

2025-26 Arabic Speaking Competition

# Teacher Companion Guide

## Recording Entries

1. Before recording
  - a. Make sure that your student feels confident and prepared. Ensure that they have filled out and returned their entry form.
  - b. Prepare your recording space. Ideal locations are quiet and without a lot of background noise, so that it's easy to hear the student. If submitting a video entry, the camera should be placed on a stable surface at about eye level. Stay nearby during the recording to assist with the Q&A section.
  - c. You have the option to submit an audio recording if you are uncomfortable submitting a video. If you choose this option, please be extra careful to record in a quiet space. Judges will apply the same grading criteria to video and audio submissions.
  - d. Have the student's parent or guardian fill out the required consent form, which is available at <https://form.jotform.com/qfi/competition-consent>. No submissions will be considered without an associated consent form.
2. Recordings should begin with a short introduction, including:
  - a. Student name
  - b. Student age
  - c. Student school, city, and country
  - d. How long the student has been learning Arabic
  - e. The title of their presentation
3. The student should give their prepared presentation on one of the 9 topics. This portion should be 2 minutes or less.
4. At the end of the recording, ask the student 1-3 questions in Arabic relating to their presentation. The number of questions is at your discretion depending on the student's language level and the complexity of the questions. The goal this section is to hear how students respond to natural conversation and dialog. Please do not share questions with students in advance, as judges will be interested in hearing students respond at their language level. Students can take a few moments to think before responding, and their responses should not sound rehearsed.
5. After the recording:
  - a. Rewatch the video or relisten to the audio to ensure that you and the student are happy with the recording, and that it is easy to hear you and your student throughout.
  - b. Please do not edit your recording. You may trim the start and end of your recording if there is empty space.
  - c. Your final recording should be no more than 3.5 minutes. It is okay if the final recording is shorter, especially for beginner students.
  - d. Submit the recording and entry form. Further instructions are below.

## Submitting Entries

Teachers should submit students' recordings on their behalf through SM Apply. All entries must go through a teacher, tutor, or administrator; no student should submit their own entry.

1. Log in or create an account through SM Apply ([qfi.smapply.org/prog/](https://qfi.smapply.org/prog/)) and click "apply".
2. Name your application with the name of the student.
3. Fill out the "School Profile" section with your contact information.
4. Complete the student information task. There are two choices to complete this section:
  - a. Fill out the form through SM Apply (like you would a Google Form). Only the coordinating teacher can fill out this form.
  - b. Fill out the PDF Student Information Form: [Letter](#) | [A4](#). Either the student or the teacher can fill out the PDF version. It can be filled digitally or printed and scanned.
5. Ensure that the student's Competition Consent Form has been completed by the student's parent/guardian as applicable. Please email [arabic@qfi.org](mailto:arabic@qfi.org) if you are unsure if the form has been completed. QFI will not consider any entries without an accompanying consent form.
6. Upload the student's recording.
7. Submit the application.
8. If you are submitting applications for multiple students, start a new application for each student.
  - a. To begin a new application, select "Programs" from the top menu bar. Then, scroll down to the "Arabic Speaking Competition" tile and select "more". You will have the option to see your existing applications or create a new one by choosing "apply".
  - b. Follow the same submission process for all applications. The "School Profile" section will remember your responses, so you should only need to complete it once.

## Important Dates – Round 1

October 1, 2025	Competition entry window opens
October & November 2025	Schools/teachers conduct competition, shortlist entries, submit recordings and student information sheets
December 10, 2025	Deadline to submit entries
December 2025-January 2026	Round 1 Judging period
February 1, 2026	All participants notified of their status

## Additional Information

### 1. What is the goal of the Arabic Speaking Competition?

The Arabic Speaking Competition is intended to be a motivation tool that engages students and encourages them to practice speaking Arabic in a formal context. We hope that it will offer students an opportunity to feel included in a community of global Arabic learners, practice using Arabic communicatively, and have the chance to create something meaningful with Arabic.

### 2. What kind of Arabic can students use in the Arabic Speaking Competition?

All participants should use Arabic throughout the Arabic Speaking Competition, but it is up to the student and their teacher to decide on the variety of Arabic. QFI recognizes all forms of communicative Arabic for the purposes of the ASC. Students preparing for MSA-only exams may wish to exclusively use MSA so that their entry is a component to their exam preparation. Students who are preparing for more flexible exams or working on a particular dialect may wish to focus more heavily on dialect usage.

### 3. How can teachers support students who may be interested in the Arabic Speaking Competition?

- Announce the ASC to your students. Talk to those students interested in taking part and explain the rules, the topics, the format, and the deadlines for the 2025 ASC.
- If possible, allocate time to allow students who wish to take part to prepare their presentation and discuss their ideas, offering support with language and vocabulary if needed.
- If more than 10 students are interested in participating, select 10 finalists from your school to submit entries to the Competition. Ideas for narrowing the selection are shared below.
- Assist your students with their recordings, including the Q&A at the end, and ensure that they are able to fill out the required entry forms correctly.
- Facilitate the submission process by uploading students' entries via the online entry portal.

### 4. How many entries can each school submit?

Each school may submit a maximum of 10 entries, which should be representative of the school's Arabic program (i.e. from multiple language backgrounds and language levels and not limited to the most advanced speakers). Schools may decide how to select their entrants. Here are some past examples of how some schools have selected their entrants:

- A selection process in the school, such as asking the Arabic students to vote for the best entries at each level.
- A class activity where students select entries based on criteria such as enjoyable, interesting, good Arabic, confident speaker, etc.

- A group activity where students work together to score entries based on the ASC judging rubric.
- The Arabic teacher selects entries using the ASC judging rubric.

**5. How is the Arabic Speaking Competition useful in a classroom context?**

It is completely up to you how you use the Arabic Speaking Competition in your classroom. The ASC could be incorporated into your regular classroom as a speaking activity or assignment, offered as extra credit, or an activity in an Arabic Club meeting.

If your school has more than 10 interested students, the selection process for your school can also be integrated as a listening activity, where the class listens to entries and selects finalists.

**6. How is the Arabic Speaking Competition useful beyond the classroom?**

We hope that the ASC can be a useful preparation tool for proficiency assessments. Most proficiency tests ask students to respond to a prompt or series of questions, and this prompt could be introduced as an exercise to prepare for the expectations of proficiency testing and to gauge your students’ proficiency, fluency, and comfort in speaking. Practicing speaking skills in a more informal environment may help students feel more confident in demonstrating their best language skills.

**7. What kind of output is appropriate by level?<sup>1</sup> Which level should my students choose?**

ASC Category	Standards-Aligned Level	Description <i>(Please refer to ACTFL and CEFR resources<sup>1</sup> for more detailed descriptions)</i>
Beginner	ACTFL: Novice Mid-High  CEFR: A1	Students can use simple sentences to describe where they live and people they know. Students can understand and respond to a basic question about these topics, but may need to hear the question repeated or rephrased. Students use a very limited vocabulary with some degree of accuracy.
	ACTFL: Intermediate Low  CEFR: A2	Students can use a series of sentences to describe familiar topics, including family, living conditions, and their educational background. Students can understand and respond to questions about familiar topics, and may be able to provide information that was not covered in the presentation. Students use a limited vocabulary and familiar grammatical structures with some degree of accuracy. Spontaneous speech is often choppy.

<sup>1</sup> Based on the [2024 ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines](#) and [2020 CEFR Companion Volume](#).

Intermediate	ACTFL: Intermediate Mid-High  CEFR: B1	Students can use multiple tenses to describe events or circumstances and present opinions with simple reasons. Students can respond to questions that ask for opinions or reasoning in a few sentences. Students use familiar vocabulary and grammatical structures to convey their point, but may struggle to find the right word and maintain fluidity, especially during spontaneous interaction.
Advanced	ACTFL: Advanced Low-Mid  CEFR: B2	Students can discuss a wide range of subjects with detail, explain opinions with more complexity, and present arguments involving cause/effect or advocating a specific perspective. Students can respond to more complex questions that require multiple sentences of explanation with a little hesitation. Students have good grammatical control and use a variety of vocabulary, structures, and connective words with some fluidity.
Mastery/Native	ACTFL: Advanced High +  CEFR: C1+  Native speakers should use this category.	Students can discuss complex topics through extended discourse. They can incorporate and develop sub-themes, conclusions, recommendations. Students can respond to questions that ask them to defend their reasoning in several sentences. Students have excellent control of the language and use a wide variety of vocabulary with ease and fluidity.

## Questions

If you have any questions or require any additional support, please reach out to Abby at [arabic@qfi.org](mailto:arabic@qfi.org).