

THE STRIVING

MUSLIM ACADEMY

Islamic and Academic Education

ISLAMIC EDUCATION · FREE TO PRINT

Qa'idah Practice Sheets

Short daily pages that follow the Qa'idah, so a parent can practise with a child between classes without having to invent anything.

WHAT IS INSIDE

- Teacher's notes: why a child stalls, and how to move them
- The three harakat
- Tanween
- Sukoon, the one that breaks reading
- Shadda
- Madd, the long sounds
- Putting it together: real words
- A four week practice log

The Striving Muslim Academy

strivingmuslimacademy.com

Free to print, free to copy, free to share. Please do not sell it.

WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED BY THE STRIVING MUSLIM ACADEMY, OCTOBER 2026

Why a child stalls on the Qa'idah



Almost every child who is "stuck" is stuck for one of these eight reasons. Find which one, and the problem usually moves within a fortnight. Guess wrongly, and you can drill for a year without progress.

1. They are reciting from memory, not reading

This is the big one, and it hides for months. After a page has been read a few times the child learns the sound of it. They look at the page and recite. It is fluent, it is confident, and they are not reading a single letter.

Test it by jumping. Cover the page and point to one word in the middle. Ask for that word alone. Read a line backwards, last word first. If fluency collapses, they were reciting. Go back, slow down, and use single words out of order from now on.

2. The three harakat are not secure

Fatha, kasra and damma are the whole system. A child who is 80 per cent sure of them will read 80 per cent of every word wrongly somewhere, and the errors look random.

Drill the marks on their own, away from letters. Write the three marks on card. Hold one up, they make the sound. Ten seconds, several times a day. Do not move on until it is instant, not merely correct.

3. Reading fast is being rewarded

Adults praise speed without meaning to. The child learns that finishing quickly earns approval, so they guess rather than work a word out, and the guesses harden.

Praise accuracy out loud and never praise speed. "You read that slowly and you got every letter." Make it normal to pause. Speed follows accuracy on its own. It never works the other way round.

4. Sukoon is being skipped

The sukoon is where real reading begins and where most children come apart. A letter with no vowel has to be stopped on, and a child who has only ever read open syllables has no habit of stopping.

Teach it physically. Clap on the vowelled letter, close your fist on the sukoon. Say "the letter closes its mouth". Give it a week of its own before you combine it with anything else.

The Striving Muslim Academy

Why a child stalls, continued

The last four. These are the ones that look like a plateau: the child has stopped moving and nobody can say why.



5. Shadda is read once instead of twice

The doubling is invisible to a beginner because in English we do not hold consonants. They see the mark and read straight past it.

Make them hold it and count. "Press on it, one, two." Contrast the pair aloud, with and without, several times. If they cannot hear the difference they will never reproduce it, so the ear comes before the page.

6. Madd lengths are guessed

Every reading is a different length, so they conclude length does not matter. It then becomes very hard to fix, because the habit is already laid down.

Count on fingers, visibly, every time. Two counts for the natural madd. The same count, every time, until it is automatic. Consistency matters far more here than which convention you use.

7. Correction is landing as humiliation

A child who is corrected sharply, or corrected in front of siblings, stops attempting words they are unsure of. They read only what is safe, so they stop progressing, and it looks like they have plateaued.

Correct the word, never the child, and do it flatly. "That one is *ba*." No sighing. No "I just told you". A child who is not afraid to be wrong will try the hard word, and trying the hard word is the whole of the progress.

8. Moving on because the book says so

The Qa'idah has pages, so a lesson feels successful when a page is finished. Pages get turned on 60 per cent accuracy, and the gaps compound until the child hits a wall two months later that nobody can explain.

Do not turn the page until it is fluent and out of order. Slow at this stage is fast later. There is no prize for reaching the back of the book.

The Striving Muslim Academy

The three harakat

Read down each column, then across each row, then let an adult point at random. Random pointing is the only one of the three that proves they are reading.



The marks on their own

MARK	NAME	SOUND
بَ	fatha	a, above the letter
بِ	kasra	i, below the letter
بُ	damma	u, a small waaw on top

Cut these three out and drill them with no letters at all until they answer instantly.

What to listen for

The commonest mix-up is **kasra read as fatha**, because the mark is underneath and the eye does not go there. If you hear this, cover the top of the letter with your finger so only the kasra shows.

The second commonest is damma read as fatha, usually because the child is reading the letter and ignoring the mark entirely. Ask "what is the mark?" before "what is the letter?" for a week, and it reverses.

The Striving Muslim Academy

Drill 1: read across

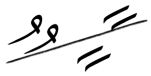
بَ	بِ	بُ	تَ	تِ	تُ
ثَ	ثِ	ثُ	جَ	جِ	جُ
حَ	حِ	حُ	خَ	خِ	خُ
دَ	دِ	دُ	ذَ	ذِ	ذُ
رَ	رِ	رُ	زَ	زِ	زُ
سَ	سِ	سُ	شَ	شِ	شُ

Drill 2: mixed, read in any order the adult points

صُ	ضَ	طِ	ظُ	عَ	غِ
فُ	قَ	كِ	لُ	مَ	نِ
هُ	وَ	يِ	بُ	ثَ	حِ

Tanween: the doubled marks

The same three marks, written twice, with an *n* added to the sound. Teach it as "the mark twice means add n". Children accept that rule immediately.



SINGLE	DOUBLED	SOUND	WHAT TO SAY
بَ	بً	ban	Two fathas, add n.
بِ	بٍ	bin	Two kasras, add n.
بُ	بٌ	bun	Two dammas, add n.

Drill: read across

تً	ثً	جً	حً	خً	دً
ذً	رً	زً	سً	شً	صً
ضً	طً	ظً	عً	غً	فً
قً	كً	لً	مً	نً	هً

Mixed: single and doubled together

This is the page that shows whether the rule has stuck. Expect errors here and do not be discouraged by them. They are the point of the exercise.

بَ	بً	تٌ	تُ	ثٍ	ثِ
جُ	جٌ	حٍ	حَ	خٍ	خِ

The trap in this page

A child who has just learned tanween often adds *n* to everything for a week, including single marks. This is not a failure. It is the sign that they have genuinely taken in a new rule and are over-applying it, which is exactly what children do when learning anything.

Do not drill tanween harder. Go back to mixed pages like the one above, where they have to choose. The over-application corrects itself in days.

The Striving Muslim Academy

Sukoon: the letter that stops

This is the hardest page in the whole Qa'idah, and it is where most children slow down badly. Give it a fortnight on its own. Do not combine it with anything new.



What it is

A small circle on top. The letter has no vowel. It is sounded and stopped, and it leans back on the letter before it.

بَبْ

ba, then b stopped. "bab"

Teach it with the body

Open hand on the vowelled letter. Closed fist on the sukoon. The child copies you. Within two or three sessions they will close their own fist before they read the letter, which means they have seen the mark in advance. That is the skill you are building.

If they add a vowel to the sukoon letter, say "that one has no mouth" and close your fist again. Do not explain it in words. The gesture works where the explanation does not.

Drill 1: two letters, the second has sukoon

أَبْ	أَتْ	أَثْ	أَجْ	أَحْ	أَخْ
إِدْ	إِذْ	إِرْ	إِزْ	إِسْ	إِشْ
أُصْ	أُضْ	أُطْ	أُظْ	أُعْ	أُغْ

Drill 2: three letters

بَيْتَ	تَتْبَ	جَحْدَ	سَرْجَ
قَلْبَ	شَمْسَ	نَجْمَ	فَجْرَ
عَبْدَ	حَمْدَ	كَلْبَ	ذِكْرَ

Only move on when all three are true

- They stop on the sukoon without being reminded
- They do not add a vowel to it
- They can do it on a word they have not seen before

Two out of three is not ready. This is the one page where rushing costs you months later.

The Striving Muslim Academy

Shadda: the letter said twice

A shadda is one letter carrying the weight of two: a sukoon letter and a vowelled letter pressed together. The child does not need that explanation. They need to hear it, hold it, and copy it.



WITHOUT	WITH SHADDA	SAY IT LIKE THIS
بَبَ	بَّ	Press and hold the b, then release.
رَبَ	رَبَّ	Hold the b for a count of one before the vowel comes out.
مَدَ	مَدَّ	Hold the d. Two letters, one shape.

Drill: hold every doubled letter

رَبَّ	حَجَّ	مَدَّ	شَدَّ
عَزَّ	قَلَّ	كُلَّ	أَمَّ
إِنَّ	ثُمَّ	جَنَّ	حَقَّ

Listen and choose

The adult reads one of each pair. The child points to the one they heard. If they cannot hear the difference, they cannot be expected to read it, so stay here.

رَبَ | رَبَّ	مَدَ | مَدَّ
قَلَ | قَلَّ	أَمَ | أَمَّ

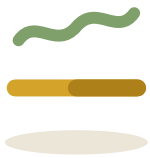
Why this one matters more than it looks

Shadda changes meaning. It is not an ornament, and a child who skims past it is misreading the word, not merely reading it plainly. Say that to an older child or an adult learner, because knowing why a rule exists makes people willing to do the dull repetition it needs.

The Striving Muslim Academy

Madd: the long sounds

Three letters stretch the vowel before them. The rule is small and the habit is large, so count out loud, on your fingers, where the child can see it.



SHORT	LONG	STRETCHED BY	HOW TO COUNT IT
بَ	بَا	alif after a fatha	Two counts. Hold up two fingers as they read.
بِ	بِي	yaa after a kasra	Two counts, the same length as above.
بُ	بُو	waaw after a damma	Two counts, the same length again.

Drill 1: short then long, so the ear hears the difference

تَ تَا	ثِ ثِي	جُ جُو	حَ حَا
دِ دِي	رُ رُو	سَ سَا	شِ شِي
صُ صُو	عَ عَا	فِ فِي	قُ قُو

Drill 2: mixed, short and long in one line

قَالَ	فِيهِ	يَقُولُ	كِتَابُ
نُورٌ	سَمِيعٌ	عَلِيمٌ	رَحِيمٌ

The error you will hear

Not a wrong length, but a **changing** length. Two counts on one word, four on the next, one on the one after. The child is not measuring at all, they are reading by feel.

Count on your fingers where they can see them and do not say a word about it. Most children start matching your hand within a few days without ever being told to.

The Striving Muslim Academy

Putting it together

Every word here uses only what the earlier pages covered. Point at random. If they can read these out of order, they are ready for the mushaf.



بِسْمِ	اللَّهِ	الْحَمْدُ	رَبِّ
الْعَالَمِينَ	مَالِكِ	يَوْمِ	الدِّينِ
نَعْبُدُ	نَسْتَعِينُ	اهْدِنَا	الصِّرَاطَ
الْمُسْتَقِيمَ	أَنْعَمْتَ	عَلَيْهِمْ	الضَّالِّينَ

The Striving Muslim Academy

Find the rule

Ask the child to point to one word on this page containing each of the following. This proves they can see the marks, not only sound them out.

FIND A WORD WITH	THEY POINT TO	CORRECT?
A sukoon		☐
A shadda		☐
A madd of two counts		☐
A kasra		☐
A damma		☐

A four week practice log

Five minutes a day. Write what you actually did, not what you meant to do. An honest log is the most useful thing you can bring to a teacher.



DAY	PAGE OR RULE PRACTISED	MINUTES	WHAT THEY FOUND HARD
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

Print this page four times, one for each week of the month.

End of month: three questions

1. Which rule did they get wrong most often? Write it here:

2. Can they read a page they have never seen, slowly but correctly? If no, do not move on.

3. Are they still willing? This matters more than the other two put together.

Take this to their teacher

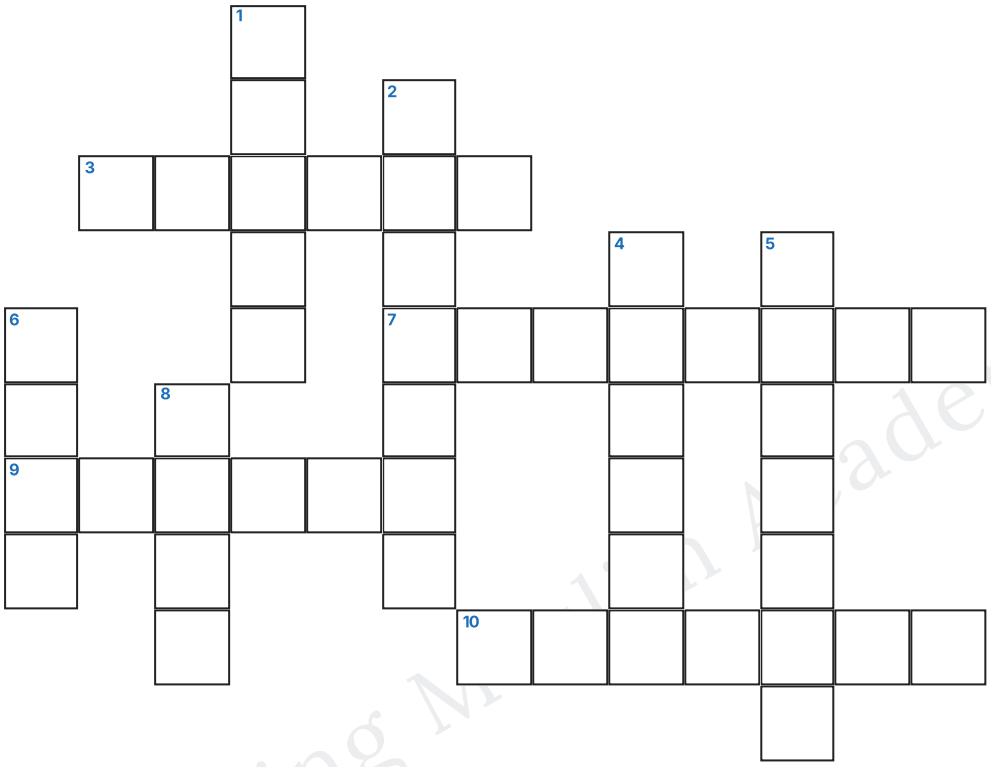
A teacher who sees this log can tell in thirty seconds what three weeks of guessing would not reveal. Bring it to the class. It is worth more than a report.

The Striving Muslim Academy

Word Whizz

Crossword

Everything you need is on the pages of this pack. Read each clue and write the word in the boxes, one letter in each box. The number in brackets tells you how many letters the word has.



Across

3 If a child can read the real words out of order, they are ready for which book? (6)

7 When a child reads slowly and gets every letter right, what should the teacher praise out loud, and not speed? (8)

9 Which mark is one letter carrying the weight of two? (6)

10 What do you count on, where the child can see, to measure a madd? (7)

Down

1 Which mark sits underneath the letter, so the eye often misses it? (5)

2 What is the plural name for the three marks fatha, kasra and damma? (7)

4 What is the small circle on top of a letter called? The letter has no vowel. (6)

5 What is the name for the doubled marks, where a mark written twice means add n? (7)

6 On a sukoon letter, what does your hand become instead of an open hand? (4)

8 What is the name for the long sounds that stretch the vowel before them? (4)

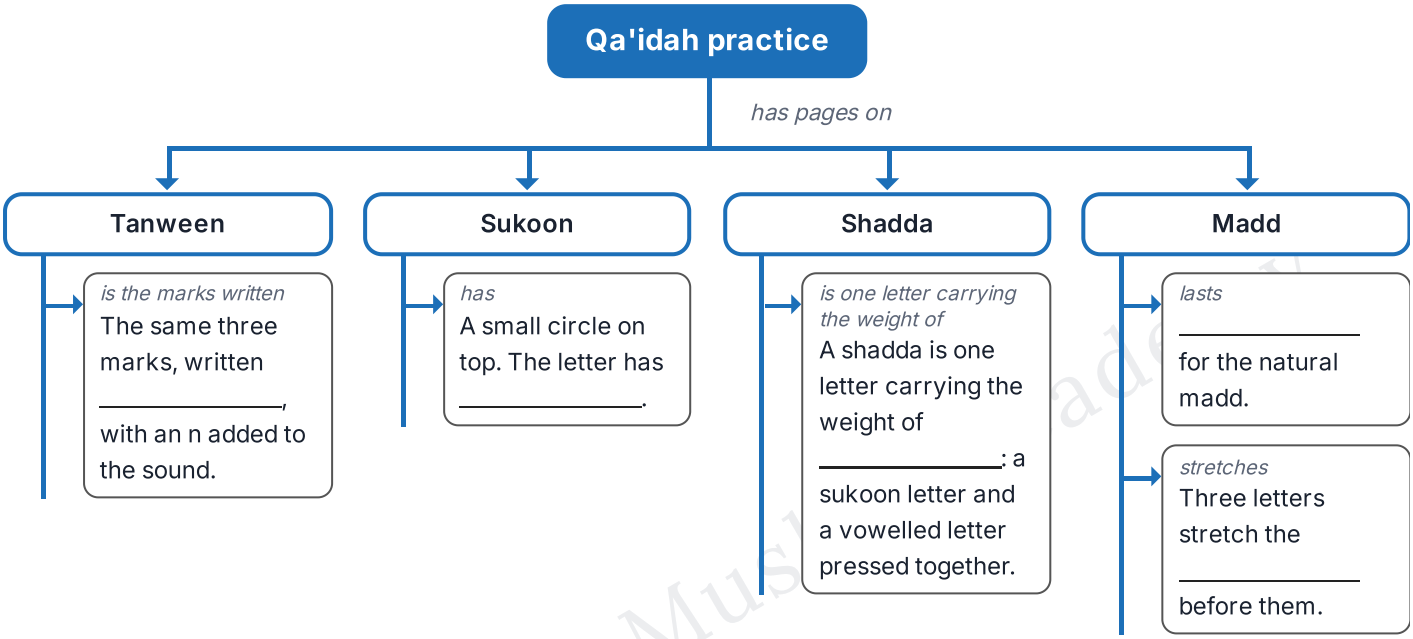
The Striving Muslim Academy

Let's Map It!

Fill in the blanks on the map with the words in the box. Read along the arrows.

USE THESE WORDS

no vowel **vowel** **Two counts** **twice** **two**



Word search

Find each word in the grid. Words read from right to left, or from top to bottom. Tick each one when you find it.

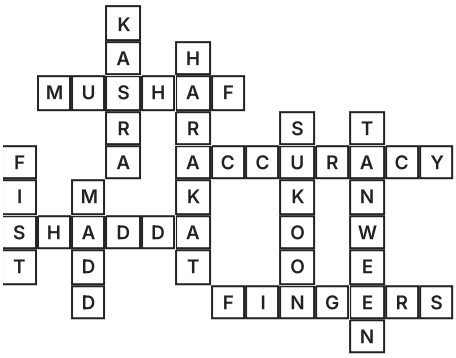
ث	م	و	ي	ث	د	ه	ن	ت
ا	ه	د	ج	و	د	ي	ق	ا
ل	غ	و	د	م	ح	ل	ا	ه
ص	ث	ن	ب	ك	ل	ا	م	د
ر	ح	ن	ذ	م	ط	ق	ك	ن
ا	ع	ن	ي	د	ل	ا	ر	ا
ط	ي	ن	ي	ع	ت	س	ن	ا
ص	ن	ظ	د	ب	ع	ن	ب	غ
ش	ط	ث	و	غ	ن	ا	ك	ظ

- ☐ نَسْتَعِينُ nasta'eenu
- ☐ الصِّرَاطَ as-siraata
- ☐ الْحَمْدُ al-hamdu
- ☐ الدِّينِ ad-deeni
- ☐ اهْدِنَا ihdinaa
- ☐ مَالِكِ maaliki
- ☐ نَعْبُدُ na'budu
- ☐ يَوْمِ yawmi

Answers

For the grown-up: cover this page while the puzzles are being done.

Crossword



Across: 3 Mushaf, 7 Accuracy, 9 Shadda, 10 Fingers

Down: 1 Kasra, 2 Harakat, 4 Sukoon, 5 Tanween, 6 Fist, 8 Madd

Let's Map It

twice; no vowel; two; Two counts; vowel

Word search

ث	م	و	ي	ث	د	ه	ن	ت
ا	ه	د	ج	و	د	ي	ق	ا
ل	غ	و	د	م	ح	ل	ا	ه
ص	ث	ن	ب	ك	ل	ا	م	د
ر	ح	ن	ذ	م	ط	ق	ك	ن
ا	ع	ن	ي	د	ل	ا	ر	ا
ط	ي	ن	ي	ع	ت	س	ن	ا
ص	ن	ظ	د	ب	ع	ن	ب	غ
ش	ط	ث	و	غ	ن	ا	ك	ظ

The Striving Muslim Academy