

Arabic is the language of a rich culture and civilization dating back many centuries. Arabic is spoken by over 350 million people, in an area extending from the Arabian Gulf in the east to the Atlantic Ocean in the west. Arabic is spoken by many of the more than four million people of Arab origin living in the United States and Canada. The United Nations adopted Arabic as one of its six official languages in 1974.

In addition to the Palestinians, the governments of twenty one countries list Arabic as their dominant mode of expression: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Arabic alphabet is used in many other languages such as Urdu and Persian. Our lives are vitally connected to the societies of the Middle East.

The study of Arabic gives profound insights into the cultural, religious, and political forces which motivate the inhabitants of that dynamic region—insights that our monolingual media seldom provide. A good knowledge of Arabic will greatly enhance the enjoyment of your travels to the world's greatest archeological sites.

In the Jacksonville community there is strong support for Arabic instruction. The Arabic population is listed at 70,000 in Jacksonville representing nearly 9% of the population. Jacksonville ranks twelfth largest in the percentage of Arab Americans among all U.S. cities.

The study of Arabic also offers our students employment opportunities in the military and the diplomatic corps. Proficiency in Arabic provides a valuable link to the rich cultural heritage for young people in our community. In addition to this, exposure to a critical language like Arabic provides students with a unique set of skills which are beneficial in mastery of challenging academic subjects.