

History of Arabic Media

History of Arabic Media – Study Notes

1. Early Foundations (Pre-20th Century)

Period	Key Developments	Representative Examples
Pre-modern era (before 1800)	- Oral storytelling, poetry recitals, and <i>maqām</i> performances were the main channels of information. - Religious institutions (mosques, madrasas) circulated news through sermons and handwritten <i>manāqib</i> (biographies) and <i>sifr</i> (chronicles).	<i>Al-Jami al-aḥad</i> (Hadith collections) – transmitted orally before being written.
Ottoman influence (1800-1914)	- Introduction of printing presses in major cities (Cairo, Beirut, Istanbul). - Emergence of <i>ṭabʿa</i> (newspapers) in Arabic to serve educated elites and reformist circles.	Al-Waḳʿi al-Miṣriyyah (Cairo, 1828) – first Arabic newspaper in Egypt, founded by Muhammad Ali's administration. Al-Jamīʿa (Beirut, 1860) – early Lebanese Arabic periodical.

2. The Birth of Modern Arabic Press (1910-1945)

Decade	Milestones	Notable Publications
1910s	- Growth of nationalist movements (Arab Revolt, pan-Arabism). - Press becomes a tool for political mobilization.	Al-Jarida (1911, Cairo) – founded by Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid.
1920s	- Expansion of literacy; more private presses. - Emergence of weekly magazines covering literature, science, and politics.	Al-Muqtaḥ (1924, Cairo) – science & culture magazine. Al-Ahram (est. 1875, but gains prominence).
1930s	- Rise of anti-colonial sentiment; newspapers support independence from Britain/French mandates. - Introduction of illustrated news.	Al-Harb (1935, Damascus) – anti-French voice. Al-Sharq (1932, Baghdad).

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Decade	Milestones	Notable Publications
1940s	• WWII spurs censorship; yet radio becomes a major medium.	Al-Qabas (1945, Damascus).
	• First Arabic news agencies are created.	Syria's Radio Damascus (est. 1946).

3. Radio & Television Era (1945-1990)

3.1 Radio

Year	Event	Impact
1945	Establishment of Radio Cairo (later Voice of the Arabs).	Became the leading propaganda tool for Arab nationalism under Gamal Abdel Nasser.
1950s-60s	Expansion of state-run stations across the Arab world (e.g., Radio Jordan , Radio Kuwait , Radio Tunisia).	Provided a unified platform for political messaging, cultural programs, and news.
1970s	Introduction of shortwave international services (e.g., BBC Arabic , Radio France Internationale Arabic).	Opened Arab audiences to external perspectives and diversified content.

3.2 Television

Year	Milestone	Significance
1960		