

Quran Stop Signs

The small letters printed above the line are stopping instructions. Where you stop changes what the verse says. Keep this next to the Mushaf.

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Stop, or lean towards stopping

Carry on

Genuinely your choice

م

WAQF LAZIM

Stop. Not optional.

Carrying on damages the meaning. The only mark on this sheet that is compulsory.

لا

LA WAQF

Do not stop here.

The sentence is not finished. At a verse end it warns about meaning, it does not forbid the stop.

ج

WAQF JA'IZ

Your choice.

Stopping and continuing are both correct here.

قلی

AL-WAQF AWLA

Better to stop.

Continuing is allowed, but the sense sits better if you stop. Qaf for quit.

صلی

AL-WASL AWLA

Better to carry on.

Stopping is allowed. Sad for wasl, which means joining.

ز

WAQF MUJAWWAZ

Stopping is permitted.

Carrying on reads better.

ص

WAQF MURAKKHAHAS

You may breathe here.

The sentence is unfinished, but long enough that a breath is licensed.

ط

WAQF MUTLAQ

The thought is complete.

Stopping is the good choice.

ٓ ٓ

MU'ANAQAH, THE EMBRACING STOP

Three dots always come in pairs. Stop at one, never at both.

The verse can be read two ways and you choose one. Al-Baqarah 2:2 is the classic case: stop after لَا رَيْبَ or after فِيهِ, not both.

س

SAKTAH, FOUR PLACES IN THE WHOLE QURAN

Cut the sound for one beat. Do not take a breath.

Al-Kahf 18:1 · Ya-Sin 36:52 · Al-Qiyamah 75:27 · Al-Mutaffifin 83:14. Taking a breath here is a different thing from what the mark asks.

Printings differ, and nobody is wrong. These marks are the work of scholars, not part of the revealed text. The system goes back to al-Sajawandi (d. 560 AH); later printers adjusted it. A Madinah Mushaf leans on صلی and قلی where a South Asian printing may use ط and ز. If your child reads from a different copy to yours, expect the marks to differ.