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Do you have any preference between these two? I've bought three of the same cabbage. I've bought three heads of the same cabbage. I'm afraid they both sound a little odd to me. I would say, "I've bought three cabbages of the same type." This AE speaker is talking about buying "three of the same pineapple" I assume they mean three of the same type of cabbage/pineapple. It doesn't make sense otherwise. If you bought three identical books, wouldn't you say this? I've bought three of the same book. I could see saying "I've bought three heads of the same kind of cabbage" if there were multiple varieties on sale. If you bought three identical books, wouldn't you say this? I've bought three of the same book. Yes, but you don't eat a book. That's what makes it sound odd: it's what you do with it. If you bought three identical books, wouldn't you say this? I've bought three of the same book. Probably not. I imagine I'd say "I've bought three copies of the book." But this is different from your 'cabbage' example: you're talking about a type of cabbage, but you're not talking about a type of book. I've bought three of the same cabbage. I've bought three heads of the same cabbage. Your problems are that (1) you did not give any context to the examples you gave, and (2) you used "cabbage" and "cabbage heads", which are not the same thing. If you give some context to the image from the video, you will help us answer but you should also understand why the man said what he did. Your problems are that (1) you did not give any context to the examples you gave, and (2) you used "cabbage" and "cabbage heads", which are not the same thing. Yes, you're right. I actually meant the first scenario, but indeed there might be two of them. Scenario 1: I bought three identical cabbages, almost the same weight, almost the same shape and, of course, the same kind. Scenario 2: I bought three heads of the same type, each head is different in weight. If you give some context to the image from the video, The guy in the video wanted to buy three different pineapples so as to compare the flavour to see if they are indeed different or if it turned out they were the same, with just the shapes being totally different. In other words he hoped he hadn't bought three pineapples of the same type. Last edited: Aug 28, 2021 The distinction between your original two sentences in #1 does not reflect the distinction between your two scenarios in #13. They both use the phrase "of the same cabbage", which I would in both cases interpret as the same kind of cabbage, not size, shape, or weight. The phrase does not imply that they are identical or nearly identical, nor does the addition of "heads of" really change anything. I would not normally even use the word "head" in this context at all, but instead use "cabbage" countably in the plural (see #2, #3). If you bought three identical books, wouldn't you say this? I've bought three of the same book. I'd say I bought three copies of the same book. And does this work? I've bought three pairs of the same jeans. Yes, I think so, but I'd be more likely to say that I'd bought three pairs of identical jeans. How about these? Secenario 1: I'm talking about myself only and say what I drank. It was three glasses and each time it was the same kind of champagne. I drank three glasses of champagne of the same kind. Scenario 2: I'm replying to someone else's utterance. That person drank some champagne and I tell them that I also drank that champagne. I drank three glasses of the same champagne. Would those scenarios differ? Are my versions fine? Last edited: Aug 28, 2021 Would those scenarios differ? I'm not sure what you're asking. The scenarios you've given do differ. I could say both sentences in both scenarios. What they mean would need to come from context. For the second scenario, I'd probably add "as you (did)" at the end. They are very similar, but the first could mean Bolliger 2002, 2003 and 2012, whereas the second can only means three glasses of Bollinger 2003. And how do you like this? Does the name of the hotel have "three of the same letter"? You're trying to apply logic again to something that was never meant to be logical. Books and letters actually are identical. Cabbages are not. When you've read one copy of the book, you've effectively read all of them. When you've eaten one cabbage, you haven't eaten all of them. Do you like this one? He was talking about making a movie scene inculding a car accident. They needed to repeat the scene three times so they needed three identical cars. "They ended up using three of the same car." I was told and I've noticed most native speakers use the singular form after the "(number) + of the same...." structure, for example, "three of the same book" not "books". Yet I come across the plural form as well. For example "three of the same bras" or "three of the same hats". Can you please explain? As Andygc said above, you can find all sorts of English on the internet. I would have said "These are three of the same style of hat in (three) different colours" and (if I wore a bra) "I have three of the same style/type of bra . . . " But people speaking casually and naturally will often say things that aren't necessarily 'correct'. We still know what they mean. And does either work? They've bought three cars of the same model. They've bought three of the same model of car. Yes, I think I would want to say 'three of the same hat'. But this is a thing you say when there isn't much time to plan, and might get mixed up with 'three hats', and you end up saying 'three of the same hats'. And does either work? They've bought three cars of the same model. They've bought three of the same model of car. The first one works for me. The second is too awkward for me with two ofs. So this works as well, right? I've got three hats of the same style/type. I have no explanation to offer for the plural bras and hats -- to me, it's just how they speak. As for #24, these examples have the same structure as the cabbage examples. In reality, I wouldn't use 'three X of the same type' or 'three of the same type of X' although those expressions don't sound outlandish to me. I'd say "I have three hats that are exactly the same." and "They bought three 2012 Toyota Camrys." To me, 'cabbage' with no modifying descriptor is green, "round-headed" cabbage like the ones in #13. If that's what I bought, I'd say "I bought three heads of cabbage" or "...three cabbages." If I bought something like apples, that supermarkets stock many varieties of, I'd say "I bought three Newtown Pippins and six Macouns." I wouldn't use 'three X of the same type' or 'three of the same type of X' although those expressions don't sound outlandish to me. I'd say "I have three hats that are exactly the same." and "They bought three 2012 Toyota Camrys." I agree. It wouldn't occur to me to use "three X of the same type". It doesn't sound idiomatic to me. "I had three glasses of Moet / I bought three identical hats" etc. Not "I had three glasses of the same type of champagne" etc. Hi, One in three of the drivers killed in road accidents have or has been drinking? I remember this kind of question being discussed to the death on the forum, but just cannot find the thread. Anyway, I think 'have' is fine as 'one in three' could easily imply one third of the drivers, but am not sure. Thank you. It may imply one-third, but it says one. I would use the singular: One in three drivers has ... Thank you for your confirmation and help. I agree with Copyright's reasoning, however I'm also pretty sure the plural form is more universally accepted. I agree with Copyright: it's definitely 'has', because 'one' is singular. 'Have' seems more commonly used, but it's incorrect. My opinion is that "one in three" doesn't mean one person though. It's 1/3 of however many and I would assume that "however many" is much greater than 3 or the statistic is meaningless. 1/3 (of the people) have ... 33% (of the people) have ... One in three (people) have ... My opinion is that "one in three" doesn't mean one person though. It's 1/3 of however many and I would assume that "however many" is much greater than 3 or the statistic is meaningless. 1/3 (of the people) have ... 33% (of the people) have ... One in three (people) have ... It's not whether it means one person that's significant; it's the use of the word 'one'. Grammatically speaking, the subject of the sentence is 'one', which means that the verb has to take a singular form to go with it. If the sentence referred to two out of every three drivers, 'have' would be correct, because 'two' is plural. 'One', however, is singular, so 'has' is correct and 'have' is wrong. Things like "In my school, one child in every class has red hair," or "One year in every four is a leap year," are slightly different examples of the same principle. Grammatically speaking, the subject of the sentence is 'one', ... My opinion is that the subject of the sentence is "one in three people". You may feel free to ignore my opinion but I think it is obvious that many people would use a plural verb in this sentence. I think it is obvious that many people would use a plural verb in this sentence. Indeed it is, as Renaissance Man and I have both observed. The fact that many people do it doesn't make it correct, though. Indeed it is, as Renaissance Man and I have both observed. The fact that many people do it doesn't make it correct, though. For a descriptivist, this is indeed the definition of "correct usage". Many people would use a singular verb - by your way of thinking, that in itself doesn't make it right either. However, let's look at it from another point of view. If "one" all by itself is the subject, what is the grammatical function of "in three" in the sentence. It seems it must be a adjective. Can I leave it out without fundamentally altering the sentence? The red apple is tasty. The apple is tasty. One in three has a headache. One has a headache. No, the subject has changed! I would say (in similar vein to panj's comment in the thread linked above): One driver in three has been drinking. One in three [of the] drivers have been drinking. I've read those other threads and I see what you mean. There does seem to be a distinction between "one driver in three" and "one in three drivers". I think the grammatical rule (for want of a better word) is probably the same, but it does sound better to use a plural form of the verb for the latter. I think there's something in what Panjandrum says in the linked thread about how close the plural noun is to the verb. This is a really interesting one. One in three has a headache. One has a headache. No, the subject has changed! I'm not sure what you're saying. One of my children has a headache. One has a headache. Same thing, isn't it? Would you say "one of my children have"? I think it's singular, whether it's "one in three", "one of my children," or "one in a million". You are right that "one of my children" or "one of three" is "one". "One in three" is a statistic representing a reduced form of some higher numbers, e.g. 33 out of 99 or 60,000 out of 180,000. This is why I think the plural verb sounds fine. "One in three drivers" means 33% of all drivers, which is certainly a number greater than one. If you think of the subject of the sentence as being "a certain number of drivers, which represent a third of the total number of drivers," then a plural verb is fine. If you think of the subject of the sentence being "one driver" (out of three), then a singular verb is fine. You are right that "one of my children" or "one of three" is "one". "One in three" is a statistic representing a reduced form of some higher numbers, e.g. 33 out of 99 or 60,000 out of 180,000. I suppose it's not something to be settled. There are different ways of seeing what "one in three" represents. To me, it is talking about a hypothetical "one" that is singular. "I throw parties all the time. One out of three ends in disaster." I wouldn't say "One out of three end in disaster" because I am speaking about a representative sampling of three and a representative one. I can certainly understand how "end" would work if I saw it as a statistic representing a large group... but I don't. To me, it is the equivalent of "Someone dies every 5 minutes of heart failure". This is an abstraction of the reality. People are not dropping dead, one at a time, at precise 5-minute intervals. Hi all, which expression is correct? Wich one, if both are correct, is more formal? Most people seem to use "in ten days time", but one sometimes one also reads the apostrophed version "in ten days' time". Thanks!! Why Not? Hi all, which expression is correct? Wich one, if both are correct, is more formal? Most people seem to use "in ten days time", but one sometimes one also reads the apostrophed version "in ten days' time". Thanks!! Why Not? I have seen this discrepancy as well, however, I write it as: "In ten days time, we will be going on holiday". To me "days" is not possessive with respect to time. I think of it as: "In a time of 10 days, we will..." Personally, I try not to use the expression "... days time" because it is redundant (and very old-fashioned) although it is still heard. It is enough to simply say: "In ten days, we will be going on holiday" Hi all, which expression is correct? Wich one, if both are correct, is more formal? Most people seem to use "in ten days time", but one sometimes one also reads the apostrophed version "in ten days' time". Thanks!! Why Not? The style guide for Guardian Unlimited shows a distinction between adjectival and adverbial terms, which leads to a useful test: Use apostrophes in phrases such as in two days' time, 12 years' imprisonment and six weeks' holiday, where the time period (two days) modifies a noun (time), but not in nine months pregnant or three weeks old, where the time period is adverbial (modifying an adjective such as pregnant or old) - if in doubt, test with a singular such as one day's time, one month pregnant The style guide for Guardian Unlimited shows a distinction between adjectival and adverbial terms, which leads to a useful test: Use apostrophes in phrases such as in two days' time, 12 years' imprisonment and six weeks' holiday, where the time period (two days) modifies a noun (time), but not in nine months pregnant or three weeks old, where the time period is adverbial (modifying an adjective such as pregnant or old) - if in doubt, test with a singular such as one day's time, one month pregnant Darn it, I knew this was an issue for me, as well! Notwithstanding adjectival and adverbial terms, I can't for the life of me understand how "years" can possess "imprisonment". What is the difference between 12 years of imprisonment and nine months of pregnancy (no irony intended!)? This is more of a rhetorical question, mplsray, because you've explained it very well based on grammatical rules... I've just never really understood the logic (or lack thereof!) behind it. Just one of those rules I'll have to memorize and not understand! Darn it, I knew this was an issue for me, as well! Notwithstanding adjectival and adverbial terms, I can't for the life of me understand how "years" can possess "imprisonment". What is the difference between 12 years of imprisonment and nine months of pregnancy (no irony intended!)? This is more of a rhetorical question, mplsray, because you've explained it very well based on grammatical rules... I've just never really understood the logic (or lack thereof!) behind it. Just one of those rules I'll have to memorize and not understand! The real problem here is referring to the possessive case using the term possessive. Consider the boy's dog. If the dog is actually the property of the boy's father, then the boy cannot be said to own the dog. Nor does it make sense to say that the father is owned by the boy. Nor, for that matter, in the case of the father's son, can the father be said to own his son—not in this part of the world, anyway. It would be better to replace the term possessive case with genitive case. That term also has the potential to mislead, but only to those who look up its etymology, unlike possessive, whose meaning can easily mislead a much larger group of people. By the way, The Greg Reference Manual, 9th ed., by William A. Sabin, New York: Glencoe/McGraw Hill, © 2001, which does advise against such usages as the barrel's bottom and the terminal's lower level says, In many common expressions that refer to time and measurements, however, and in phrases implying personification, the possessive form has come to be accepted usage. Hi all, which expression is correct? Wich one, if both are correct, is more formal? Most people seem to use "in ten days time", but one sometimes one also reads the apostrophed version "in ten days' time". Thanks!! Why Not? Simple test. What would you say for the singular? I'll see you in one day's time. or I'll see you in one day time. I had one week's vacation or I had one week vacation Thus "She'll see in you ten days' time". "She had ten weeks' vacation". Just to confuse things. I had a one-week vacation. She had a ten-week vacation. Simple test. What would you say for the singular? I'll see you in one day's time. or I'll see you in one day time. I had one week's vacation or I had one week vacation Thus "She'll see in you ten days' time". "She had ten weeks' vacation". Just to confuse things. I had a one-week vacation. She had a ten-week vacation. Also, although the length of time is plural the vacation could be singular, so be careful not to confuse "She had ten weeks' vacation" - multiple vacations totalling ten weeks with "She had a ten week vacation" - a single vacation of ten weeks Either way, I only get 5 weeks a year, the lucky so and so! Hi, So would a three months' journey be correct? (Though I suppose that a three-month journey would also be possible.) Last edited: Feb 21, 2010 Either a three-month journey or a three months' journey. Hello everybody. I have some problems when I want to say that something needs to be increased/decreased several times. I don't want to use "six,seven-fold" or something like that. I know that we can say it using "one, two, three, four ..... times". But the problem is that I don't know how to say it correctly if I, for example, want to say "The incomes in the country decreased by eight times" or "You have to increase the capacity of that device by four times". And hence I have one more question: what we have when saying "by X times"? What would be the difference if we said that without "by", just "increased/decreased X times"? Thank you. Unfortunately English is ambiguous in this respect. People argue about it. Everyone thinks it's obvious that 'four times bigger' means X and 'four times as big' means Y, but they disagree about X and Y. If the budget was £1000 and it increased (by) eight times, or by a factor of eight, or by eight, is it now £8000 or £9000? We have previous threads about this, though I'm not sure how you would find them. Thank you. But is what I suggested correct? I mean my two sentences. "Decreased by 8 times" doesn't mean anything to me at all. "Decreased to an eighth of its former size or amount" is precise, and perhaps that's what some muddle-headed innumerate meant by "decreased by 8 times," but I don't know, and I wouldn't trust the writer's arithmetic. Sometimes I read "decreased by" over 100%, which would produce a negative number as far as I can understand, but sometimes that's impossible. I think the best thing to do in these cases is to provide both numbers and let the reader draw his own conclusion about the relationship between them. Just say, "increased from 6 to 48" or "decreased from 48 to 6" and either leave it at that or, if you must give a proportion, add it. "From 1950 to 2000, the country's gross national product increased eight times, from 6 billion flinds* to 48 billion flinds." "The war years were an economic disaster. The gross national product fell from its prewar level of 48 billion flinds to 6 billion flinds." *The country's unit of currency is the flind of 100 urthals. Thank you too. But there's still a problem. What if I need to say: "You have to increase the capacity of that device by four times"? Or is it better to say that sentence using "fourfold"? I don't think "fourfold" is used much currently in AE; I don't know about BE. I've seen x-fold in older written material, but I especially wouldn't expect to see it in technical material. If you are dealing with engineers, "by four times" ought to mean "× 4" and you should be all right. If you are not, and the people you are speaking to might think "by four times" means to add an amount that is 4× the base amount (making the new total five times the base), then you had better say "to four times its current level" and give the numbers. Example: "Increase the capacity of the pump from 400 cc/min to 1600 cc/min." That's probably what the engineers would want anyway. Be specific and let them do their own math. Hi all, I was wondering what's the difference between "three times" vs "times three". Example: My English teacher was kind enough to let me choose a song for a listening. The song will be played three times for the rest of the students to fill in the gaps. I do know this is correct: "we are going to listen to this song three times". But is this correct, too? : "we are going to listen to this song times three" Beyond the second being a twisted grammar thing, should it were incorrect, could you please tell me what would I be saying? That's it. Thanks to the community! Last edited: Nov 17, 2022 Beyond the second being a twisted grammar thing, should it be incorrect, could you please tell me what would I be saying? Hello. This song times three simply isn't normal. The word order is strange and it suggests that you are trying to do some sort of strange multiplication with a song. You can't (except maybe in a very rare case, for emphasis) use "times three" to replace "three times", which means thrice, although we very rarely use that word. "Times three" implies "multiplied by three", especially in a simple sum, e.g. three times three is nine. You can't (except maybe in a very rare case, for emphasis) use "times three" to replace "three times", which means thrice, although we very rarely use that word. "Times three" implies "multiplied by three", especially in a simple sum, e.g. three times three is nine. Those very rare cases are the spice of tolerating me as an English student 😊 @owlman5 Yeah, sure it is. I first heard of this expression while watching an anime where one of the rivals uses a strength multiplier by saying "... TIMES THREE!!" or something like that. That was the point - I immediately understood the meaning, and then I asked myself if it could be used on real life situations (like filling the gaps to a song that is played thrice...) Cheers ! You can't (except maybe in a very rare case, for emphasis) You have disappointed me by not coming to class, so now you are going to write the sentence "I won't be a truant" on a [single] sheet of paper, times 100! Is this one the those cases, @lingobingo? Last edited: Nov 17, 2022 I find that very odd. I suppose it might (but still rather unusually) be used in something like: I couldn't agree more! I absolutely agree with that, times 100. Lol. I'm lucky enough to have a teacher with an ample threshold of patience for grammar jugglers (even though she struggles with beginners at the fact that they are so naive). Enough said on my part. Thanks!! Arabic words are generally based on three-letter roots that convey a single basic idea. For example, I have noticed that the Arabic root B-R-D has the basic meaning of cold, or mail, or an abrading tool, or papyrus, or a rifle, or a tea kettle, and other things along that general line. So the root B-R-D is used to create words that convey that general idea. Is that right? Arabic words are generally based on three-letter roots that convey a single basic idea. I think that probably there was a single idea, but the older the root is the more ideas it conveys although they are almost always related. Yes, the words created out of the root usually convey that idea or are related one way or the other. Most of the time it's very easy to grasp the relationship. For example, I have noticed that the Arabic root B-R-D has the basic meaning of cold, or mail, or an abrading tool, or papyrus, or a rifle, or a tea kettle, and other things along that general line. So the root B-R-D is used to create words that convey that general idea. Is that right? I think you are giving too many ideas or concepts to the root. The basic is cold or cool; others are generally are related. Bardi (papyrus) comes from the fact that it grows only in fresh water, hence it's cold (compared to the dry area a few meters away into the land); to the relation is to cold, not papyrus! Bareed (mail) came from the fact that in first mail posts they used fix a pole in certain points then يبرد فيه، أي يثبت. The idea that something that stays in a place comes from that when it stops moving it cools. Filing itself comes from the fact that you need to pour water on what you filed to cool it. I don't know how barrad came to be used for kettle in the Levant (didn't find it in dictionaries so I suppose it's a new collequal use, maybe), but in Arabic sometimes one can use the opposite meaning word (such as بصير = blind). In short, you got the idea right, but you gave too many meanings to a simple root. I don't know how barrad came to be used for kettle in the Levant (didn't find it in dictionaries so I suppose it's a new collequal use, maybe), but in Arabic sometimes one can use the opposite meaning word (such as بصير = blind). That's exactly right. In parts of KSA, they call the thermos ثلاجة (refrigerator), even though its purpose is to preserv not cold. I'm not too sure about your explanations for بريد and بردي, though. They sound suspiciously like after-the-fact rationalizations. Those two words could be borrowings from other languages. Responding to the original post: I think there is so much more to Arabic roots. They can convey so many meanings depending on what from they are in. Places, jobs, times, tools and even different verbs giving different meanings. As Mahaodeh was mentioning. I don't know how this topic wandered but I guess the idea was to discuss how knowing root meanings and a little morphology could boost your vocab. However does any one recommend any good books on morphology in English? Lots of people are recommending books in Arabic but I'd need a teacher. Right now that's not happening. Last edited by a moderator: Sep 3, 2009 I think two things have to be distinguished clearly: etymological root and lexicographical root. The latter is only a lexicographical device. Open a dictionary, and you find 10 words listed under the same root, but that doesn't follow that all of them are etymologically related. They may come from homophonous roots, and as Wadi says, some may be loanwords from other languages. We can always come up with an explanation, saying why a particular word derives from a particular root, but as Wadi says, that can very well be an after-the-fact rationalization. As an Arabic learner who is reasonably familiar with Arabic morphology, I would say that knowing the basic meaning of a root would not greatly increase your word power. It helps a bit, of course (the active and passive participles, which you can form freely, are very useful, for example), but at the end of the day, you have to learn most of the words one by one. No short cut. I don't mean to put a damper on the party, but I speak from my own painful experience. Hi there, Responding to the original post: I think there is so much more to Arabic roots. They can convey so many meanings depending on what from they are in. Places, jobs, times, tools and even different verbs giving different meanings. As Mahaodeh was mentioning. I don't know how this topic wandered but I guess the idea was to discuss how knowing root meanings and a little morphology could boost your vocab. I think that's true - roots have their basic meaning in them, and by "pouring" them into a certain "model", you get the final word. It's a combination of the basic meaning of the root and the meaning each وزن (for instance) gives. It does help to know roots with their basic meanings, side by side with the "patterns" (don't know how to call them - such as مفعل, مفعلة, فعلان etc.) and their basic meaning. It's true you still have to memorize your vocabulary, but so many times you can tell meaning of a new word by knowing other words from the same family. Especially with verbs, where it's very easy to give a specific meaning to each وزن - mutuality, reflexiveness, repetitiveness, and so on (but also with places, or special مصدر's). Particularly with words in modern Arabic, words you come across in newspapers and don't necessarily show up in dictionaries - تهميش, تؤارث, مستورثين (just some examples I remember) and many more. It's fun trying to together the two meanings and find the exact word you want. Like a puzzle. Responding to the original question I would say that triliteral roots used to express a single basic idea. But throughout the development of Arabic some additional meanings were added. As the most probable sources of these discrepancies (as it appears to us at the present time) we can identify old pre-Islamic tribal dialects and later loan-words. For example, this is the case of bareed (mail) which is derived from Latin veredus (a post-horse, courier's horse). Or, as in the case of barraad (kettle), we may simply miss the right etymology. Barraad was originally a kettle-like water receptacle made of unglazed ceramic. Thus it held it's content reasonably cool by very slow (but permanent) evaporation. Shukran for that. That was insightful. Ok I guess what I wrote was misinterpreted. I was to blame for that with my ambiguous post. What I meant to say is knowing how roots work and awzaan can make it easier to learn vocab. Like now I'm never going to forget barrad. (Thank you musta3rib). Although I'm looking for books on the topic. I know the Arabs were big on it (and non-Arabs such as turks and persians/central asians). Sadly my Arabic is a little weak to access those texts (and I don't speak turkish, persian or urdu). I mean where did you, nx'33, learn about awzaan. I've had them mentioned in early classes but no detailed lessons. (Sorry about the youtube link!) For a succinct overview, you can try Arabic Verbs and Essentials of Grammar published by McGraw-Hill (2007). There you can find all the basic morphology; you won't be disappointed, unless you're looking for some rarities like derived stem no. XII ... Yes, if one is familiar with a basic root meaning and familiar with basic word shapes and the ideas they most often connote, he/she will be able to take a guess at the meaning of a new word. For example, nouns of the root مفعل (maf3al) most often have the meaning of the place where the action of the root occurs. So, if say, one does not know the meaning of مكتب(ها) maktab, but knows that the root ك.ت.ب has to do with writing, he/she may be able to infer that a maktab is a place where one writes -- perhaps an office or a desk. In this sense, Arabic is almost algebraic -- you can take plug its root letters into a specific wazn that gives a certain meaning and get a word that relates to the meaning of the root by way of the meaning of the wazn. In fact, since I am bored, let's explore that idea: First, we must get a basic equation that helps us arrive at the meaning of a word. Perhaps: معنى الكلمة = الجذر + الوزن Now, let's use the example of مفعل and ك.ت.ب again. We have our wazn of مفعل, which as I said above often has to do with the place that takes place. So: مفعل = مكان الفعل Ok, so using our basic equation above our new equation for مفعل becomes: مكان فعل الجذر = الجذر + مفعل Ok, now we need a root. We are using ك.ت.ب.ل As I said above this root has to do with writing. Expressing it in Arabic: ذو علاقة بالكتابة = ك.ت.ب Now, so we have two elements: مفعل = مكان الفعل ك.ت.ب = ذو علاقة بالكتابة Let's plug them into our equation: First, the basic equation again: معنى الكلمة = الجذر + الوزن Replacing الوزن wit مكان الكتابة = ك.ت.ب ذو علاقة بالكتابة = مكان الكتابة مكتب -------- Let's try another. Suppose we have come across the word مدرسة which we have never heard before. Yet from our knowledge of deriving roots we can figure out that the root is د.ر.س, which we know has to do with learning (متعلق بالدراسة). And of course we know that the pattern مفعلة has to to with places. مكان الدراسة = مكان الدراسة مدرسة = د.ر.س + مكان فعل الجذر مفعلة = الجذر + مفعلة "The place of learning. Oh, it must b reductive as well as flawed since math is objective whereas language is not, but it's a fun exercise nonetheless that may help learners (and even native speakers) get a better feel for, or a basic understanding of, the roots and and word patterns of the language and how they relate to each other to recreate meaningful words. Lonelyman - If you are looking for more sources reflecting to some extent the way Arabs understand their grammar, you can try W. Wright's A GRAMMAR OF THE ARABIC LANGUAGE. Yes, I admit that it was first published in 19th century... But it is very insightful and includes even the peculiarities Ghabi mentioned (i.e. derived verbal stems up to XV) and it is still being republished over and over by Librairie du Liban. Thanks everyone. So I'll be using Arabic Verbs and Essentials of Grammar before I get my hands dirty with W. Wright. Hopefully alongside those 10 forms al Kitaab videos on youtube I'll have enough material. Thanks again it's been really useful. Since someone suggested it, I have Arabic Verbs and Essentials of Grammar here in front of me. I'll copy up the relevant chapter here, although it's a very basic. The Arabic Root SystemThe Key to understanding how Arabic grammar works is in its system of roots. Once you understand how roots work, you can start to identify which are the root letters of a word and understand the patterns they produce. You will then be able to form the different structures following the patterns and use your knowledge to pronounce words correctly and to guess at the meaning of vocabulary. We can begin by looking at some English words: necessary unnecessary necessitate necessarily necessity As a speaker of English, you can see that these words are connected in meaning. You see the combination of letters "necess" and you know that this word is connected with the meaning of "needing". You can recognize the extra letters on the beginning and end of the word as addition to the meaning: un- meaning "not"; the ending -ity showing that the word is a noun; -ly that it is an adverb, etc. Now look at these Arabic words: كتب (kataba) he wrote كتاب (kataab) book مكتب (maktab) office يكتب (yaktub) he writes كاتب (kaatib) writer Can you spot the three Arabic letters that appear in each of the words on the You should be able to see that these letters appear in all the words. 1. ك (kaaf) 2. ت (taa') 3. ب (baa') Notice that the letters appear in the same order in all of the words; the kaaf comes first, then the taa', and finally the baa'. These three letters, in this order, are the root. There are sometimes other letters as well as the root letters, but the root letters will always appear in the same sequence. The root sequence we have looked at (kaaf, taa', baa') is connected w the meaning of "writing". Whenever you see a word with this root, it probably has something to do with writing. The root letters mushroom into many different possible words. For example, when the root letters are put into a particular pattern with the letter mim (م) at the front, the meaning becomes "a place of writing" or "a desk/an office". مكتب (maktab) The vast majority of Arabic words contain three root letters, as in the example above. much of Arabic grammar is concerned with manipulating the three root letters into different patterns. As a symbol to respresnt the three root letters of any word, Arabic grammar uses the letters فعل (f'e'l). So the word for "office" - مكتب (maktab) - is the مَفْعَل pattern; i.e. the root letters have a ma (مَ) before them, a sukuun (o) over the first root letter and a fatHa (ـَ) over the second root letter. In the same way, the word كتابة (kitaaba) would be the فِعالة (fi3aala) pattern. كُتُب (ku (fu3ul) pattern, etc. Using A Dictionary It is worth adding a note about how to use an Arabic dictionary. It is possible to put Arabic in strict alphabetical order as we do in English, and this is becomming more common in the age of computerized alphabetization. However, the most widely used dictionaries for learners and native speakers use a system based on the root letters of the word. This means all the words with the same root letters are grouped together. You will need to try and figure out the root letters of a word before you can look it up in the dictionary. Hello, Say you have two words that share the same root. Do they necessarily share the same or even a similar meaning? If no, then what exactly is the purpose of the root system? Why bother stating the root of two given words (assuming they share the same root), just to say that they are unrelated in meaning? For example in a previous thread I used the example of camel and beauty (جمل and جمال) sharing the same root J-M-L. Other than just saying, "they share the same root" how does knowing that actually benefit us? Thanks. Most of the time, yes. For ones that don't, it is usually due to a deeper reason. 1. Which of the two is correct? 2. Which of the two are correct? 3. Which of the three is correct? 4. Which of the three are correct? Hi, Would you please help me on them? Which one is grammatical ok? Not a specific source/Self made general question Thank you. "Correct" is quite vague. If you're asking about grammatical correctness for example, then there can be more than one "correct" answer. If you ask "Which of the three are correct?", you're automatically assuming that two answers are "correct" but you don't know which ones. In short, you could say "Which of the three is/are correct?", but not "Which of the two are correct?". The latter would be nonsensical. Thank you. I wish one native English speaker would confirm or clarify it too. There is only one of the many that is correct; "which" therefore refers to "one"; one is singular. 1. Which [of the two] is correct? 2. Which [of the two] are correct? 3. Which [of the three] is correct? 4. Which [of the three] are correct? This assumes that there is one correct answer. There is only one of the many that is correct; "which" therefore refers to "one"; one is singular. That's what we assume. If you're asking the question "which of the two," you seem to imply that you're asking for one thing, and thus "which" is singular. However, with "which of the three" you could presumably be asking for two things: "Out of the three following statements, one is false. Which of the three are correct?" Excuse me I got more confused. In post #4 it is mentioned that "3. Which of the three is correct?" is correct. But In post #5 it is mentioned that "4. Which of the three are correct?" is correct. Would you please clarify it? There is only one of the many that is correct; "which" therefore refers to "one"; one is singular. Why would you assume that? 'Which' can refer "one" just as well as to "ones". If there were always only one 'correct' answer, you wouldn't see replies such as "Both are correct" on this forum. Just to add to what I wrote in my previous post, "Which of the two are correct?" may not be wrong in terms of grammar, but it sounds absurd since you are assuming that both options are correct and yet you're asking the question. "Which of the three are correct?" is logically possible. Excuse me I got more confused. In post #4 it is mentioned that "3. Which of the three is correct?" is correct. But In post #5 it is mentioned that "4. Which of the three are correct?" is correct. Would you please clarify it? Do you think that out of the three things, only one is correct? Then "is" is correct. Do you think that out of the three things, two are correct? Then "are" is correct. Excuse me I got more confused. In post #4 it is mentioned that "3. Which of the three is correct?" is correct. But In post #5 it is mentioned that "4. Which of the three are correct?" is correct. Would you please clarify it? It depends on the context. If there can be only one correct option or we assume there to be only one correct option, we would ask "Which of the three/two is correct". If there can be more than one correct option or we expect there to be more, we would ask "Which of the two/three are correct". The question "Which of the two are correct" might be absurd, but I guess there would be some kind of absurd context too. However, I'd still like to see what others think about this, I'm not quite sure. Now I completely understood it. Thanks everybody. In your original post, you could have asked: Which of the four are correct?, as you presumably knew that at least two of them were. Dear English speakers, could you help me decide whether I must use 'by' to specify how much times one number increased / decreased in relation to another number, as in the example below. To me, it looks like there is substantial difference in the meaning. The company's revenue increased two times in 2018 = the revenue doubled (eg from USD 1,000,000 in 2017 to USD 2,000,000 in 2018) The company's revenue increased by two times in 2018 = the 2018 revenue increased BY an amount exceeding the 2017 level twice (i.e. USD 1,000,000 + USD 2,000,000 = USD 3,000,000). Is this understanding correct or not? Thanks in advance to those who comment. "By" is normal after "increase" and "decrease". "By two times" isn't normal. Here is a normal use of "by": Sales increased by 17 percent last year. The company's revenue increased twice/two times last year. This is an unusual thing to say, but the words and grammar are normal. The company's revenue increased by two times last year Is this understanding correct or not? Thanks in advance to those who comment. Your understanding appears to be fine, inasmuch as the second sentence means anything. I strongly suggest only using "by" with percentages or fractions ("increased by 25%" or "increased by a quarter" for instance), and even then being a little cautious with percentages bigger than about 150%. Even "increase n times" can be a little problematical in English. We almost invariably use "doubled" in your situation, and "trebled" and "quadrupled" where it increased three-fold and four-fold respectively. In general I would say we use terms like "increased five-fold" rather than "increased five times", because "five times" could mean on five separate occasions, rather than five being a multiplier. However, "fold" sounds odd with non-integers, so we use "times" instead, where something like "increased one and a half times" cannot possibly be mistaken for a number of occasions. Both replies are quite helpful - thanks a lot! The math in your second example does NOT follow the language; 1M + 2M = 3M might be expressed this way: Revenue growth in 2018 amounted to twice the revenue of 2017. 2018 revenue was equal to three times the 2017 revenue. For me, without a math term such as “equals”, “two times” clearly means two occasions: I have watched this movie five times. I have visited New York ten times. We also hear “increased by a factor of x” which means the new amount equals the old amount multiplied by x. Such remarkable growth might be expressed like this: Revenue increased by a factor of 2.5 from 2017 to 2018. Today I meet the same problem as the poster mentioned. e.g. Output of coal increased fourfold last year. If the output of coal was 1,000 tons the year before last, How much was the output of coal last year? 4,000 tons or 5000 tons? The same problems also happen with these words "increase, decrease, raise, add, reduce". e.g. Output of coal decreased fourfold last year. If the output of coal was 1,000 tons the year before last, How much was the output of coal last year? 333 tons or 250 tons? Last edited: May 13, 2019 changwecanbelievein said: Today I meet the same problem as the poster mentioned. e.g. Output of coal increased fourfold last year. If the output of coal was 1,000 tons the year before last, How much was the output of coal last year? 4,000 tons or 5000 tons? In ordinary English, "increased fourfold" means it is four times what it was, so 4,000 tons in this case. However as you are well aware this does not stand up to logical scrutiny, and the writer would have done far better to write "quadrupled", or use a different expression that did not involve "increased", such as "was four times as high last year", but here you need to add "as the year before", as without "increased" it is not clear what is being compared - it could be four times as high as this year. changwecanbelievein said: The same problems also happen with these words "increase, decrease, raise, add, reduce". e.g. Output of coal decreased fourfold last year. If the output of coal was 1,000 tons the year before last, How much was the output of coal last year? 333 tons or 250 tons? Using "increased" is understandable, even if it may not be technically correct. Using "decreased" with anything other than a numerical value or a proportion less than one is meaningless. It could be 200 tons, of course: Starting with 200 tons and treating "increased fourfold" as additive would give 1,000 tons, so "decreased fourfold" could mean the same calculation in reverse. How did you get 333 tons as an option? In ordinary English, "increased fourfold" means it is four times what it was, so 4,000 tons in this case. However as you are well aware this does not stand up to logical scrutiny, and the writer would have done far better to write "quadrupled", or use a different expression that did not involve "increased", such as "was four times as high last year", but here you need to add "as the year before", as without "increased" it is not clear what is being compared - it could be four times as high as this year. Using "increased" is understandable, even if it may not be technically correct. Using "decreased" with anything other than a numerical value or a proportion less than one is meaningless. It could be 200 tons, of course: Starting with 200 tons and treating "increased fourfold" as additive would give 1,000 tons, so "decreased fourfold" could mean the same calculation in reverse. How did you get 333 tons as an option? For the first example, I understand your explanation. I mean that "Four times/fold" means the real changed part was 3,000. the result of 1,000 adds 3,000 was the output of coal last year. In order to avoid using "increase" we had better write like this,"Output of coal was fourfold as high as the year before last." It means if the output was 1,000 the year before last, the output of last year was 4,000. In ordinary English, "increased fourfold" means it is four times what it was, so 4,000 tons in this case. However as you are well aware this does not stand up to logical scrutiny, and the writer would have done far better to write "quadrupled", or use a different expression that did not involve "increased", such as "was four times as high last year", but here you need to add "as the year before", as without "increased" it is not clear what is being compared - it could be four times as high as this year. Using "increased" is understandable, even if it may not be technically correct. Using "decreased" with anything other than a numerical value or a proportion less than one is meaningless. It could be 200 tons, of course: Starting with 200 tons and treating "increased fourfold" as additive would give 1,000 tons, so "decreased fourfold" could mean the same calculation in reverse. How did you get 333 tons as an option? For the second example, Thank you for showing me the usage of "decrease". Now I know this word can only be used with a numerical value or a proportion less than one. But how should I express the reduction of output from 1000 tons to 250 tons with "xxx times/fold"? I mean that the output from 200 to 1000 means five times/fold, not four times or quadrupled. So I think 200 tons is wrong for "four times/fold". My opinion is,"The output of last year is 4 times less than that of the year before last. What I want to tell the readers is "output of last year was 250, output of the year before last was 1,000". changwecanbelievein said: But how should I express the reduction of output from 1000 tons to 250 tons with "xxx times/fold"? I mean that the output from 200 to 1000 means five times/fold, not four times or quadrupled. So I think 200 tons is wrong for "four times/fold". The output last year was 0.25 times the output of the year before.The output last year was a quarter of the output of the year before.The output last year was 25% of the output of the year before."Fold" isn't used for fractions (not fractions less than one, at any rate). You can use words like "rise" and "fall" or "increase" or "decrease" to make