Alif Baa Unit 4-5 - Asking Yes/No Questions

Asking Yes/No Questions

The Interrogative hal هل

<u>Yes/no questions are marked with a special particle: hal هل</u>. Because English does not mark yes/no questions, this particle has no English translation. Think of it as a signpost saying: the answer to this question is either "yes" or "no." That means that even if you are not quite sure what someone is asking you, but you heard the word hal هل at the beginning of the question, you have a 50-50 chance of guessing and getting it right. Those are pretty good odds for a beginning language student!

هل يوسف من مدينة نيو يورك؟   **hal** Yusef min madiinat New York?   Is Joseph from the city of New York?
هل مدينة شكاجو في ولاية أيوى؟   **hal** madiinat Chicago fii wilaayat Iowa?   Is Chicago in Iowa?

On the preceeding two questions, hal هل is placed at the beginning of the question to signal that the answer is either yes or no. Now consider the following question, which is <u>not</u> a yes/no question and, therefore, is <u>not</u> marked with the interrogative particle hal هل.

أين مدينة شكاجو؟   'ayna madiinat Chicago?   Where is Chicago?