure root beyond that form is agreed, and no English cousin can honestly be claimed. Not every word in this book gets a family tree, and this one is named plainly rather than forced into one.

The word travelled anyway, just not by inheritance. Persian نان passed into Hindi-Urdu as **nân**, and from there into English as **naan** — the bread on a restaurant menu is this exact word, arriving by borrowing three languages after Persian, not by any shared ancestor.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **nân** — bread
- *Say it:* **nân, lotfan.** — bread, please
- *Name:* the one fact this word's history gives you — Middle Persian **nân**, root beyond that unknown
- *Trace it:* **nân** → Hindi-Urdu **nân** → English **naan** — a borrowing, not a cousin
- *Run through:* **âb, lotfan** — **nân, lotfan** — two requests back to back

## Before you move on

What does نان mean? (**Bread.**) Does it have a secure Indo-European cousin? (No — the trail runs cold at Middle Persian **nān**.) Which English word is this same word, borrowed rather than inherited? (**Naan**, via Hindi-Urdu.)

Source: Wiktionary: نان.

### 9.3 چای — tea, and the road that gave everyone but Europe the same word

Say, لطفاً نان, (*nân, lotfan*). Here is the drink that usually comes with it.

#### You'll want to know first — one word

چای — *chây* — tea

لطفاً چای. — *chây, lotfan*. — Tea, please.

Three letters, all already yours: چ *ch*, from چيست; long â; ی as a closing glide.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

چای is not an inherited Persian word at all — it is a loan, and a comparatively recent one. It continues Northern Chinese **chá**, carried overland through Central Asia into Persian, the same road Russian **chai** and Turkish **çay** travelled.

The word did not stop at Persian. چای itself passed onward into Urdu as چائے *chây*, the same three-step road: Chinese into Persian into Urdu. Tea that instead reached Europe by **sea** carried a different, southern-Chinese form, which is why English says **tea** and French says *thé* rather than *chai*: one drink, two words, sorted by whether it travelled by land or by water.

#### Your turn

- Say it: **chây** — tea
- Say it: **chây, lotfan**. — tea, please

- *Name:* the road — Chinese **chá** → Persian **chây** → Urdu **chāy**
- *Contrast:* **chây**, which travelled by land, against **tea**, which travelled by sea
- *Run through:* **âb**, **lotfan** — **nân**, **lotfan** — **chây**, **lotfan**

Before you move on

Which language gave Persian چای? (**Chinese**, overland.) Which language borrowed this exact Persian word onward? (**Urdu**, as چائے.) Why does English say **tea** instead? (It arrived by sea, carrying a different Chinese form.)

Source: Wiktionary: چای.

## 9.4 کلید — key, a Greek word Persian has held for two thousand years

Say لطفاً چای. Then recall the small linking *-e* the first sentence taught inside من اسم — you will need it again in a moment.

You'll want to know first — one word

کلید — *kelid* — **key**

Four letters, all already yours: ک *k*, from کمک; ل *l*; ی long *i*; د *d*.

**Grammar Lens: a possessive request, built from an old part**

لطفاً من، کلید. — *kelid-e man, lotfan.* — **My key, please.**

No new grammar here — this reuses the ezafe **-e** exactly as من اسم did, now linking a household word to its owner instead of a name. A request can carry an owner the same way a name did.

**The word, taken apart — and its English cousins**

کلید is not inherited Persian at all — it is a loan from Greek **kleidíon**, “little key,” one of a handful of Greek words that entered Persian in the Hellenistic centuries after Alexander’s conquest, when Greek-speaking rulers governed Iranian land for generations. The

parent word, **kleís**, shares its Indo-European root with Latin *claudere*, “to close” — the root behind English **close**, **conclude**, and **exclude**. This chapter’s four words now stand for all three of Persian’s vocabulary layers: inherited آب, an untraceable نان, an overland Chinese loan in چای, and a Greek loan in کلید.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **kelid** — key; then **kelid-e man, lotfan** — my key, please
- *Connect:* **kelid** ← Greek **kleidíon** → Latin *claudere* → English **close, conclude, exclude**
- *Run through:* **âb, nân, chây, kelid** — each with , **lotfan**
- *Sort:* which of the four is inherited, which is untraceable, which travelled by land, which came from Greek
- *Retrieve:* the ezafe **-e** from من اسم, now on کلید

### Before you move on

Which language did Persian borrow کلید from, and when? (Greek, after Alexander.) Say “my key, please.” (**Kelid-e man, lotfan.**) Name all four polite requests this chapter built. (**Âb, nân, chây, kelid**, each with **lotfan.**) Source: Wiktionary: کلید.

## Chapter 10

# Mother, Father, Brother, Daughter

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

*By the end of this chapter:* I can name my mother, father, brother, and daughter in Persian, the four secure English cousins Chapter 6 named without teaching.

*The chapter closes on dokhtar, daughter, then runs all four family words back to back and reuses the ezafe from esm-e man ast and kelid-e man to say dokhtar-e man, my daughter.*

### 10.1 مادر — mother, a word this track already promised you

The بودن lesson traced it back to English **be**, and in passing named four plainest inherited cousins the track had not yet taught as their own lessons: مادر, پدر, برادر, دختر. This chapter and the next finally give each one its own lesson, starting here.

#### You'll want to know first — one word

مادر — *mâdar* — **mother**

Four letters, all already yours: م د ا ر — *m*, long *â*, *d*, *r*.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

مادر continues Middle Persian **mâdar**, from Indo-European *\*méh<sub>2</sub>tēr* — the same root English wore down to **mother**, German to *Mutter*, Latin to *māter* (giving English **maternal**), and Sanskrit to **mātr̥**. Few words in any language family stay this recognisable after four thousand years; a mother is called almost the same thing across most of Eurasia because small children the world over reach for the same easy sounds.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **mâdar** — mother
- *Connect:* **mâdar** ← *\*méh<sub>2</sub>tēr* → English **mother**, Latin **māter**, Sanskrit **mātr̥**
- *Retrieve:* **kelid-e man**, **lotfan** — my key, please
- *Name:* which four family words the بودن lesson promised, and which one this lesson delivers

### Before you move on

What does مادر mean? (**Mother.**) Which lesson first named it as an English cousin, without teaching it as its own word? (**The بودن lesson**, in passing.) Which three family words does the track still owe you? (دختر, برادر, پدر.)  
Source: Wiktionary: مادر.

## 10.2 پدر — father, mâdar's oldest partner

Say مادر, and its English cousin. This lesson's word has kept the same partnership for four thousand years.

### You'll want to know first — one word

پدر — *pedar* — **father**

Three letters, all already yours: پ *p*, from پرسیدن; د *d*; ر *r*.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

پدر continues Middle Persian **pidar**, from Indo-European *\*ph<sub>2</sub>tēr* — the direct cousin of English **father**, German *Vater*, and Latin *pater* (giving English **paternal**, **patriot**). مادر and پدر are not just similar in meaning; they are built the same way, both old Indo-European kinship words carrying a shared **-ar/-tar** ending that once meant something close to “the one who [does the kin role].”

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **pedar** — father
- *Connect:* **pedar** ← *\*ph<sub>2</sub>tēr* → English **father**, Latin **pater**
- *Pair:* **mâdar** — **pedar**, both carrying the same old kinship ending
- *Run through:* **mâdar**, **pedar** — mother, father

### Before you move on

What does پدر mean? (**Father.**) Which English word is it the direct cousin of? (**Father**, via **pater**.) What ending do مادر and پدر share? (An old kinship ending, **-ar/-tar**.)  
Source: Wiktionary: پدر.

## 10.3 برادر — brother, the cousin that never drifted

Say پدر and مادر. One family word from the بودن lesson’s list is still owed to you, and it is the sibling one.

### You’ll want to know first — one word

برادر — *barâdar* — **brother**

Five letters, all already yours: ب ر د ا ر — *b, r, long â, d, r* again. Notice ر opens and closes the word.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

برادر continues Middle Persian **brād(ar)**, from Indo-European *\*b<sup>h</sup>réh<sub>2</sub>tēr* — the direct cousin of English **brother**, German *Bruder*,

and Latin *frāter* (giving English **fraternal**). Unlike some kinship cousins, whose meanings narrow or shift as they travel, **brother** has meant exactly the same thing in every branch that kept it, for as long as anyone can trace it: this is as clean an inheritance as the family survives with.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **barâdar** — brother
- *Connect:* **barâdar** ← \**b<sup>h</sup>réh<sub>2</sub>tēr* → English **brother**, Latin **frāter**
- *Run through:* **mâdar**, **pedar**, **barâdar** — mother, father, brother
- *Name:* the one word the بودن lesson still owes you

Before you move on

What does برادر mean? (**Brother.**) Which English word is it the direct cousin of? (**Brother.**) Which family word from the بودن lesson's list is still owed? (دختر, daughter.)  
Source: Wiktionary: برادر.

## 10.4 دختر — daughter, and the family the بودن lesson promised is complete

Say برادر. Then read من اسم است ... once more, from the right edge — the very first sentence this track ever built, and the pattern this lesson reuses to close a family.

### You'll want to know first — one word

دختر — *dokhtar* — daughter

Four letters, all already yours: د ر ت خ — *d, kh, t, r.*

### Grammar Lens: naming a family member as your own

من دختر — *dokhtar-e man* — my daughter

The same ezafe **-e** from من اسم and من کلید links a family word to its owner exactly the way it linked a name and a request. One grammar

habit, three completely different kinds of noun.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

دختر continues Middle Persian **duxtar**, from Indo-European  $*d^hugh_2tēr$  — the direct cousin of English **daughter** and German *Tochter*. An earlier lesson named four inherited family cousins in passing — مادر, دختر, برادر, پدر — while it was really teaching بودن. This chapter and the last have now taught all four as full lessons: a promise made early, kept three chapters later.

#### Your turn

- *Say it:* **dokhtar** — daughter; then **dokhtar-e man** — my daughter
- *Connect:* **dokhtar**  $\leftarrow *d^hugh_2tēr \rightarrow$  English **daughter**
- *Run through:* **mâdar**, **pedar**, **barâdar**, **dokhtar** — all four, from memory
- *Retrieve:* است ... من اسم, the first sentence this track built, and its ezafe
- *Name:* which of the four family words is the odd one out in sound — دختر's **kh**, where the other three have none

#### Before you move on

Name all four family words this chapter and the last have taught, in order. (**Mâdar**, **pedar**, **barâdar**, **dokhtar**.) Say “my daughter.” (**Dokhtar-e man**.) Which earlier sentence used the same ezafe? (است ... من اسم, the very first sentence this track built.)  
Source: Wiktionary: دختر.



## Chapter 11

# Eye, Hand, Foot, Tongue

Modes: ⇄ voice (4) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

**By the end of this chapter:** I can name my eye, hand, foot, and tongue in Persian, and I can say zabân for both tongue and language — the word for the thing this whole track teaches.

*The chapter and the tranche close on zabân, tongue and language together, then run a short scene built from every chapter so far: the name exchange, the wellbeing question, this chapter’s own requests and family and body words, and khodâhâfez to close.*

### 11.1 چشم — eye, and what “how are you” was really pointing at

Say دختر. Then read *چطور شما حال است؟* once more from the right edge — an earlier lesson asked about your *حال*, your state, but never once named the parts of you that state belongs to. This chapter does.

You’ll want to know first — one word

چشم — *cheshm* — eye

Three letters, all already yours: چ *ch*, from چیست; ش *sh*, from شما; م *m*.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

چشم continues Middle Persian **čāšm**, tracing back through Old Iranian to the Indo-European root *\*spek’-*, “to look at, to observe.” English never inherited this root directly for its everyday word **eye** — that word comes from a different ancient root entirely — but it kept *\*spek’-* through Latin *specere*, “to look at”: **spy**, **spectacle**, **species**, **inspect**, and **suspect** are all this same root, arriving sideways rather than head-on.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **cheshm** — eye
- *Connect:* **cheshm** ← *\*spek’-* → Latin **specere** → English **spy**, **spectacle**, **species**
- *Retrieve:* است؟ چطور شما حال — the question this chapter’s body words could actually answer
- *Run through:* **mâdar**, **pedar**, **barâdar**, **dokhtar**, **cheshm** — five family and body words in one breath

### Before you move on

What does چشم mean? (**Eye.**) Which three English words share its root, none of them meaning “eye”? (**Spy, spectacle, species.**) Which earlier question could a body-part chapter actually answer? (است؟ چطور شما حال)  
Source: Wiktionary: چشم.

## 11.2 دست — hand, and a sound law that hides a cousin in plain sight

Say چشم (*cheshm*). This lesson’s word looks nothing like its closest Indo-Iranian relative — and that mismatch is not an accident.

### You’ll want to know first — one word

دست — *dast* — hand

Three letters, all already yours: د ت س — *d, s, t*.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

دست continues Old Persian **dastā-**, from Indo-European *\*ǵ<sup>h</sup>es-to-*, “hand.” Sanskrit’s word for hand, **hasta**, is the very same root — and so, further out, is Greek **kheír**, which English kept indirectly in **surgery** (literally “hand-work”) and **chiropractic** (“done by hand”). Old Persian’s **d**, Avestan’s **z**, and Sanskrit’s **h** look like three unrelated sounds, but they are the completely regular Indo-Iranian outcome of the same ancestral sound in each of the three branches — the kind of correspondence a false cousin never has, and a real one always does.

#### Your turn

- *Say it:* **dast** — hand
- *Connect:* **dast** ← *\*ǵ<sup>h</sup>es-to-* → Sanskrit **hasta**, Greek **kheír** → English **surgery**, **chiropractic**
- *Contrast:* Persian **d**, Avestan **z**, Sanskrit **h** — three sounds, one regular law
- *Run through:* **cheshm**, **dast** — eye, hand

#### Before you move on

What does دست mean? (**Hand.**) Which Sanskrit word is its direct cousin? (**hasta.**) Which two English words trace to the same root through Greek **kheír**? (**Surgery, chiropractic.**)

Source: Wiktionary: دست.

### 11.3 پا — foot, the plainest cousin in the whole track

Say چشم and دست. One more body word closes this chapter, and for once its history needs no caution at all.

#### You’ll want to know first — one word

پا — *pâ* — foot

Two letters, both already yours: پ *p*, from پدر; long ا *â*.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

پا continues Old Persian **pād-**, from Indo-European *\*ped-/pod-*, “foot.” Unlike دست, this cousin needs no sound-law explanation to see: English **foot**, Latin **pes/pedis** (**pedal, pedestrian**), Greek **pous/podos** (**podiatry, tripod**), and Sanskrit **pāda** all sit close enough to hear the family resemblance directly. Some Indo-European cousins take a page of sound changes to prove; this one barely needs a sentence.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **pâ** — foot
- *Connect:* **pâ** ← *\*ped-/pod-* → English **foot**, Latin **pes**, Greek **pous**, Sanskrit **pāda**
- *Run through:* **cheshm, dast, pâ** — eye, hand, foot
- *Name:* which of this chapter’s three cousins needed a sound law, and which one did not

### Before you move on

What does پا mean? (**Foot.**) Name four language families that keep a recognisable version of this word. (**English, Latin, Greek, Sanskrit.**) Which earlier body word needed a sound law to prove its cousin? (دست, hand.)  
Source: Wiktionary: پا.

## 11.4 زبان — tongue, and language, and everything this track has built

Say چشم, دست, پا — eye, hand, foot. One organ this list has left out names something bigger than itself.

### You’ll want to know first — one word, one new letter

زبان — *zabân* — tongue, and also language

Four letters, three of them already yours — ن ا ب — plus one this track has never needed before: ز *ze*, an ordinary letter from the inherited Arabic set, read simply as English *z*. ن-ا-ب-ز.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

زبان continues Middle Persian **zabān**, tracing to the ancient Indo-European word for “tongue.” English **tongue** is the same root, worn down at home. Latin took the same root and, by a well-documented but still debated *d-to-l* shift, turned it into *lingua* — the ancestor of English **language** and **linguistics**. Persian, like English, never split the organ from the ability: فارسی زبان *zabân-e fârsi*, “the Persian tongue,” is simply the Persian **language** — the same word this whole track has been teaching you to use.

#### Your turn — everything this track has taught

One short scene, built entirely from independently learned pieces, chapter by chapter:

- *Read it:* است ... من اسم — the very first sentence this track built
- *Read it:* شما against تو — the register this track built next
- *Read it:* چطور شما حال است؟ — the careful question that followed
- *Say it:* خوبم — the reply that answered it
- *Say it:* لطفاً من، کلید / لطفاً آب، — this chapter’s own requests
- *Name:* زبان پا، دست، چشم، دختر، برادر، پدر، مادر، — eight new words, three chapters
- *Read it:* خدا حافظ، and recall what it leaves unsaid — no verb, just the two halves an earlier lesson joined
- *Connect:* **zabân** ← old “tongue” word → English **tongue**, Latin *lingua* → **language**, **linguistics**

#### Before you move on

What does زبان mean, in both of its senses? (**Tongue**, and **language**.) Which new letter did it need? (ز, *ze*.) Which two

English words trace to the same root by a disputed sound shift?  
(**Tongue** directly; **language** and **linguistics** through Latin's *d-to-l* turn.) What is **فارسی زبان**? (The Persian language — the one this whole track teaches.)  
Source: Wiktionary: **زبان**.

## Chapter 12

# Name, Heart, Door, Book

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

*By the end of this chapter:* I can say name, heart, door, and book in Persian, and I can tell which of the four is inherited and which is a later Arabic loan.

*The chapter closes on ketâb, an Arabic loan, then runs all four words back to back — nâm, del, dar, ketâb — sorts them by vocabulary layer, and rebuilds the earlier name exchange the reappearance of nâm reopens.*

### 12.1 نام — name, the word Persian never borrowed

Say زبان, starting on its letter ز. Then say the very first sentence this track ever built, است ... من اسم. Both words in that sentence for “name” are about to get company.

#### You’ll want to know first — one word

نام — *nâm* — **name**

Three letters, all already yours: ن ا م — *n*, long *â*, *m*.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

نام continues Old Persian **nāma**, from Indo-European *\*h<sub>1</sub>nómn*, “name” — one of the most widely shared words in the whole family:

English kept it as **name**, Greek as **ónoma** (→ **onomastics**), Italian as *nome*, and Sanskrit as **nāman**. اسم *esm*, the word this track taught first, is a separate, later Arabic loan for the identical idea — so Persian now holds two words for “name,” inherited and borrowed, sitting side by side the way خوب and وقت already showed the track’s vocabulary layers working.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **nām** — name
- *Connect:* **nām** ← *\*h<sub>1</sub>nomn* → English **name**, Greek **ónoma**, Sanskrit **nāman**
- *Contrast:* نام, inherited, against اسم, the Arabic loan the name-exchange lesson taught first
- *Retrieve:* زبان — tongue, and language, the word that closed the last chapter

Before you move on

What does نام mean? (**Name.**) Which other Persian word means the same thing, and which language did it arrive through? (اسم, through Arabic.) Which English word shares نام’s own root?

(**Name.**)

Source: Wiktionary: نام.

## 12.2 دل — heart

Say نام (*nām*), and its English cousin. This lesson’s word has an even more famous one.

### You’ll want to know first — one word

دل — *del* — heart

Two letters, both already yours: د ل — *d, l*.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

دل continues Middle Persian **dil**, from the ancient Indo-European word for heart, *\*kē̯r* — the same root English wore down to **heart**, Armenian kept as **sirt**, and Sanskrit built into **hṛdaya**. Persian uses دل far beyond anatomy, the way English leans on *heart* for courage and feeling rather than only the organ — a later chapter’s word for “want” will lean on it too.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **del** — heart
- *Connect:* **del** ← *\*kē̯r* → English **heart**, Sanskrit **hṛdaya**, Armenian **sirt**
- *Run through:* **nām**, **del** — name, heart
- *Retrieve:* دختر — daughter, from a few lessons back

### Before you move on

What does دل mean? (**Heart.**) Which English word is its direct cousin? (**Heart.**) Name one other language that kept the same root. (**Sanskrit** *hṛdaya*, or **Armenian** *sirt*.)  
Source: Wiktionary: دل.

## 12.3 در — door

Say در, and the root it shares with **heart**. This lesson’s word shares its own root with an equally ordinary English word.

### You’ll want to know first — one word

در — *dar* — **door**

Two letters, both already yours: د ر — *d, r*.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

در continues Old Persian **duvar-**, “door, gate,” from Indo-European *\*d<sup>h</sup>wer-*. Few Indo-European words are this well attested across every

branch of the family at once: English **door**, German **Tür**, Latin **foris** (→ **foreign**, “outside the door”), Greek **thýra**, and Sanskrit **dvāra** all continue the identical ancient word. در is Persian’s contribution to a cognate set most Indo-European languages still carry.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **dar** — door
- *Connect:* **dar** ← \**d<sup>h</sup>wer-* → English **door**, German **Tür**, Latin **foris**, Sanskrit **dvāra**
- *Run through:* **nām**, **del**, **dar** — name, heart, door

Before you move on

What does در mean? (**Door.**) Name three other languages that kept the same root. (**English** *door*, **German** *Tür*, **Sanskrit** *dvāra*, among others.)

Source: Wiktionary: در.

## 12.4 کتاب — book, and the name exchange this chapter reopens

Say در, and the four languages that share its root. This chapter’s last word breaks that pattern completely.

### You’ll want to know first — one word

کتاب — *ketâb* — **book**

Four letters, all already yours: ک ت ا ب — *k, t, long â, b*.

#### Grammar Lens: a possessed object, the pattern one more time

لطفاً من، کتاب. — *ketâb-e man, lotfan.* — **My book, please.**

The same ezafe **-e** from من اسم, and من کلید, and من دختر links a fourth kind of noun to its owner. Four different words, one grammar habit.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

کتاب is not inherited Persian at all: it is borrowed whole from Arabic **kitāb**, “book,” built on the three-consonant root ک ت ب (*k-t-b*), “to write.” Persian’s four new words this chapter show its vocabulary layers running in both directions at once — نام is inherited where اسم, taught first, is Arabic; کتاب is Arabic where Persian has no single inherited word of its own for the idea. دل and در are older still, each carrying an Indo-European root beside a whole set of English cousins.

### Your turn — the chapter, then the name exchange it reopens

- *Say it:* **ketâb** — book; then **ketâb-e man, lotfan** — my book, please
- *Run through:* **nâm, del, dar, ketâb** — all four of this chapter’s words
- *Sort:* which words are inherited, and which one is Arabic
- *Rebuild:* شما / تو — the register choice; چیست؟ شما اسم — the question, joining *chi* and *ast*; خوشوقتم — the reply that closes an introduction
- *Connect:* نام, this chapter’s own name-word, back to the exchange that first taught اسم
- *Retrieve:* پا — foot, one more body word from a few lessons back

### Before you move on

Which language did Persian borrow کتاب from? (**Arabic.**) Say “my book, please.” (**Ketâb-e man, lotfan.**) Which of this chapter’s four words is inherited Persian, and which is the Arabic loan? (نام, دل, در inherited; کتاب Arabic.) Which earlier word for “name” does نام now stand beside? (اسم.)  
Source: Wiktionary: کتاب.



## Chapter 13

# Sky, Sun, Moon, Star, Rain

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

*By the end of this chapter:* I can name the sky, sun, moon, star, and rain in Persian, and I can say which of those words has no established English cousin.

*The chapter closes on bârân, a word with no English cousin, then runs all five sky words back to back and rebuilds the careful wellbeing question the weather now follows in ordinary small talk.*

### 13.1 آسمان — sky

Say کتاب (*ketâb*), and which language it came from. This chapter turns from things in the house to the world above it, starting with the biggest word of all.

#### You'll want to know first — one word

آسمان — *âsemân* — sky

Five letters, all already yours: آ م س ن — alef with *madde*, *s*, *m*, long *â*, *n*.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

آسمان continues Old Persian **asmānam**, from Indo-European *\*h<sub>2</sub>ék<sup>m</sup>ō*, “stone.” Sanskrit kept the plain sense as **aśman**, “stone,” while Avestan’s cousin word already carried both meanings, “stone” and “sky,” at once. Picturing the sky as a stone dome overhead was a

widespread Indo-European habit, not a Persian invention — one old word doing two jobs, the way زبان later did for tongue and language.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* âsemân — sky
- *Connect:* âsemân ← \*h<sub>2</sub>ék̑mō → Sanskrit aśman, “stone”
- *Name:* the old Indo-European habit آسمان preserves — picturing the sky as stone
- *Retrieve:* زبان — tongue and language, with its letter ز

Before you move on

What does آسمان mean? (**Sky**.) What did its root originally mean, and which Sanskrit word still keeps that older sense? (**Stone**; aśman.)  
Source: Wiktionary: آسمان.

## 13.2 خورشید — sun, a word built from two old pieces

Say آسمان (âsemân), and the root sense it once carried. Look up, and this lesson names what is in it.

### You’ll want to know first — one word

خورشید — *khorshid* — sun

Six letters, all already yours: خ و د ی ش ر — *kh*, *o* carrying its learned *o* value, *r*, *sh*, long *i*, *d*.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

خورشید is a compound, not a single old root. Its first half, خور *khōr*, “sun,” descends from the ancient Indo-European word for the sun, \*sóh<sub>2</sub>wl — the same distant root behind English **sun**, Latin **sol** (→ **solar**), Greek **hēlios** (→ **heliotrope**), and Sanskrit **sūrya**, though it reached Persian by a completely different branch of the family. Its

second half, شید *shid*, “shining,” is an unrelated word that Avestan had already paired with خور long before Persian existed.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **khorshid** — sun
- *Split:* خور, sun — شید, shining
- *Connect:* خور ← \**sóh<sub>2</sub>wl* → English **sun**, Latin **sol**, Greek **hēlios**, Sanskrit **sūrya**
- *Run through:* âsemân, **khorshid** — sky, sun

#### Before you move on

What does خورشید mean, and what are its two parts? (**Sun**; خور “sun” plus شید “shining.”) Which English word shares خور’s distant root? (**Sun**.)

Source: Wiktionary: خورشید.

## 13.3 ماه — moon, and month

Say خورشید (*khorshid*), and the two old pieces fused inside it. The sky’s other light gives Persian one more word doing double duty.

### You’ll want to know first — one word

ماه — *mâh* — **moon**, and also **month**

Three letters, all already yours: م ا ه — *m*, long *â*, *h*.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ماه continues Old Persian **māha-**, from Indo-European \**mēh<sub>1</sub>ns*, “moon.” The same root split into two related English words, **moon** and **month** — a month was, for most of human history, one full cycle of the moon — and Persian’s single word still holds both senses together, the way زبان later holds “tongue” and “language” in one word. Latin kept the root as **mensis** (→ **month**, **menstrual**), Greek

as **mēn**, and Sanskrit as **māsa**.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **mâh** — moon, and month
- *Connect:* **mâh** ← \**mēh<sub>1</sub>ns* → English **moon** and **month**, Latin **mensis**, Sanskrit **māsa**
- *Run through:* âsemân, khorshid, **mâh** — sky, sun, moon

### Before you move on

What two English words does ماه's root split into? (**Moon** and **month**.) Which earlier Persian word did the same double duty for tongue and language? (زبان.)

Source: Wiktionary: ماه.

## 13.4 ستاره — star

Say ماه, and the two English words its root split into. One more light in the sky, and a new small spelling habit.

### You'll want to know first — one word, one small spelling habit

ستاره — *setâre* — **star**

Five letters, all already yours: ه ر ا ت س — *s, t, long â, r*, and a final ه read as the vowel *-e* rather than as a consonant — the first time this track has met ه doing that particular job.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ستاره continues Old Persian **star-**, from Indo-European \**h<sub>2</sub>stér*, “star.” Few Indo-European roots survive this cleanly across the whole family: English **star**, Latin **stella** (→ **stellar**, **constellation**), Greek **astron** (→ **astronomy**, **disaster** — “ill-starred”), and Persian's own ستاره all continue the identical ancient word, alongside در's door and ماه's moon as the tranche's clearest cousins.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **setâre** — star
- *Connect:* **setâre** ← *\*h<sub>2</sub>stér* → English **star**, Latin **stella**, Greek **astron**
- *Read it:* the final ه in ستاره as -e, not as a consonant
- *Run through:* âsemân, khorshid, mâh, **setâre** — sky, sun, moon, star
- *Retrieve:* در — door, and its own well-attested cousin set

#### Before you move on

What does ستاره mean? (**Star.**) How is its final ه read? (As the vowel -e, not a consonant.) Name two other languages whose word for star shares the same root. (**English** *star*, **Latin** *stella*, or **Greek** *astron*.)

Source: Wiktionary: ستاره.

## 13.5 باران — rain, and the wellbeing question this chapter answers differently

Say ستاره (*setâre*), and its root's three attested cousins. Not every sky word gets to keep company like that.

### You'll want to know first — one word

باران — *bârân* — **rain**

Five letters, all already yours: ب ا ر ا ن — *b*, long *â*, *r*, long *â*, *n*.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

باران continues Middle Persian **wārān**, from Indo-Iranian *\*wáHr*, “water, rain,” itself from Indo-European *\*weh<sub>1</sub>r-*, “water.” Its cousins stayed close to home: Avestan **vāra**, “rain,” and Sanskrit **vār**, “water,” share the identical root. English **rain** is not part of this family at all — its own origin is disputed and confined to the Germanic languages, with no secure Indo-European cousin beyond them — so, as with رفتن

and گفتن far earlier, the honest answer here is that no English cousin is claimed.

### Grammar Lens: what small talk about the sky follows

Weather small talk in Persian commonly follows the wellbeing exchange, the same slot English fills right after “how are you?” Rebuild the question: است؟ چطور شما حال, careful **ast**, not a contraction, then its reply, ممنون خوبم — a shape a sky word can now attach to.

### Your turn — every sky word, then the exchange it follows

- *Say it:* **bârân** — rain
- *Connect:* **bârân** ← \*weh<sub>1</sub>r- → Sanskrit **vār**, Avestan **vāra** — no English cousin
- *Run through:* **âsemân**, **khoshid**, **mâh**, **setâre**, **bârân** — all five sky words
- *Rebuild:* است؟ چطور شما حال and its reply, ممنون خوبم

### Before you move on

What does باران mean? (**Rain.**) Does it share a root with English **rain**? (**No.**) Which two Indo-Iranian languages keep the closest cousins? (**Avestan, Sanskrit.**) Name all five sky words. (**Âsemân, khoshid, mâh, setâre, bârân.**)  
Source: Wiktionary: باران.

## Chapter 14

# Sister, Son, Man, Woman, Friend

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

*By the end of this chapter:* I can name my sister, son, and friend in Persian, tell man and woman apart, and open and close a short interaction with all of them.

*The chapter and the tranche close on dust, friend, then run all five people-words back to back and rebuild a complete short interaction with a friend: a polite request for tea, a request for a key, and the standard farewell both voices share.*

### 14.1 خواهر — sister, the family word the earlier tranche skipped

Say باران, and whether it has an English cousin. The sky words are done; the family the earlier tranche built — پدر, مادر, برادر — is missing exactly one member.

**You'll want to know first — one word, a familiar silent letter**

خواهر — *khâhar* — sister

Five letters, all already yours: ر ه ا و خ. The و here is silent, exactly the pattern خواندن taught: written after خ and before ل, never pronounced. Read it **kh-â-har**.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

خواهر continues Middle Persian **xwāhar**, from Indo-European *\*swésōr*, “sister” — as secure a cognate as برادر’s own *\*b<sup>h</sup>réh<sub>2</sub>tēr*. English kept it as **sister** (through Old Norse, replacing the native Old English form), Latin as **soror** (→ **sorority**), and Sanskrit as **svasṛ**. پدر, مادر, برادر, خواهر دختر now give the track all five of Indo-European’s plainest kinship words.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **khâhar** — sister
- *Connect:* **khâhar** ← *\*swésōr* → English **sister**, Latin **soror**, Sanskrit **svasṛ**
- *Read it:* the silent و in خواهر, the same pattern خواندن taught
- *Name:* all five family words this track now holds — پدر, مادر, برادر, خواهر دختر
- *Retrieve:* کتاب — book, from a few lessons back

### Before you move on

What does خواهر mean? (**Sister.**) Which letter in it is silent, and which earlier word taught the same pattern? (خواندن; و.) Which English word is its direct cousin? (**Sister.**)  
Source: Wiktionary: خواهر.

## 14.2 پسر — son, دختر’s missing counterpart

Say خواهر, and its secure English cousin. Then say برادر — its own family tranche taught دختر, “daughter,” but never gave her brother’s counterpart a lesson of its own, until now.

### You’ll want to know first — one word

پسر — *pesar* — **son**

Three letters, all already yours: پ — *pe*, from پرسیدن, then *s*, *r*.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

پسر continues Old Persian **puça**, cognate with Sanskrit **putra**, “son” — an Indo-Iranian word Persian and Sanskrit still share with each other. English **son** is not part of this family: it descends from an entirely different Indo-European root, so — as with باران and رفتن before it — no English cousin is claimed here. پسر and دختر now give the track a complete pair for “son” and “daughter,” even though only one of the two has an English relative.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **pesar** — son
- *Connect:* **pesar** ← Old Persian **puça** → Sanskrit **putra** — no English cousin
- *Run through:* **barâdar**, **pesar** — brother, son — the two words this pair now completes
- *Run through:* **khâhar**, **pesar** — sister, son

### Before you move on

What does پسر mean? (**Son.**) Which Sanskrit word is its direct cousin? (**Putra.**) Does English **son** share the same root? (**No.**)  
Source: Wiktionary: پسر.

## 14.3 مرد — man, but its root says “mortal”

Say پسر (*pesar*), and the Sanskrit word it shares a root with.  
This lesson’s word looks like it should be an easy English cousin.  
It is not.

### You’ll want to know first — one word

مرد — *mard* — **man**

Three letters, all already yours: د ر م — *m, r, d.*

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

مرد continues Middle Persian **mard**, from Indo-European *\*mer-*, “to die.” Its literal sense is not “man” at all — it is “mortal,” “one who dies.” The same root gives Latin **mortuus**, “dead” (→ English **mortal**, **mortician**), Greek **brotós** (→ **ambrosia**, “not mortal”), and Sanskrit **martya**. English **man** looks like an obvious match for مرد and is not one — it descends from a completely different root — so this is one place where guessing a cousin from sound alone would mislead rather than help.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **mard** — man
- *Connect:* **mard** ← *\*mer-* → Latin **mortuus**, **mortal**; Greek **brotós**; Sanskrit **martya** — not English **man**
- *Run through:* **pesar**, **mard** — son, man

### Before you move on

What does مرد mean? (**Man.**) What does its root literally mean, and which English word keeps that sense? (**Mortal**; **mortal** itself.) Does English **man** share the same root? (**No — a false friend.**) Source: Wiktionary: مرد.

## 14.4 زن — woman, a root hiding behind a royal title

Say مرد, and why it is not a cousin of English **man**. This lesson’s word finds its English cousin in an unexpected place.

### You’ll want to know first — one word

زن — *zan* — **woman**

Two letters, both already yours: ز ن — ز *ze*, from زبان, then *n*.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

زن continues Middle Persian **zan**, from Indo-European  $*g^w\acute{e}n(h_2)-$ , “woman.” English kept the same root, but only inside a narrowed, elevated word: **queen** was once simply “woman,” the way مرد narrowed “mortal” down to “man.” Greek kept the plain sense directly as **gynē** (→ **gynecology**), and Russian as **žena**. مرد and زن give the track its first pair of person words that are not family roles.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **zan** — woman
- *Connect:* **zan** ←  $*g^w\acute{e}n(h_2)-$  → English **queen**, Greek **gynē**
- *Run through:* **mard**, **zan** — man, woman
- *Contrast:* مرد narrowed from “mortal”; زن widened English’s cousin down to royalty alone
- *Retrieve:* ستاره — star, one more well-attested cousin

### Before you move on

What does زن mean? (**Woman.**) Which English word is its cousin, and what did that word originally mean before it narrowed? (**Queen**; simply “woman.”) Which Greek word shares the same root? (**Gynē.**)  
Source: Wiktionary: زن.

## 14.5 دوست — friend, and everything this tranche has built

Say زن مرد, (*mard, zan*) — man, woman. One more person word closes the tranche, and it is a word this track has half-taught already.

### You’ll want to know first — one word, already half-known

دوست — *dust* — friend

Four letters, all already yours: د ت س و — *d*, long *u*, *s*, *t*. The compound verb for “to love” already ran on this exact word; here it stands alone, as the person it names.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

دوست goes back through Old Persian **dauštā** to Indo-European \**ǵews-*, “to taste, to choose” — a friend is *the one chosen*. English inherited the root directly as **choose**; Latin took it as **gustus**, “taste,” giving English **gusto** and **disgust**. The compound-verb lesson that first taught this root only ever used دوست glued to داشتن; this is its first lesson as a free-standing noun.

### Your turn — the tranche, start to finish

One short scene, built entirely from independently learned pieces:

- *Say it:* **dust** — friend; then **khâhar, pesar, mard, zan, dust** — all five people-words this closing chapter taught
- *Connect:* **dust** ← \**ǵews-* → English **choose**, Latin **gustus**
- *Say it:* لطفاً چای، — offer your friend tea in the **bârân**, rain, reusing the very first polite request this track built
- *Say it:* لطفاً من، کلید — and ask a friend to pass your key
- *Read it:* حافظ — guardian, protector — the Arabic-rooted half of a farewell you have used since your very first complete exchange
- *Read it:* joined خداحافظ, and recall what it leaves unsaid — no verb, just two halves fused into one wish
- *Run through:* ... خداحافظ ... ممنون خوبم، ... است؟ چطور شما حال! سلام. خداحافظ. — the exact four-line interaction a friend opens and closes

### Before you move on

What does دوست mean on its own? (**Friend.**) Which compound verb already ran on this exact word? (**Dust dâshtan**, “to love.”) Name all five people-words this closing chapter taught, in order. (**Khâhar, pesar, mard, zan, dust.**) How does a friend close the four-line interaction? (خداحافظ, said by both voices.)

Source: Wiktionary: دوست.



## Chapter 15

# Nine Letters, and the Words You Already Knew

Modes: 👁 eyes (1) ✍ pen (9) ⇄ Hands-free start: none of the 10 lessons.

*By the end of this chapter:* I can write nine Perso-Arabic letters from memory, read *salâm*, *bale*, *na*, *mamnun*, *nân*, *nâm* and *mâh* off the page rather than from the romanization, and explain why Persian leaves its short vowels unwritten.

*Seven words the book had only ever given by ear, read letter by letter from the right – and the reason a Persian word can be read only once you have heard it.*

### 15.1 | — one stroke, and the direction of the page

Return to the right-to-left direction and the one alef stroke you first copied beside *salâm*. Now make both durable before adding a second letter.

#### Script — first, which way the page runs

English marches **left to right**. Persian marches **right to left**.

Your pen starts at the **right edge** of a word and travels **towards the left**. So in a Persian word the letter you meet **first** is the **rightmost** one, and the letter you meet **last** is the leftmost — the exact reverse of what your eye has been trained on for your whole reading life.

This takes a few minutes to stop feeling strange and then stops mattering entirely. Numbers, incidentally, still run left to right, which surprises people more than the letters do.

## Script — the letter itself

l

**One downstroke.** That is the whole letter, and there is nothing in the alphabet simpler. Draw it from the top down, straight, and lift.

Its name is **alef**. What it *sounds* like is a longer story than what it looks like, and this book will take that slowly: for now, treat alef as the letter that carries a long â, the vowel in English *father*.

### Your turn

- *Write it:* l — one stroke, top to bottom
- *Say it:* â, the vowel of *father*
- *Point to:* at the right edge of a Persian word, where your pen would begin

Before you move on

How many strokes in alef? (**One.**)

## 15.2 ج — alef, with a bowl at its foot

Write l. One stroke, top to bottom.

### Script — the shape

ج

Start exactly as you started alef — a tall stroke coming down — and then, instead of lifting, **swing left into a shallow bowl** at the foot and come back up a little.

One movement, no pen lift. If you can write l you are most of the way to ج already; the difference is what happens at the bottom.

Its name is **lâm** and it says l, as in English *long*.

### Your turn

- *Write it:* l, then ج — the same descent, and then the bowl
- *Say it:* l

Before you move on

Do you lift the pen between the stroke and the bowl? (**No** — one movement.)

### 15.3 س — three teeth, then a bowl

Write ل. Descent, then bowl.

**Script — the shape**

س

Three small **teeth** — short upward points in a row — and then the line drops into a **bowl** and comes back up, the same kind of bowl you drew on lâm.

Remember you are working **right to left**: the first tooth you draw is the **rightmost** one.

All of it is one movement. No lifts at all.

Its name is **sin** and it says **s**, as in English *see*.

**Your turn**

- *Write it:* س — three teeth from the right, then the bowl, without lifting
- *Say it:* s

Before you move on

Which tooth do you draw first? (The **rightmost**.)

### 15.4 م — a loop, and a tail below the line

Write س. Three teeth, then the bowl.

## Script — the shape

م

A small **closed loop** sitting on the line, and from it a **tail** dropping straight down **below** the line.

The loop is small and round; keep it tight, or it starts to look like other letters you will meet later. The tail is what makes mim unmistakable standing on its own — very few letters drop below the line, and your eye will learn to use that. Joined into the middle of a word the tail is trimmed away and the loop is what survives, which is the same trimming you will meet everywhere.

One movement, no lift.

Its name is **mim** and it says **m**.

## Your turn

- *Write it:* م — the small loop, then the tail dropping below the line
- *Say it:* **m**

Before you move on

Is the loop open or closed? (**Closed.**)

## 15.5 Letters that hold hands, and two that will not

Write س, then م. Four letters are now yours.

## Script — the running line

Persian is not written as separate letters sitting side by side. Letters **join**, running into one another along a single line, the way English cursive does — except that in Persian it is not a style. It is the ordinary way to write, and printed text does it too.

Because they join, most letters **change shape** depending on where they sit: a letter at the start of a joined run, one in the middle, one at the end, and one standing alone can all look different. They are the same letter.

That sounds like four times the work. It is not, and here is why: the changes are almost always **the same trimming**. A letter's identifying part stays, and the finishing flourish is cut short so the next letter can begin.

Look at sin, which you can already write:

alone: س — in the middle of a run: س

The three teeth survive. The bowl is what gets trimmed away.

### Script — and the letters that refuse

Now the rule that saves you the most trouble.

**A few letters join to the letter before them, but never to the letter after.** They connect on the right, and refuse on the left, so the run **breaks** and the next letter starts fresh as though beginning a new word.

**alef is one of them.** So when you meet a gap in the middle of a Persian word, it is very often not a gap at all — it is one of these non-joining letters doing exactly what it always does.

That single fact turns a page of Persian from an unbroken puzzle into something with visible seams.

#### What you've built

Four letters, and they spell a word you have been saying since the very first lesson:

سلام

Read it right to left: س *s*, ل *l*, ا *â*, م *m*. Say it: **salâm**.

Two things to notice. The short vowel between *s* and *l* is **not written** — Persian normally prints only the long vowels, and readers supply the rest. And the break before the final م is alef refusing to join, exactly as promised.

### Your turn

- *Read it:* سلام — name each letter from the right, then say the word
- *Write it:* سلام — and let the run break after alef
- *Say it:* **salâm**

Before you move on

Which part of sin survives when it joins? (The **teeth**; the bowl is trimmed.)

## 15.6 ب — a bowl, and one dot underneath

Write سلام. Four letters, one break.

### Script — the shape

ب

A single shallow **bowl**, wider and flatter than the one on lâm, sitting on the line — and **one dot below it**.

Draw the bowl first, then lift and place the dot. That lift is the only one.

Its name is **be** and it says **b**.

Now the part worth more than the letter. **This bowl is a skeleton that several letters share.** On its own it means nothing; the **dots** decide which letter it is — how many, and whether they sit above or below.

That is why dots in Persian are not decoration and not optional. Move one dot from below to above and you have written a different letter. Your eye has to learn to look at the dots as hard as it looks at the shape.

### Your turn

- *Write it:* ب — the shallow bowl, then one dot beneath it
- *Say it:* **b**

Before you move on

Is the bowl alone enough to identify a letter? (**No** — the dots decide.)

## 15.7 ت and ن — the same bowl, dotted differently

Write ب. Bowl, then one dot below.

### Script — two dots above

ت

**The same bowl as be.** Two dots, and they sit **above** it.

That is the entire difference, and it is a whole different letter: **te**, saying **t**.

### Script — one dot above, and a deeper bowl

ن

**One dot above** — and a bowl that is noticeably **deeper and rounder** than be's, curving well below the line before coming back up.

Its name is **nun** and it says **n**.

Standing alone, nun's deeper bowl helps you. In the middle of a joined run the bowl gets trimmed like everyone else's, and then the dot is doing nearly all the work: **one above** is nun, **two above** is te, **one below** is be.

#### What you've built

Three letters, one shape:

ب — one dot **below**

ت — two dots **above**

ن — one dot **above**

You learned one bowl and got three letters out of it. That is the trade Persian keeps offering: fewer shapes than you feared, and dots you cannot afford to skim.

### Your turn

- *Write it:* ب, then ت, then ن — same hand movement, different dots
- *Say it:* **b**, **t**, **n**

Before you move on

Which of the three has the deepest bowl? (**nun**.)

## 15.8 ه — the letter with four costumes

Write ت, then ن. Same bowl, different dots.

### Script — the shape

ه

A small **round** letter, standing on the line, no dots at all.

Its name is **he**. It says **h** at the start of a word — and at the **end** of a word it usually says nothing like an h: it carries a final **e** sound, the vowel that ends so many Persian words.

This letter will test what you learned about joining, because its four forms differ more than most:

alone: ه — at the start: ه — in the middle: ه — at the end: ه

Do not try to memorise four shapes. Recognise the **round body**, notice where in the run it is sitting, and let the shape follow from that. Persian readers are not holding four pictures in mind either.

### Your turn

- *Write it:* ه — small and round, no dots
- *Say it:* **h** at the front of a word; a soft **e** at the end of one

Before you move on

Does he carry any dots? (**None.**)

## 15.9 و — one shape, three jobs, and no hand offered to the left

Write و. Small, round, no dots.

### Script — the shape

و

A small **loop** at the top with a **tail** sweeping down and to the left, below the line. One movement.

Its name is **vâv**, and it is unusually hard-working. Depending on the word it is:

- the consonant **v**
- the long vowel **u**, as in English *food*
- the vowel **o**

You cannot tell which from the letter alone. You learn it with the word — and that is a fair trade, because it means Persian needs no separate letters for those vowels at all.

**And vâv is a non-joiner**, the second one this chapter has given you. Like alef, it takes the hand of the letter on its right and offers nothing to the left, so the run breaks after it.

### Your turn

- *Write it:* ۭ — the small loop, then the tail below the line
- *Say it:* **v**, then **u**, then **o** — one letter, three jobs

Before you move on

Can you tell from the shape alone whether vâv is v, u or o? (**No** — the word tells you.)

## 15.10 Practice — seven words you already knew, now read

Write your nine letters in a row, right to left, saying each name as you go.

### Script — the words come back

**Nothing new is taught here.** Every word below is one this book already gave you to say, and every letter in them is one you can now write.

Read each from the right, naming its letters before you say it:

سلام

ب‌له

ن‌ه

م‌م‌ن‌ون

ن‌ان

ن‌ام

م‌اه

*salâm — bale — na — mamnun — nân — nâm — mâh.*

Seven words. Nine letters. That ratio is the point: a small closed set of shapes unlocks far more than its own size, and it keeps doing so as the set grows.

#### Why it's said this way

Count the letters in ب‌له and count the sounds in *bale*. Three letters, four sounds.

**Persian normally does not write its short vowels.** The long ones get letters — that is part of what alef and vâv are for — but the short *a*, *e* and *o* are left off the page, and the reader supplies them.

This sounds alarming and is not, for the same reason English readers cope with *read* and *read*: you are not decoding letter by letter for long. You recognise the word.

It does mean one thing, though, and it is worth accepting early. **You cannot reliably sound out a Persian word you have never heard.** Reading and listening have to grow together in this language, more tightly than in one that spells every vowel. That is why this book taught you these seven words by ear first, and is only now handing you the page.

#### What you've built this chapter

Nine letters, and three ideas that matter more than any of them:

- **the page runs right to left**, and your pen starts at the right edge

- **letters join**, changing shape by position — but the change is a trimming, not a new letter, and **alef and vâv refuse to join to the left**, which is what makes the gaps inside a word
- **dots carry the identity** — one bowl gave you ب, ت and ن

Nine of Persian's thirty-two letters. The remaining twenty-three are mostly more of what you have just done: familiar skeletons, re-dotted.

### Your turn

- *Read it:* ممنون نه بله سلام — name the letters of each before saying it
- *Write it:* نان and نام — one letter apart, and check which
- *Say it:* **mamnun**, and count how many letters are written for it

Before you move on

Which two of your nine letters refuse to join to the left? (ا and و.)



## Chapter 16

# One to Five, and the Words English Already Says

Modes: 🗣️ voice (6) 🗋️ Hands-free start: all 6 lessons.

*By the end of this chapter:* I can say, hear and recognise the Persian numbers one to five, write the one of them made only of letters I have been taught, and name the English cousin of each.

*Five numbers, five Indo-European roots and five everyday English cousins — retrieved shuffled rather than recited, with the one writable form written.*

### 16.1 یک — one, and the first number this book has ever taught

Read سلام and نان off the page, without the romanization. Nine letters, and the words they finish.

**You'll want to know first — one word**

یک — *yek* — **one**

Fifteen chapters of names, verbs, kinship, the body and the sky, and not one number. That has a cost the book has been carrying quietly: no age, no price, no telephone number, no quantity, no time of day. It starts being paid here.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

یک continues Middle Persian **yak**, from Proto-Iranian *\*Haywāh* and Indo-Iranian *\*Háywas*, ultimately Indo-European *\*óyws*, “one.” That root did not stay in Iran. Sanskrit *eka*, Ancient Greek *oios*, Latin **ūnus**, French **un**, German **ein** and English **one** are all the same word, worn down differently. Of the ten numbers this slice teaches, nine have a cousin an English speaker already says every day — which makes the count the cheapest vocabulary in the whole book, not the most expensive.

### Your turn

- Say it: **yek** — one
- Connect: **yek** ← *\*óyws* → English **one**, Latin **ūnus**, Sanskrit **eka**

### Before you move on

What does یک mean? (**One**.) Which everyday English word is the same root? (**One**.)

Sources: Wiktionary: یک; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## 16.2 دو — two, and a letter doing its third job

Say **yek**, and the English word that is the same root.

### You’ll want to know first — one word

دو — *do* — **two**

Two letters. The second is و, the hard-working letter from the script chapter that can be *v*, *u* or *o*; here it is **o**, and the word tells you so.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

دو continues Middle Persian **dō**, from Proto-Iranian *\*duwā*, from Indo-European *\*dwoh*, “two.” English **two**, Latin **duo**, Greek **dyo** and Sanskrit **dvá** are the same word.

Say *do* and *two* one after the other. Nothing has to be learned there; it has to be recognised.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **do** — two
- *Connect:* **do** ← \**dwōh* → English **two**, Latin **duo**
- *Run through:* **yek, do**

Before you move on

Which of ۳'s three jobs is it doing in دو? (۳.)

Sources: Wiktionary: دو; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## 16.3 سه — three, and the first number the hand can make

Say **yek, do**.

### You'll want to know first — one word

سه — *se* — **three**

س and ه. Both were taught in the script chapter, so this is the first number in the book you can write as well as say. Of the twelve numbers this slice covers, exactly two are in that position — the other is nine.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

سه continues Middle Persian **sē**, from Indo-European \**tréyes*, “three.” English **three**, Latin **trēs**, Greek **treîs** and Sanskrit **tri** are the same word.

The Persian form looks further away than *do* did, and it is: the initial consonant and the *r* have both gone. Hearing *se* as *three* takes a moment where hearing *do* as *two* took none — that is worth noticing now, because the next two numbers are further still.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **se** — three
- *Connect:* **se** ← \**tréyes* → English **three**, Latin **trēs**

- *Write it:* سه — sin, then he. Right to left.
- *Run through:* yek, do, se

Before you move on

Which two numbers can this book write so far? (سه and, later, نه.)  
Sources: Wiktionary: سه; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## 16.4 چهار — four, and one consonant taking three different paths

Say se and its English cousin, then do.

You'll want to know first — one word

چهار — *chahâr* — four

Two syllables, and the long â of باران in the second.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

چهار continues Old Persian **chathwar**, from Indo-European *\*k<sup>w</sup>etwóres*, “four.”

That opening *\*k<sup>w</sup>* is the interesting part, because three languages did three different things with it. Latin kept it whole: **quattuor**. English lost the lip-rounding and then the *k* itself softened to *f*: **four**. Persian pushed it forward to a **ch**. One sound, three descendants, and the numbers still line up.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **chahâr** — four
- *Connect:* **chahâr** ← *\*k<sup>w</sup>etwóres* → Latin **quattuor**, English **four**
- *Run through:* yek, do, se, **chahâr**

Before you move on

Which language kept the original **kw** whole? (**Latin.**)

Sources: Wiktionary: چهار; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## 16.5 پنج — five, and the word you have already met on a map

Say **chahâr**, and what three languages did with its first sound.

You'll want to know first — one word

پنج — *panj* — five

پ is Persian's own letter, one of the four the alphabet added for sounds Arabic does not have.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

پنج continues Middle Persian **panj**, from Indo-European *\*pénk<sup>w</sup>e*, “five.” Greek **pénte**, Latin **quīnque** and English **five** are the same word.

This one an English speaker has probably already met without knowing it. **Punjab** is *panj* + *âb*, “five waters” — the land of the five rivers. So is the fruit drink **punch**, named for its five ingredients. The number was in the language before the lesson was.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **panj** — five
- *Connect:* **panj** ← *\*pénk<sup>w</sup>e* → Greek **pénte**, Latin **quīnque**, English **five**
- *Run through:* **yek**, **do**, **se**, **chahâr**, **panj** — the whole first five

Before you move on

What does the **panj** in **Punjab** mean? (**Five.**)

Sources: Wiktionary: پنج; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## 16.6 Payoff — one to five, out of order

Say **panj**, then **yek**.

### Your turn

A run learned forwards is a rhyme. Break it four ways.

1. Hear each of the five named singly and out of order, and say what it is.
2. Count backwards from **panj** to **yek**.
3. Read the five printed shuffled — **پنج، چهار، یک، دو سه** — and say each.
4. Write **سه**, the one of the five whose letters are already yours.

Then say each number's English cousin: **one, two, three, four, five**. Every one of the five has one, and that is not a coincidence — it is the same set of words, five thousand years apart.

Before you move on

Source: Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## Chapter 17

# Six to Ten, and One Sound Law

Modes: ⇄ voice (5)    👁 eyes (1)    ⇄ Hands-free start: first 3 of 6 lessons.

*By the end of this chapter:* I can say, hear and recognise every Persian number from one to ten, write the two of them made only of letters I have been taught, and explain why haft begins with h where septem begins with s.

*Five more numbers, the Iranian s-to-h rule that explains one of them, the analogy that explains the next, and the whole run of ten shuffled.*

### 17.1 شش — six, and the short vowel you cannot see

Count one to five, then five to one.

You'll want to know first — one word

شش — *shesh* — **six**

Two letters, and they are the same letter. The vowel between them is short, so Persian does not write it — which is the script chapter's rule doing exactly what it said it would: a Persian word can be read only once you have heard it.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

شش continues Middle Persian **shash**, from Indo-European *\*swéks*, “six.” English **six**, Latin **sex**, Greek **hék** and Sanskrit **ṣaṣ** are the same word.

**Your turn**

- *Say it:* **shesh** — six
- *Connect:* **shesh** ← \**swéks* → English **six**, Latin **sex**
- *Run through:* **chahâr**, **panj**, **shesh**

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: شش; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

**17.2 هفت — seven, and the rule behind it**

Say **shesh** and its English cousin.

**You'll want to know first — one word**

هفت — *haft* — **seven**

**The word, taken apart — and its English cousins**

هفت comes from Proto-Iranian \**haptá*, from Indo-European \**septm*, “seven.” Latin **septem**, English **seven** and Sanskrit **saptá** all keep the *s*.

Persian does not, and that is not an accident about this word. **Iranian turned Indo-European *s* into *h* at the front of a word**, everywhere, and once you know that one change a great many Persian words stop looking foreign. Set the pairs side by side:

- Sanskrit **saptá** — Persian **haft**
- Sanskrit **sindhu**, “river” — Persian **hind** (and, through Persian, **India**)
- Sanskrit **soma** — Avestan **haoma**

This is the single most useful sound law in the language for a reader who knows any European one, and a number is where it is easiest to see.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **haft** — seven
- *Connect:* **haft** ← \*septm → Latin **septem**, English **seven**
- *Apply:* *s* at the front becomes *h* — **saptá** → **haft**
- *Run through:* **panj**, **shesh**, **haft**

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: هفت; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## 17.3 هشت — eight, and a rule that does not apply

Say **haft**, and what Iranian did to every word-initial *s*.

### You'll want to know first — one word

هشت — *hasht* — **eight**

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

هشت goes back to Indo-European \**oktōw*, “eight” — Latin **octō**, Greek **oktō**, English **eight**. There is no *s* anywhere in that history, so the rule you learned one lesson ago cannot be what put the **h** on the front. What put it there was *haft* standing next to it. Seven and eight are said together more often than almost any other pair of words, and the *h-* of *haft* spread onto its neighbour. A rule and an exception, one lesson apart, and the exception is the more human of the two.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **hasht** — eight
- *Connect:* **hasht** ← \**oktōw* → Latin **octō**, English **eight**
- *Run through:* **shesh**, **haft**, **hasht**

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: هشت; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## 17.4 ﺋ — nine, and the word it is spelled exactly like

Say **hasht**, and why its **h** is there.

**You’ll want to know first — one word**

ﺋ — *noh* — **nine**

ﻥ and ه. Both are yours from the script chapter, so this is the second of the twelve numbers you can write as well as say — the other was سه.

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ﺋ continues Middle Persian **noh**, from Indo-European *\*h1newn*, “nine.” Latin **novem**, English **nine** and Sanskrit **náva** are the same word. Now look at the spelling against a word from the opening chapter. ﺋ is also *na*, “no” — the same two letters, because the vowel that tells them apart is short and Persian does not write short vowels. Only the sentence separates **nine** from **no**.

This is the clearest case in the book of the trade the script chapter named. Persian writes fewer signs than it says, and the reader pays for it exactly here.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **noh** — nine
- *Connect:* **noh** ← *\*h1newn* → Latin **novem**, English **nine**
- *Write it:* ﺋ — nun, then he
- *Contrast:* the same two letters said **na** are “no”

### Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: ﺋ; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## 17.5 ده — ten, and the building block for nine more numbers

Say **noh** and **haft**, and what ﺋ can also mean.

## You'll want to know first — one word

ده — *dah* — **ten**

### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ده continues Middle Persian **dah**, from Indo-European *\*dekm*, “ten.” Latin **decem** (and through it **decimal**, **December**), English **ten** and Sanskrit **dāśa** are the same word.

Hold on to this one. Persian builds every number from eleven to nineteen by putting a unit in front of **dah** — *yâz-dah*, *si-dah*, *chahâr-dah* — so the next chapter costs one rule rather than nine words. Ten has to be learned before the teens can be, and now it is.

## Your turn

- *Say it:* **dah** — ten
- *Connect:* **dah** ← *\*dekm* → Latin **decem**, English **ten**
- *Run through:* **haft**, **hasht**, **noh**, **dah**

### Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: ده; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## 17.6 Payoff — one to ten

Count one to five, then say what Iranian did to word-initial *s*.

## Your turn

1. Hear all ten named singly and out of order, and say each.
2. Count backwards from **dah** to **yek**.
3. Read the ten printed shuffled and say each.
4. Write ده and نه, the two whose letters the script chapter gave you.
5. Say the English cousin of each of the ten. Every one has one.

Then group them by what happened to the first sound: **haft** shows the *s-to-h* rule, **hasht** borrowed its *h* from **haft**, and **shesh** kept its *s* because the rule only touches the front of a word.

Before you move on

Source: Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## Chapter 18

# The Teens Are a Rule, Not Nine Words

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

*By the end of this chapter:* I can build any number from eleven to nineteen by putting a unit in front of dah, say twenty and a hundred, and write the tenth letter of this book.

*Three teens taught and six built from the rule, then the two round amounts a price actually names — and the one letter a hundred needs that no lesson yet teaches the hand to make.*

### 18.1 یازده — eleven, and one rule for nine numbers

Count one to ten, then say **dah** on its own and what it means.

You'll want to know first — one word, and then a rule

یازده — *yâzdah* — eleven

Say it slowly and the ten is audible at the end: *yâz* + **dah**. The first piece is *yek* worn down; the second is the word for ten you learned in the last lesson.

**That is the whole of the teens.** Persian puts the unit in front of ten and stops:

---

|    |                                             |
|----|---------------------------------------------|
| 12 | <i>davâz-dah</i> — from <i>do</i>           |
| 14 | <i>chahâr-dah</i> — <i>chahâr</i> unchanged |
| 19 | <i>nuz-dah</i> — from <i>noh</i>            |

---

Nine numbers, one rule, and the unit is a number you already have. This is why ten had to come first.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **yâzdah** — eleven
- *Split:* *yâz* + *dah*
- *Build:* *chahâr* + *dah* → **chahârdah**, fourteen

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: **یازده**; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## 18.2 سیزده — thirteen, and how far a unit can bend

Say **yâzdah**, split it in two, and build fourteen.

### You'll want to know first — one word

سیزده — *sizdah* — **thirteen**

*si* + **dah**. The unit is *se*, with its vowel lengthened and darkened — and English does the same thing without anyone noticing: *three* becomes *thir-* in **thirteen**, and *five* becomes *fif-* in **fifteen**.

Listen past the bending, then, and hear what does not bend: **the ten stays the same**, on the end, every time.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **sizdah** — thirteen
- *Split:* *si* + *dah*
- *Compare:* **se** → *si*, as English **three** → *thir-*

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: **سیزده**; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## 18.3 پانزده — fifteen, and the one irregularity worth naming

Say **sizdah** and split it, then say **panj**.

**You'll want to know first — one word**

پانزده — *pânzdah* — **fifteen**

*pân* + *z* + **dah**. There is an **n** in there that *panj* does not have in the place you would expect it, and there is a **z** that came from the *j*.

Sixteen does the same thing: *shânzdah*, from *shesh*. Fifteen and sixteen are the only two of the nine teens that bend this far, and they bend the same way — so it is one irregularity, met once, not two.

**Your turn**

- Say it: **pânzdah** — fifteen
- Say it: **shânzdah** — sixteen, the same bend
- Run through: **yâzdah**, **sizdah**, **pânzdah** and the ten inside each

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: پانزده; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## 18.4 بیست and صد — twenty and a hundred

Say **pânzdah** and **sizdah**, and split each in two.

**You'll want to know first — two words**

بیست — *bîst* — **twenty**

صد — *sad* — **a hundred**

Two words, taken together because a price names one or the other far more often than it names any of the eighteen numbers between them.

صد is two letters and it is the largest number in this book. Its first letter, ص, is one no lesson has taught the hand to make — it enters this book by

eye only, the way most of the track's words have, and reading is what the number needs.

#### The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

بیست goes back to Indo-European *\*wikmtih*, “twenty” — Latin **vīgintī**, Sanskrit *vimshati*.

صد goes back to *\*kmtom*, “hundred” — Latin **centum**, Greek **hekatón**, English **hundred**. The Latin form is the one English borrowed twice over, in **century** and **per cent**, so a reader who has ever seen a percentage has already met **sad**'s cousin.

The spelling is the joke: صد is written with a borrowed Arabic letter for a word that is not Arabic at all.

#### Your turn

- *Say it:* **bist** — twenty; **sad** — a hundred
- *Connect:* **sad** ← *\*kmtom* → Latin **centum**, English **hundred**
- *Run through:* **dah**, **bist**, **sad** — the three round amounts

#### Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: صد; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## 18.5 Payoff — one to twenty, and the hundred above it

Count one to ten, then say a hundred.

#### Your turn

Three of the nine teens were taught. **Build the other six** rather than recalling them.

1. From *do*, *chahâr*, *haft*, *hasht* and *noh*, build twelve, fourteen, seventeen, eighteen and nineteen by putting the unit in front of **dah**. Then check each against a printed list and repair only what missed.
2. Say sixteen, and say which taught number it bends like.

3. Count one to twenty straight through.
4. Hear twelve amounts named singly, from **yek** to **sad**, and say each.

The point of the chapter is that six of these nine numbers were never taught and you can say them anyway. That is what a rule buys and a word list does not.

Before you move on

Source: Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.



## Chapter 19

# The Ten Persian Digits

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) ✍ pen (4) ⇄ Hands-free start: none of the 5 lessons.

*By the end of this chapter:* I can read and write the ten Persian digits, read a price, a page number and a telephone number off an Iranian page, and say which way a number runs inside a right-to-left line.

*Ten signs across four lessons, grouped by what makes each pair hard: the reversed direction, the one-tooth pair, the three Arabic draws differently, and the mirror pair.*

### 19.1 · \ — two digits, and a direction that reverses

Which way does a Persian line run? Say **yek**.

#### Script — the shapes, and the direction

· — *sefr*, zero \ — *yek*, one

Persian has its own ten digit signs, and every price ticket, telephone number and page number in Iran is written in them. A reader who can say **yek** and cannot read \ still cannot read a price.

· is a **dot**, not a ring. Fix that first, because a European eye reads a dot as a decimal point — and Persian's nine is the ring.

Now the part no earlier chapter has had to say: **numbers run left to right, inside a line that runs right to left**. Ten is \ · — one, then zero, in the European order — while the words around it move the other way. The page changes direction at the number and changes back after it.

**Your turn**

- *Write it:* · — a dot; ۱ — a stroke
- *Read it:* ۱· — *dah*, ten, left to right

Before you move on

Sources: Unicode Arabic chart; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

**19.2 ۲ ۳ — one tooth apart**

Write · and ۱, then read ۱·.

**Script — the shapes**

۲ — *do*, two ۳ — *se*, three

۳ is ۲ with one more tooth. That is the whole difference, and it is small enough that the two have to be written as a pair rather than one at a time — say *do* and *se* aloud as the hand makes them and the shapes stop competing.

**Your turn**

- *Write it:* ۲, then ۳ beside it
- *Read it:* ۱۲, ۱۳, ۲۳, left to right

Before you move on

Sources: Unicode Arabic chart; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

**19.3 ۴ ۵ ۶ — the three Persian keeps for itself**

Write ۲ and ۳, and say which has the extra tooth.

**Script — the shapes**

۴ — *chahâr*, four ۵ — *panj*, five ۶ — *shesh*, six

These three are the reason this chapter exists as more than a list.

Seven of the ten digits are drawn the same way in Persian and in Arabic. ۴, ۵ and ۶ are not: Arabic writes those three with quite different shapes. A reader who picked up the digits from an Arabic book will read an Iranian price wrongly at exactly these three places and nowhere else.

If you drill three of the ten harder than the rest, drill these.

### Your turn

- *Write it:* ۴, ۵, ۶, saying *chahâr, panj, shesh*
- *Read it:* ۱۴, ۱۵, ۱۶, left to right

Before you move on

Sources: Unicode Arabic chart; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## 19.4 ∨ ∧ ۹ — a mirror pair, and the ring

Write ۴, ۵, ۶ — the three Arabic draws differently.

### Script — the shapes

∨ — *haft*, seven ∧ — *hasht*, eight ۹ — *noh*, nine

∨ and ∧ are mirror images of each other, one opening upward and one downward. Write them as a pair, every time, and the mirror stops being a problem — the same trick that worked on ۲ and ۳.

۹ is a **ring** with a tail, and this is where a dot-shaped zero pays off. Had · been a ring too, the page would carry two rings and no way to separate them.

Ten signs, four lessons. The set is closed.

### Your turn

- *Write it:* ∨ and ∧ as a pair, then ۹
- *Run through:* · ۱ ۲ ۳ ۴ ۵ ۶ ∨ ∧ ۹ once, slowly

Before you move on

Sources: Unicode Arabic chart; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## 19.5 Payoff — reading the figures

Count one to twenty, then say which way digits run inside a Persian line.

### Your turn

1. Read all ten signs shuffled and say each as a Persian word.
2. Read ۱۰, ۱۱, ۲۰ and ۱۰۰ and say each — *dah*, *yâzdah*, *bist*, *sad*.
3. Hear ten amounts named and write each in Persian figures.
4. Write the ten signs from dictation, out of order, and check ۴, ۵ and ۶ against the models rather than against memory.

Say what a reader can now do that could not be done four chapters ago: read a price, a page number and a telephone number off an Iranian page.

Before you move on

Sources: Unicode Arabic chart; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## Chapter 20

# Which One: the Ordinals

Modes: ⇄ voice (4) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

**By the end of this chapter:** I can say first, second, third and fourth, build the ordinal of any number I can count to, and write two of them from memory.

*One borrowed ordinal at the head of the series, one ending that makes all the rest, and the two forms whose letters chapter 15 already gave.*

### 20.1 اول — first, and the one ordinal Persian did not build

Read ا, ه and او, then say **yek**.

#### You'll want to know first — one word

اول — *avval* — **first**

Counting says *how many*. Ordering says *which one*, and a floor number, a date on a notice, a chapter heading and a queue all need the second.

Three letters — ا, و, ل — and every one of them was taught in the script chapter, so this is the third word in the book you can write from memory without meeting a new sign.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

اول is Arabic, from the root ʔ-w-l. Persian did not build it from *yek*. Every other ordinal in the language *is* built from its own number, as

the next lesson shows. So the series opens with a borrowed word and continues with native ones — the same shape English has in **first** and **second**, which are not built from *one* and *two* either, before **third**, **fourth**, **fifth** fall into line.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **avval** — first
- *Write it:* اول — alef, vâv, lam
- *Contrast:* *yek* counts, اول orders

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: اول; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## 20.2 دوم and سوم — second, third, and one ending

Say **avval**, and where it came from. Then say **do** and **se**.

### You'll want to know first — two words and a rule

دوم — *dovvom* — **second**

سوم — *sevvom* — **third**

**The rule is one ending:** م, **-om**, on the cardinal. *do* + *-om* → *dovvom*; *se* + *-om* → *sevvom*. The consonant doubles at the join, which is the only thing you have to hear.

سوم is written س، و، م — three letters, all yours from the script chapter. That makes it the fourth word in this book you can write unaided, after *se*, *noh* and *avval*, whose written forms the script chapter already gave.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* **dovvom** — second; **sevvom** — third
- *Split:* *do* + *-om*, *se* + *-om*
- *Write it:* سوم — sin, vâv, mim

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: سوم; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## 20.3 چهارم — fourth, with nothing bending

Say the ordinal ending, then **dovvom** and **sevvom**.

**You'll want to know first — one word**

چهارم — *chahârom* — **fourth**

*chahâr* + *-om*, and nothing happens at the join. *panjom*, “fifth,” is the same: the cardinal ends in a consonant, so the ending simply follows it.

*dovvom* and *sevvom* doubled a consonant only because their cardinals end in a vowel. Two and three are the exception; four onwards is the rule, all the way up. *dahom* is “tenth”, *bistom* is “twentieth”, *sadom* is “hundredth.”

So a reader who has twelve cardinals and one ending has twelve ordinals, minus the borrowed first.

**Your turn**

- *Say it:* **chahârom** — fourth
- *Build:* *panj* + *-om* → **panjom**, fifth
- *Build:* *dah* + *-om* → **dahom**, tenth

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: چهارم; Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## 20.4 Payoff — which one

Count one to twenty, then read ۷, ۱۲ and ۱۰۰.

**Your turn**

1. Say the first four in order, then out of order.

2. **Build**, do not recall: fifth, seventh, tenth, twentieth, hundredth, from the cardinals and the ending.
3. Say which one of the whole series is not built that way, and where it came from.
4. Write اول and سوم from memory. Both are made entirely of letters the script chapter taught.
5. Use one: name the floor a room is on, and the day of the month a notice gives.

Before you move on

Source: Omniglot, Numbers in Persian.

## Chapter 21

# Reading — Words, Answers, and the Figures

Modes: 🗣️ voice (2) 👁️ eyes (1) 🗋️ Hands-free start: none of the 3 lessons.

*By the end of this chapter:* I can read a Persian word, an answer and a figure off a page, without anyone saying them first.

*The ten digits read as amounts rather than drawn as shapes — the first Persian a traveller can take off a page without knowing a single letter.*

### 21.1 (reading) — six words, nothing said first

You have written every letter in every one of these. Not one word is new, and not one shape inside them is new either.

What is new is that nobody says them before you read them.

#### Read this

ماه نان نه بله ممنون سلام

Read down the list once. Do not take each word apart — look at the whole shape and let it arrive.

Again, and notice which came at once and which you had to unpick. Both are fine. The difference is what practice removes.

### What to know first

Persian joins its letters, so a word is not five shapes standing in a row. It is one shape.

That is why reading a word cold is a different skill from writing it. Writing, you make the joins one at a time and know what is coming. Reading, the joins are already made and the whole word has to land at once.

Look at نان and نه. Both open with the same letter, and the difference is at the end, which is exactly where a reader is most likely to stop looking.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* the six words down the list, once, without stopping

*Twice through:*

Before you move on

How many of the six were new? (**None.**)

Which two open with the same letter? (نان and نه.)

## 21.2 (reading) — the answers, on the page

The last lesson gave you six words. These are six you would answer with.

Nothing here is new. What is new is meeting them where nobody is speaking.

### Read this

سوم اول سلام ممنون نه بله

Read down once, without stopping.

Again — and notice the list changes halfway. The first four are things you say to a person. The last two are things you read off a door.

### What to know first

اول and سوم are the two you are most likely to meet written before you ever meet them spoken: a floor, a platform, a queue.

That is the argument for reading them now. An answer you can only recognise by ear is one you can only give when somebody asks out loud. The same words on a sign do not wait for you.

Six lines, and the last two are the ones a street will hand you first.

### Your turn

- *Say it:* the six lines, once, in order, without stopping

*Twice through:*

Before you move on

How many of the six were new? (**None.**)

Which two would you read off a door? (سوم and اول.)

## 21.3 (reading) — the figures

Six words, then six answers. These are not words at all.

You drew every one of them. Reading them is the same ten signs coming the other way.

### Read this

• ۱ ۲ ۳ ۴ ۵ ۶ ۷ ۸ ۹ ۱۰ ۲۰ ۱۰۰

Read across each line once, without stopping.

Again — and this time read the last three as amounts rather than as signs. Ten. Twenty. A hundred.

### What to know first

These ten signs are the only Persian most travellers read before they read any word at all. A price, a floor, a platform, a phone number: none of them waits for you to know the letters.

Notice also which way they run. The digits go left to right inside a number even though the words around them run right to left, so ۱۰۰ is a one and two zeros in the order you already expect.

That is the whole trick, and it is why a figure is the first thing a reader can take from a Persian page.

**Your turn**

- *Say it:* the six lines aloud, once, without stopping

*Twice through:*

Before you move on

How many of the ten signs were new? (**None.**)

Which way does a Persian number run? (**Left to right**, inside a line that runs the other way.)

# Pronunciation & Script Reference

A **reference**, not a chapter. Look up a sound when a lesson names it; do not memorize this page first. The lessons introduce Persian script inside language the learner can already understand, one word-sized pattern at a time.

This track uses a learner romanization: **â** marks long *a*; **u** marks the long vowel in *mamnun*. Romanization is temporary scaffolding. Train your eye on the Persian form and gradually cover the Latin line.

## The script in three facts

1. **Read right to left (rtl)**. Words and sentences begin at the right edge.
2. **Most letters join**, and their shape responds to position. Some letters do not connect leftward to the next letter. In سلام, ل creates the visible break before final م.
3. **Short vowels are normally unwritten** (**short-vowels-unwritten**). Learn the vowel pattern with the word. The long vowels are represented with ا *â*, و *u*, and ی *i*.

Persian has no uppercase/lowercase distinction. Its alphabet adds پ *p*, چ *ch*, ژ *zh*, and گ *g* to the inherited Arabic inventory; the lessons will introduce them only when a useful word needs them.

## Sound ids used by the starter lessons

- **Sound id: rtl**  
**What to do:** start at the right edge and follow the word leftward  
**First anchor:** سلام *salâm*

- **Sound id: long-a**  
**What to do:** hold ا as a steady *â*, near the vowel in “father”  
**First anchor:** سلام *salâm*
- **Sound id: long-u**  
**What to do:** hold و as *u*, near “oo” in “food,” without an English off-glide  
**First anchor:** ممنون *mamnun*
- **Sound id: long-i**  
**What to do:** hold ی as long *i* in the learned word  
**First anchor:** چیست *chist*
- **Sound id: short-vowels-unwritten**  
**What to do:** supply learned *a*, *e*, or *o* even when no separate vowel letter appears  
**First anchor:** به *bale*, نه *na*
- **Sound id: ezafe-e**  
**What to do:** say a light linking *-e* after a noun before its owner or description; ordinary text often leaves it unmarked  
**First anchor:** من اسم *esm-e man*
- **Sound id: sh**  
**What to do:** read three-dotted ش as *sh*  
**First anchor:** شما *shomâ*
- **Sound id: persian-che**  
**What to do:** read Persian چ as *ch*  
**First anchor:** چیست *chist*
- **Sound id: kh**  
**What to do:** make خ farther back than English *h*; a gentle approximation is acceptable first  
**First anchor:** خوب *khub*
- **Sound id: gh**  
**What to do:** use the modern Iranian Persian voiced back-of-the-mouth sound for غ  
**First anchor:** خوشوقتم *khoshvaghtam*
- **Sound id: vav-o**  
**What to do:** let و carry the learned *o* value in this word  
**First anchor:** چطور *chetor*

- **Sound id:** persian-question-mark  
**What to do:** recognize ؟ at the left end of a right-to-left question  
**First anchor:** چیست؟ شما اسم
- **Sound id:** alef-madde  
**What to do:** read آ — alef under a wavy *madde* — as a word-initial long *â*  
**First anchor:** آمدن *âmadan*
- **Sound id:** persian-gaf  
**What to do:** read گ *gâf* as English *g* in “go”; it is a Persian addition to the Arabic set  
**First anchor:** گفتن *goftan*
- **Sound id:** persian-pe  
**What to do:** read پ *pe* as English *p*; a ب shape with three dots beneath, and the third of Persian’s four additions  
**First anchor:** پرسیدن *porsidan*
- **Sound id:** silent-vav  
**What to do:** after خ and before ل, leave و unpronounced — it is written, never said  
**First anchor:** خواندن *khândan*
- **Sound id:** ze  
**What to do:** read ز as English *z*; an ordinary letter from the inherited Arabic set  
**First anchor:** زبان *zabân*
- **Sound id:** heh-e  
**What to do:** read a word-final ه as the vowel *-e*, not as a consonant  
**First anchor:** ستاره *setâre*

## Read the current word before the whole alphabet

- سلام gives م ا ل س, right-to-left direction, joining, and long *â*.
- ممنون reuses م, adds و ن, and assigns و its long-*u* job in this word.
- به and نه make the missing short vowels visible by contrast: the spelling supplies a consonantal frame; the learned word supplies *a/e*.
- من اسم است ... recombines familiar letters and adds one spoken grammar cue, ezafe *-e*. The cue is often heard but not printed.

- شما, چیست, and خوشوقتم add *sh*, Persian چ, and the back sounds in خ/غ only inside the name exchange.
- چطور است؟ چطور شما حال reuses ezafe and the Persian question mark; چطور gives و its learned *o* value, while خوبم returns to long-*u*.
- خدا reuses خ and long-*â* ا; حافظ adds a clear initial *h* and a final ظ pronounced *z* in modern Persian. The complete farewell is normally joined in Persian as خداحافظ.
- رفتن, بودن, and دانستن need no new letters at all; the verb chapter adds only آ (alef wearing a *madde*, for a word opening on long *â*) inside آمدن, and گ *gâf* inside گفتن — the second of the four Persian additions گ ژ چ پ the learner has now met.
- The requests, family, and body chapters need only one new letter across all twelve words: ز *ze*, an ordinary member of the inherited Arabic set, inside زبان *zabân*. Every other word in those three chapters — آب, نان, آب, چای, کلید, مادر, پدر, برادر, دختر, چشم, دست, پا — reuses letters already met.
- The next fourteen words — نام, دل, در, کتاب, آسمان, خورشید, ماه, ستاره, دوست, زن, مرد, پسر, خواهر, باران — need no new letters at all, only one new habit: ستاره's final ه carries the vowel *-e* rather than a consonant, the sound id *heh-e*.

One spelling symbol can do more than one job in later words—especially و and ی—so read from the word and context rather than assigning each shape one English value forever.

## Sources

- Persian Online: The Writing System
- Persian Online: Connecting Characters
- Persian Online: Vowels

# Glossary

This glossary collects every word and phrase taught in the book. Pronunciation appears when it differs from the written form; chapter numbers show where each entry is introduced.

آب *âb*

water — and Persian’s first “please”

Introduced in Chapter 9.

آمدن *âmadan*

to come — with the hat-wearing alef and a root English kept as *come*

Introduced in Chapter 6.

آسمان *âsemân*

sky

Introduced in Chapter 13.

اول *avval*

first — an Arabic word standing in front of a Persian series

Introduced in Chapter 20.

بله *bale*

yes

Introduced in Chapter 1.

برادر *barâdar*

brother — the third of Chapter 6’s promised cousins

Introduced in Chapter 10.

باران *bârân*

rain — the chapter’s payoff, and a sky word with no English cousin

Introduced in Chapter 13.

صد بیست *bist sad*

twenty and a hundred — the two amounts a price actually names

Introduced in Chapter 18.

بودن *budan*

to be — and the ending every Persian verb wears

Introduced in Chapter 6.

چهار *chahâr*

four — where a kw became a ch, and English kept the k  
Introduced in Chapter 16.

چهارم *chahârom*

fourth — the rule applied with nothing bending at all  
Introduced in Chapter 20.

چای *chây*

tea — Persian's own leg of the overland road from Chinese  
Introduced in Chapter 9.

چشم *cheshm*

eye — the body part behind the family a doctor's question would ask about  
Introduced in Chapter 11.

چطور *chetor*

how; in what manner  
Introduced in Chapter 4.

چیست *chist*

what is?  
Introduced in Chapter 3.

ده *dah*

ten — and the piece every number from eleven to nineteen is built on  
Introduced in Chapter 17.

دانستن *dânestan*

to know — the chapter's clearest cousin, and the place all five pairs come back  
Introduced in Chapter 6.

در *dar*

door  
Introduced in Chapter 12.

دست *dast*

hand — a regular sound law hiding behind three different-looking Indo-Iranian words  
Introduced in Chapter 11.

دل *del*

heart  
Introduced in Chapter 12.

دو *do*

two — two letters, and the same word as English two  
Introduced in Chapter 16.

دختر *dokhtar*

daughter — Chapter 6's last promised cousin, and the family closes  
Introduced in Chapter 10.

سوم دوم *dovvom sevvom*

second and third — the ending that turns any number into an order  
Introduced in Chapter 20.

دوست *dust*

friend — the standalone noun, and the closing word of this whole tranche  
Introduced in Chapter 14.

داشتن دوست *dust dâshtan*

to like, to love — “to have as friend,” and the place all thirteen verbs run together  
Introduced in Chapter 8.

من اسم است ... *esm-e man ... ast*

my name is ...

Introduced in Chapter 2.

شما اسم چیست؟ *esm-e shomâ chist?*

What is your name? (respectful)

Introduced in Chapter 3.

فهمیدن *fahmidan*

to understand — and the one Persian verb class whose stem you can predict

Introduced in Chapter 7.

کردن فکر *fekr kardan*

to think — two words bolted into one verb, and the pattern that builds hundreds more

Introduced in Chapter 7.

گرفتن *gereftan*

to take — and the clearest English cousin in this book

Introduced in Chapter 8.

گفتن *goftan*

to say — and the Persian-only letter گ that starts it

Introduced in Chapter 6.

حافظ *hâfez*

guardian, protector — the Arabic-rooted half of the farewell

Introduced in Chapter 5.

هفت *haft*

seven — and the one sound change that unlocks half of Persian

Introduced in Chapter 17.

حال *hâl*

state, condition — the state in “How are you?”

Introduced in Chapter 4.

چطور شما حال است؟ *hâl-e shomâ chetor ast?*

How are you? (careful, respectful)

Introduced in Chapter 4.

هشت *hasht*

eight — an h that the rule does not explain

Introduced in Chapter 17.

کلید *kelid*

key — a Greek word Persian has held since Alexander, and the chapter’s payoff

Introduced in Chapter 9.

کتاب *ketâb*

book — an Arabic loan, and the chapter's payoff  
Introduced in Chapter 12.

خواهر *khâhar*

sister — the family word the earlier family tranche left out  
Introduced in Chapter 14.

خواندن *khândan*

to read — and to recite, and to sing, because all three are sounding  
Introduced in Chapter 7.

خدا *khodâ*

God — the inherited Persian half of the standard farewell  
Introduced in Chapter 5.

خداحافظ *khodâ hâfez*

goodbye — the standard Persian farewell  
Introduced in Chapter 5.

خورشید *khorshid*

sun — one root and a second, unrelated one, fused into a single word  
Introduced in Chapter 13.

خوشوقتم *khoshvaghtam*

pleased to meet you  
Introduced in Chapter 3.

خوب *khub*

good, well  
Introduced in Chapter 4.

ممنون خوبم, *khubam, mamnun*

I am well, thank you  
Introduced in Chapter 4.

کردن کمک *komak kardan*

to help — the compound pattern proving itself, and a third layer in the vocabulary  
Introduced in Chapter 8.

مادر *mâdar*

mother — a word Chapter 6 already named as an English cousin, now taught in full  
Introduced in Chapter 10.

ماه *mâh*

moon, and month — one old word doing two jobs, like زبان before it  
Introduced in Chapter 13.

ممنون *mamnun*

thank you / grateful  
Introduced in Chapter 1.

مرد *mard*

man — not English “man,” but “mortal”

Introduced in Chapter 14.

نه *na*

no

Introduced in Chapter 1.

نام *nâm*

name — Persian’s own inherited word, beside the Arabic اسم already learned

Introduced in Chapter 12.

نان *nân*

bread — a word this track cannot trace, and English quietly borrowed anyway

Introduced in Chapter 9.

نوشتن *neveshtan*

to write — the chapter’s last pair, and the place all four run together

Introduced in Chapter 7.

نه *noh*

nine — the second number the hand can already make, and a warning

Introduced in Chapter 17.

پا *pâ*

foot — the corpus’s most secure cognate, unmarked by any sound-law puzzle

Introduced in Chapter 11.

پنج *panj*

five — the number hiding inside Punjab and inside a fruit drink

Introduced in Chapter 16.

پانزده *pânzdah*

fifteen — a nasal that appears out of nowhere, twice

Introduced in Chapter 18.

پدر *pedar*

father — the second cousin Chapter 6 named in passing

Introduced in Chapter 10.

پسر *pesar*

son — دختر’s counterpart, an Indo-Iranian cousin with no English relative

Introduced in Chapter 14.

پرسیدن *porsidan*

to ask — the verb behind a question you have been asking since Chapter 3

Introduced in Chapter 8.

رفتن *raftan*

to go — the verb that shows why every Persian verb comes in two pieces

Introduced in Chapter 6.

سلام *salâm*

hello / peace

Introduced in Chapter 1.

سه *se*

three — the first number this book can already write  
Introduced in Chapter 16.

ستاره *setâre*

star  
Introduced in Chapter 13.

شش *shesh*

six — one letter written twice  
Introduced in Chapter 17.

شما / تو *shomâ / to*

you — respectful or plural / familiar singular  
Introduced in Chapter 3.

سیزده *sizdah*

thirteen — the unit wears down, and the rule still holds  
Introduced in Chapter 18.

یازده *yâzdah*

eleven — and the rule that hands you eight more numbers with it  
Introduced in Chapter 18.

یک *yek*

one — and the Indo-European word English still says as one  
Introduced in Chapter 16.

زبان *zabân*

tongue, and language — the word for the thing you are learning, and the  
tranche's closing review  
Introduced in Chapter 11.

زن *zan*

woman — a root English kept behind a royal title  
Introduced in Chapter 14.

# Review Questions

Try these without looking ahead. Every prompt comes from the same canonical lesson data as its chapter. Answers begin in the next section.

## Chapter 2

**2.1** من اسم است ... — *my name is ...*

Type the careful Persian sentence 'My name is Sara.'

## Chapter 3

**3.1** تو / شما — *two relationships inside "you"*

Type the Persian 'you' safest in a first meeting.

**3.2** چیست — *"what is?" in one joined word*

Join Persian chi + ast into the careful form 'what is?'.

**3.3** شما اسم چیست؟ — *ask a name respectfully*

Type the respectful Persian question 'What is your name?'

**3.4** خوشوقتم — *pleased to meet you*

Type the Persian response 'Pleased to meet you.'

**3.5 Practice** — *a complete Persian name exchange*

After someone asks شما اسم چیست؟, type the careful Persian answer using Sara.

## Chapter 4

**4.1** حال — *the "state" in a wellbeing question*

Type the Persian word meaning 'state' or 'condition'.

**4.2** چطور — *"how?" one layer at a time*

Type the Persian question word meaning 'how?'.

**4.3** است؟ چطور شما حال — *ask “How are you?” respectfully*

Type the careful respectful Persian question ‘How are you?’.

**4.4** خوب — *“good” and “well”*

Type the Persian word meaning ‘good’ or ‘well’.

**4.5** ممنون خوبم، — *“I am well, thank you”*

Reply in Persian: ‘I am well, thank you.’

**4.6 Practice** — *a Persian wellbeing exchange*

After است؟ چطور شما حال, type the polite Persian reply.

## Chapter 5

**5.1** خدا — *the Persian half of a farewell*

Type the Persian word *khodâ*, meaning ‘God’.

**5.2** حافظ — *“guardian” or “protector”*

Type the Persian word *hâfez*, meaning ‘guardian’ or ‘protector’.

**5.3** خداحافظ — *goodbye*

Type the standard Persian expression for ‘goodbye’.

**5.4 Practice** — *open, check, and close*

The short Persian interaction is ending. Type the final expression.

## Chapter 6

**6.1** بودن — *“to be,” and the ending every Persian verb wears*

Type the Persian verb meaning ‘to be’.

**6.2** رفتن — *“to go,” and the second form that travels with it*

Give the present stem that goes with رفتن (*raftan*).

**6.3** آمدن — *“to come,” and an alef that wears a hat*

Type the Persian verb meaning ‘to come’.

**6.4** گفتن — *“to say,” written with a letter Arabic does not have*

Give the present stem that goes with گفتن (*goftan*).

**6.5** دانستن — *“to know,” and five pairs held together*

Give the present stem that goes with دانستن (*dânestan*).

## Chapter 7

**7.1** کردن فکر — “to think,” written as two words

Type the two Persian words that together mean ‘to think’.

**7.2** فهمیدن — “to understand,” and the class that gives its stem away

Give the present stem that goes with فهمیدن (fahmidan).

**7.3** خواندن — “to read,” and a letter that is written but not said

In خواندن, which written letter is not pronounced?

**7.4** نوشتن — “to write,” and four verbs of the mind held together

Give the present stem that goes with نوشتن (neveshtan).

## Chapter 8

**8.1** گرفتن — “to take,” and a cousin you can hear

Give the present stem that goes with گرفتن (gereftan).

**8.2** پرسیدن — “to ask,” and the questions you could already ask

Give the present stem that goes with پرسیدن (porsidan).

**8.3** کمک کردن — “to help,” and the machine on its second run

Type the two Persian words that together mean ‘to help’.

**8.4** داشتن دوست — “to love,” which Persian says as “to have as friend”

Type the two Persian words that together mean ‘to love’.

## Chapter 9

**9.1** آب — water, and Persian’s first “please”

Type the Persian for ‘water, please’.

**9.2** نان — bread, and a root this track cannot trace

Type the Persian word for ‘bread’.

**9.3** چای — tea, and the road that gave everyone but Europe the same word

Type the Persian word for ‘tea’.

**9.4** کلید — key, a Greek word Persian has held for two thousand years

Type the Persian word for ‘key’.

## Chapter 10

**10.1** مادر — *mother, a word this track already promised you*

Type the Persian word for 'mother'.

**10.2** پدر — *father, mādār's oldest partner*

Type the Persian word for 'father'.

**10.3** برادر — *brother, the cousin that never drifted*

Type the Persian word for 'brother'.

**10.4** دختر — *daughter, and the family the بودن lesson promised is complete*

Type the Persian word for 'daughter'.

## Chapter 11

**11.1** چشم — *eye, and what "how are you" was really pointing at*

Type the Persian word for 'eye'.

**11.2** دست — *hand, and a sound law that hides a cousin in plain sight*

Type the Persian word for 'hand'.

**11.3** پا — *foot, the plainest cousin in the whole track*

Type the Persian word for 'foot'.

**11.4** زبان — *tongue, and language, and everything this track has built*

Type the Persian word that means both 'tongue' and 'language'.

## Chapter 12

**12.1** نام — *name, the word Persian never borrowed*

Type the Persian word for 'name' that is NOT the Arabic loan اسم.

**12.2** دل — *heart*

Type the Persian word for 'heart'.

**12.3** در — *door*

Type the Persian word for 'door'.

**12.4** کتاب — *book, and the name exchange this chapter reopens*

Type the Persian word for 'book'.

## Chapter 13

### 13.1 آسمان — *sky*

Type the Persian word for 'sky'.

### 13.2 خورشید — *sun, a word built from two old pieces*

Type the Persian word for 'sun'.

### 13.3 ماه — *moon, and month*

Type the Persian word that means both 'moon' and 'month'.

### 13.4 ستاره — *star*

Type the Persian word for 'star'.

### 13.5 باران — *rain, and the wellbeing question this chapter answers differently*

Type the Persian word for 'rain'.

## Chapter 14

### 14.1 خواهر — *sister, the family word the earlier tranche skipped*

Type the Persian word for 'sister'.

### 14.2 پسر — *son, دختر's missing counterpart*

Type the Persian word for 'son'.

### 14.3 مرد — *man, but its root says "mortal"*

Type the Persian word for 'man'.

### 14.4 زن — *woman, a root hiding behind a royal title*

Type the Persian word for 'woman'.

### 14.5 دوست — *friend, and everything this tranche has built*

Type the Persian word for 'friend'.

## Chapter 15

### 15.1 | — *one stroke, and the direction of the page*

In a Persian word, which letter do you read first — the leftmost or the rightmost?

### 15.2 ل — *alef, with a bowl at its foot*

What is the difference between the letters alef and lâm?

### 15.3 س — *three teeth, then a bowl*

How many teeth does the letter sin have before its bowl?

### 15.4 م — *a loop, and a tail below the line*

What part of mim drops below the writing line?

**15.5** *Letters that hold hands, and two that will not*

You see a gap in the middle of a Persian word. What is the likeliest reason?

**15.6** ب — *a bowl, and one dot underneath*

Where does the dot of be sit — above the bowl or below it?

**15.7** ت and ن — *the same bowl, dotted differently*

A bowl with two dots above it — which letter is that?

**15.8** ه — *the letter with four costumes*

What does the letter he usually sound like at the END of a Persian word?

**15.9** و — *one shape, three jobs, and no hand offered to the left*

Which other letter in this chapter behaves like vâv, joining on the right but never on the left?

**15.10** *Practice — seven words you already knew, now read*

Persian writes its long vowels but usually leaves out the short ones. What does that mean for reading a word you have never heard?

## Chapter 16

**16.1** یک — *one, and the first number this book has ever taught*

Type the Persian word for 'one'.

**16.2** دو — *two, and a letter doing its third job*

Type the Persian word for 'two'.

**16.3** سه — *three, and the first number the hand can make*

Write the Persian word for 'three', using the two letters the script chapter taught.

**16.4** چهار — *four, and one consonant taking three different paths*

Type the Persian word for 'four'.

**16.5** پنج — *five, and the word you have already met on a map*

Count aloud from one to five in Persian.

**16.6** *Payoff — one to five, out of order*

Count backwards from five to one in Persian.

## Chapter 17

**17.1** شش — *six, and the short vowel you cannot see*

How many letters are in شش, and how many sounds?

**17.2** هفت — *seven, and the rule behind it*

Latin has septem and Persian has haft. What happened to the s?

**17.3** هشت — *eight, and a rule that does not apply*

Why does hasht begin with h, when octo and eight do not?

**17.4** نه — *nine, and the word it is spelled exactly like*

نه can be read two ways. Give both.

**17.5** ده — *ten, and the building block for nine more numbers*

Type the Persian word for 'ten'.

**17.6** Payoff — *one to ten*

Count aloud from one to ten in Persian.

## Chapter 18

**18.1** یازده — *eleven, and one rule for nine numbers*

Build fourteen from chahâr and dah.

**18.2** سیزده — *thirteen, and how far a unit can bend*

Which part of sizdah never changes across the teens?

**18.3** پانزده — *fifteen, and the one irregularity worth naming*

Which other teen bends the same way as pânzdah?

**18.4** بیست and صد — *twenty and a hundred*

Say ten, twenty and a hundred in Persian.

**18.5** Payoff — *one to twenty, and the hundred above it*

Build seventeen and nineteen from haft, noh and dah.

## Chapter 19

**19.1** ۰ ۱ — *two digits, and a direction that reverses*

A Persian line runs right to left. Which way do the digits inside it run?

**19.2** ۲ ۳ — *one tooth apart*

Write the Persian digit for three, then the digit for two.

**19.3** ۴ ۵ ۶ — *the three Persian keeps for itself*

Write the three Persian digits that Arabic draws differently.

**19.4** ۷ ۸ ۹ — *a mirror pair, and the ring*

Which two Persian digits are mirror images of each other?

**19.5** Payoff — *reading the figures*

Write a hundred in Persian figures.

## Chapter 20

**20.1** اول — *first, and the one ordinal Persian did not build*

Is avval built from the Persian word for one?

**20.2** دوم and سوم — *second, third, and one ending*

What ending turns a Persian cardinal into an ordinal?

**20.3** چهارم — *fourth, with nothing bending*

Build tenth and twentieth from dah and bist.

**20.4** Payoff — *which one*

Say first, second, third, fourth in Persian.

## Chapter 21

**21.1** (*reading*) — *six words, nothing said first*

Which word is bread?

**21.2** (*reading*) — *the answers, on the page*

Which line would be on the first floor?

**21.3** (*reading*) — *the figures*

What number is on the last line?

# Answer Key

The first response is the canonical display answer. When a question accepts other authored forms, they appear underneath.

## Chapter 2

2.1 من اسم است ... — *my name is ...*

Answer: است سارا من اسم

Also accepted: esm-e man Sara ast; esm-e man Sârâ ast

## Chapter 3

3.1 تو / شما — *two relationships inside “you”*

Answer: شما

Also accepted: shoma; shomâ; shomâ

3.2 چیست — *“what is?” in one joined word*

Answer: چیست

Also accepted: chist; chîst

3.3 چیست؟ شما اسم — *ask a name respectfully*

Answer: چیست؟ شما اسم

Also accepted: چیست شما اسم; esm-e shoma chist; esm-e shomâ chist

3.4 خوشوقتم — *pleased to meet you*

Answer: خوشوقتم

Also accepted: khoshvaghtam; khoshvaqtam

3.5 Practice — *a complete Persian name exchange*

Answer: است سارا من اسم

Also accepted: esm-e man Sara ast; esm-e man Sârâ ast

## Chapter 4

### 4.1 حال — *the “state” in a wellbeing question*

Answer: حال

Also accepted: hal; hâl; hāl

### 4.2 چطور — *“how?” one layer at a time*

Answer: چطور

Also accepted: chetor; chetowr

### 4.3 است؟ چطور شما حال — *ask “How are you?” respectfully*

Answer: است؟ چطور شما حال

Also accepted: است؟ چطور شما حال; hal-e shoma chetor ast; hâl-e shomâ chetor ast

### 4.4 خوب — *“good” and “well”*

Answer: خوب

Also accepted: khub; khûb; khoob

### 4.5 ممنون خوبم، — *“I am well, thank you”*

Answer: ممنون خوبم،

Also accepted: ممنون خوبم; khubam mamnun; khûbam mamnûn

### 4.6 Practice — *a Persian wellbeing exchange*

Answer: ممنون خوبم،

Also accepted: ممنون خوبم; khubam mamnun; khûbam mamnûn

## Chapter 5

### 5.1 خدا — *the Persian half of a farewell*

Answer: خدا

Also accepted: khoda; khodâ; xodâ; xoda

### 5.2 حافظ — *“guardian” or “protector”*

Answer: حافظ

Also accepted: hafez; hâfez; hâfez; hafiz

### 5.3 خداحافظ — *goodbye*

Answer: خداحافظ

Also accepted: khodahafez; khoda hafez; khodâ hâfez; khodâ hâfez; xodâhâfez

### 5.4 Practice — *open, check, and close*

Answer: خداحافظ

Also accepted: khodahafez; khoda hafez; khodâ hâfez; khodâ hâfez

## Chapter 6

### 6.1 بودن — *“to be,” and the ending every Persian verb wears*

Answer: بودن

Also accepted: budan; būdan

6.2 رفتن — “to go,” and the second form that travels with it

Answer: رو

Also accepted: rav; raw; rav-; ro

6.3 آمدن — “to come,” and an alef that wears a hat

Answer: آمدن

Also accepted: amadan; âmadan; āmadan

6.4 گفتن — “to say,” written with a letter Arabic does not have

Answer: گو

Also accepted: gu; gu-; gū; goo

6.5 دانستن — “to know,” and five pairs held together

Answer: دان

Also accepted: dan; dân; dān; dan-

## Chapter 7

7.1 کردن فکر — “to think,” written as two words

Answer: کردن فکر

Also accepted: fekr kardan; fikr kardan; fekr-kardan

7.2 فهمیدن — “to understand,” and the class that gives its stem away

Answer: فهم

Also accepted: fahm; fahm-; fehm

7.3 خواندن — “to read,” and a letter that is written but not said

Answer: و

Also accepted: vav; waw; v; the vav

7.4 نوشتن — “to write,” and four verbs of the mind held together

Answer: نویس

Also accepted: nevis; nevis-; nivis; navis

## Chapter 8

8.1 گرفتن — “to take,” and a cousin you can hear

Answer: گیر

Also accepted: gir; gir-; gīr; geer

8.2 پرسیدن — “to ask,” and the questions you could already ask

Answer: پرس

Also accepted: pors; pors-; purs; pursh

8.3 کردن کمک — “to help,” and the machine on its second run

Answer: کردن کمک

Also accepted: komak kardan; komak-kardan; kumak kardan

8.4 داشتن دوست — *“to love,” which Persian says as “to have as friend”*

Answer: داشتن دوست

Also accepted: dust dashtan; dust dâshtan; dost dashtan; doost dashtan; dūst dāštan

## Chapter 9

9.1 آب — *water, and Persian’s first “please”*

Answer: لطفاً آب،

Also accepted: ab lotfan; âb, lotfan; ab, lotfan; āb lotfan

9.2 نان — *bread, and a root this track cannot trace*

Answer: نان

Also accepted: nan; nân; nān

9.3 چای — *tea, and the road that gave everyone but Europe the same word*

Answer: چای

Also accepted: chay; chây; chai

9.4 کلید — *key, a Greek word Persian has held for two thousand years*

Answer: کلید

Also accepted: kelid; kalid; kelīd

## Chapter 10

10.1 مادر — *mother, a word this track already promised you*

Answer: مادر

Also accepted: madar; mādār; mādār

10.2 پدر — *father, mādār’s oldest partner*

Answer: پدر

Also accepted: pedar; pidar

10.3 برادر — *brother, the cousin that never drifted*

Answer: برادر

Also accepted: baradar; barādar; barādar

10.4 دختر — *daughter, and the family the بودن lesson promised is complete*

Answer: دختر

Also accepted: dokhtar; dukhtar; duxtar

## Chapter 11

11.1 چشم — *eye, and what “how are you” was really pointing at*

Answer: چشم

Also accepted: cheshm; chashm

11.2 دست — *hand, and a sound law that hides a cousin in plain sight*

Answer: دست

Also accepted: dast

11.3 پا — *foot, the plainest cousin in the whole track*

Answer: پا

Also accepted: pa; pâ; pā

11.4 زبان — *tongue, and language, and everything this track has built*

Answer: زبان

Also accepted: zaban; zabân; zabān

## Chapter 12

12.1 نام — *name, the word Persian never borrowed*

Answer: نام

Also accepted: nam; nām; nān

12.2 دل — *heart*

Answer: دل

Also accepted: del; dil

12.3 در — *door*

Answer: در

Also accepted: dar

12.4 کتاب — *book, and the name exchange this chapter reopens*

Answer: کتاب

Also accepted: ketab; ketâb; kitab

## Chapter 13

13.1 آسمان — *sky*

Answer: آسمان

Also accepted: aseman; âsemân; asman

13.2 خورشید — *sun, a word built from two old pieces*

Answer: خورشید

Also accepted: khورشid; xorshid

13.3 ماه — *moon, and month*

Answer: ماه

Also accepted: mah; mâh; māh

13.4 ستاره — *star*

Answer: ستاره

Also accepted: setare; setâre; sitare

**13.5** باران — *rain, and the wellbeing question this chapter answers differently*

**Answer:** باران

**Also accepted:** baran; bârân

## Chapter 14

**14.1** خواهر — *sister, the family word the earlier tranche skipped*

**Answer:** خواهر

**Also accepted:** khahar; khâhar; xahar

**14.2** پسر — *son, دختر's missing counterpart*

**Answer:** پسر

**Also accepted:** pesar

**14.3** مرد — *man, but its root says "mortal"*

**Answer:** مرد

**Also accepted:** mard

**14.4** زن — *woman, a root hiding behind a royal title*

**Answer:** زن

**Also accepted:** zan

**14.5** دوست — *friend, and everything this tranche has built*

**Answer:** دوست

**Also accepted:** dust; dost; doost

## Chapter 15

**15.1** | — *one stroke, and the direction of the page*

**Answer:** the rightmost

**Also accepted:** rightmost; the right one; the one on the right; right

**15.2** ل — *alef, with a bowl at its foot*

**Answer:** lam has a bowl at the foot

**Also accepted:** the bowl at the bottom; lam curves at the foot; a curve at the bottom; lam has a curve

**15.3** س — *three teeth, then a bowl*

**Answer:** 3

**Also accepted:** three; 3 teeth; three teeth

**15.4** م — *a loop, and a tail below the line*

**Answer:** the tail

**Also accepted:** its tail; the tail below the loop; the descender

**15.5** Letters that hold hands, and two that will not

**Answer:** a letter that does not join to the left

**Also accepted:** a non-joining letter; a letter that refuses to join; alef or another non-joiner; a letter that only joins on the right

**15.6** ب — *a bowl, and one dot underneath*

**Answer:** below

**Also accepted:** below it; underneath; beneath the bowl; under

**15.7** ت and ن — *the same bowl, dotted differently*

**Answer:** te

**Also accepted:** ت; t; the letter te

**15.8** ه — *the letter with four costumes*

**Answer:** a final e

**Also accepted:** an e; the e sound; e; a soft e vowel

**15.9** و — *one shape, three jobs, and no hand offered to the left*

**Answer:** alef

**Also accepted:** ا; the letter alef; alif

**15.10 Practice** — *seven words you already knew, now read*

**Answer:** you cannot reliably sound it out

**Also accepted:** you cannot sound it out; you have to know the word already; you cannot be sure of the vowels; reading and listening must grow together

## Chapter 16

**16.1** یک — *one, and the first number this book has ever taught*

**Answer:** یک

**Also accepted:** yek; yak

**16.2** دو — *two, and a letter doing its third job*

**Answer:** دو

**Also accepted:** do; dō

**16.3** سه — *three, and the first number the hand can make*

**Answer:** سه

**Also accepted:** se; sē

**16.4** چهار — *four, and one consonant taking three different paths*

**Answer:** چهار

**Also accepted:** chahar; chahâr

**16.5** پنج — *five, and the word you have already met on a map*

**Answer:** yek do se chahâr panj

**Also accepted:** yek, do, se, chahâr, panj; yek do se chahar panj; yek, do, se, chahar, panj

**16.6 Payoff** — *one to five, out of order*

**Answer:** panj chahâr se do yek

**Also accepted:** panj, chahâr, se, do, yek; panj chahar se do yek; panj, chahar, se, do, yek

## Chapter 17

**17.1** شش — *six, and the short vowel you cannot see*

**Answer:** two letters, three sounds

**Also accepted:** 2 letters 3 sounds; two letters and three sounds

**17.2** هفت — *seven, and the rule behind it*

**Answer:** it became h

**Also accepted:** s became h; it became an h; s > h

**17.3** هشت — *eight, and a rule that does not apply*

**Answer:** it copied haft

**Also accepted:** from haft next to it; haft spread its h; because of haft

**17.4** نه — *nine, and the word it is spelled exactly like*

**Answer:** noh, nine; na, no

**Also accepted:** noh nine and na no; nine and no; na = no, noh = nine

**17.5** ده — *ten, and the building block for nine more numbers*

**Answer:** ده

**Also accepted:** dah

**17.6** Payoff — *one to ten*

**Answer:** yek do se chahâr panj shesh haft hasht noh dah

**Also accepted:** yek, do, se, chahâr, panj, shesh, haft, hasht, noh, dah; yek do se chahar panj shesh haft hasht noh dah

## Chapter 18

**18.1** یازده — *eleven, and one rule for nine numbers*

**Answer:** chahârdah

**Also accepted:** chahardah; chahâr dah; chahârdah — fourteen

**18.2** سیزده — *thirteen, and how far a unit can bend*

**Answer:** dah

**Also accepted:** -dah; the dah; the ten

**18.3** پانزده — *fifteen, and the one irregularity worth naming*

**Answer:** shânzdah

**Also accepted:** shanzdah; sixteen; shânzdah, sixteen

**18.4** بیست and صد — *twenty and a hundred*

**Answer:** dah bist sad

**Also accepted:** dah, bist, sad

**18.5** Payoff — *one to twenty, and the hundred above it*

**Answer:** hifdah nuzdah

**Also accepted:** hifdah, nuzdah; haftdah nohdah; hifdah and nuzdah

## Chapter 19

**19.1** ۰ ۱ — *two digits, and a direction that reverses*

**Answer:** left to right

**Also accepted:** left-to-right; the other way, left to right

**19.2** ۲ ۳ — *one tooth apart*

**Answer:** ۲ ۲

**Also accepted:** ۳ ۲; ۳۲

**19.3** ۴ ۵ ۶ — *the three Persian keeps for itself*

**Answer:** ۴ ۵ ۶

**Also accepted:** ۴ ۵ ۶; ۴۵۶; four five six

**19.4** ۷ ۸ ۹ — *a mirror pair, and the ring*

**Answer:** ۷ and ۸

**Also accepted:** seven and eight; ۷ ۸; haft and hasht

**19.5** *Payoff* — *reading the figures*

**Answer:** ۱۰۰

**Also accepted:** ۱۰۰ sad; ۱۰۰ sad

## Chapter 20

**20.1** اول — *first, and the one ordinal Persian did not build*

**Answer:** no

**Also accepted:** no, it is Arabic; no — it is borrowed from Arabic; it is Arabic

**20.2** دوم and سوم — *second, third, and one ending*

**Answer:** -om

**Also accepted:** om; the suffix -om; م, -om

**20.3** چهارم — *fourth, with nothing bending*

**Answer:** dahom bistom

**Also accepted:** dahom, bistom; dahom and bistom

**20.4** *Payoff* — *which one*

**Answer:** avval dovvom sevvom chahârom

**Also accepted:** avval, dovvom, sevvom, chahârom; avval dovvom sevvom chaharom; avval, dovvom, sevvom, chaharom

## Chapter 21

**21.1** (*reading*) — *six words, nothing said first*

**Answer:** nan

**Also accepted:** نان; nān

**21.2** (*reading*) — *the answers, on the page*

**Answer:** avval

**Also accepted:** اول; first

**21.3** (*reading*) — *the figures*

**Answer:** 100

**Also accepted:** ۱۰۰; hundred; sad

## A note on sources

Script descriptions follow the University of Texas at Austin Persian Online writing-system materials; its open greetings vocabulary grounds the Chapter 4 wellbeing forms and the Chapter 5 farewell.



# Index

Look up an English meaning, a dedicated language topic, or a chapter topic. Each linked reference opens the chapter where the material is introduced; the focus labels name only explicitly typed lesson sections.

## A

### **Ask and Answer Names**

chapter topic; Chapter 3, p. 11

## B

### **book — an Arabic loan, and the chapter's payoff** كتاب (ketâb)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 12, p. 69

### **bread — a word this track cannot trace, and English quietly**

### **borrowed anyway** نان (nân)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 9, p. 51

### **brother — the third of Chapter 6's promised**

### **cousins** برادر (barâdar)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 10, p. 57

## D

### **daughter — Chapter 6's last promised cousin, and the family**

### **closes** دختر (dokhtar)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 10, p. 57

### **door** در (dar)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 12, p. 69

## E

**eight** — **an h that the rule does not explain** هشت (hasht)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 17, p. 107

**eleven** — **and the rule that hands you eight more numbers with**

**it** یازده (yâzdah)

Chapter 18, p. 113

**Eye, Hand, Foot, Tongue**

chapter topic; Chapter 11, p. 63

**eye** — **the body part behind the family a doctor's question**

**would ask about** چشم (cheshm)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 11, p. 63

## F

**father** — **the second cousin Chapter 6 named in**

**passing** پدر (pedar)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 10, p. 57

**fifteen** — **a nasal that appears out of nowhere,**

**twice** پانزده (pânzdah)

Chapter 18, p. 113

**first** — **an Arabic word standing in front of a Persian**

**series** اول (avval)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 20, p. 123

**five** — **the number hiding inside Punjab and inside a fruit**

**drink** پنج (panj)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 16, p. 101

**foot** — **the corpus's most secure cognate, unmarked by any**

**sound-law puzzle** پا (pâ)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 11, p. 63

**Four Verbs of the Mind**

chapter topic; Chapter 7, p. 35

**four** — **where a kw became a ch, and English kept the**

**k** چهار (chahâr)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 16, p. 101

**fourth** — **the rule applied with nothing bending at**

**all** چهارم (chahârom)

Chapter 20, p. 123

**friend** — **the standalone noun, and the closing word of this whole**

**tranche** دوست (dust)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 14, p. 81

## G

**Give your name**

chapter topic; Chapter 2, p. 9

**God — the inherited Persian half of the standard****farewell** خدا (khodâ)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 5, p. 23

**good, well** خوب (khub)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 4, p. 17

**goodbye — the standard Persian farewell** خداحافظ (khodâ hâfez)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 5, p. 23

**Greetings and responses**

chapter topic; Chapter 1, p. 1

**guardian, protector — the Arabic-rooted half of the****farewell** حافظ (hâfez)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 5, p. 23

## H

**hand — a regular sound law hiding behind three****different-looking Indo-Iranian words** دست (dast)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 11, p. 63

**heart** دل (del)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 12, p. 69

**hello / peace** سلام (salâm)

explicit focus: writing, etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 1, p. 1

**How Are You?**

chapter topic; Chapter 4, p. 17

**How are you? (careful, respectful)** است؟ چطور شما حال (hâl-e shomâ

chetor ast?)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 4, p. 17

**how; in what manner** چطور (chetor)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 4, p. 17

## I

**I am well, thank you** ممنون خوبم، (khubam, mamnun)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 4, p. 17

## K

**key — a Greek word Persian has held since Alexander, and the chapter’s payoff** کلید (kelid)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 9, p. 51

## L

**Letters that hold hands, and two that will not**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 15, p. 89

## M

**man — not English “man,” but “mortal”** مرد (mard)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 14, p. 81

**moon, and month — one old word doing two jobs, like** زیان before it ماه (mâh)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 13, p. 75

**mother — a word Chapter 6 already named as an English cousin, now taught in full** مادر (mâdar)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 10, p. 57

**Mother, Father, Brother, Daughter**

chapter topic; Chapter 10, p. 57

**my name is ...** است ... من اسم (esm-e man ... ast)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 2, p. 9

## N

**Name a Verb, Find Its Stem**

chapter topic; Chapter 6, p. 27

**Name, Heart, Door, Book**

chapter topic; Chapter 12, p. 69

**name — Persian’s own inherited word, beside the Arabic** اسم (nâm)

**already learned** نام (nâm)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 12, p. 69

**Nine Letters, and the Words You Already Knew**

chapter topic; Chapter 15, p. 89

**nine — the second number the hand can already make, and a warning** نه (noh)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 17, p. 107

**no** نه (na)

explicit focus: script, etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 1, p. 1

## O

**one — and the Indo-European word English still says as**

**one** یک (yek)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 16, p. 101

**One to Five, and the Words English Already Says**

chapter topic; Chapter 16, p. 101

## P

**Please: Water, Bread, Tea, Key**

chapter topic; Chapter 9, p. 51

**pleased to meet you** خوشوقتم (khoshvaghtam)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 3, p. 11

## R

**rain — the chapter's payoff, and a sky word with no English**

**cousin** باران (bârân)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 13, p. 75

**Reading — Words, Answers, and the Figures**

chapter topic; Chapter 21, p. 127

## S

**second and third — the ending that turns any number into an**

**order** سوم دوم (dovvom sevvom)

Chapter 20, p. 123

**seven — and the one sound change that unlocks half of**

**Persian** هفت (haft)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 17, p. 107

**Sister, Son, Man, Woman, Friend**

chapter topic; Chapter 14, p. 81

**sister — the family word the earlier family tranche left**

**out** خواهر (khâhar)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 14, p. 81

**six — one letter written twice** شش (shesh)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 17, p. 107

**Six to Ten, and One Sound Law**

chapter topic; Chapter 17, p. 107

**sky** آسمان (âsemân)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 13, p. 75

**Sky, Sun, Moon, Star, Rain**

chapter topic; Chapter 13, p. 75

**son** — دختر's counterpart, an Indo-Iranian cousin with no English**relative** پسر (pesar)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 14, p. 81

**star** ستاره (setâre)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 13, p. 75

**state, condition** — the state in “How are you?” حال (hâl)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 4, p. 17

**sun** — one root and a second, unrelated one, fused into a single**word** خورشید (khorshid)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 13, p. 75

**T****Take Leave**

chapter topic; Chapter 5, p. 23

**Taking, Asking, Helping, Loving**

chapter topic; Chapter 8, p. 43

**tea** — Persian's own leg of the overland road from**Chinese** چای (chây)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 9, p. 51

**ten** — and the piece every number from eleven to nineteen is**built on** ده (dah)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 17, p. 107

**thank you / grateful** ممنون (mamnun)

explicit focus: script, etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 1, p. 1

**The Teens Are a Rule, Not Nine Words**

chapter topic; Chapter 18, p. 113

**The Ten Persian Digits**

chapter topic; Chapter 19, p. 119

**thirteen** — the unit wears down, and the rule still**holds** سیزده (sizdah)

Chapter 18, p. 113

**three** — the first number this book can already write سه (se)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 16, p. 101

**to ask** — the verb behind a question you have been asking since**Chapter 3** پرسیدن (porsidan)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 8, p. 43

**to be** — and the ending every Persian verb wears بودن (budan)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 6, p. 27

- to come** — with the hat-wearing alef and a root English kept as *come* آمدن (âmadan)  
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 6, p. 27
- to go** — the verb that shows why every Persian verb comes in two pieces رفتن (raftan)  
explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 6, p. 27
- to help** — the compound pattern proving itself, and a third layer in the vocabulary کردن کمک (komak kardan)  
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 8, p. 43
- to know** — the chapter's clearest cousin, and the place all five pairs come back دانستن (dânestan)  
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 6, p. 27
- to like, to love** — “to have as friend,” and the place all thirteen verbs run together داشتن دوست (dust dâshtan)  
explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 8, p. 43
- to read** — and to recite, and to sing, because all three are sounding خواندن (khândan)  
explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 7, p. 35
- to say** — and the Persian-only letter گ that starts it گفتن (goftan)  
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 6, p. 27
- to take** — and the clearest English cousin in this book گرفتن (gereftan)  
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 8, p. 43
- to think** — two words bolted into one verb, and the pattern that builds hundreds more کردن فکر (fekr kardan)  
explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 7, p. 35
- to understand** — and the one Persian verb class whose stem you can predict فهمیدن (fahmidan)  
explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 7, p. 35
- to write** — the chapter's last pair, and the place all four run together نوشتن (neveshtan)  
explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 7, p. 35
- tongue, and language** — the word for the thing you are learning, and the tranche's closing review زبان (zabân)  
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 11, p. 63
- twenty and a hundred** — the two amounts a price actually names صد بیست (bist sad)  
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 18, p. 113
- two** — two letters, and the same word as English two دو (do)  
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 16, p. 101

## W

**water — and Persian’s first “please”** آب (âb)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 9, p. 51

**what is?** چیست (chist)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 3, p. 11

**What is your name? (respectful)** چیست؟ شما اسم (esm-e shomâ chist?)

explicit focus: script; Chapter 3, p. 11

**Which One: the Ordinals**

chapter topic; Chapter 20, p. 123

**woman — a root English kept behind a royal title** زن (zan)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 14, p. 81

## Y

**yes** بله (bale)

explicit focus: script, usage and culture; Chapter 1, p. 1

**you — respectful or plural / familiar singular** شما / تو (shomâ / to)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 3, p. 11

## Other

**| — one stroke, and the direction of the page**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 15, p. 89

**| — one stroke with the model covered**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: writing; Chapter 1, p. 1

**| — one stroke with the model present**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 1, p. 1

**| — the stroke from the sound**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: writing; Chapter 1, p. 1

**ب — a bowl, and one dot underneath**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 15, p. 89

**ت and ن — the same bowl, dotted differently**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 15, p. 89

**س — three teeth, then a bowl**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 15, p. 89

**ل — alef, with a bowl at its foot**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 15, p. 89

**م — a loop, and a tail below the line**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 15, p. 89

**ه — the letter with four costumes**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 15, p. 89

**۹ — one shape, three jobs, and no hand offered to the left**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 15, p. 89

**• ۱ — two digits, and a direction that reverses**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 19, p. 119

**۲ ۳ — one tooth apart**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 19, p. 119

**۴ ۵ ۶ — the three Persian keeps for itself**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 19, p. 119

**۷ ۸ ۹ — a mirror pair, and the ring**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 19, p. 119