

Tajwid — the basics

Tajwid is not decoration. It is the body of rules that keeps every letter in its own place and every vowel its own length, so that the words stay the words.



★ The order it rests on

وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا

“And recite the Qur’an with measured recitation.” Every rule in the discipline is an attempt to say what measured means.

Qur’an 73:4

★ And We recited it slowly

كَذَلِكَ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ تَرْتِيلًا

Answering those who wanted it all at once: “thus — that We may strengthen your heart thereby — and We have recited it to you in a measured recitation.”

Qur’an 25:32

★ Makharij — where a letter comes from

The discipline maps the throat, tongue, lips and nasal passage into articulation points and assigns every letter its own. The standard verse-text taught for it is Ibn al-Jazari’s Muqaddimah.

The tajwid tradition • Ibn al-Jazari, al-Muqaddimah al-Jazariyyah

★ Sifat — what a letter does

Paired qualities, each letter taking one side of each pair.

- Hams and jahr — breathed or voiced
- Shiddah and rakhawah — stopped or flowing
- Isti’la’ and istifal — raised or lowered

The tajwid tradition • a classification, not a text

★ Nun sakinah — four treatments

- Idhhar — sounded plainly
- Idgham — merged into the next letter
- Iqlab — turned into a mim before ba’
- Ikhfa’ — hidden, with a nasal hum

The tajwid tradition • a classification, not a text

★ Madd — the lengths

The natural madd is the short two counts; the rest are longer, and the works of the discipline differ over how many counts each of the longer ones takes.

The tajwid tradition • the works differ on the counts

★ Qalqalah — the five that bounce

Qaf, ta’, ba’, jim and dal bounce when they carry a sukun. Students remember them in the made-up word qutub jad.

The tajwid tradition • a classification, not a text

★ He lengthened his own reading

Anas was asked how the Prophet ﷺ recited. He said it was marked by prolongation, and recited the basmalah drawing out “bismillah”, “ar-Rahman” and “ar-Rahim”.

Sahih al-Bukhari 5046

★ If the tongue stumbles

“Such a person as recites the Qur’an and masters it will be with the noble scribes; and one who exerts himself and recites it with great difficulty will have a double reward.”

Sahih al-Bukhari 4937