

**Persian
Reading
and
Writing**

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PRESS

Table of Contents

Dedication and Acknowledgments	iii
Table of Contents	v
Preliminaries	ix
Chapter 1: The Persian Writing System	1
§1.1. Basic Letter Shapes #1 and Words	3
§1.1.1. <i>Jim</i> and <i>Aléf</i>	3
§1.1.2. <i>Vâv</i>	3
§1.1.3-4. <i>Ye, Mim</i>	4
§1.1.5. <i>Jim, Aléf, Vâv, Ye, and Mim</i> Matching Exercise	4
§1.1.6. <i>Jim, Aléf, Vâv, Ye, and Mim</i> Map Exercise	4
§1.1.7. Handwriting Exercise #1: <i>jim, aléf, vâv, ye, and mim</i>	5
§1.2. Basic Letter Shapes #2 and Words	6
§1.2.1-3. <i>Te, Ze, Sin</i>	6
§1.2.4. <i>Te, Ze, and Sin</i> Visa Application Exercise	7
§1.2.5. Handwriting Exercise #2: <i>te, ze, and sin</i>	7
§1.2.6. <i>/... ast/ [he/she/it is]</i>	7
§1.3. Basic Letter Shapes #3 and Words	8
§1.3.1-4. <i>Lâm, Tâ, Kâf, Fe</i>	8
§1.3.5. <i>Lâm, Tâ, Kâf, and Fe</i> Letter Envelope Exercise	9
§1.3.6. Handwriting Exercise #3: <i>lâm, tâ, kâf, and fe</i>	9
§1.3.7. A Question about <i>/...ast/</i>	9
§1.4. Vowel Letters	10
§1.4.1. <i>Aléf, Vâv, and Ye</i>	10
§1.4.2. <i>He</i>	10
§1.4.3. Vowel Letters and <i>He</i> Letter Envelope Reading Exercise	11
§1.4.4. Handwriting Exercise #4: Vowel Letters and <i>He</i>	11
§1.5. Basic Letter Shapes #4 and Words	12
§1.5.1-5. <i>Dâl, Shin, Gâf, Che, Nun</i>	12
§1.5.6. <i>Dâl, Shin, Gâf, Che, and Nun</i> Restaurant Menu Exercise	13
§1.5.7. Handwriting Exercise #5: <i>dâl, shin, gâf, che, and nun</i>	13
§1.6. <i>Aléf, Vâv</i> and <i>Ye</i>	14
§1.6.1. Word-initial <i>Aléf</i>	14
§1.6.2. Word-initial <i>Ye</i>	14
§1.6.3. Word-initial <i>Vâv</i>	14
§1.6.4. Sentence Writing Practice	15
§1.7. Basic Letter Shapes #5 and Words	16
§1.7.1. <i>Re</i>	16
§1.7.2. Reading Words and Sentences	16
§1.7.3. The Suffix <i>/ast/ [is]</i> in Colloquial/Spoken and Literary/Written Registers	17
§1.7.4. ' <i>Ayn</i>	18
§1.7.5. ' <i>Ayn</i> Recognition Exercise	18
§1.7.6. Handwriting Exercise #6: <i>aléf, vâv, ye, re, and 'ayn</i>	18
§1.8. Conjunctions for "and" and "or" (in Persian)	19

§1.9.	Twenty Letters of the Persian Alphabet Described to This Point	20
§1.9.1.	Handwriting Exercise #7: Twenty Letters in the Persian Alphabet	21
§1.10.	The Remaining Twelve Letters in the Persian Alphabet	22
§1.10.1.	<i>Be, Pe, and Se</i>	22
§1.10.2.	<i>Hé-ye Jimí and Khe</i>	22
§1.10.3.	<i>Be, Pe, Se, Hé-ye Jimí, and Khe</i> Recognition Exercise	23
§1.10.4.	<i>Ghayn and Qâf</i>	24
§1.10.5.	<i>Zâl, Zhe, and Zâ</i>	24
§1.10.6.	<i>Sâd and Zâd</i>	25
§1.10.7.	<i>Ghayn, Qâf, Zâl, Zhe, Zâ, Sâd, and Zâd</i> Recognition Exercise	25
§1.10.8.	Handwriting Exercise #8: <i>ghayn, qâf, zâl, zhe, zâ, sâd, and zâd</i>	25
§1.10.9.	Paragraph Reading and Writing Exercise	26
§1.11.	French and English Loanwords in Persian	27
§1.11.1.	Listening to French and English Loanwords	27
§1.11.2.	Sentences	28
§1.12.	The Persian Alphabet in Alphabetical Order	29
§1.12.1.	Alphabet Listening Exercise	29
§1.12.2.	Alphabet Writing Exercise	30
§1.13.	Notes on the Persian Alphabet	32
§1.13.1.	Note on Alphabet Letters That Join and Do Not Join a Word's Next Letter	32
§1.13.2.	Note on Multiple Shapes of Alphabet Letters	32
§1.13.3.	Writing Practice	32
§1.14.	Persian Alphabet Reading Review Exercises	33
§1.14.1.	Vocabulary Categories Reading Exercise	33
§1.14.2.	French and English Loanword Reading Review Exercise	34
§1.14.3.	Grocery Store Ad Reading Review Exercise	35
§1.14.4.	Place Names Reading Review Exercise	36
§1.14.5.	Illustrations and Word Reading Review Exercise	37
§1.14.6.	Iranian Given Names Reading Practice	38
§1.14.7.	Map Reading Exercise	39
§1.15.	The Short Vowel Sounds /a/, /e/, and /o/ in Persian Writing	40
§1.15.1.	Recognizing Words with Unwritten Vowel Sounds	40
§1.15.2.	French and English Loanwords in Persian	42
§1.15.3.	Diacritical Marks for the Short Vowel Sounds /a/, /e/, and /o/ in Persian Writing	42
§1.15.4.	Words Beginning with the Sounds /a/, /e/, or /o/	43
§1.15.5.	The Diphthong /ay/	43
§1.15.6.	The Diphthong /ow/	43
§1.15.7.	Loanwords and Place Names Review	44
§1.16.	<i>Tashdíd, Tanvín, and Hamzé</i>	46
§1.16.1.	<i>Tashdíd</i>	46
§1.16.2.	<i>Tanvín</i>	46
§1.16.3.	<i>Hamzé</i>	46
§1.16.4-5.	Exercises Recognizing Words with <i>Zir, Zebár, Pish, Tashdíd, Tanvín, and Hamzé</i>	47
§1.16.6.	Practice Writing Numbers	47
§1.17.	Notes on Persian Sounds vis-à-vis Letters	48

§1.17.1.	Dictation Exercises	49
§1.18.	Persian Syllables	50
§1.19.	Word Stress or Accent in Persian	51
§1.19.1	Definite and Indefinite Nouns	51
§1.19.2.	Addressing People by Name	51
§1.19.3.	Verbs	51
§1.19.4.	Conjunctions	52
§1.20.	Noun Phrases in Persian	53
§1.20.1.	Matching Exercise Practicing <i>Kasré-ye Ezâfé</i>	53
§1.20.2.	<i>Kasré-ye Ezâfé</i> after Words Ending in a Vowel Sound	53
§1.20.3.	Matching Exercise Practicing <i>Kasré-ye Ezâfé</i>	54
§1.21.	Alphabet and Word Reading and Writing Review: French and English Loanwords	55
§1.21.1.	Easily Recognizable Loanwords from French	55
§1.21.2.	Loanwords from French Recognizable to Readers Familiar with French	61
Chapter 2: Persian Reading		63
§2.1.	West and Central Asian Places and Peoples	65
§2.2.	Subjects and Fields of Expertise	66
§2.3.	Noun Phrases	68
§2.4.	Classroom Vocabulary	69
§2.5.	Textbook Vocabulary	71
§2.6.	Geography, Textbook, and Classroom Reading Review	74
§2.7.	Verbs in Short Sentences	75
§2.8.	Reading Phrase by Phrase	78
§2.9.	Persian Numbers	84
§2.10.	Arithmetic	87
§2.11.	An Iranian-American Restaurant Menu	89
§2.12.	Iranian-American Date Books and Calendars	92
§2.13.	Recognizing Verb Tense and Mood Forms	96
§2.14.	An Iranian Schoolbook Text on the Subject of Praying	100
§2.15.	Persian Jokes	103
§2.16.	Names and Addresses on Letter Envelopes	106
§2.17.	Iranian Identity Cards	108
§2.18.	Persian Reading Materials in America	110
§2.19.	Newspaper Headlines and Article Titles	112
§2.20.	BBC On-line News Items	114
§2.21.	Daily Activities	120
§2.22.	A Life Story	127
Chapter 3: Persian Handwriting		135
§3.1.	Taking Persian Notes on the Subject of a Persian Textbook	137
§3.2.	Taking Persian Notes on Persian Class Activities	140
§3.3.	Reading and Writing Personal Notes and Letters	143
§3.4.	Reading and Writing Handwritten Envelopes	146
§3.5.	A Personal Note	149
§3.6.	A Business Letter	151
§3.7.	An Iranian Schoolbook Text on Khomeini's Return to Iran (1)	153

§3.8.	A Visa Application Form	156
§3.9.	A Famous Narrator Talks about Writing and Life (1)	161
§3.10.	A Letter to an Office of Education	163
§3.11.	A Personal Letter in Receipt of a Letter and a Book	165
§3.12.	A Letter on Planning a Trip to America (1)	167
§3.13.	About a Famous Writer and One of His Short Stories (1)	169
§3.14.	Notes on the Word « سر »	171
§3.15.	A Note about a Magazine Article and a Book	173
§3.16.	<i>Nasta'liq</i> Script	175
§3.17.	A Letter about Persian Class Notes	181
§3.18.	<i>Shekasté</i> Handwriting	185
§3.19.	A Personal Letter about the Good Old Days (1)	187
§3.20.	Sample Statements in <i>Nasta'liq</i> and <i>Shekasté</i> Scripts	189
Chapter 4. Reading Persian Texts		191
§4.1.	An Iranian-American Restaurant Advertisement	193
§4.2.	An Obituary Notice	196
§4.3.	Season's Greetings	199
§4.4.	A Wedding Invitation	204
§4.5.	An Iranian-American Travel Agency Advertisement	209
§4.6.	A Medical Insurance Company Advertisement	212
§4.7.	A Radio/Television Company Announcement	214
§4.8.	An Advertisement for a Long Distance Telephone Service	217
§4.9.	An Advertisement for an Iranian-American Grocery Store	219
§4.10.	An Iranian Schoolbook Text on Iranian Climate and Weather	223
§4.11.	An Iranian Schoolbook Introduction to the Middle East	226
§4.12.	Official Iranian Holidays	230
§4.13.	Christmas and New Year's Greetings	233
§4.14.	A Business Letter to an Academic Congress	236
§4.15.	A Dictionary Entry about Dictionaries	242
§4.16.	An Iranian Grade-School Text on Khomeini's Return to Iran (2)	244
§4.17.	A Health Sciences Announcement	248
§4.18.	An Inquiry about a Book	250
§4.19.	A Note about a Magazine Article and a Book (2)	253
§4.20.	An Iranian Cooking Lesson	256
§4.21.	A Crossword Puzzle	262
§4.22.	A Handwritten Note about a New Magazine	266
§4.23.	An Inquiry about University Persian and Islamic Studies	268
§4.24.	A Personal Letter about the Good Old Days (2)	272
§4.25.	A Letter on Planning a Trip to America (2)	276
§4.26.	A Famous Narrator Talks about Life and Writing (2)	278
§4.27.	About a Famous Writer and One of His Short Stories (2)	283
§4.28.	A Biographical Note on the Poet Forugh Farrokhzād	294
§4.29.	Thoughts about the Iranian Hostage Postage Stamp	304
§4.30.	Attachment to One's Homeland	314
Index		321

Preliminaries

Persian Reading and Writing is a beginner's textbook designed as a classroom and self-study resource for developing general Persian reading skills of both printed and handwritten texts and for learning to write Persian legibly, first in *naskh* script, then in *tahriri* script, and finally in *nasta'liq* script.

Chapter 1, **The Persian Writing System**, introduces the Persian alphabet through a word-method approach. Readers do not learn alphabet letters in isolation, but rather in the context of words and then in phrases and statements. They learn to read words by recognizing clusters of letters which remind them of a word's meaning. At the beginning, this means that learners practice with English and French loanwords in Persian script whose meanings they already know. Readers also learn to make guesses about the meaning of words in context and the meaning of statements by recognizing words and other Persian-specific signals. The use of English and French loanwords at the beginning of Persian reading—and all of the cited loanwords are common Persian words which appear in the best and most recent one-volume Persian-English and Persian-Persian dictionaries—means that learners confront only one unknown at a time when learning the Persian alphabet: the physical shapes and combinations of letters. In addition, the instruction on the Persian writing system is programmed in the sense that one writing system feature is presented at a time, with each new description and discussion based on previous discussion with a single new piece of information added.

Chapter 2, **Reading Persian**, practices reading techniques with words, phrases, statements, passages, and exercises of various sorts. For example, a text may begin with a one-word sentence and continue with that verb acquiring a subject, an object, and adverbial modifiers. The longest such statements may then appear with modifiers added to subject and object words. As another example, a text may appear with blank spaces and an accompanying list of words to fill those spaces. A third sort of text exhibits slash marks as indicators of how much one's eyes can or should absorb in a single glance when practicing phrase-by-phrase reading through a text.

Chapter 3, **Persian Handwriting**, provides models, illustrations, and exercises designed to lead readers, first, to develop facility in reading Persian handwriting and, second, to acquire a legible handwriting in Persian *naskh* script (similar to typescript), *tahriri* script, and the more cursive *nasta'liq* hand. Reading practice deals with texts in *tahriri*, *nasta'liq*, and *shekasté* handwriting styles, later treated as reading texts in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4, **Reading Persian Texts**, presents a series of printed and handwritten texts illustrative of Persian fonts and writing styles. Lessons in this chapter practice basic reading skills.

At the end of the book is a comprehensive **Index**, useful for locating specific language subjects, forms, phenomena, and particularly significant vocabulary in the book. The Index also cross-references relevant sections in the parallel textbooks *Persian Conversation(s)*, *Persian Listening*, and *Persian Grammar and Verbs*.

An **audio CD** with readings of all texts accompanies *Persian Reading and Writing*. Recorded texts correspond to the numbers enclosed in a circle to the right of the text.

* * *

The straightforward and open-ended organization of materials and texts in *Persian Reading and Writing* invites readers and their teachers to develop further learning and reinforcement resources and activities. In other words, the textbook does not methodologically preclude its use in a variety of learning contexts with a variety of methods and goals. But, in line with its programmed and word-method approach, students do not learn or practice reading or writing alphabet letters in isolation, combinations of letters which produce non-words, or combinations of letters forming words unfamiliar to students. Moreover, teachers need to bear in mind that students do not begin to see

words with unwritten short vowel sounds until Chapter §1.15 (on page 41) and that the presentation in Chapter §1 presents only as much information about features of Persian as students need in order to learn to read Persian.

In classroom use of *Persian Reading and Writing*, teachers might consider adopting the following strategies.

- Preparation of keyboarded and handwritten Persian flashcards with vocabulary items for all major objects in the language classroom and posting the flashcards on or next to the objects in question.
- Preparation of keyboarded and handwritten Persian flashcards with vocabulary items for all major objects in an everyday office and making copies of those flashcards available to students to post them on or next to the objects in question in their offices.
- Preparation of keyboarded and handwritten statements about classroom objects on flashcards. Posting the flashcards in appropriate places in the classroom once students have finished Chapter §1.15.
- Use of the on-line "Farsi Persian Word List" for Pro Lingua's *Color Lexicarry Pictures for Learning Languages* (2006, 3rd edition, 2nd printing) or use of the *English/Farsi Oxford Picture Dictionary* (2nd edition, 2009). After completing Chapter 1 of *Persian Reading and Writing*, students can look at *Lexicarry* or *Oxford* pictures while reading their Persian vocabulary lists. Students who choose to use the Oxford dictionary need to bear in mind that the dictionary has many mistakes among its Persian equivalents for its 4,400+ English words, expressions, and statements.
- Development of full-fledged intermediate and advanced reading lessons from many of the authentic texts presented in *Persian Reading and Writing* for use in beginning and elementary reading activities.
- Organization of discussions and activities on Persian morphology and syntax with texts in *Persian Reading and Writing*, which does not treat Persian grammar directly. However, paradigms, conjugations, phrases, and vocabulary glossed in discrete groups accompany texts throughout the book encouraging students to reach tentative inductive conclusions about illustrate language features. Readers working with *Persian Reading and Writing* in self-study can use *Persian Grammar and Verbs* for descriptive discussions of everything which texts and examples in *Persian Reading and Writing* highlight. Moreover, the textbook's index cross-references subjects of discussion in *Persian Grammar and Verbs*.
- In a four-skills Persian learning setting, students spend a relatively small portion of class sessions in writing activities other than dictation exercises. The bulk of each class hour is filled with listening and speaking activities without any use of Persian writing in those activities. Once students have completed Chapter 1 of *Persian Reading and Writing*, they can continue with the book in tandem with the elementary materials in *Persian Listening* and *Persian Conversation(s)* or with other textbook guides that teach Persian listening and speaking.
- As soon as they finish Chapter 1, students should consider acquiring two dictionaries: *Living English-Persian Dictionary* (2007) by M.R. Bateni, et al; and *Kimia Persian-English Dictionary* (2006) by K. Emami. Eventually, they will want to own Farhang Moaser's *Contemporary Persian Dictionary: New Edition* (2004) by G.H. Sadri Afshar, et al. A reading lesson on Persian dictionaries appears in Chapter §4.15.

Chapter 1

The Persian Writing System

نظام فارسی نوشتاری



Let's Make Iran a School – Literacy Movement

This guide to the Persian writing system presents alphabet letters and other Persian symbols, one-by-one, step-by-step, in keyboarded and elementary handwritten forms in the context of words, phrases, and sentences. In self-study, readers can make use of the accompanying audio CD, which presents recorded readings of all Persian items marked with Perso-Arabic numerals (for track numbers) enclosed in circles to their right.

As a further guide to pronunciation, an English transcription between slash lines appears with some Persian words and phrases. In most cases, for example /b/, /k/, /ch/, and /sh/, the sounds represented by the transcription are immediately obvious. In some other cases, for example /q/ and /kh/, the transcription represents a sound unfamiliar to speakers of English. And, in several cases, for example /u/, /i/, /ow/, and /â/, the transcription may not represent the sound which first comes to mind when a native speaker of American English sees it. A bracketed /u/ signals the sound of the letter "u" in words such as "rude," "tuba," and "Rumi." A bracketed /i/ signals the sound of the letter "i" in words such as "Rumi," "Sa'di," and "Shirâz," and the sound of the vowel letters in "feet" and "seat." A bracketed /ow/ combination represents the sound of the letters "ow" in words such as "mow," "tow," and "Ferdowsi." A bracketed /â/ represents the sound of "â" in the words "Fârs," "Irân," and "Shirâz," and the sound of "a" in "father." All features of pronunciation of Persian sounds, letters, and combinations of letters receive repeated attention throughout Chapter 1.

With respect to Persian handwriting activities in Chapter 1, readers should have a composition book with lined pages on which to write as they are directed to do so throughout the chapter. They should show their work to their Persian instructor or other educated native-speaker of Persian for correction on a regular basis.

Chapter 2 Persian Reading

خواندن فارسی



نهضت سواد آموزی - Literacy Movement

Chapter 2 aims to help students develop facility in reading meaningful units or segments of written Persian. Beginning readers of Persian continue in this chapter to learn to read clusters comprising recognizable words. Readers then learn to read phrases, shorter clauses, and shorter sentences as units. Finally, beginning readers deal with authentic texts.

In Chapter 2, the focus shifts from European loanwords in everyday Persian to a general reading threshold vocabulary. This shift introduces learners to their chief task in becoming proficient in reading Persian: vocabulary acquisition and maintenance. Learners need to memorize much basic vocabulary, perhaps concentrating on groups of related words on discrete subjects, and then learn to appreciate Persian word patterns as well as roots and other core components of words. Such matters get detailed treatment in the companion volume *Persian Grammar and Verbs*.

Chapter 3 Persian Handwriting

دستخط فارسی



The Advent and Nature of Handwriting in Iran

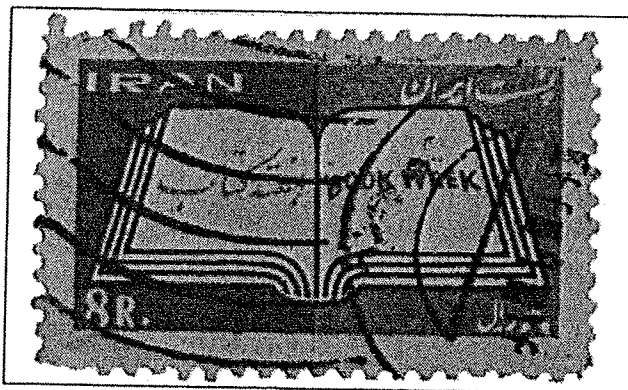
Chapter 3 first presents models for *tahriri* script, the now preferred handwriting style taught in Iranian schools. *Tahriri* script differs slightly from elementary *naskh* handwriting (in Chapter 1 and modeled in the text in Chapter §2.14), which resembles typescript and the most common keyboarding fonts. Chapter 3 then describes and illustrates the *nasta'liq* and *shekasté* handwriting styles which most educated Iranian adults use.

Because handwriting models in this chapter mostly appear in authentic texts beyond the elementary level of Persian in terms of vocabulary, morphology and syntax, and content complexity, lesson activities concentrate on handwriting rather than reading issues, with reading consisting only of scanning activities to reinforce handwriting recognition and practice. This chapter also helps readers develop skills for taking notes in Persian and writing handwritten notes and letters.

Because at the beginning writing Persian usually seems awkward and slow to learners, they usually opt for a Latin transcription of their own devising when taking notes in class or in self-study. If, however, learners decide from the very beginning to take notes in Persian, they will learn to transcribe things in Persian at least as efficiently as in Latin transcription. At the same time, they will be improving word-recognition reading skills and firming up spelling skills useful in learning new vocabulary, especially Arabic loanwords.

Chapter 4 Reading Persian Texts

مطالعه متون فارسی



Week of the Book - هفته کتاب

Chapter 4 presents thirty texts in the context of mini-lessons with pre-reading, reading, and practice activities and exercises. Included among the texts are keyboarded versions of authentic letters and other handwritten texts in Chapter 3, there presented not for reading, but for learning about features of Persian handwriting styles. This chapter's reading lessons aim to help students become comfortable with and adept at dealing with Persian texts and to bring them up to an intermediate level of Persian reading proficiency.

The kinds and sequence of exercises and reading activities in this chapter's lessons also illustrate such general procedures for dealing with Persian reading materials as the following.

1. Pre-reading thinking or activities.
2. Vocabulary work in subject matter or word pattern groups with appreciation of these three facts:
 - (1) Vocabulary acquisition is a continuing task when striving for advanced Persian reading proficiency.
 - (2) Recognizing and retaining vocabulary may remain problematic in part because of unfamiliar morphology.
 - (3) Unfamiliarity with a subject or technology in English translates into greater difficulty in dealing with a Persian text on that subject.
3. Special attention to verbs in a text with appreciation of the possibility that a given sentence may exhibit unfamiliar syntax.
4. Scanning a text for facts without concern for unfamiliar vocabulary or phrase and sentence patterns.
5. Use of a dictionary to check meanings of key words without appreciation of which scanning a text for facts does not get adequate results.