

Sanskrit, Step by Step, Root by Root

An etymology-driven curriculum, built one word at a time

Adhithya Rajasekaran

This edition compiled incrementally — new chapters added as they
are written.

Copyright © Adhithya Rajasekaran. Licensed under Creative Commons
Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0). Devanagari set
in Noto Sans Devanagari (SIL Open Font License).

Preface

Sanskrit, like Latin, is not learned for conversation. It is learned to read, to hear how much of the world’s vocabulary was assembled, and — above all — because it is a **taproot**: the classical ancestor of Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi, and Bengali, whose every “hello” and “thank you” is a worn-down form of a Sanskrit word you will meet here in its full shape. And Sanskrit is at the same time a *sister* of Latin, Greek, and English — so its roots reach west (to *thee*, to Greek *eu-*, to *come*, to *no*) as surely as they reach east. Learning it ties the two halves of that inheritance together.

Sanskrit is classically written in **Devanagari**, the script you may already know from Hindi. This book teaches the reading *inside* the word lessons, with attention to the features Sanskrit needs even from a Devanagari reader — the *visarga* (ḥ), the vocalic ṛ, the conjuncts, and the *sandhi* that fuses words at their seams. (A reader new to the script learns it here from scratch; one who knows it skims the notes.)

We use standard **IAST** transliteration (the dotted ṛ, ḥ, ś, and macrons) alongside the Devanagari, and trace roots back toward Proto-Indo-European where the trail is clear — every form supplied in full. When Sir William Jones told the Asiatic Society in 1786 that Sanskrit bore to Latin and Greek “a stronger affinity... than could possibly have been produced by accident,” he launched the whole science of comparative linguistics; this book is, in miniature, a tour of the words he meant.

How to use this book

Every numbered section is one word, or one small phrase, and takes a few minutes — the length of a queue, an errand, or the walk to the bus. Read them in order the first time through: each section stands on the ones before it, and nothing is used before it has been taught. After that the book becomes reference, and you can open it anywhere.

Say the Sanskrit out loud wherever you can. The prompts under *Your*

turn are written to be spoken, and saying a word is most of what makes it stay. The questions under *Before you move on* carry their own answers in brackets: cover them, answer from memory, then look.

Nothing here is gated behind the alphabet. Each lesson introduces exactly the letters and sounds its own word needs, so you are reading real words from the first page rather than drilling a chart. The whole script is gathered in a reference at the back of the book — somewhere to look things up when you are curious, never a chapter to sit through first.

Released under CC BY-SA 4.0 — share it, adapt it, teach from it.

Contents

Preface	iii
1 Greetings	1
1.1 namaste	1
1.2 namaskāraḥ	2
1.3 na	3
1.4 na	5
1.5 na	5
1.6 na	6
1.7 dhanyavādaḥ	7
1.8 svāgatam	8
1.9 da	9
1.10 ām	10
1.11 na	11
1.12 Practice	12
1.13 virāma	13
2 Introducing Yourself	15
2.1 nāma	15
2.2 mama	16
2.3 ḥ	17
2.4 asti	18
2.5 mama nāma ... asti	19
2.6 ā	20
2.7 bhavān	21
2.8 tvam	22
2.9 kim	23
2.10 bha	24
2.11 tava nāma kim?	25

2.12	ānandaḥ	26
2.13	i	27
2.14	Practice	28
3	How Are You?	31
3.1	katham	31
3.2	bhavān katham asti?	32
3.3	ā	33
3.4	aham	34
3.5	kuśalam	35
3.6	ma	36
3.7	aham kuśalī asmi	37
3.8	na cintā	38
3.9	Practice	39
3.10	u	40
4	Farewells	43
4.1	gacchāmi	43
4.2	punaḥ	44
4.3	ra	45
4.4	punardarśanāya	46
4.5	śvaḥ	47
4.6	pa	48
4.7	Practice	50
5	The First Verbs	53
5.1	vadāmi	53
5.2	ya	54
5.3	aham samiskṛtam vadāmi	56
5.4	vasāmi	57
5.5	ṛ	58
5.6	karomi	59
5.7	Practice	60
5.8	a	62
6	Numbers One to Five	65
6.1	eka dva tri catur pañca	65
6.2	eka · dva · tri · catur · pañca	66
6.3	ña	68
6.4	pañca	70

7	The Core Verbs	73
7.1	asti · bhavati	73
7.2	ca	75
7.3	gacchati	76
7.4	āgacchati	78
7.5	ka	79
7.6	khādati	81
7.7	paśyati	83
7.8	kha	84
7.9	jānāti	86
8	The Mind and the Palm Leaf	89
8.1	cintayati	89
8.2	e	91
8.3	avagacchati · budhyate	92
8.4	paṭhati	94
8.5	va	95
8.6	likhati	97
9	Taking, Asking, Helping, Loving	99
9.1	grhṇāti	99
9.2	ta	101
9.3	prcchati	102
9.4	sāhāyyam karoti	104
9.5	m	105
9.6	snihyati · priyam	106
10	What You'd Ask For	109
10.1	pānīyam	109
10.2	sa	111
10.3	kṣīram	112
10.4	annam	114
10.5	ī	115
11	The People You'd Introduce	117
11.1	mitram	117
11.2	kuṭumbam	118
11.3	ha	120
11.4	bhrātā	121
11.5	bhaginī	122

	11.6	e	124
12		The Face, Part One	127
	12.1	akṣi	127
	12.2	karnah	128
	12.3	ṭha	130
	12.4	mukham	131
13		The Face, Part Two	133
	13.1	nāsikā	133
	13.2	dha	134
	13.3	hr̥dayam	136
14		Pointing, and Asking	139
	14.1	etat	139
	14.2	ṭa	140
	14.3	tat	141
	14.4	atra	142
	14.5	la	143
	14.6	tatra	144
	14.7	kaḥ	145
	14.8	o	145
	14.9	kutra	147
	14.10	a- / t- / k-	147
	14.11	tha	148
15		Describing Things	151
	15.1	mahat	151
	15.2	alpa	152
	15.3	ba	152
	15.4	uttama	154
	15.5	nava	155
	15.6	u	155
	15.7	purātana	157
	15.8	before the noun, and it AGREES	157
	15.9	ṣa	158
	15.10	au	160

16	Places — and the Two Noun Families	163
16.1	gṛham	163
16.2	grāmaḥ	164
16.3	ṇa	165
16.4	mārgaḥ	166
16.5	vanam	167
16.6	ga	168
16.7	nagaram	170
16.8	-am · -aḥ	171
16.9	ja	172
17	Time — Day, Night, and When Things Happen	175
17.1	dinam	175
17.2	rātriḥ	176
17.3	śa	177
17.4	adya	179
17.5	hyaḥ	179
17.6	cha	180
17.7	sadā	182
17.8	kāla-śabdāḥ	183
18	Asking — Every Question Begins with K	185
18.1	kadā	185
18.2	kimartham	186
18.3	kati	187
18.4	kutaḥ	188
18.5	ka-śabdāḥ	189
19	Counting On — Six to Ten, and What They Prove	191
19.1	ṣaṭ	191
19.2	sapta	192
19.3	aṣṭa	193
19.4	navan	194
19.5	daśa	195
19.6	saṅkhyā-śabdāḥ	196
20	People — and the Four Noun Endings	199
20.1	naraḥ	199
20.2	nārī	200
20.3	bālaḥ	201

20.4	vr̥ddhaḥ	202
20.5	janaḥ	202
21	More Everyday Verbs	205
21.1	nṛtyati	205
21.2	hasati	206
21.3	tiṣṭhati	206
21.4	smarati	207
22	Verbs of Mind and Motion	209
22.1	śṛṇoti	209
22.2	nayati	210
22.3	kriḍati	210
22.4	dahati	211
22.5	ḍa	212
23	The Four Oldest Kinship Words	215
23.1	pitā	215
23.2	mātā	216
23.3	sūnuḥ	216
23.4	duhitā	217
23.5	ū	218
24	Things You Ask For	221
24.1	jalaḥ	221
24.2	odanaḥ	222
24.3	phalaḥ	223
24.4	o	224
24.5	vastram	225
24.6	dīpaḥ	226
24.7	pha	227
25	The Hand and the Foot	229
25.1	hastāḥ	229
25.2	pādaḥ	230
25.3	śiraḥ	231
25.4	dantaḥ	231
25.5	keśaḥ	232

26	Naming Who Someone Is	235
26.1	guruḥ	235
26.2	śiṣyaḥ	236
26.3	rājā	237
26.4	atithiḥ	237
26.5	vaidyaḥ	238
27	Answering With More Than Yes	241
27.1	astu	241
27.2	ai	242
27.3	sādhu	243
27.4	alam	244
27.5	satyam	245
27.6	evam	246
28	Taking Your Leave	247
28.1	idānīm	247
28.2	paraśvaḥ	248
28.3	i	249
28.4	yātrā	250
28.5	śubham	251
28.6	svasti	252
29	Courtesy Words	253
29.1	kṛpayā	253
29.2	kṣamyatām	254
29.3	praṇāmaḥ	255
29.4	upakāraḥ	256
29.5	dhanyaḥ	256
30	Welcoming a Guest	259
30.1	dvāram	259
30.2	āsanam	260
30.3	puṣpam	261
30.4	mālā	261
30.5	añjaliḥ	262
31	The Sky and Its Lights	265
31.1	ākāśaḥ	265
31.2	candraḥ	266

31.3	tārā	267
31.4	vāyuh	267
31.5	himam	268
32	The Tree and What Grows	271
32.1	taruh	271
32.2	patram	272
32.3	trṇam	273
32.4	latā	273
32.5	dāru	274
33	The River and the Road	277
33.1	nadī	277
33.2	setuh	278
33.3	parvataḥ	279
33.4	puram	279
33.5	samudraḥ	280
34	More of the Body	283
34.1	bāhuh	283
34.2	grīvā	284
34.3	asthi	285
34.4	raktam	285
34.5	dehaḥ	286
35	In the House	289
35.1	dugdham	289
35.2	madhu	290
35.3	lavaṇam	291
35.4	pustakam	291
35.5	śayyā	292
36	More Short Replies	295
36.1	api	295
36.2	sarvam	296
36.3	tathā	297
36.4	mandam	297
36.5	samyak	298

37	More Courtesy	301
37.1	śāntiḥ	301
37.2	sādaram	302
37.3	prasannaḥ	303
37.4	abhinandanam	303
37.5	āsīrvādaḥ	304
38	Fire and Stone	307
38.1	agniḥ	307
38.2	bhasma	308
38.3	śilā	309
38.4	sikata	309
38.5	mṛttikā	310
39	Animals	313
39.1	dhenuḥ	313
39.2	vihaḡaḥ	314
39.3	matsyaḥ	315
39.4	śunakaḥ	315
39.5	sarpaḥ	316
40	In the Kitchen	319
40.1	dadhi	319
40.2	śarkarā	320
40.3	navanītam	321
40.4	śākam	321
40.5	modakaḥ	322
41	Things People Make	325
41.1	cakram	325
41.2	kalaśaḥ	326
41.3	plavaḥ	327
41.4	darpaṇaḥ	327
41.5	chatram	328
42	Five More Replies	331
42.1	kadācit	331
42.2	sahasā	332
42.3	prāyaḥ	333
42.4	kiñcit	333

	42.5	bahu	334
43		Good Manners	337
	43.1	ātithyam	337
	43.2	vinayaḥ	338
	43.3	namrata	339
	43.4	viśvāsaḥ	339
	43.5	saralaḥ	340
44		Colours	343
	44.1	śvetaḥ	343
	44.2	śyāmaḥ	344
	44.3	pītaḥ	345
	44.4	haritaḥ	345
	44.5	nīlaḥ	346
45		Times of the Day	349
	45.1	prātaḥ	349
	45.2	madhyāhnaḥ	350
	45.3	sāyam	351
	45.4	māsaḥ	351
	45.5	saṁvatsaraḥ	352
46		Sun and Shade	355
	46.1	raviḥ	355
	46.2	raśmiḥ	356
	46.3	prakāśaḥ	357
	46.4	chāyā	357
	46.5	tāpaḥ	358
47		Parts of a House	361
	47.1	bhittiḥ	361
	47.2	vātāyanam	362
	47.3	sopānam	363
	47.4	stambhaḥ	363
	47.5	talam	364
48		More Animals	367
	48.1	simhaḥ	367
	48.2	vṛkaḥ	368
	48.3	chāgaḥ	369

48.4	vānarah	369
48.5	haṁsah	370
49	Five Small Answers	373
49.1	tarhi	373
49.2	yathā	374
49.3	kevalam	375
49.4	muhuḥ	375
49.5	aho	376
50	Sound and Song	379
50.1	śabdaḥ	379
50.2	praśnaḥ	380
50.3	vāṇī	381
50.4	gītām	381
50.5	ślokaḥ	382
51	More of the Family	385
51.1	patiḥ	385
51.2	patnī	386
51.3	pitāmahaḥ	387
51.4	mātāmahī	387
51.5	mātulaḥ	388
52	Two Things Joined	391
52.1	ca	391
52.2	vā	392
52.3	kintu	393
52.4	na ... na	394
52.5	ca · vā · kintu · na ... na	395
53	Which One, That One	397
53.1	yah	397
53.2	sah	398
53.3	yah ... sah	399
53.4	yatra ... tatra	400
53.5	ya- · ta-	402

54	Thus It Was Said	403
54.1	iti	403
54.2	... iti cintayati	404
54.3	iti	406
55	Having Gone, and In Order to Go	407
55.1	gatvā	407
55.2	gantum	409
55.3	-tvā · -tum	410
56	What Happened Yesterday	413
56.1	agacchat	413
56.2	apaṭhat · akhādat	415
56.3	a- ... -t	416
57	Able, and Willing	419
57.1	śaknoti	419
57.2	icchatī	420
58	What Pleases Me	423
58.1	mahyam	423
58.2	rocate	424
58.3	mahyam ... rocate	426
59	Where You Come From	427
59.1	deśaḥ	427
59.2	Bhāratam	428
59.3	bhāratīyaḥ	429
59.4	Bhāratāt	430
60	The Stick at the End	433
60.1	daṇḍa	433
61	The Turning Season	435
61.1	ṛtuḥ	435
61.2	ṛ	436
62	The Ending That Counts	439
62.1	pañcamah	439
62.2	saptamah	440
62.3	aṣṭamah	442

62.4	navamaḥ	443
62.5	daśamaḥ	444
62.6	pañcamaḥ · saptamaḥ · aṣṭamaḥ	446
63	The Endings Before It	449
63.1	ṣaṣṭhaḥ	449
63.2	caturthaḥ	451
63.3	tṛtīyaḥ	452
63.4	dvitīyaḥ	453
63.5	prathamaḥ	455
63.6	prathamaḥ · dvitīyaḥ · tṛtīyaḥ	456
64	Reading — Words, Lines, and a First Passage	459
64.1	(reading)	459
64.2	(reading)	460
64.3	(reading)	461
	Devanagari & Sanskrit sounds (reference)	463
	Glossary	465
	Review Questions	487
	Answer Key	489
	Index	491

Chapter 1

Greetings

Modes: 🗣️ voice (6) 👁️ eyes (1) ✍️ pen (6) 🗣️ Hands-free start: first 1 of 13 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can greet someone in Sanskrit, recognize the reply, and choose an appropriate response.

Complete SA-C01-practice, the canonical closing checkpoint, and demonstrate the chapter promise: greet someone in Sanskrit, recognize the reply, and choose an appropriate response.

1.1 नमस्ते (namaste) — “I bow to you”

The first Sanskrit word — and the original that Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi, and Bengali all wore down into their own greetings.

The letters in this word

Four even beats: *na · ma · s · te*. The *s* closes its own beat and leans straight into *te* with no vowel between them. Nothing here is strange to an English mouth — say it at conversational speed and it is yours.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

namaste = *namas* (“a bow, obeisance”) + *te* (“to you”) — literally “**a bow to you.**” This is the *source*: the word every Indo-Aryan *namaste* descends from. *Namas* is from the root √nam “to bend, bow” (PIE **nem-*). And *te* “to you” is a family heirloom — the same Indo-European pronoun behind Latin *tē*, Greek *se*, and archaic English

thee. Say *namas-te* and you speak a word Cicero and Chaucer would each half-recognise.

Why it's said this way

Palms pressed together (the gesture is *añjali*), a slight bow: hands and word say the same thing. *Namaste* greets the person before you as worthy of a bow — hello, and on parting, goodbye. It is the greeting Sanskrit gave to half of South Asia.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- read it — na · ma · s · te
- the two parts (*namas* “a bow” + *te* “to you”)
- the English cousin of *te* (**thee**)

Before you move on

What does *namaste* literally mean, and what English pronoun is *te* cousin to? (“A bow to you”; **thee**.)

1.2 नमस्कारः (namaskārah) — the fuller form

Same bow, different grammar — and your first case-ending.

The letters in this word

na · mas · kā · rah. The *ā* is the long vowel, held about twice as long as a short *a*. The final *-h* is a soft breath after the vowel, almost an echo of it: the word ends on a whispered *ha*, not a stop.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

namaskārah = *namas* (“a bow”) + *kāra* (“the making, the doing,” from the root $\sqrt{\text{kr}}$ “to do/make”). So *namaskāra* is “the **making** of a bow” — an act, where *namaste* is an address. That root $\sqrt{\text{kr}}$ “to do” is among Sanskrit’s most productive (it gives *karma*, “a thing done”); it

is PIE *k^wer-*. The final **visarga** *-aḥ* marks the masculine singular — your first case-ending.

Grammar Lens

Namaste and *namaskāra* share the same first half, *namas*, but end differently because they do different grammatical jobs — one takes a pronoun (*te* “to you”), the other builds a noun (*-kāra* “the making of”). Sanskrit words are transparently assembled from roots and endings; once you see the seams, long words stop being frightening.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- read it — na · mas · kā · raḥ
- how it differs in sense from *namaste* (“the making of a bow” vs. “a bow to you”)
- what the final visarga *-aḥ* marks (masculine singular)

Before you move on

Namaskāra is built from which two parts, and what does its visarga ending tell you? (*Namas* “a bow” + *kāra* “the making of”; masculine singular.)

1.3 ढ — one character, met inside words you already say

A horizontal head-line (shirorekḥā) runs across the top; letters hang beneath it like laundry on a line.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: ढ

ढ — *na*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *n*, it is **na**.

What it is made of:

- a clockwise left loop joined to a rightward shoulder
- a top-to-bottom right stem
- the top shirorekhā

You already say these words, and ऩ is one of the shapes inside them — the rest of their shapes are still ahead of you, so here the character stands on its own:

- *namaste* — hello (lit. “a bow to you”)
- *namaskārah* — hello (lit. “the making of a bow”)

Writing: ऩ

- **1.** start at the loop’s inner-right curve, sweep down and clockwise around the small opening, then continue right along the shoulder without lifting
- **2.** lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
- **3.** lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified three-stroke teaching form; everyday handwriting may join or simplify the loop differently

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-ऩ-order.gif’, strokes 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 11 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ऩ in it

ऩ

- *Trace it:* ऩ three times, saying *na* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ऩ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ढ? What sound does it carry? (*na*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

1.4 ढ — copy it in three strokes, counting the lifts

Put the stroke order from the last lesson beside you. It stays visible for all of this one.

Writing — guided copy

Copy ढ once, following the three strokes in order: the loop and shoulder, the right stem top to bottom, then the **śirorekhā** across the top, left to right.

Count your pen lifts as you go. There should be **two** — after the shoulder and after the stem — and no more. If you lifted three or four times, you drew a picture of the letter rather than the letter; do it once more and watch only the lifts.

The last stroke is the one that matters most and is the easiest to treat as decoration. The **śirorekhā** is drawn **last and left to right**, and in running Devanagari it joins up across a whole word — so it is not a lid on one letter, it is the line the word will eventually hang from.

Before you move on

How many pen lifts? (**Two**.) Which stroke came last? (**The śirorekhā**, left to right.)
One caution the source itself carries: this is one attested teaching order, not a national standard. Everyday handwriting joins and simplifies it, and a hand that has learned a different order is not wrong.

1.5 ढ — write it with the model covered

Look at ढ once and say *na*. Then cover it, and the stroke order with it.

Writing — delayed copy

With everything covered, wait ten seconds, then write ऋ once from memory.

Ten seconds is long enough that your hand cannot be copying a shape it can still see, and short enough that a letter you met a minute ago is still there.

Only after the letter is finished, uncover the model and compare.

Before you move on

Check the **śirorekhā** first, and check its length rather than its presence.

A hand writing from memory usually remembers to put the bar there and draws it only as wide as the letter's own body. In running text the bar has to reach the full width of the letter, because the next letter's bar will meet it. A bar drawn short is the one mistake that looks completely correct on a single letter and falls apart the moment there are two.

1.6 ऋ — the letter from the sound

Cover every ऋ on the page. Nothing to copy, nothing to uncover, and no stroke order in front of you.

Writing — dictation

Say *na* aloud, or play it, and write the letter that carries it. Once.

A delayed copy asks your hand to remember a shape. Dictation asks it to turn a **sound** into a shape, which is what writing is actually for, and the two do not always arrive together.

Before you move on

Uncover the model, compare — and notice what you were asked to write.

Not *n*. **na**. One shape came out of your hand for two sounds, and nobody wrote the vowel. That is what an abugida is, and it is the reason the letters of this script cannot be counted the way an alphabet's can: ऋ is not a letter plus a silent vowel, it is a syllable with a consonant you can change.

1.7 धन्यवादः (dhanyavādaḥ) — “thank you”

The full, un-worn Sanskrit shape of a “thank you” you already met to the east.

The letters in this word

dha · nya · vā · daḥ. The opening *dh* is one sound, not two — a *d* released with a puff of breath behind it. *nya* is likewise a single run. It closes on the same soft breathed *-ḥ* as *namaskāraḥ*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

dhanyavādaḥ = *dhanya* (“worthy, deserving,” from *dhana* “wealth”) + *vāda* (“a speaking, a statement,” from the root √vad “to speak”). Literally “a saying of ‘you are worthy.’” This is the **source** of the thanks you met to the east — Hindi *dhanyavād*, Marathi and Punjabi likewise, Bengali *dhônyobad* — here in its full Sanskrit shape, visarga and all.

Why it’s said this way

Classical Sanskrit thanks are more often shown in deed and honorific than said with a set formula; *dhanyavāda* is the plain, dignified “thank you,” and its survival across every modern northern language shows how durable a good word can be. Note you already knew all its pieces — only the ending (*-aḥ*) is new.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- read it — *dha · nya · vā · daḥ*
- its two roots (*dhanya* “worthy” + *vāda* “a saying”)
- a modern descendant (Hindi *dhanyavād* / Bengali *dhônyobad*)

Before you move on

Dhanyavāda is built from which two parts, and what modern greeting descends from it? (*Dhanya* “worthy” + *vāda* “a saying”; Hindi *dhanyavād*, etc.)

1.8 स्वागतम् (svāgatam) — “welcome”

One word that is *cognate* with English “welcome” — not just a translation of it.

The letters in this word

svā · ga · tam. It opens on *sv-* said as one push, carries the long *ā* in that first beat, and ends on a bare *m* with no vowel after it — the mouth simply closes.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

svāgatam = *su* (“well, good”) + *āgata* (“come,” from *ā* “toward” + the root $\sqrt{\text{gam}}$ “to go/come”) — “**well come**,” which is exactly what English *welcome* means too. Two deep Indo-European threads surface:

- *su-* “good” is the twin of **Greek *eu-*** — the *eu* of *euphoria*, *eulogy*, *euphemism*. Sanskrit *su-* and Greek *eu-* are the same prefix.
- the root $\sqrt{\text{gam}}$ “to go/come” is PIE *g^wem-* — the very root of English **come** (and of Latin *venīre*, hence *venue*, *convene*).

So *svāgatam* and *welcome* are not just parallel ideas but partly **cognate** ones.

Why it’s said this way

Su + *āgata* fuses into *svāgata* by **sandhi** — Sanskrit’s rule that *u* before a vowel becomes the glide *v*. You will see sandhi everywhere; it is why Sanskrit words seem to melt into one another. The neuter ending *-am* makes it “a welcome / it is welcomed.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- read it — *svā · ga · tam*
- the two parts (*su* “well” + *āgata* “come”)
- the English word that is *su-*’s Greek twin (*eu-*, as in *euphoria*)

- the English cousin of the root $\sqrt{\text{gam}}$ (**come**)

Before you move on

Svāgatam literally means what, and name two of its far-flung cousins. (“Well come” = welcome; Greek *eu-* (from *su-*) and English *come* (from $\sqrt{\text{gam}}$).)

1.9 ढ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, one you have already met: न. Say what it does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: ढ

ढ — *da*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *d*, it is **da**.

What it is made of:

- a short top-to-bottom stem
- an outer body joined to an inward curl and down-right tail
- the top shirorekhā

You already say this word, and ढ is one of the shapes inside it — the rest of its shapes are still ahead of you, so here the character stands on its own:

- *dhanyavādaḥ* — thank you

Writing: ढ

- 1. draw the short stem top-to-bottom

- **2.** lift at the stem’s lower junction, sweep left through the upper shoulder and around the outer body, curl inward and clockwise through the loop, then continue down-right through the tail without lifting
- **3.** lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified three-stroke teaching form; another learner source stages the outer body and curl-tail separately

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-**द**-order.gif’, strokes 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 8 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find **द** in it
- द**
- *Trace it:* **द** three times, saying *da* as you finish each one
 - *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find **द** once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — **द**? What sound does it carry? (*da*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

1.10 आम् (ām) — “yes”

You can greet, thank, and welcome. Now the smallest reply of all.

The letters in this word

ām — one beat. A long *ā*, then the lips close on *m* with no vowel after it. Say it and stop.

Why it's said this way

Classical Sanskrit, like Latin, leans on more than a bare “yes”: one answers by echoing the verb, or with *ām*, *evam* (“so it is”), or *bāḍham* (“certainly”). The blunt yes/no habit of English is not universal — these old languages preferred to *say what they meant*. *Ām* is the plain agreement, and the one to reach for first.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- yes — *ām*
- two other ways to agree (*evam* “so it is”, *bāḍham* “certainly”)
- what Sanskrit prefers to a bare yes (echoing the verb)

Before you move on

How do you say yes, and what does Sanskrit often do instead of saying it? (*Ām*; echo the verb, or answer with *evam* or *bāḍham*.)

1.11 ऋ (na) — “no, not”

You have *ām*. Here is its opposite — and it may be the oldest thing in this whole book.

The letters in this word

na — one short beat, the *a* closer to English *cup* than to *car*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Na (“no, not”) you have already met wearing other clothes: it is Proto-Indo-European **ne* “not,” **the same negative** as the Latin *nōn* of the last track, as English **no**, **not**, **none**, as German *nein*, and as Hindi *nahīn*. Of every word in this book, *na* may reach furthest unchanged — one syllable spoken, in some form, from Iceland to India for five thousand years.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- yes and no — *ām / na*
- the English cousins of *na* (no, not, none)
- the Latin cousin you already know (*nōn*)

Before you move on

What is the ancient root of *na*, and name three of its living cousins. (PIE **ne* “not”; English *no/not/none*, Latin *nōn*, German *nein*, Hindi *nahīn* — any three.)

1.12 Chapter 1 — Practice and Recall

No new words — just the five, and the roots that reach both east and west.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- hello, “a bow to you” — *namaste*
- hello, “the making of a bow” — *namaskārah*
- thank you — *dhanyavādaḥ*
- welcome, “well come” — *svāgatam*
- yes and no — *ām / na*

How to answer: the taproot both ways

Sanskrit points east *and* west. Trace each:

Say these aloud:

- which Sanskrit word do Hindi/Marathi/Punjabi/Bengali’s greetings come from? (*namas / namaste*)

- which Greek prefix is *su-* “good” the twin of? (*eu-*)
- which English verb is the root $\sqrt{\text{gam}}$ cousin to? (*come*)
- which Latin word (last track) is *na* cousin to? (*nōn*)

What you’ve built: the roots you now carry

- *namas* “a bow” → every Indo-Aryan hello; root $\sqrt{\text{nam}}$ “to bend”
- *te* “to you” → English **thee**, Latin *tē*
- *su-* “good” → Greek **eu-** (euphoria, eulogy)
- $\sqrt{\text{gam}}$ “come” → English **come**, Latin *venīre*
- *na* “not” → English **no/not/none**, Latin *nōn*, German *nein*

Before you move on

In 1786 Sir William Jones said Sanskrit, Latin, and Greek shared “a stronger affinity than could have been produced by accident.” Name two words from this chapter that show it. (Any two: *te*↔*thee*/*tē*, *su-*↔*eu-*, $\sqrt{\text{gam}}$ ↔*come*, *na*↔*nōn*.)

1.13 ऌ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: न · द. Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: ऌ

ऌ — *no sound of its own — it takes one away.*

It is a **vowel-killer**. Every consonant in this script arrives with an *a* already inside it — that is what an abugida is. This mark takes the *a* back, leaving the bare consonant. It is how the script writes two consonants in a row.

Where it sits: a stroke below that removes the inherent ‘a’ and forms a conjunct with the next consonant.

Worked through: ऩ + ॠ = ऩॠ — *n*.

You already say these words, and ॠ is one of the shapes inside them — the rest of their shapes are still ahead of you, so here the character stands on its own:

- *namaste* — hello (lit. “a bow to you”)
- *namaskāraḥ* — hello (lit. “the making of a bow”)
- *dhanyavādaḥ* — thank you
- *svāgatam* — welcome (lit. “well come”)

Writing: ॠ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ॠ and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed.

This book does not yet tell you **where to start the character or which way to travel**. That is a real thing, taught with real variation from school to school, and it is not written down here until it can be written down with a source. Copying what is in front of you needs no such source, and it is how the shape gets into your hand in the meantime.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ॠ in it

ॠ

- *Trace it:* ॠ three times, and each time say what it does: **it kills the built-in *a***
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ॠ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ॠ? What does it do to the consonant it sits on? (**Takes away the built-in *a*.**) Name one word you already say that contains it.

Chapter 2

Introducing Yourself

Modes:  voice (10)  pen (4)  Hands-free start: first 2 of 14 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can introduce myself in Sanskrit, give my name, and understand the other person's name.

Complete SA-C02-practice, the canonical closing checkpoint, and demonstrate the chapter promise: introduce myself in Sanskrit, give my name, and understand the other person's name.

2.1 नाम (nāma) — “name,” the source of a word half the world shares

The first word of the introduction — and, since this is Sanskrit, the *source* of the word half the world uses.

The letters in this word

nā · *ma*. A long first beat and a short second — the two vowels English keeps apart in *father* and *sofa*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

nāma (“name,” neuter) is from the stem *nāman*, from Proto-Indo-European ***h₃nomn-**. This is not a *borrowing* from anywhere — it is the ancestor: the same root surfaces as English **name**, Latin *nōmen* (→ **noun**, **nominate**), Greek *onoma*, and, worn down, as Hindi *nām*, Bengali *nām*, Punjabi *nānī*. When you say Sanskrit *nāma*, you are standing near the headwaters of a word that

flowed to both Europe and modern India.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “nāma”
- its children, west and east — English *name*, Latin *nōmen*; Hindi *nām*

Before you move on

What PIE root is *nāma* from, and name two of its descendants.
(**h₃nomn-*; any two of English *name*, Latin *nōmen*, Greek *onoma*,
Hindi *nām*.)

2.2 मम (mama) — “my,” the ancestor of *me* and *my*

The word that makes the name yours — and it is, quite literally,
the grandparent of English *my*.

The letters in this word

ma · *ma*. Two identical short beats, evenly stressed.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

mama (“my, of me”) is the genitive of *aham* (“I”), on the first-person root **ma-**, from Proto-Indo-European ***me-**. This is the source of the whole first-person family: English **me**, **my**, **mine**, Latin *meus*, Greek *emou*, and Hindi *merā*. Sanskrit *mama* and English *my* are not merely similar — they are the same ancient word, one still in its old form, the other worn smooth by five thousand years.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “mama”
- the m- family — *mama* / English *me*, *my* / Latin *meus* / Hindi *merā*

Before you move on

What is *mama* the genitive of, and its English cousins? (*Aham*, “I”; English **me**, **my**, **mine**.)

2.3 ः — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: न · द · ः
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: ः

ः — *h*.

It is a **visarga**: not a letter, but a soft breathed *h* at the end of a syllable. It is the mark that ends a great many Sanskrit masculine nouns, so it is worth knowing on sight.

Where it sits: a pair of dots to the right of the syllable, marking a voiceless post-vocalic breath.

Worked through: न + ः = नः — *nah*.

You already say these words, and ः is one of the shapes inside them — the rest of their shapes are still ahead of you, so here the character stands on its own:

- *namaskārah* — hello (lit. “the making of a bow”)
- *dhanyavādah* — thank you

Writing: ः — **copy what you see**

Put your pen on ः and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed.

This book does not yet tell you **where to start the character or which way to travel**. That is a real thing, taught with real variation from school to school, and it is not written down here until it can be written down with a source. Copying what is in front of you needs no such source, and it is how the shape gets into your hand in the meantime.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ः in it

ः

- *Trace it:* ः three times, saying *h* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ः once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ः? What does it add to the end of a syllable? (**A soft breathed *h*.**) Name one word you already say that contains it.

2.4 अस्ति (asti) — “is,” the ancestor of *is* and *est*

The little verb “is” — and here you meet it in the form that fathered half the “to be” words on earth.

The letters in this word

as · *ti*. The *s* closes the first beat; *ti* follows cleanly after it.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

asti (“is”) is the third-person singular of the root *as-* (“to be”), from Proto-Indo-European ***h₁es-**. It is the source of the family’s copula: English **is**, German *ist*, Latin *est*, Greek *esti*, and Hindi *hai* (← *asti* directly). Unlike its Dravidian neighbours — Tamil and Bengali drop “is” in the present — Sanskrit *keeps* an explicit copula, and it is the very word Europe kept too.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “asti”
- the family — *asti* / English *is* / Latin *est* / Greek *esti* / Hindi *hai*

Before you move on

What root is *asti* from, and its cousins across the family? (*As-* / PIE **h₁es-*; English *is*, Latin *est*, Hindi *hai*.)

2.5 मम नाम ... अस्ति (mama nāma ... asti) — “my name is...”

Three atoms you now own, assembled — and note that Sanskrit, unlike Tamil or Bengali, actually *says* the “is.”

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

mama (my) + *nāma* (name) + your name + *asti* (is) = **mama nāma ... asti**, “my name is...” *Mama nāma Aruṇaḥ asti.* → “My name is Arun.”

Grammar Lens: Sanskrit keeps the “is”

Where Tamil says only *en peyar Arun* and Bengali *āmār nām Arun* — both dropping the verb (the zero copula) — Sanskrit says *mama nāma ... asti*, with an explicit *asti* (“is”). This is the Indo-European way, the one Latin and English kept too (*my name is ...*). The verb comes **last**, as in the modern Indian languages that descend from it. (In casual use *asti* can be dropped, but the “full-dress” Sanskrit sentence keeps it.)

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “mama nāma ... asti” with your name
- how this differs from Tamil/Bengali (Sanskrit keeps the “is”)

Before you move on

Give your name in Sanskrit, and say what it keeps that Tamil and Bengali drop. (*Mama nāma ... asti*; the copula *asti*, “is.”)

2.6 आ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ढ · ् · ँ.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: आ

आ — $\bar{a}$.

It is an **independent vowel**: the full-size letter a vowel wears when it opens a word and has no consonant to lean on. Inside a word the same vowel is written as a small sign instead.

What it is made of:

- the joined upper-and-lower left body of a
- a middle shoulder
- an inner vertical stem
- a trailing vertical stem
- the top shirorekha

You already say this word, and आ is one of the shapes inside it — the rest of its shapes are still ahead of you, so here the character stands on its own:

- $\bar{a}m$ / na — yes / no

Writing: आ

- **1.** curve around the upper bowl, then continue down and around the lower bowl without lifting
- **2.** lift and sweep the middle shoulder right
- **3.** lift and draw the inner stem top-to-bottom
- **4.** lift and draw the trailing stem top-to-bottom

- **5.** lift and draw the top shirorekḥā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 4. The pen comes up 4 times and no more.

verified modern printed teaching form; other Devanagari traditions split the shared *a* body into more strokes

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Saurmandal, ‘Devanagari आ stroke order.svg’, frames 1–5, Wikimedia Commons, 5 August 2023.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find आ in it

आ

- *Trace it:* आ three times, saying ā as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find आ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — आ? What sound does it carry? (*ā*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

2.7 भवान् (bhavān) — the respectful “you”

To ask someone’s name you need a word for “you” — and for a first meeting, Sanskrit reaches for the polite one.

The letters in this word

bha · *vān*. The *bh* is one sound — a *b* released with breath behind it. The second beat carries a long *ā* and closes on *n*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Bhavān (“you,” respectful) is not really a second-person word at all: it is a third-person honorific — “your honour,” from *bhavat* (“being, gracious one”) — and so it takes a *third-person* verb (*bhavān asti*,

“your honour is”). For a first meeting, use *bhavān*.

Grammar Lens: politeness by grammatical person

Where Hindi and Punjabi make respect *plural* (*āp ... haiṁ*), Sanskrit makes it *third-person*: to be polite you address someone as though speaking *about* them — “is your honour well?” rather than “are you well?” Different trick, same courtesy.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the respectful “you” — *bhavān*
- what it literally means (your honour)
- why it takes a third-person verb (it speaks *about* the person)

Before you move on

How does Sanskrit build respect into “you,” and how does Hindi do it instead? (Sanskrit uses a third-person honorific, *bhavān* “your honour”; Hindi uses a plural, *āp*.)

2.8 त्वम् (tvam) — the familiar “you”

The other “you” — the one you use with friends, and the ancestor of English *thou*.

The letters in this word

tvam — one beat. The *tv-* is a single push, *t* and *v* said together, and then the lips close on *m*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Tvam (familiar “you”) is from Proto-Indo-European **tū* — the direct ancestor of English archaic **thou**, Latin *tū*, French *tu*, and Hindi *tū*. Unlike *bhavān*, it takes an ordinary second-person verb. Its possessive is *tava* (“your”), which you will need in the very next question.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- both words for you — *tvam* (familiar), *bhavān* (respectful)
- the English cousin of *tvam* (**thou**)
- which one you would use on a first meeting (*bhavān*)

Before you move on

What English word is *tvam* cousin to, and what is its possessive form? (Archaic **thou**; *tava* “your.”)

2.9 किम् (kim) — “what,” the source of the question-words

The question-word — and the fountainhead of a whole family of “wh-” words, east and west.

The letters in this word

kim — one short beat, closing on *m* with no vowel after it.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

kim (“what”) is from the interrogative stem *ka-*, from Proto-Indo-European ***k^wo-** — the ancestor of the whole question-family: English **what**, **who**, **which**, Latin *quis* / *quid*, Greek *tis*, and Hindi *kyā* / *kaun*. Sanskrit’s own questions all grow from this *ka-*: *kim* (what), *kaḥ* (who), *kadā* (when), *kutra* (where), *katham* (how). It is the single seed from which both Europe’s *qu-/wh-* words and India’s *k-* words grew.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “kim”
- the *ka-* family — *kim*, *kaḥ*, *kadā*, *kutra*, *katham*
- its western children (English *what*, Latin *quis*)

Before you move on

What PIE root is *kim* from, and its cousins? (**k^wo-*; English *what*, Latin *quis*, Hindi *kyā*.)

2.10 ऋ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ॠ · ॡ · आ.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: ऋ

ऋ — *bha*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *bh*, it is **bha**.

What it is made of:

- a clockwise upper loop joined to a descending trunk
- a clockwise lower bowl continuing through a rightward crossbar
- a top-to-bottom right stem
- the top shirorekhā

You already say this word, and ऋ is one of the shapes inside it — the rest of its shapes are still ahead of you, so here the character stands on its own:

- *bhavān* / *tvam* — you

Writing: ऋ

- **1.** start at the upper loop's lower inner tip, sweep left and clockwise around the upper loop, descend the joined trunk, curl clockwise around the lower bowl, and continue right through the crossbar without lifting

- **2.** lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
- **3.** lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified three-stroke teaching form; another learner source stages the upper and lower body parts separately

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: JackPotte, ‘Devanagari b^h भ.gif’, strokes 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 29 March 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find भ in it
- भ
- *Trace it:* भ three times, saying *bha* as you finish each one
 - *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find भ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — भ? What sound does it carry? (*bha.*)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

2.11 तव नाम किम्? (tava nāma kim?) — “what’s your name?”

Turn the introduction around — ask, instead of tell.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

tava (“your,” the genitive of *tvam*) + *nāma* (name) + *kim* (what) → “**your name what?**” Here Sanskrit often *drops* the *asti*: *tava nāma kim?* stands complete, the question-word alone doing the work.

Grammar Lens: the respectful version

Tava (“your”) is the familiar form, matching *tvam*. To a respected stranger, use the honorific: *bhavataḥ nāma kim?* (*bhavataḥ*, “of your honour”). Note *mama* / *tava* / *bhavataḥ* — “my / your / your-honour’s” — all built the same way, as genitives.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the familiar question — *tava nāma kim?*
- the respectful version — *bhavataḥ nāma kim?*
- answer it — *mama nāma ... asti*

Before you move on

Ask “what’s your name?” respectfully, and give the “my/your” pair. (*Bhavataḥ nāma kim?*; *mama* “my” / *tava* “your.”)

2.12 आनन्दः (ānandaḥ) — “joy,” and “a joy to meet you”

The warm close of an introduction — a word so full it names bliss itself.

The letters in this word

ā · *nan* · *daḥ*. Long *ā* to open, *nd* said together in the middle, and the soft breathed *-ḥ* to close.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

To say “pleased to meet you,” Sanskrit can say *bhavantaṁ dṛṣṭvā ānandaḥ* — “**seeing you, [there is] joy.**” The key word *ānandaḥ* (“joy, bliss, delight”) is from *ā-* (“fully”) + the root *nand* (“to rejoice”). It is one of Sanskrit’s most beloved words — the *ānanda* of *sat-cit-ānanda* (“being-consciousness-bliss”), and the name **Ānanda**, the Buddha’s devoted disciple. So a simple greeting reaches for the word Indian thought uses for the deepest happiness.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “ānandaḥ”
- the full phrase — *bhavantamī dṛṣṭvā ānandaḥ*
- where else *ānanda* appears (bliss; the name Ānanda)

Before you move on

What does *ānandaḥ* mean, and what is it built from? (“Joy, bliss”; *ā*- “fully” + *nand* “to rejoice.”)

2.13 ि — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ः · आ · ऋ. Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: ि

ि — *i*.

It is a **vowel sign**. It is not a letter and never stands alone: it attaches to a consonant and **replaces** the *a* built into it. Replaces, not adds — the *a* is gone.

Where it sits: a curl placed BEFORE (to the left of) the consonant, though pronounced after.

Worked through: न + ि = नि — *ni*.

You already say these words, and ि is one of the shapes inside them — the rest of their shapes are still ahead of you, so here the character stands on its own:

- *asti* — is
- *mama nāma ... asti* — my name is...
- *kim* — what
- *tava nāma kim?* — what’s your name?

Writing: ि — copy what you see

Put your pen on ि and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed.

This book does not yet tell you **where to start the character or which way to travel**. That is a real thing, taught with real variation from school to school, and it is not written down here until it can be written down with a source. Copying what is in front of you needs no such source, and it is how the shape gets into your hand in the meantime.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ि in it
 ि
- *Trace it:* ि three times, saying *i* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ि once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ि? What vowel does it put on the consonant it attaches to — and what does it take off? (**Puts *i* on; takes the built-in *a* off.**) Name one word you already say that contains it.

2.14 Chapter 2 — the whole exchange

No new words. Two people meet, and every word in the exchange is one you already have.

The exchange

Say these aloud:

- *mama nāma mīrā asti.* — “My name is Mira.”
- *tava nāma kim?* — “What’s your name?”
- *mama nāma aruṇaḥ asti.* — “My name is Arun.”
- *bhavantam dr̥ṣṭvā ānandaḥ.* — “Pleased to meet you.”

How to answer: the atoms

Say these aloud:

- name, my, is, what (*nāma*, *mama*, *asti*, *kim*)
- where the verb sits in the sentence (last)
- whether Sanskrit drops the “is” (no — it keeps an explicit copula)

What you’ve built: every atom is a source

Every word in that exchange is an *ancestor*, not a borrowing:

- *nāma* → English **name**, Latin *nōmen*
- *mama* → English **my**, **me**
- *asti* → English **is**, Latin *est*, Hindi *hai*
- *kim* → English **what**, Latin *quid*

And Sanskrit keeps the copula that its Dravidian neighbours drop.
Next chapter: *bhavān katham asti?* — “how are you?”

Before you move on

Give your name in Sanskrit, ask for someone else’s, and name two English words this chapter’s vocabulary is the ancestor of. (*Mama nāma ... asti; tava nāma kim?*; any two of **name**, **my**, **is**, **what**.)

Chapter 3

How Are You?

Modes: 🗣️ voice (7) ✍️ pen (3) 🗣️ Hands-free start: first 2 of 10 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can ask how someone is in Sanskrit, answer naturally, and return the question.

Complete SA-C03-practice, the canonical closing checkpoint, and demonstrate the chapter promise: ask how someone is in Sanskrit, answer naturally, and return the question.

3.1 कथम् (katham) — “how,” another of the ka-questions

You met *kim* (“what”) in Chapter 2. Here is its sibling in the question-family.

The letters in this word

ka · *tham*. The *th* is one sound — a *t* with breath after it, never the *th* of English *thin*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

katham (“how, in what way”) is from the interrogative stem *ka-*, PIE ***k^wo-** — the same root that gave *kim* and, in the west, English **wh-** and Latin *qu-*. It heads the same *ka-* question-family: *kim* (what), *kaḥ* (who), *kadā* (when), *kutra* (where), *katham* (how). From *katham* comes the abstract noun *kathā* (“a telling, a story” — “the how of a thing”), and, worn down, Hindi’s *kaise*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “katham”
- the ka- question family — *kim, kaḥ, kadā, kutra, katham*

Before you move on

What root do Sanskrit’s question-words share, and its western cousins? (The interrogative *ka-*, PIE **k^wo-*; English *wh-*, Latin *qu-*.)

3.2 भवान् कथम् अस्ति? (bhavān katham asti?) — “how are you?”

Three words you own, assembled into the first thing you ask after hello.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

bhavān katham asti? = *bhavān* (respectful “you”) + *katham* (“how”) + *asti* (“is”) — literally “**your honour how is?**” Recall from Chapter 2 that *bhavān* (“your honour”) takes a **third-person** verb — so it is *asti* (“is”), not “are.” The familiar version uses *tvam* and the second-person verb: *tvam katham asi?* (*asi*, “you are”).

Grammar Lens: the copula, three persons

You now hold the “to be” verb across persons: *asmi* (“I am”), *asi* (“you are”), *asti* (“is”) — the ancestors, respectively, of English **am**, and (through Latin/Greek) of *is/est*. “How are you?” simply asks after a *state*, and Sanskrit, unlike Tamil, has always kept a verb for it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the respectful question — *bhavān katham asti?*
- the familiar version — *tvam katham asi?*
- the copula trio — *asmi* (am), *asi* (are), *asti* (is)

Before you move on

Why is it *asti* (“is”) with *bhavān*, and what are the three copula forms? (*Bhavān* = “your honour,” a 3rd-person subject; *asmi/asi/asti* — am / you are / is.)

3.3 ा — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: आ · भ · ि. Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: ा

ा — ā.

It is a **vowel sign**. It is not a letter and never stands alone: it attaches to a consonant and **replaces** the *a* built into it. Replaces, not adds — the *a* is gone.

Where it sits: a vertical bar to the right of the consonant.

Worked through: न + ा = ना — *nā*.

You already say these words, and ा is one of the shapes inside them — the rest of their shapes are still ahead of you, so here the character stands on its own:

- *namaskāraḥ* — hello (lit. “the making of a bow”)
- *dhanyavādaḥ* — thank you
- *svāgatam* — welcome (lit. “well come”)
- *nāma* — name

Writing: ा — copy what you see

Put your pen on ा and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed.

This book does not yet tell you **where to start the character or which way to travel**. That is a real thing, taught with real variation from school to school, and it is not written down here until it can be written down with a source. Copying what is in front of you needs no such source, and it is how the shape gets into your hand in the meantime.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ा in it
- *Trace it:* ा three times, saying ā as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ा once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ा? What vowel does it put on the consonant it attaches to — and what does it take off? (**Puts ā on; takes the built-in a off.**) Name one word you already say that contains it.

3.4 अहम् (aham) — “I,” the ancestor of *ego* and *I*

To answer “how are you?” you first need “I” — and it is the grandparent of both English *I* and the word *ego*.

The letters in this word

a · *ham*. Two short beats, closing on *m*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

aham (“I”) is from Proto-Indo-European ***h₁eǵ(H)om** — the direct ancestor of Latin **ego** (whence English *ego*, *egotist*), Greek *egō*, and, worn all the way down, English **I** itself. So Sanskrit *aham*, Latin *ego*, and English *I* are one word across three continents of time. Its possessive is the *mama* (“my”) from Chapter 2 — and, curiously, “I” (*aham*) and “my” (*mama*) come from *different* ancient roots (**eǵ-* and **me-*), a quirk Sanskrit shares with English (*I* vs. *my/me*).

Grammar Lens: “I” can be dropped

Sanskrit verbs carry the person in their ending — *asmi* already means “I am” — so *aham* is often left out. You still learn it first, because the answer to *katham asi?* begins with it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “aham”
- the family — *aham* / Latin *ego* / English **I**
- the odd pair — “I” (*aham*, root **eǵ-*) and “my” (*mama*, root **me-*) differ, as in English *I* vs. *my*

Before you move on

What PIE root is *aham* from, and its cousins? (**h₁eǵ(H)om*; Latin *ego*, English **I**.)

3.5 कुशलम् (kuśalam) — “well-being”

The word that answers “how are you?” — one that once meant, of all things, “skill in cutting sacred grass.”

The letters in this word

ku · *śa* · *lam*. The *ś* is the *sh* of *ship*. Three short beats, closing on a bare *m*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Kuśalam (“well-being, welfare, all-being-well”) is native Sanskrit, famously derived from *kuśa* (the sacred grass) + a root of “cutting” — so it first meant “skilled [at gathering kuśa grass properly],” hence “adept, fit, in good order,” hence “well.” A whole idea of wellness grew from a ritual skill. Its adjective is *kuśalī* (“one who is well”).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- well-being — *kuśalam*
- its adjective (*kuśalī*, “one who is well”)
- the surprising root (*kuśa*, the sacred grass → “skilled” → “well”)

Before you move on

What does *kuśalam* mean, and where does it come from?
 (“Well-being”; from *kuśa* grass → “skilled” → “well.”)

3.6 म — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: भ · णि · ण् । Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: म

म — *ma*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *m*, it is **ma**.

What it is made of:

- a top-to-bottom left stem joined to a clockwise lower loop and rightward crossbar
- a top-to-bottom right stem
- the top shirorekḥā

You already say these, and every one of them has म somewhere inside it:

- आम् / न *ām* / *na* — yes / no
- नाम *nāma* — name
- मम *mama* — my

Writing: म

- 1. descend the left stem, curl left and clockwise around the lower loop, and continue right through the crossbar without lifting
- 2. lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
- 3. lift and draw the top shirorekḥā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified three-stroke teaching form; another learner source stages the left stem and loop-crossbar separately

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: JackPotte, ‘Devanagari म म.gif’, strokes 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 29 March 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find म in it
- आम् / न · नाम · मम
- *Trace it:* म three times, saying *ma* as you finish each one
 - *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find म once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — म? What sound does it carry? (*ma*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

3.7 अहं कुशली अस्मि (aham kuśalī asmi) — “I am well”

You have the question and you have the word. Now put the answer together.

The letters in this word

a · haṁ · ku · śa · lī · as · mi. The *ṁ* is a hum through the nose that colours the vowel before it rather than a full *m*; the *ī* in the fifth beat is long.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Ahaṁ kuśalī asmi — “**I am well**”: *aham* (“I”) + *kuśalī* (“well”) + *asmi* (“am”). Or simply *kuśalam* (“[all is] well”). The exchange:

— *bhavān katham asti?* (“How are you?”) — *aham kuśalī asmi, dhanyavādaḥ*. (“I am well, thank you.”)

Grammar Lens: *asmi* is the “I” form of “to be”

Asti was “is.” *Asmi* is “am” — the same verb wearing its first-person ending *-mi*. That *-mi* is the mark of “I” all through the Sanskrit verb, and you will meet it again on every verb in the next chapter.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the question — *bhavān katham asti?*
- the full reply — *aham kuśalī asmi, dhanyavādaḥ*
- the ending that means “I” (*-mi*, as in *asmi*)

Before you move on

Give the reply to *bhavān katham asti?*, and say which ending marks “I.” (*Ahaṁ kuśalī asmi*; the ending *-mi*.)

3.8 न चिन्ता (na cintā) — “no worry”

When someone thanks you, this gentle reply says, simply, “don’t give it a thought.”

The letters in this word

na cin · tā. The *c* is the *ch* of *church*, never a *k*; the final *ā* is long.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Na cintā literally means “[**there is**] **no worry** / **no anxiety**” — used for “never mind / no trouble / you’re welcome.” Two atoms: *na* (“not”), the ancient negative from Chapter 1 — PIE **ne*, behind English **no**, **not**, Latin *nōn*, and every Indo-Aryan “no.” And *cintā* (“anxious thought”), from the root *cint* (“to think, ponder”) — the same *cintā* borrowed into Hindi and Urdu (*cintā mat karo*, “don’t worry”). So the reply pairs the family’s oldest negative with a verb of thinking: “think nothing of it.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “na cintā”
- its two atoms (*na* “not” + *cintā* “worry”)
- the exchange — *dhanyavādaḥ* / *na cintā*

Before you move on

What does *na cintā* literally say, and what is its negative *na* cousin to? (“No worry”; PIE **ne* — English *no/not*, Latin *nōn*.)

3.9 Chapter 3 — The how-are-you exchange

No new words. The whole responding cycle, from atoms you now own.

The exchange

Say these aloud:

- “How are you?” (respectful) — *bhavān katham asti?*
- “I am well, thank you.” — *aham kuśalī asmi, dhanyavādaḥ.*
- “No worry / you’re welcome.” — *na cintā.*
- the familiar question — *tvam katham asi?*

How to answer: the atoms

Say these aloud:

- the ka- question-word for “how” (*katham*)
- “I” and the copula trio (*aham*; *asmi*/*asi*/*asti*)

What you’ve built: the roots you now carry

- *katham* ← the interrogative *ka-* (PIE **k^wo-*) → English *how/what*, Latin *qu-*
- *aham* ← **h₁eg(H)om* → Latin **ego**, English **I**
- *asmi* ← **h₁es-* → English **am**; *asti* → *is*, *hai*
- *na* (in *na cintā*) ← **ne* → English *no/not*, Latin *nōn*

Before you move on

A respected stranger asks *bhavān katham asti?* — give a full reply, and answer their thanks. (*Aham kuśalī asmi, dhanyavādah* — and to thanks, *na cintā*.)

3.10 ँ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ि · ा · ः. Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: ँ

ँ — *u*.

It is a **vowel sign**. It is not a letter and never stands alone: it attaches to a consonant and **replaces** the *a* built into it. Replaces, not adds — the *a* is gone.

Where it sits: a small hook below the consonant.

Worked through: ऋ + ँ = ॠ — *nu*.

You already say this word, and ூ is one of the shapes inside it — the rest of its shapes are still ahead of you, so here the character stands on its own:

- *kuśalam* — well-being

Writing: ூ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ூ and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed.

This book does not yet tell you **where to start the character or which way to travel**. That is a real thing, taught with real variation from school to school, and it is not written down here until it can be written down with a source. Copying what is in front of you needs no such source, and it is how the shape gets into your hand in the meantime.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ூ in it
- ூ
- *Trace it:* ூ three times, saying *u* as you finish each one
 - *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ூ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ூ? What vowel does it put on the consonant it attaches to — and what does it take off? (**Puts *u* on; takes the built-in *a* off.**) Name one word you already say that contains it.

Chapter 4

Farewells

Modes: 🔄 voice (5) ✍ pen (2) 🔄 Hands-free start: first 2 of 7 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can end a Sanskrit conversation politely and choose a farewell that fits the situation.

Complete SA-C04-practice, the canonical closing checkpoint, and demonstrate the chapter promise: end a Sanskrit conversation politely and choose a farewell that fits the situation.

4.1 गच्छामि (gacchāmi) — “I go” (taking leave)

Sanskrit has no casual “bye.” Like its daughters, it takes leave by saying “I go” — and the verb is a cousin of English *come* and *go*.

The letters in this word

gac · *chā* · *mi*. Both *c* sounds are the *ch* of *church*, and the doubling is real — hold it a moment longer than one *ch*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

gacchāmi (“I go”) is from the root *gam* (“to go”) — the very root you met in Chapter 1’s *svāgatam* (= *su* + *āgata*, “well come,” from *ā* + *gam*). That root is Proto-Indo-European ***g^wem-**, the ancestor of English **come** (and, via Latin *venīre*, of *venue*, *convene*). To leave politely one says *gacchāmi* (“I go”) or, more gracefully, *āgacchāmi* (“I [shall] come [back]”) — the same “promise of return” the modern

languages kept.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “gacchāmi” — I go
- the root and its Chapter-1 cousin (*gam*; *svāgatam*, “well come”)
- the English cousin of *gam* (**come**)

Before you move on

How does Sanskrit take leave, and what root is *gacchāmi* from? (By saying “I go,” *gacchāmi*; the root *gam*, PIE **g^wem-*, cousin of English **come**.)

4.2 पुनः (punah) — “again,” the seed of “till we meet again”

One small word turns a leave-taking into a promise of return.

The letters in this word

pu · *nah*, closing on the soft breathed *-h*. Before certain following sounds that breath turns into an *r*: *punar-*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

punah (“again, back, once more”) is a native Sanskrit adverb (its combining form is *punar-*, as in *punar-janma*, “rebirth” — “birth again”). It has no tidy single English cognate, but its work is one English shares: it turns a parting into “see you **again**.” Add it to *darśana* (“seeing”) and you get the graceful Sanskrit farewell of the next lesson.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “punah”
- its combining form and a word from it (*punar-*; *punarjanma*, “rebirth”)

Before you move on

What does *punah* mean, and what is its combining form? (“Again”; *punar-*, as in *punarjanma*, “rebirth.”)

4.3 र — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ँ · ऋ · ॠ.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: र

र — *ra*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *r*, it is **ra**.

What it is made of:

- a top-to-bottom stem curling clockwise around the lower loop
- a diagonal tail
- the top shirorekha

You already say this word, and र is one of the shapes inside it — the rest of its shapes are still ahead of you, so here the character stands on its own:

- *namaskārah* — hello (lit. “the making of a bow”)

Writing: र

- 1. start at the headline junction, descend the stem, and curl left and clockwise around the lower loop to the tail junction

- **2.** lift at that junction and draw the diagonal tail down-right
- **3.** lift and draw the top shirorekha left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified three-stroke teaching form; another animated learner source joins the loop and diagonal tail

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-र-order.gif’, strokes 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 10 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find र in it

र

- *Trace it:* र three times, saying *ra* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find र once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — र? What sound does it carry? (*ra.*)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

4.4 पुनर्दर्शनाय (punar-darśanāya) — “until we meet again”

The graceful Sanskrit goodbye — “for the sake of seeing [you] again.”

The letters in this word

pu · nar · dar · śa · nā · ya. Six even beats; ś is the *sh* of *ship*; the long ā falls in the fifth.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

punardarśanāya = *punar* (“again”) + *darśana* (“seeing, sight, vision”) in the **dative** case (*-āya*, “for the sake of”) — literally “**for seeing [you] again**,” i.e. “until we meet again.” The word *darśana* is deep: it is “seeing” in the sense of *beholding* — the *darśan* one takes of a deity or a revered person, and the name of the six *darśanas*, the schools of Indian philosophy (“ways of seeing”). So this farewell promises not just a meeting but a *beholding* to come.

Grammar Lens: the dative “for the sake of”

The ending *-āya* is the dative singular — “to / for.” *Darśana* (a seeing) → *darśanāya* (for a seeing). You will meet the cases one at a time; this is your first, the “for-the-purpose-of” case.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “punar-darśanāya”
- its literal meaning (“for seeing [you] again”)
- what *darśana* means beyond “seeing” (a beholding; the *darśan* of a deity)

Before you move on

What does *punar-darśanāya* literally mean, and what case gives the “for”? (“For seeing again”; the dative *-āya*.)

4.5 श्वाः (śvaḥ) — “tomorrow”

A goodbye with a date on it — and a word that, unlike Hindi’s *kal*, means only one day.

The letters in this word

śvaḥ — one beat: the *sh* of *ship* pushed straight into *v*, then the soft breathed *-ḥ*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

śvaḥ (“tomorrow”) is from Proto-Indo-European ***kes-** (“tomorrow / morning”). Where the modern Indian languages muddle “tomorrow” and “yesterday” into one word (Hindi *kal*, Bengali *kāl*, from *kāla* “time”), classical Sanskrit kept them **separate and precise**: *śvaḥ* is “tomorrow” and *hyaḥ* is “yesterday” — two distinct words. “See you tomorrow” is *śvaḥ punar-darśanam* (“tomorrow, a seeing-again”) or *śvaḥ drakṣyāmi* (“tomorrow I shall see [you]”).

Grammar Lens: Sanskrit’s precision

That the daughters blurred *śvaḥ* / *hyaḥ* into a single *kal* is a small window into language change: the modern tongues traded precision for economy, letting tense carry the load. Sanskrit, the older layer, still keeps the two days apart.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “śvaḥ” (tomorrow) and “hyaḥ” (yesterday)
- “see you tomorrow” — *śvaḥ punar-darśanam*
- how this differs from Hindi/Bengali *kal* (Sanskrit keeps the two days distinct)

Before you move on

What does *śvaḥ* mean, and how does Sanskrit differ from Hindi here? (“Tomorrow”; Sanskrit keeps *śvaḥ* “tomorrow” and *hyaḥ* “yesterday” separate, where Hindi merges them into *kal*.)

4.6 ण — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ढ · ण · र.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: प

प — *pa*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *p*, it is **pa**.

What it is made of:

- a left stem curving around the lower bowl to its upper-right junction
- a top-to-bottom right stem
- the top shirorekhā

You already say these, and every one of them has प somewhere inside it:

- पुनः *punaḥ* — again

Writing: प

1. descend the left stem, then curve right around the lower bowl and rise to its upper-right junction without lifting
2. lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
3. lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified three-stroke teaching form; everyday handwriting may join or simplify the bowl differently

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-प-order.gif’, strokes 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 10 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find प in it

पुनः

- *Trace it:* प three times, saying *pa* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find प once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ण? What sound does it carry? (*pa.*)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

4.7 Chapter 4 — The farewells

No new words. Three ways to part — the ancestors of the modern Indian goodbyes.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- taking leave — *gacchāmi* (“I go”)
- “until we meet again” — *punar-darśanāya*
- “see you tomorrow” — *śvaḥ punar-darśanam*

How to answer: the atoms

Say these aloud:

- the verb “to go” and its Ch-1 cousin (*gam*; *svāgatam*)
- “again” and its combining form (*punaḥ* / *punar-*)
- “tomorrow” vs. “yesterday” (Sanskrit keeps *śvaḥ* / *hyaḥ* distinct)

What you’ve built: the roots you now carry

- *gam* “to go” ← PIE **g^wem-* → English **come**
- *punaḥ* / *punar-* “again” (→ *punarjanma*, “rebirth”)
- *darśana* “a seeing / beholding” (the six *darśanas* of philosophy)
- *śvaḥ* “tomorrow,” *hyaḥ* “yesterday” — kept separate, unlike Hindi *kal*

Before you move on

You're taking leave and expect to see someone tomorrow. Give the graceful goodbye, and specify tomorrow. (*Punar-darśanāya* — or *śvaḥ punar-darśanam.*)

Chapter 5

The First Verbs

Modes:  voice (5)  pen (3)  Hands-free start: first 1 of 8 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can build short present-tense Sanskrit sentences with the chapter’s first verbs.

Complete SA-C05-practice, the canonical closing checkpoint, and demonstrate the chapter promise: build short present-tense Sanskrit sentences with the chapter’s first verbs.

5.1 वदामि (vadāmi) — “I speak,” and the Sanskrit verb

So far, “to be.” Here is a verb that *acts* — and it reveals the most famous feature of the Sanskrit verb: it counts to **three**.

The letters in this word

va · *dā* · *mī*. The long *ā* in the middle beat is the ending doing its work — shorten it and the word stops meaning “I speak.”

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

vadāmi (“I speak”) is from the root *vad* (“to speak, to say”) — the very root of *vāda* (“a saying”) inside Chapter 1’s *dhanyavādaḥ* (“thank you”). The present tense is stem + person- ending: *vad-ā-mī*, where *-mī* means “I” — the same *-mī* you can see in *asmī* (“I am”).

Grammar Lens: singular, DUAL, and plural

Here is Sanskrit’s showpiece. Where English (and Hindi) count in two — singular and plural — Sanskrit counts in **three**, with a special **dual** for *exactly two*:

number	form	meaning
singular	<i>vadāmi</i>	I speak
dual	<i>vadāvaḥ</i>	we two speak
plural	<i>vadāmaḥ</i>	we (three or more) speak

A whole grammatical number just for pairs — for two eyes, two hands, a couple. Greek had it too, and lost it; English never kept it; Sanskrit polished it. It is one of the things that makes the language feel so exact.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “vadāmi” — I speak
- the root and its Chapter-1 cousin (*vad*; *dhanyavāda*, “thank you”)
- the three numbers — *vadāmi* (I) / *vadāvaḥ* (we two) / *vadāmaḥ* (we all)

Before you move on

What root is *vadāmi* from, and what third “number” does Sanskrit have that English lacks? (*Vad*, “to speak”; the **dual**, for exactly two — *vadāvaḥ*, “we two speak.”)

5.2 य — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ॐ · र · य. Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: य

य — *ya*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *y*, it is **ya**.

What it is made of:

- a clockwise inner curl
- a lower bowl rising to the right-stem junction
- a top-to-bottom right stem
- the top shirorekḥā

You already say these words, and य is one of the shapes inside them — the rest of their shapes are still ahead of you, so here the character stands on its own:

- *dhanyavādaḥ* — thank you
- *punardarśanāya* — until we meet again (lit. “for seeing again”)

Writing: य

1. start beneath the headline, curve clockwise around the inner curl, and finish at the left waist
2. lift at that waist, curve down and right around the lower bowl, and rise to the right-stem junction
3. lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
4. lift and draw the top shirorekḥā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 3. The pen comes up 3 times and no more.

verified four-stroke teaching form; another animated learner source joins the inner curl and lower bowl

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-य-order.gif’, strokes 1–4, Wikimedia Commons, 10 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find य in it

य

- *Trace it:* य three times, saying *ya* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find य once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — य? What sound does it carry? (*ya*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

5.3 अहं संस्कृतं वदामि (aham saṁskṛtaṁ vadāmi) — “I speak Sanskrit”

Your first full, moving sentence — and the language’s name is itself a little lesson in how Sanskrit builds words.

The letters in this word

a · haṁ · saṁs · kṛ · taṁ · va · dā · mi. The *ṁ* is a hum through the nose that colours the vowel before it rather than a full *m*; *ṛ* is a short vowel made with the tongue curled, near the *ri* of *rich*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

aham saṁskṛtaṁ vadāmi = *aham* (“I”) + *saṁskṛtam* (the object) + *vadāmi* (“speak”) — “I Sanskrit speak,” the verb last (as in every daughter language). The name *saṁskṛta* means “**put together, refined, perfected**” — from *saṁ-* (“together,” cousin of English *same*, Greek *syn-*) + *kṛta* (“made, done,” from the root *kṛ* you met in *namaskāra*). So “Sanskrit” literally means “the perfected [language],” named in contrast to *prākṛta* (“natural, raw” — Prakrit, the everyday speech from which Hindi, Bengali, and the rest descend).

Grammar Lens: sandhi joins the words

Say it aloud and *aham* + *saṁskṛtam* runs together as *aham saṁskṛtam* — the *m* softening to the anusvāra before the next consonant. That is

sandhi, the sound-joining you met in Chapter 1’s *svāgatam*; it is why Sanskrit flows.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*aham saṁskṛtam vadāmi*”
- what *saṁskṛta* means (*saṁ* “together” + *kṛta* “made” = “perfected”)
- its opposite, the source of the modern languages (*prākṛta*, “natural”)

Before you move on

Say “I speak Sanskrit,” and unpack the name. (*Aham saṁskṛtam vadāmi*; *saṁskṛta* = *saṁ* “together” + *kṛta* “made” — “the perfected language.”)

5.4 वसामि (vasāmi) — “I live, I dwell”

A second verb, so you can say where you live — and it hides the English word *was*.

The letters in this word

va · *sā* · *mi*. One consonant apart from *vadāmi*, and the same long *ā* carrying the ending.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

vasāmi (“I dwell, I live”) is from the root *vas* (“to dwell, to stay, to abide”), from Proto-Indo-European ***wes-** (“to dwell, to be”) — the ancestor of English **was** and **were** (the past of “to be” began as “to dwell/remain”). So Sanskrit’s “I dwell” and English’s “was” are, at the root, one word. From *vas* come *vāsa* (“a dwelling”), *nivāsa* (“a residence”), and names like *Vārāṇasī*. “I live in the city” is *aham nagare vasāmi*.

Grammar Lens: “in” is a case-ending

nagare (“in the city”) = *nagara* (“city”) in the **locative** case (-e, “in / at”). Sanskrit has no separate word for “in” — it is folded into the noun’s ending, the ancestor of the postpositions Hindi and Bengali use. This is your second case, after Chapter 4’s dative.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*vasāmi*” — I dwell
- “I live in the city” — *aham nagare vasāmi*
- the English cousin of the root *vas* (**was**)

Before you move on

What PIE root is *vasāmi* from, its English cousin, and how does Sanskrit say “in”? (**wes-* “to dwell”; English **was**; with a case-ending, the locative -e.)

5.5 ऋ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: र · प · य.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: ऋ

ऋ — *r̥*.

It is a **vowel sign**. It is not a letter and never stands alone: it attaches to a consonant and **replaces** the *a* built into it. Replaces, not adds — the *a* is gone.

Where it sits: a small hook below (the vocalic *r*, common in Sanskrit).

Worked through: न + ऋ = नृ — *nr̥*.

You already say this word, and ॠ is one of the shapes inside it — the rest of its shapes are still ahead of you, so here the character stands on its own:

- *aham samiskṛtāni vadāmi* — I speak Sanskrit

Writing: ॠ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ॠ and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed.

This book does not yet tell you **where to start the character or which way to travel**. That is a real thing, taught with real variation from school to school, and it is not written down here until it can be written down with a source. Copying what is in front of you needs no such source, and it is how the shape gets into your hand in the meantime.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ॠ in it
- ॠ
- *Trace it:* ॠ three times, saying *r* as you finish each one
 - *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ॠ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ॠ? What vowel does it put on the consonant it attaches to — and what does it take off? (**Puts *r* on; takes the built-in *a* off.**) Name one word you already say that contains it.

5.6 करोमि (karomi) — “I do,” from the root behind *karma* and *namaskāra*

The last verb of the chapter — from the single most productive root in Sanskrit, one you have met again and again.

The letters in this word

ka · ro · mi. Three even beats, all short.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

karomi (“I do, I make”) is from the root *kr* (“to do, make”), from Proto-Indo-European ***k^wer-**. This is the root at the heart of this book:

- *namaskāraḥ* — “the **making** of a bow” (*namas* + *kāra*)
- *karma* — “a thing **done**,” an action
- *saṁskṛta* — “**put together**, perfected” (this very language)

To say “**I work**,” Sanskrit says *kāryaṁ karomi* — “I do work,” where *kāryaṁ* (“work, task”) is *itself* from *kr* (“a thing-to-be-done”). So “I work” is, at root, “*kr*-thing I *kr*-do.” Hindi’s *kām karnā* and Bengali’s *kāj karā* are its worn-down grandchildren.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “karomi” — I do
- “I work” — *kāryaṁ karomi*
- three words from the root *kr* (*namaskāra*, *karma*, *saṁskṛta*)

Before you move on

What root is *karomi* from, and name three words built on it. (*Kṛ*, “to do,” PIE ***k^wer-**; *namaskāra*, *karma*, *saṁskṛta* — among many.)

5.7 Chapter 5 — The first verbs

No new words. Three verbs, one engine — and Sanskrit’s count-to-three.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “I speak Sanskrit” — *aham saniskṛtaṁ vadāmi*
- “I live in the city” — *aham nagare vasāmi*
- “I work” — *aham kāryaṁ karomi*
- “we two speak” — *vadāvah* (the dual!)

How to answer: the engine

Say these aloud:

- the ending that means “I” (-*mi*, as in *asmi*, *vadāmi*)
- Sanskrit’s three numbers (singular / **dual** / plural)
- where the verb sits, and how “in” is shown (verb last; a case-ending, the locative -*e*)

What you’ve built: the roots you now carry

- *vad* “to speak” (→ *dhanyavāda*)
- *vas* “to dwell” ← PIE **wes-* → English **was**
- *kr* “to do” ← **k^wer-* → the root of *namaskāra*, *karma*, *saniskṛta*; *kāryaṁ* “work”
- *saniskṛta* = *sam* (“together,” English *same*) + *kṛta* (“made”) = “perfected”

Before you move on

In one breath, say your language, your city, and your work in Sanskrit — then say “we two speak.” (*Aham saniskṛtaṁ vadāmi. Aham nagare vasāmi. Aham kāryaṁ karomi. Vadāvah.*)

5.8 अ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: प · य · ृ.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: अ

अ — *a*.

It is an **independent vowel**: the full-size letter a vowel wears when it opens a word and has no consonant to lean on. Inside a word the same vowel is written as a small sign instead.

What it is made of:

- a joined upper-and-lower left body
- a middle shoulder
- a right vertical stem
- the top shirorekḥā

You already say these words, and अ is one of the shapes inside them — the rest of their shapes are still ahead of you, so here the character stands on its own:

- *asti* — is
- *mama nāma ... asti* — my name is...
- *bhavān katham asti?* — how are you?
- *aham* — I

Writing: अ

- **1.** curve around the upper bowl, then continue down and around the lower bowl without lifting
- **2.** lift and sweep the middle shoulder right

- **3.** lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
- **4.** lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 3. The pen comes up 3 times and no more.

verified modern printed teaching form; other Devanagari traditions split the body into more strokes

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Saurmandal, ‘Devanagari अ stroke order.svg’, frames 1–4, Wikimedia Commons, 5 August 2023.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find अ in it
- अ
- *Trace it:* अ three times, saying *a* as you finish each one
 - *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find अ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — अ? What sound does it carry? (*a.*)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

Chapter 6

Numbers One to Five

Modes: ⇨ voice (2) 👁 eyes (1) ✍ pen (1) ⇨ **Hands-free start:** none of the 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say the Sanskrit numerals एक to पञ्च with their dual and gendered forms, and follow पञ्च outward into Punjab, pentagon, and the disputed history of punch.

Trace pañca out of Sanskrit: into Persian panj-āb, the five waters behind Punjab; into Greek pente in pentagon and pentathlon; and into punch, with the five-ingredients account labelled as common rather than settled.

6.1 एक, द्व, त्रि, चतुर्, पञ्च — one to five

This chapter does something the other Indic chapters can't do alone. Sanskrit preserves the **Old Indo-Aryan forms behind** the Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Gujarati and Punjabi ones — and, at the same time, these forms are **cousins** of the English ones. Learn five and you get a foothold in both directions.

You'll want to know: the five

	stem	masculine	neuter
1	éka-	एकः ékaḥ	एकम् ékam
2	dvá-	द्वौ dváu	द्वे dvé
3	tri-	त्रयः trayaḥ	त्रीणि trīṇi
4	catúr-	चत्वारः catvāraḥ	चत्वारि catvāri
5	पञ्च pāñca	—	—

Three notes, and the third one matters more than it looks.

Sanskrit has a dual — a separate number for exactly two things — which is why “two” is *dváu* rather than a plural.

***Pañca* barely inflects in the nominative and accusative. It is also the one you already half-know.**

And Sanskrit numbers have gender. Look at the last column. These same words, in Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Gujarati, and Punjabi, mostly descend from the **neuter** forms — *trîṇi* and *catvāri*, not *tráyah* and *catvārah*. Keep that column in view; the daughter languages inherit from it.

What you’ve built: two directions

These five forms point in two directions. The next lesson lines them up with Latin and English and explains the sound laws. A final short lesson follows *pañca* into *Punjab*, *pentagon*, and the qualified history of *punch*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “eka, dva, tri, catur, pañca”
- the exactly-two category — dual
- the daughter-language column — neuter

Before you move on

Give one to five in Sanskrit. (*Eka, dva, tri, catur, pañca*.) Why does “two” look unusual? (Sanskrit has a **dual** — a form for exactly two.) Which column will the modern languages mostly descend from? (**The neuter** — *trîṇi, catvāri*.) Which number barely changes across gender in this table? (*Pañca*.) Next: connect the Sanskrit forms west to Latin and English.

6.2 The Sanskrit numbers are English cousins

Give the five stems: *eka, dva, tri, catur, pañca*.

What you've built: one family, not borrowing

Sanskrit	Latin	English
<i>éka-</i>	<i>ūnus</i>	one
<i>dvá-</i>	<i>duo</i>	two
<i>tri-</i>	<i>trēs</i>	three
<i>catúr-</i>	<i>quattuor</i>	four
<i>páñca</i>	<i>quīnque</i>	five

Sanskrit, Latin, and English inherited these from one family. Numbers resist replacement, so their relationship remains audible after millennia. The first row needs one caveat: *éka-* and *ūnus/one* use the same root with different suffixes, PIE **oy-ko-* versus **óynos*. They are relatives rather than the same complete word. The other four rows continue the same word.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

PIE **k^w* was a *k* with rounded lips. In **k^wetwóres* “four,” three branches treated it differently:

branch	outcome	example
Latin	kept <i>qu-</i>	<i>quattuor</i>
Indo-Iranian	merged it with <i>k</i> , then palatalised before front vowels	<i>catvāri</i>
Germanic	shifted it to <i>hw-</i>	<i>what, who</i>

Sanskrit *c-* is therefore a regular result, not a random replacement. The same sequence helps explain *pañca*'s *ñc*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

The **f**- of *five* does not come from **k^w*. It comes from initial **p*, changed to *f* by **Grimm's law**, as in *pater* → *father* and *pēs* → *foot*. English *four* is irregular. By the sound rule it should begin *hw-* like *what*. Its *f-* is usually explained as analogy with neighbouring *five*. Counting words can reshape one another.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *tri, trēs, three*
- rounded *k* — *quattuor, catvāri, what*
- initial *p* → *f* — *pañca/five*
- regular inheritance or borrowing — inheritance

Before you move on

Are the Latin and Sanskrit forms borrowed from one another? (No: they are inherited cousins.) What are the three outcomes of $*k^w$? (Latin *qu-*, Indo-Iranian *c-* after merger and palatalisation, Germanic *hw-*.) Where does *five*'s initial *f* come from? (PIE *p* by Grimm's law.) What is the usual explanation for *four* also beginning with *f*? (Analogy with neighbouring *five*.)

6.3 ञ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: य · ृ · अ.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: ञ

ञ — *ñā*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *ñ*, it is **ñā**.

What it is made of:

- a clockwise open-left bowl
- a rightward shoulder rising to the headline
- a short descending lower stem
- the top shirorekḥā

You already say these words, and अ is one of the shapes inside them — the rest of their shapes are still ahead of you, so here the character stands on its own:

- *eka dva tri catur pañca* — one to five — Old Indo-Aryan ancestors preserved in Sanskrit, and cousins of the English ones
- *eka · dva · tri · catur · pañca* — the Sanskrit, Latin, and English number family and the sound laws between them

Writing: अ

1. start at the open upper-left tip and curve clockwise around the bowl to the open lower-left tip
2. lift at the bowl's right junction, sweep right through the shoulder, then curve upward along the right side to the headline
3. lift at the lower right-side junction and descend the short stem below the bowl
4. lift and draw the top shirorekha left-to-right

Pen lifts: 3. The pen comes up 3 times and no more.

verified four-stroke teaching form fitted to the bundled printed outline

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, 'Deva-अ-order.gif', strokes 1–4, Wikimedia Commons, 10 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find अ in it

अ

- *Trace it:* अ three times, saying *ñā* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find अ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ञ? What sound does it carry? (*ña.*)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

6.4 *Pañca* hiding in familiar words

Say Sanskrit “five.” (*Pañca.*) Give its English cousin. (*Five.*)

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Punjab comes from Persian *panj-āb*, “five waters,” for the land of five rivers spanning India and Pakistan. Persian *panj* is the Iranian cousin of Indic *pañca*: both descend from the same Indo-Iranian and PIE number root.

The place-name is Persian, not Sanskrit, but the family resemblance is real.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Greek *pente* is another descendant of the same root. It appears in **pentagon**, a five-sided figure, and **pentathlon**, a five-event contest.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

The usual account derives **punch**, the drink, from Hindi *pāñch* ← Sanskrit *pañca*, because the drink was said to contain five ingredients. That origin is not unanimous. A rival derives the word from **puncheon**, a type of cask. Keep the useful connection with a label: “the common five-ingredients account,” not an unquestioned fact.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *panj + āb* — five waters
- Greek *pente* — pentagon, pentathlon
- *punch* — common account, not certain

Before you move on

What does *Punjab* mean? (“Five waters.”) Is Persian *panj* borrowed from Sanskrit? (No: it is an Iranian cousin.) Which Greek form hides in *pentagon*? (*Pente*.) What caution belongs with the drink *punch*? (The five-ingredients derivation is common, but *puncheon* is a rival account.)

Chapter 7

The Core Verbs

Modes: ⇄ voice (6) ✍ pen (3) ⇄ Hands-free start: first 1 of 9 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say that someone is, becomes, goes, comes, eats, sees and knows in Sanskrit; I can name each verb by its dhātu rather than by its present form, say which of the three gaṇa patterns builds its stem, and point at the English word that descends from the same root.

Say जानाति, name its root ज्ञा and the syllable -ना- its class plants inside the word, run back through the chapter’s six verbs as root plus class plus ending, separate the one that is a prefixed form of another, and pair गम्, अद्, पश् and भू with come, eat, inspect and be.

7.1 अस्ति and भवति — Sanskrit’s two words for “is”

Six chapters of words. Now the machinery. A Sanskrit verb is never quoted the way an English one is, and this pair shows why.

You’ll want to know: अस्ति and भवति

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
अस्ति	<i>asti</i>	he, she, or it is
भवति	<i>bhavati</i>	he, she, or it becomes

Both land in English as “is.” *Asti* states that something simply **is** there. *Bhavati* says something **comes to be** — a state arriving rather than sitting still. Sanskrit never merged the two.

The letters in this word

अ is *a*, a short neutral vowel; ति is *ti*. Inside अस्ति the *s* and *t* stack into one joined shape, स्ति — Devanagari fuses a consonant cluster into a single letter. भवति needs no fusing: भ *bha*, व *va*, ति *ti*.

Grammar Lens: the dhātu and its gaṇa

Sanskrit files a verb under its धातु (*dhātu*), its **root** — the bare syllable a dictionary lists. *Asti* is filed under अस् (*as*), *bhavati* under भू (*bhū*). A root is not yet a word. To reach the present it joins one of ten गण (*gaṇa*) classes, and the class decides what happens between root and ending. Class 2 adds nothing: *as* + *ti* → *asti*. Class 1 strengthens the root and adds a vowel: *bhū* → *bhava* + *ti* → *bhavati*. Root, then class, then ending. Every verb in this chapter is built that way.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

अस् is PIE **es-*: English **is**, Latin *est*, German *ist*, barely worn. भू is PIE **bheu-*, “to grow, to come to be”: English **be** and **been**, Latin *futūrus* behind **future**, Greek *phusis* behind **physics**. Now the surprise. English “to be” is stitched from *both* — *am*, *is*, *are* from **es-*; *be*, *been*, *being* from **bheu-*. English fused two verbs into one ragged paradigm. Sanskrit left them side by side.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “asti” — it is
- “bhavati” — it becomes
- the two roots — *as*, *bhū*
- the English halves — “is” from one, “been” from the other

Before you move on

Which two roots stand behind *asti* and *bhavati*? (अस् *as* and भू *bhū*.)
What does a गण class do? (**Turns a root into a present stem** —

nothing added for *as*, a vowel added for *bhū*.) Which English words descend from each? (*Is* from *as*; *be* and *been* from *bhū*.) Next: a root whose present stem you could never have guessed.

7.2 च — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ँ · अ · ञ.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: च

च — *ca*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *c*, it is **ca**.

What it is made of:

- a short upper bar joined to a rounded body opening right
- a top-to-bottom right stem
- the top shirorekha

You already say these, and every one of them has च somewhere inside it:

- पञ्च *pañca* — five inside Punjab, pentagon, and the debated history of punch

Writing: च

- 1. draw the short upper bar left-to-right, turn down and left through the shoulder, then curve around the rounded body to its open right junction without lifting
- 2. lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
- 3. lift and draw the top shirorekha left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified three-stroke teaching form; everyday handwriting may join or simplify the body differently

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-च-order.gif’, strokes 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 10 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find च in it

पञ्च

- *Trace it:* च three times, saying *ca* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find च once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — च? What sound does it carry? (*ca*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

7.3 गच्छति (gacchati) — “goes,” and why dictionaries file it elsewhere

Root, then class, then ending. Say the two roots from last time. (*As, bhū.*) Here the middle step stops being tidy.

You’ll want to know: गच्छति

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
गच्छति	<i>gacchati</i>	he, she, or it goes
गच्छामि	<i>gacchāmi</i>	I go

The second form is already yours: Chapter 4 used it to take leave. Same stem, different ending — -ति *-ti* for “he, she, it,” -ामि *-āmi* for “I.”

The letters in this word

ग is *ga*. ति is *ti*, already familiar. Between them sits च्छ, a doubled *ch* — one stacked shape for two *ch* sounds in a row, held slightly long: *gach-cha*. Let the middle of the word linger.

Grammar Lens: the stem that hides its root

The root here is गम् (*gam*), “to go.” The present stem is गच्छ (*gaccha*). No rule you have met turns one into the other, and no amount of staring at *gaccha* recovers *gam*.

That is the whole reason Sanskrit hangs its grammar on the root rather than on any spoken form. *Gam* is where the dictionary keeps this verb, where its past and future are built from, and where its relatives — गति *gati* “motion,” आगम *āgama* “arrival” — are visibly cousins. Learn roots, not forms.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

गम् is PIE **gwem-*. Its English descendant is **come** — the same root, turned around: what one language walks away with, another walks toward.

Latin took it as *venīre*, “to come,” and English then borrowed it back in a crowd: **venue**, **convene**, **intervene**, **advent**, **adventure**.

Sanskrit *gacchati* and English *come* are the two ends of one very old word.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “gacchati” — it goes
- “gacchāmi” — I go
- the root, not the stem — *gam*
- the English cousin — *come*

Before you move on

What is the root of *gacchati*? (गम् *gam*.) Could you have predicted the stem from it? (No — which is why the root is what gets

learned.) Which ending makes it “I go”? (-ामि -āmi.) Which English verb is the same root? (**Come**.) Next: the same stem, aimed the other way.

7.4 आगच्छति (āgacchati) — “comes,” or “goes” reversed

Say “it goes.” (*Gacchati*.) Now add one syllable in front and the direction reverses.

You’ll want to know: आगच्छति

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
गच्छति	<i>gacchati</i>	it goes
आगच्छति	<i>āgacchati</i>	it comes

आ (*ā*) means “toward, hither.” Stick it on the front and the motion turns back to face you. Sanskrit has no separate word for “come” at all: coming is going, aimed homeward.

The letters in this word

Everything after the first letter is last lesson’s word, unchanged. The new piece is आ, the long *ā* — the same vowel as अ *a* but held roughly twice as long. Length alone carries meaning in Sanskrit, so give it its time: *aa-gach-cha-ti*.

Grammar Lens: the upasarga, Sanskrit’s aiming device

आ is an उपसर्ग (*upasarga*), a preverb. Sanskrit has about twenty, and any of them may ride in front of a root to re-aim it:

prefix	sense	on गम्
आ <i>ā</i>	toward	<i>āgacchati</i> , comes
सम् <i>sam</i>	together	<i>saṁgacchati</i> , goes together
नि <i>ni</i>	down	<i>nigacchati</i> , goes down

A handful of roots plus a handful of prefixes covers an enormous amount of vocabulary. You have met the trick already without being

told: संस्कृत (*samskr̥ta*, “Sanskrit”) is *sam* “together” on the root कृ *kr̥* “make” — put-together, and so perfected.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Latin aims *venīre* “come” with the same kind of prefix: *ad-* “toward” gives **advent**, *con-* “with” gives **convene**, *inter-* “between” gives **intervene**. English does it natively too — *come* becomes **become**, **overcome**, **income**.

Sanskrit simply runs the system harder and more openly, with the seams left visible.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “gacchati ... āgacchati” — goes, comes
- the prefix and its sense — *ā*, toward
- one more prefix on the same root — *sam*, together

Before you move on

How does Sanskrit say “comes”? (आगच्छति — *ā* “toward” on “goes.”) What is such a prefix called? (An उपसर्ग, *upasarga*.) Which Sanskrit word you already knew is built the same way? (संस्कृत — *sam* plus *kr̥*.) Next: a verb whose everyday form is not the one related to English.

7.5 क — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: अ · ज · च. Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: क

क — *ka*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *k*, it is **ka**.

What it is made of:

- a counterclockwise left bowl
- a top-to-bottom central stem
- a separate right-hand arch
- the top shirorekḥā

You already say these, and every one of them has क somewhere inside it:

- किम् *kim* — what

Writing: क

- **1.** start at the bowl's upper-right junction and sweep left over the top, down around the left side, and back to the lower-right junction
- **2.** lift and draw the central stem top-to-bottom
- **3.** lift at the upper junction and sweep the right-hand arch clockwise down to its open lower tip
- **4.** lift and draw the top shirorekḥā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 3. The pen comes up 3 times and no more.

verified four-stroke teaching form; everyday handwriting may join or simplify the body differently

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-क-order.gif’, strokes 1–4, Wikimedia Commons, 8 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find क in it

किम्

- *Trace it:* क three times, saying *ka* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find क once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — क? What sound does it carry? (*ka*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

7.6 खादति (khādati) — “eats,” and the cousin it is not

Name the three steps that build a Sanskrit present. (**Root, class, ending.**) This verb is the tidiest one yet — and hides a warning.

You’ll want to know: खादति

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
खादति	khādati	he, she, or it eats
खाद्य	khādyā	edible , food

The root is खाद् (*khād*), and it belongs to the same class 1 as *bhū*, so the build is plain: *khād* + *a* + *ti* → *khādati*. No stacked letters, no surprises, nothing hidden.

The letters in this word

खा is *khā*: a *k* with a puff of breath after it, then the long *ā* you met last lesson. Sanskrit treats that puff as a separate letter, not an accent — क *ka* and ख *kha* are two different letters that change meaning. द is *da*, ति is *ti*.

Grammar Lens: the everyday word and the related word

English **eat**, Latin *edere* (behind **edible**), and German *essen* all descend from PIE **ed-*. Sanskrit inherited it too, as the root अद् (*ad*), class 2 — endings straight onto the root, like *asti*: *ad* + *ti* → अत्ति (*atti*), “eats.”

But *atti* is not the ordinary word. Classical Sanskrit eats with खाद्, a root with no clear European relative at all.

So the family word and the everyday word part company here.

Cognates tell you where a language came from; they do not promise to tell you what it says at dinner. Keep the two questions separate.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

The pattern repeats across the family. English has native **eat** beside borrowed **consume** and **devour**; Sanskrit has inherited अद् beside ordinary खाद्.

A language keeps its old word somewhere — in a proverb, a compound, a sacred text — while daily speech moves on to another.

Khādya, “edible,” is the word you will actually meet on a menu.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*khādati*” — it eats
- the root and its class build — *khād ... a ... ti*
- the cousin of English *eat* — *ad*, *atti*

Before you move on

What is the ordinary Sanskrit verb for eating? (खादति, *khādati*, root अद्.) Which Sanskrit root is the actual cousin of English *eat*? (अद् *ad*, giving *atti*.) Which class does *ad* belong to, and how do you know? (**Class 2** — the ending goes straight onto the root, as in *asti*.) Next: a verb built out of two different roots.

7.7 पश्यति (paśyati) — “sees,” a verb with two roots

So far one root has built each verb. Here two roots share the work, and you have already met the quieter one.

You’ll want to know: पश्यति

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
पश्यति	<i>paśyati</i>	he, she, or it sees
दर्शन	<i>darśana</i>	a beholding , a viewing

The present tense comes from the root पश् (paś). Every other tense of this verb comes from a different root, दृश् (dṛś) — and *dṛś* is where दर्शन was built, the word inside Chapter 4’s farewell पुनर्दर्शनाय, “until a seeing again.”

Two roots, one verb, divided by tense. English does the same with *go* and *went*, which were never the same verb either.

The letters in this word

प is *pa*. Then श्य, a stack of two letters: श *śa*, a *sh* made with the tongue high and forward, plus य *ya*. Say them glued: *pash-ya-ti*. Sanskrit has three different *s* letters, and this is the one that leans toward *sh*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

पश् descends from PIE **spek-*, “to observe closely.” The *s* and the *p* swapped places on the way into Indo-Iranian, which is why the Sanskrit form begins *paś-* rather than *spaś-*.

Latin kept it straight as *specere*, and English is full of the results: **spectacle, inspect, respect, species, suspect, spy**.

Greek swapped the letters too, in its own direction, giving *skop-*: **telescope, microscope, skeptic, bishop** (from *episkopos*, an overseer).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “paśyati” — it sees

- the two roots — *paś* for the present, *dṛś* for the rest
- the Chapter 4 word from the other root — *darśana*
- the English descendants — *inspect*, *species*, *telescope*

Before you move on

Which root gives the present *paśyati*? (पश्य *paś*.) Which root supplies the rest of the verb? (दृश् *dṛś* — the one behind *darśana*.) What PIE root is *paś* from? (**Spek-*.) Name two English words from it. (**Inspect**, **species**, **telescope** — any two.) Next: the verb that means “know,” and the class that plants a syllable in the middle.

7.8 ख — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ज · च · क.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: ख

ख — *kha*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *kh*, it is **kha**.

What it is made of:

- a descending left stem curling around a small loop and continuing through the broad lower bowl
- an open clockwise upper-right loop
- a top-to-bottom right stem
- the top shirorekha

You already say this word, and ख is one of the shapes inside it — the rest of its shapes are still ahead of you, so here the character stands on its own:

- *khādati* — he, she, or it eats — the everyday eat-verb, which is not the one English is related to

Writing: ख

- 1. descend the left stem, curl clockwise around the small left opening, then continue down and right around the broad lower bowl to the lower-right junction without lifting
- 2. lift at the upper-left of the right opening and sweep clockwise around its oval to the open lower-left tip
- 3. lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
- 4. lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 3. The pen comes up 3 times and no more.

verified four-stroke teaching form fitted to the bundled printed outline

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-ख-order.gif’, strokes 1–4, Wikimedia Commons, 9 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ख in it

ख

- *Trace it:* ख three times, saying *kha* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ख once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ख? What sound does it carry? (*kha*.) Name one word you already say that contains it.

7.9 जानाति (jānāti) — “knows,” and English *know* is the same word

Two ways a root has become a stem so far: nothing added, or a vowel added. Here is the third, and it is the boldest.

You’ll want to know: जानाति

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
जानाति	<i>jānāti</i>	he, she, or it knows
ज्ञान	<i>jñāna</i>	knowledge

The root is ज्ञा (*jñā*). Its class, the ninth, does not add a vowel at the end — it plants a whole syllable -ना- (-*nā*-) between root and ending: *jā* + *nā* + *ti* → *jānāti*. The marker sits inside the word.

The letters in this word

जा is *jā*; ना *nā* and ति *ti* close it. The root’s own spelling ज्ञ is a famous stacked letter, *j* over *ñ*, said *gya* across much of India today and *jñā* in the classical description. Pick one and stay with it.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

ज्ञा is PIE **gno*-. English **know** is that root undisguised, and so are **can** and **cunning**, which began as “know how.”

Latin took it as *noscere*: **notice**, **notion**, **cognition**, **ignore** (“not-know”), **noble** (“well-known”). Greek took it as *gnōsis*: **diagnosis**, **prognosis**, **agnostic**.

One root, a whole shelf of English vocabulary, and Sanskrit ज्ञान *jñāna* sitting at the other end of it.

What you’ve built: six verbs, three ways to build a stem

Asti, *bhavati*, *gacchati*, *āgacchati*, *khādati*, *paśyati*, *jānāti*. Every one is a root plus a class plus an ending, and the class was the only thing that varied: nothing inserted (*as-ti*), a vowel appended (*bhava-ti*, *khāda-ti*), or a syllable planted inside (*jā-nā-ti*). Prefix one and you aim it: *ā-gacchati*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “jānāti” — it knows
- the root and its planted syllable — *jñā ... nā*
- the English twin — *know*
- three roots and their English kin — *gam*/come, *ad*/eat, *paś*/inspect

Before you move on

What is the root of *jānāti*, and what does its class insert? (ज्ञा *jñā*; the syllable -ना-.) Give the six verbs of this chapter. (*Asti*, *gacchati*, *āgacchati*, *khādati*, *paśyati*, *jānāti*.) Which two are one root plus a prefix? (गच्छति and आगच्छति.) Which Sanskrit root is English *know*? (ज्ञा.) And which English words carry *gam*, *ad*, *paś*, and *bhū*? (*Come*, *eat*, *inspect*, *be* — four roots you now own in two languages.)

Chapter 8

The Mind and the Palm Leaf

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) ✍️ pen (2) 🗣️ Hands-free start: first 1 of 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say that someone thinks, understands, reads and writes in Sanskrit; I can name the class that plants -अय- inside a verb, build “understands” out of a prefix and a verb I already had, say what लिख् meant before it meant write, and tell a word worn down by speech (तद्भव) from one carried over whole (तत्सम).

Say लिखति, give the scratching sense its root carried first, run the chapter’s four verbs back as root plus class plus ending — the planted -अय- of चिन्तयति, the अव- prefix and the waking बुध् behind understanding, the plain -a- of पठति and लिखति — sort Bengali lekhā and Hindi cintā into तद्भव and तत्सम, and name the two word-histories that needed a label rather than a claim.

8.1 चिन्तयति (cintayati) — “thinks,” and a root that never reached English

Say “it knows.” (*Jānāti*, root ज्ञा — the root English *know* is made of.) Here is what you do *before* you know.

You’ll want to know: चिन्तयति

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
चिन्तयति	<i>cintayati</i>	he, she, or it thinks
चिन्ता	<i>cintā</i>	a thought , a worry

The root is चिन्त् (*cint*), “to think, to turn over.” Chapter 3 already handed you the noun: न चिन्ता (*na cintā*), “no worry,” is this root saying “think nothing of it.”

The letters in this word

चि is *ci*, said *chi* as in *chip*. Then न्त, न *na* stacked with त *ta* and said as one *nt*. य is *ya*, ति is *ti*: *chin-ta-ya-ti*.

Grammar Lens: the tenth class plants अय

Three ways a गण class has turned a root into a present stem: add nothing (*as-ti*), add a vowel (*bhava-ti*), plant a syllable inside (*jā-nā-ti*). Here is the fourth.

The **tenth** class inserts -अय- (*-aya-*) between root and ending: *cint* + *aya* + *ti* → चिन्तयति. The marker is loud and always in the same position, so -*aya-* names its class on hearing.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

चिन्त् goes back to PIE **kweyt-*, “to notice” — and its च *c-* is the rounded *k* from the numbers, which Indo-Iranian merged with plain *k* and then palatalised before a front vowel.

Where it went next is the surprise. Baltic and Slavic took “notice” to “count” and then to **read**: Russian *čitat* and Lithuanian *skaityti* both mean “to read.” Sanskrit made the same root mean *think*.

And English? Nothing descends from **kweyt-*. The trail west runs out, and saying so beats inventing a cousin.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “cintayati” — it thinks
- the root and its planted syllable — *cint* ... *aya*
- the Chapter 3 phrase built on the same root — *na cintā*

Before you move on

What does class 10 put between root and ending, and what is *cintayati*'s root? (-अय-; चिन्त्, the root of *na cintā*.) Why does the word begin with *c* and not *k*? (**A rounded PIE *k*, merged and then palatalised** — the numbers' rule.) Which verb of knowing came just before this one, and does *cint* have an English cousin? (जानाति; **no** — this root left English nothing.)

8.2 े — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: च · क · ख. Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: े

े — *e*.

It is a **vowel sign**. It is not a letter and never stands alone: it attaches to a consonant and **replaces** the *a* built into it. Replaces, not adds — the *a* is gone.

Where it sits: a stroke above the top bar.

Worked through: न + े = ने — *ne*.

You already say this word, and े is one of the shapes inside it — the rest of its shapes are still ahead of you, so here the character stands on its own:

- *namaste* — hello (lit. “a bow to you”)

Writing: े — copy what you see

Put your pen on े and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed.

This book does not yet tell you **where to start the character or which way to travel**. That is a real thing, taught with real variation from school to school, and it is not written down here

until it can be written down with a source. Copying what is in front of you needs no such source, and it is how the shape gets into your hand in the meantime.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find े in it
- *Trace it:* े three times, saying *e* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find े once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — े? What vowel does it put on the consonant it attaches to — and what does it take off? (**Puts *e* on; takes the built-in *a* off.**) Name one word you already say that contains it.

8.3 अवगच्छति (avagacchati) — “understands,” going down into it

Say “it goes,” then “it comes.” (*Gacchati*, *āgacchati* — one उपसर्ग prefix apart.) And say “it thinks.” (*Cintayati*.) One more prefix, and thinking turns into understanding.

You’ll want to know: अवगच्छति

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
गच्छति	<i>gacchati</i>	it goes
अवगच्छति	<i>avagacchati</i>	it understands

अव (*ava*) means “down.” Put it on “goes” and you get “goes down into” — and that is Sanskrit’s ordinary verb for understanding. No new root, no new stem: one more preverb on a word you already own.

Sanskrit has a second verb for it too, बुध्यते (*budhyate*), “wakes, comes to realise.” Its ending -ते *-te* belongs to Sanskrit’s second set of endings, used

when the action loops back on the doer — waking is something you do to yourself.

The letters in this word

Everything after two syllables is last chapter’s word. The new opening is अ *a* plus व *va*: *a-va-gach-cha-ti*. In बुध्यते the middle is ध्य, a stack of ध *dha* and य *ya*, said glued: *bu-dhya-te*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

गम्, under *avagacchati*, is still PIE **gwem-*, the root of English **come** and Latin *venire* behind **advent**.

बुध् is PIE **bheudh-*, “to be awake, to be aware.” Its most famous derivative is बुद्ध (*buddha*), “the awakened one” — a title, not a name. Greek made it *punthanomai*, “to learn by asking”; Russian *budit* still means “to wake.”

English got it too, worn thin: **forbid** and **bode** (as in *foreboding*) descend from Old English *bēodan*, “to announce, to offer.” Modern *bid* mixes that verb with a second, unrelated one — so keep to *forbid* and *bode* if you want the clean cousin.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “gacchati ... avagacchati” — goes, understands
- the prefix and its sense — *ava*, down
- the other verb and its root — *budhyate*, *budh*
- what बुद्ध means — the awakened one

Before you move on

Build “understands” out of pieces you already had. (अव “down” + गच्छति “goes”.) Name the three verbs that share that one stem. (*Gacchati*, *āgacchati*, *avagacchati*.) What does बुध् mean before it means “understand,” and what title comes from it? (**To wake**; बुद्ध, the awakened one.) Which two English words are its clean cousins? (**Forbid** and **bode**.)

8.4 पठति (paṭhati) — “reads,” and where the word went afterwards

Say “it thinks” and “it understands.” (*Cintayati, avagacchati.*)
This next verb is the plainest build in the chapter and the richest afterlife.

You’ll want to know: पठति

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
पठति	<i>paṭhati</i>	he, she, or it reads
पाठ	<i>pāṭha</i>	a lesson , a recitation

The root is पठ् (*paṭh*), class 1 — root, vowel, ending, exactly like *bhavati*. Its first meaning is not “read” but “**recite aloud, rehearse, study**”: reading was a thing done with the mouth, and Sanskrit named it that way.

The letters in this word

प is *pa*. ठ is *ṭha*, a *t* made with the tongue curled back to the roof of the mouth *and* a puff of breath after it. ति is *ti*, tongue forward. Hear the two *t*-sounds apart: *pa-ṭha-ti*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

This is the verb four living languages still read with — Hindi and Urdu *paṛhnā*, Bengali *poṛa*, Marathi *paḍhṇe*. The change is regular: that curled-back ठ softens between vowels, and the old ending drops off. A word reshaped by centuries of ordinary speech is तद्भव (*tadbhava*), “become from that.”

Now set चिन्ता beside it. It sits in Hindi, Marathi and Bengali **unchanged** — lifted back out of Sanskrit by scholars rather than inherited through speech. That kind is तत्सम (*tatsama*), “the same as that.” Every claim about a Sanskrit word’s descendants is one of those two, and they are not the same claim.

Grammar Lens: where पठति itself came from

The usual account runs back through प्रथ् (*prath*), “to spread, to become widely known” — reciting as broadcasting — and behind that a root that also gives पृथिवी (*prthivī*), “the earth, the wide one.”

Some hold instead that *paṭhati* is a later, spoken form that scholars dressed up as Sanskrit. Keep the label on it, exactly as you did with *punch*: a common account, not a settled one.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “paṭhati” — it reads, it recites
- a worn-down grandchild — *paṛhnā*
- a word carried whole — *cintā*

Before you move on

What did *paṭhati* mean before “read,” and which class builds it? (**Recite aloud; class 1.**) Name the two ways a Sanskrit word reaches a modern language. (तद्भव, worn down through speech; तत्सम, carried over whole.) Which is *paṛhnā*, which is *cintā*, and what label belongs on *paṭhati*’s own ancestry? (*Tadbhava*; *tatsama*; **a common account, not settled** — the caution you kept on *punch*.)

8.5 व — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: क · ख ·
े. Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: व

व — *va*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *v*, it is **va**.

What it is made of:

- a counterclockwise left loop

- a top-to-bottom right stem
- the top shirorekhā

You already say these, and every one of them has व somewhere inside it:

- वदामि *vadāmi* — I speak

Writing: व

- **1.** start at the upper-right of the body, travel left around the top, and continue counterclockwise around the loop to the right-side junction
- **2.** lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
- **3.** lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified three-stroke teaching form

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: JackPotte, ‘Devanagari v व.gif’, strokes 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 29 March 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find व in it

वदामि

- *Trace it:* व three times, saying *va* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find व once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — व? What sound does it carry? (*va.*)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

8.6 लिखति (likhati) — “writes,” and the scratch it started as

Say “it reads.” (*Paṭhati.*) Name a language that still reads with that word. (Hindi *paṛhnā*, Bengali *poṛa*, Marathi *paḍhṇe* — any one.) Now the other half of literacy.

You’ll want to know: लिखति

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
लिखति	<i>likhati</i>	he, she, or it writes
लेखनी	<i>lekhanī</i>	a pen

The root is लिख् (*likh*), class 6. Class 6 adds the same *-a-* class 1 does but leaves the root untouched: *likh* + *a* + *ti*. Two classes, one vowel, and the difference is only whether the root gets strengthened first.

The letters in this word

लि is *li*. ख is *kha*, a *k* with a puff of breath after it — the letter that opens *khādati*. ति is *ti*: *li-kha-ti*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

लिख् does not mean “write” first. It means **to scratch, to scrape, to furrow**, and “write” second — because writing *was* scratching, into palm leaf and birch bark with a stylus. The older sense stays visible in रेखा (*rekhā*), “a line, a scratch,” the same root wearing an *r*. Outside Sanskrit the trail is thin but real: Greek *ereikō*, “to tear,” and Lithuanian *riekti*, “to slice.” No everyday English word descends from it — that is two roots in this chapter that left English nothing. Eastward, a different story: Hindi and Urdu *likhnā*, Bengali *lekhā*, Marathi *lihṇe* — worn down, *tadbhava*, with Marathi’s *kh* softened to *h*.

What you’ve built: four verbs, four ways to build a stem

Cintayati, *avagacchati*, *paṭhati*, *likhati*. Thinking plants -अय-; understanding is “goes” with अव in front, or बुध्यते, waking; reading and writing take a plain *-a-*, class 1 and class 6.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “likhati” — it writes
- what the root meant first — to scratch
- the chapter’s four — *cintayati*, *avagacchati*, *paṭhati*, *likhati*

Before you move on

What did लिख् mean before “write,” and what are the chapter’s four verbs? (**To scratch**; *cintayati*, *avagacchati*, *paṭhati*, *likhati*.) Which plants -अय-, and which is a prefix on a verb you already had? (*Cintayati*; *avagacchati*.) Which verb of understanding means “wakes,” and what title comes from its root? (बुध्यते; बुद्ध.) Is Bengali *lekhā* tatsama or tadbhava, and which two word-histories here needed a label rather than a claim? (**Tadbhava**; *paṭhati*’s ancestry and *likh*’s English kin — the *punch* caution, twice.)

Chapter 9

Taking, Asking, Helping, Loving

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) ✍️ pen (2) 🗣️ Hands-free start: first 1 of 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say that someone takes, asks, helps and loves in Sanskrit; I can say संस्कृतं मम प्रियम्, build a verb by putting करोति behind a noun, and point at the English word — grab, pray, friend — that each of these four roots also produced.

Say संस्कृतं मम प्रियम्, give स्निह् its older sense of stickiness and label the disputed snow connection, follow प्रिय west into friend, free and Friday by the p-to-f change that also made pañca into five, run the chapter’s four verbs back with grab, pray and comes beside them, and sort प्रिय against Hindi piyā as तत्सम against तद्भव — then place पञ्च beside प्रिय as the other word that travelled in both directions at once.

9.1 गृह्णाति (grhṇāti) — “takes,” and English *grab*

Say “it writes,” and what its root meant first. (*Likhati*; to scratch.) Now say “it knows” and name the syllable its class plants inside the word. (*Jānāti*; -ना-.) That syllable is back.

You’ll want to know: गृह्णाति

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
गृह्णाति	grhṇāti	he, she, or it takes , seizes
ग्रहण	grahaṇa	a seizing ; an eclipse

The root is ग्रह् (*grah*), class 9 — *jānāti*’s class. It plants the same syllable, and the syllable comes out -णा- rather than -ना-: a curled-back ऋ earlier in the word pulls the following *n* back to match it. Sanskrit tidies its consonants after the fact.

The letters in this word

गृ is *gr̥*: the vowel ऋ is a vowel made of *r* itself, a short buzz between *ri* and *ru* — the same vowel inside संस्कृत. Then ह्रा, *h* and curled-back ण fused with a long *ā*: *gr̥h-ṇā-ti*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

ग्रह् is PIE **ghrebh-*, “to seize.” The oldest Sanskrit still writes it गृह्णाति (*gr̥bhṇāti*), with the *bh* the reconstruction predicts. English kept the same root in **grab**, **grip** and **grasp**.

Say what that means carefully, though. Sanskrit built its verb with the class-9 syllable; English built its words with other endings entirely.

They are the same root wearing different suffixes — **relatives, not the same word**, exactly the caution you put on *eka* beside *one*.

Inside Sanskrit the root spreads out: ग्रह (*graha*) is a **planet**, named as the *seizer* that takes hold of a life. Eastward it wore down to Marathi घेणे (*gheṇe*), the ordinary verb for taking.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*gr̥hṇāti*” — it takes
- the root and its planted syllable — *grah ... ṇā*
- the English kin — *grab, grip, grasp*
- the worn-down Marathi grandchild — *gheṇe*

Before you move on

Which class builds *gr̥hṇāti*, and which earlier verb shares it? (**Class 9; जानाति.**) Why -णा- and not -ना-? (**The curled-back ऋ pulls the *n* back to match.**) Name three English words from the same root. (**Grab, grip, grasp.**) Are they the same word as *gr̥hṇāti* or

relatives of it? (**Relatives** — same root, different suffixes, like *eka* and *one*.) Is Marathi *gheṇe* tatsama or tadbhava? (**Tadbhava**.)

9.2 त — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ख · े · व.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: त

त — *ta*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *t*, it is **ta**.

What it is made of:

- a right-to-left upper shoulder curving down to an open lower tip
- a top-to-bottom right stem
- the top shirorekḥā

You already say these, and every one of them has त somewhere inside it:

- भवान् / त्वम् *bhavān / tvam* — you
- तव नाम किम्? *tava nāma kim?* — what's your name?
- न चिन्ता *na cintā* — no worry / it's nothing / you're welcome
- खादति *khādati* — he, she, or it eats — the everyday eat-verb, which is not the one English is related to

Writing: त

1. start at the body's upper-right junction, sweep left across the shoulder, then curve down around the left side and finish down-right at the open lower tip without lifting

- **2.** lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
- **3.** lift and draw the top shirorekḥā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified three-stroke teaching form; everyday handwriting may join or simplify the body differently

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-त-order.gif’, strokes 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 10 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find त in it
भवान् / त्वम् · तव नाम किम्? · न चिन्ता
- *Trace it:* त three times, saying *ta* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find त once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — त? What sound does it carry? (*ta*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

9.3 पृच्छति (pr̥cchati) — “asks,” and the prayer at the other end of it

Say “it takes” and its English kin. (*Gṛhṇāti*; **grab**.) Say “it goes.” (*Gacchati*.) Listen to the middle of that one — it comes back here.

You’ll want to know: पृच्छति

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
पृच्छति	<i>pr̥cchati</i>	he, she, or it asks
प्रश्न	<i>praśna</i>	a question

The root is प्रच्छ् (*prach*), class 6 — *likhati*’s class, a plain *-a-* on an untouched root. The root’s *r* turns into the vowel ऋ, and the ending fuses into the doubled च्छ you already met in *gacchati*.

The letters in this word

पृ is *pr*, the *r*-vowel again. च्छ is the stack of two *ch* sounds held slightly long, exactly as in *gacchati*. ति closes it: *prch-cha-ti*. Let the middle linger.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

प्रच्छ् is PIE **prek-*, “to ask,” and it is one of the best-travelled roots in the family.

Latin took it as *precārī*, “to ask, to entreat” — and from that English has **pray**, **prayer**, **deprecate**, and **precarious**, which meant “held only by asking, at someone else’s pleasure.”

Germanic took the same root and turned its initial *p* into *f* by **Grimm’s law** — the very change that made *pañca* into **five**. That is why German asks with **fragen**. Persian asks with *porsidan* and Russian with *prosit*, both the same word again.

Eastward it wore down: Hindi and Urdu पूछना (*pūchnā*), Marathi पुसणे (*pusṇe*) — *tadbhava*, with the *r*-vowel flattened to *u*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*prcchati*” — it asks
- the root — *prach*
- the Latin descendant and its English children — *precārī*, *pray*
- the German cousin with *f* — *fragen*

Before you move on

Which class builds *prcchati*, and which verb shares its doubled middle? (**Class 6**; गच्छति.) What did Latin *precārī* mean, and name two English words from it. (**To entreat**; **pray**, **precarious**.) Why does German say *fragen* with an *f*? (**Grimm’s law** turned initial *p* into *f* — as in *pañca* and *five*.) And is Hindi *pūchnā* tatsama or

tadbhava? (Tadbhava.)

9.4 साहाय्यं करोति (sāhāyyaṃ karoti) — “helps,” or going along with

Say “it asks” and “it takes.” (*Pr̥cchati*, *gr̥hṇāti*.) Helping is not built like either of them. It takes two words.

You’ll want to know: साहाय्यं करोति

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
साहाय्यम्	<i>sāhāyyaṃ</i>	help , assistance
साहाय्यं करोति	<i>sāhāyyaṃ karoti</i>	he, she, or it helps

करोति (*karoti*) is “does, makes” — the root कृ (*kr*), class 8, yours since Chapter 5 as करोमि (*karomi*), “I do.” Same stem, familiar swap of ending: -ति for “he, she, it,” -मि for “I.”

So Sanskrit has no verb “to help.” It has a noun for help and puts “does” behind it — a machine you can run on almost any noun.

The letters in this word

सा *sā*, हा *hā*, then य्य, य *ya* stacked on itself and held double. The final म् *m* softens to a hum before the next word, so it is written -ः: *sāhāyyaṃ karoti*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

साहाय्य is built on सहाय (*sahāya*), “a companion” — सह (*saha*), “with,” plus आय, from the root इ (*i*), “to go.” A helper is *one who goes along with you*. Sanskrit leaves such seams showing, the way संस्कृत is *sam* “together” on कृ.

Latin names a companion by the same picture: *comes* is *com-* “with” on *ire* “to go,” the root behind **exit** and **transit**.

Bengali still helps with this very word, unchanged: *sāhājjo korā*, a *tatsama* carrying the whole Sanskrit noun plus its own “do.” Hindi and Marathi instead say *madad karnā* and *madat karṇe* — same machine, but with an **Arabic** word that reached them through Persian. Not everything modern comes from Sanskrit.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “sāhāyyam karoti” — it helps
- “karomi ... karoti” — I do, it does
- the two pieces of *sahāya* — *saha* “with,” *āya* “going”

Before you move on

How does Sanskrit say “helps”? (साहाय्यं करोति — a noun plus “does”.) What are the two pieces inside *sahāya*, and which Latin word for a companion is built the same way? (सह “with” + आय “going”; *comes*.) Which language still helps with this exact Sanskrit noun, and which two borrowed an Arabic one instead? (Bengali; Hindi and Marathi, with *madad*.)

9.5 ः — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: े · व · त.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: ः

ः — *ṃ* (*nasal*).

It is a **nasal mark**. It is not a letter and never stands alone: it sits on a syllable and sends its sound through the nose.

Where it sits: an anusvāra dot above the top bar, nasalizing the syllable.

Worked through: न + ः = नं — *naṃ*.

You already say these words, and ः is one of the shapes inside them — the rest of their shapes are still ahead of you, so here the character stands on its own:

- *aham samiskṛtani vadāmi* — I speak Sanskrit
- *sāhāyyam karoti* — he, she, or it helps — a noun plus “does,” and help named as going along with someone

Writing: ँ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ँ and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed.

This book does not yet tell you **where to start the character or which way to travel**. That is a real thing, taught with real variation from school to school, and it is not written down here until it can be written down with a source. Copying what is in front of you needs no such source, and it is how the shape gets into your hand in the meantime.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ँ in it

ॐ

- *Trace it:* ँ three times, saying *ṇ* (*nasal*) as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ँ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ँ? Where does it send the sound? (**Through the nose.**) Name one word you already say that contains it.

9.6 स्निह्यति and प्रियम् — loving, and the word inside *friend*

Say “it helps,” “it asks,” “it takes.” (*Sāhāyyam karoti, prcchati, gṛhṇāti.*) One feeling left, named after something physical.

You’ll want to know: स्निह्यति and प्रियम्

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
स्निह्यति	<i>snihyati</i>	he, she, or it feels affection
मम प्रियम्	<i>mama priyam</i>	dear to me

स्निह् (*sniḥ*) means, first, **to be sticky, oily, moist**, and only then “to feel fond of.” The noun स्नेह (*sneha*) is still both: *oil* and *affection*.

For everyday liking Sanskrit reaches instead for प्रिय (*priya*), “dear.” With मम (*mama*), yours since Chapter 2: संस्कृतं मम प्रियम्, “Sanskrit is dear to me.”

The letters in this word

स्नि stacks स *sa* on न *na* over the vowel *i* — one push, *sni*, not *si-ni*. Then ह्य, *h* and *y* fused: *sniḥ-ya-ti*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

प्रिय is PIE **priHos*, “dear, beloved.” Germanic turned that *p* into *f* by Grimm’s law — the third time you have watched it happen: **friend** is “the loving one,” **free** meant “beloved of the household” before “not a slave,” and **Friday** is the day of *Frigg*, whose name is the same word. Eastward it took both roads at once: प्रिय sits unchanged in Hindi, Marathi and Bengali, a *tatsama*; worn down it is Hindi पिया (*piyā*), “beloved,” a *tadbhava*.

स्निह् is the opposite case. It may belong with the root behind **snow** — snow being what sticks — but that is argued, so keep it labelled.

What you’ve built: four verbs, and a taproot

Gṛhṇāti, *pr̥cchati*, *sāhāyāni karoti*, *snihyati* — seizing, asking, going along with, sticking. Four physical pictures, each reaching west (*grab*, *pray*, *comes*, *friend*) and east into living speech.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “saṁskṛtaṁ mama priyam” — Sanskrit is dear to me
- स्नेह, twice over — oil, and affection
- *friend*, *free*, *Friday* — all from *priya*

Before you move on

Give this chapter’s four, and what स्निह् meant before “love.” (*Gṛhṇāti*, *pr̥cchati*, *sāhāyāni karoti*, *snihyati*; **sticky, oily**.) Three

English words from प्रिय, and what turned its *p* into *f*? (**F**riend, **f**ree, **F**riday; **G**rimm's law, as in *fragen* and *five*.) Which English number's *f* is **not** that law? (**F**our, copying *five*.) Which earlier word travelled both ways as *priya* does, and is *piyā* tatsama or tadbhava? (पञ्च — east to *panj* and **P**unjab, “five waters,” west to Greek *pente*; *piyā* is tadbhava.)

Chapter 10

What You’d Ask For

Modes: 👁 eyes (3) ✍ pen (2) 🗣 Hands-free start: first 1 of 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name water, milk and food in Sanskrit, say that food is grammatically the eaten thing, and name the three genders every Sanskrit noun carries.

Say अन्नम्, name the root अद् it shares with खादति’s cousin अत्ति, and state the three grammatical genders Sanskrit sorts every noun into, tying the neuter -म् running through the chapter back to the neuter numeral forms of Chapter 6.

10.1 पानीयम् (pānīyam) — “water,” the thing to be drunk

Say “Sanskrit is dear to me.” (*Samiskṛtani mama priyam.*) Every word so far has named an action. Now for the nouns you would actually reach for — starting with the one you would ask for first.

You’ll want to know: पानीयम्

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
पानीयम्	<i>pānīyam</i>	water
पिबति	<i>pibati</i>	he, she, or it drinks

पानीयम् is neuter, and its final -म् marks that — a whole family of everyday nouns ends this way, and it will keep coming back this chapter.

The letters in this word

पा is *pā*, the long-*ā* you have said since नाम. नी stacks न *na* under the long-*i* sign ी. यम् closes it: *y*, the inherent *a*, then म् with its vowel stripped by the *halant* — *pā-nī-ya-m*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

पानीयम् is built on the root पा (*pā*), “to drink,” plus -अनीय (*-anīya*), a suffix meaning “fit to be ~ed.” Literally: **the thing that is to be drunk**.

The root is PIE **peh3-**, “to drink.” Latin took it into *potare*, and from that English has **potion** and **poison** — a drink, and a drink gone wrong.

Eastward, पानीयम् wore down through Prakrit *pāṇīya* into the everyday water-word of the daughter languages: Hindi पानी (*pānī*), Gujarati *pāṇī*, and, in the Bangladesh register of Bengali, *pani* — every one तद्भव, worn down by ordinary speech, not carried over whole. Sanskrit’s own oldest water-words, जल and उदक, took a different road entirely; this is not that word.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “pānīyam” — water
- the root and its suffix — *pā* “drink” plus *-anīya* “fit to be”
- the worn-down grandchildren — *pānī*, *pāṇī*, *pani*

Before you move on

What does पानीयम् literally mean, and from which two pieces? (“**The thing to be drunk**” — *pā* “drink” plus *-anīya* “fit to be”.) Name two English words from the same PIE root. (**Potion, poison.**) Is Hindi *pānī* तत्सम or तद्भव? (तद्भव.) And how did you say “dear to me” last chapter? (*Priyam.*)

10.2 स — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: व · त · ं.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: स

स — *sa*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *s*, it is **sa**.

What it is made of:

- a descending left stem curling through the central hook and diagonal tail
- a left-to-right middle crossbar
- a top-to-bottom right stem
- the top shirorekha

You already say these, and every one of them has स somewhere inside it:

- नमस्ते *namaste* — hello (lit. “a bow to you”)
- नमस्कारः *namaskārah* — hello (lit. “the making of a bow”)
- अस्ति *asti* — is
- मम नाम ... अस्ति *mama nāma ... asti* — my name is...

Writing: स

- **1.** start just below the headline, descend the left stem, curve left around the central hook, and continue diagonally down-right through the tail without lifting
- **2.** lift at the central junction and draw the middle crossbar left-to-right

- **3.** lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
- **4.** lift and draw the top shirorekḥā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 3. The pen comes up 3 times and no more.

verified four-stroke teaching form; the corroborating deskbook stages the left curve and diagonal tail separately

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: JackPotte, ‘Devanagari s स.gif’, strokes 1–4, Wikimedia Commons, 29 March 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find स in it
नमस्ते · नमस्कारः · अस्ति
- *Trace it:* स three times, saying *sa* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find स once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — स? What sound does it carry? (*sa.*)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

10.3 क्षीरम् (kṣīram) — “milk,” and the dessert it left behind

Say “water,” and the root it is built on. (*Pānīyam*; पा, “to drink.”) Not every drink-word in Sanskrit has so tidy an answer.

You’ll want to know: क्षीरम्

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
क्षीरम्	<i>kṣīram</i>	milk
क्षीर	<i>kṣīra</i>	milk — the bare stem, still living inside Hindi <i>khūr</i>

Neuter again, marked by the same -म् as पानीयम्.

The letters in this word

क्ष is a new stacked pair: क *k* fused under ष, the hissed retroflex *s* — together they say *kṣa*, one push, not two. Then the long-ī sign ी, र *ra*, and the neuter म् you already know: *kṣī-ra-m*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Where पानीयम्'s history is settled, क्षीरम्'s is not. One account traces it to an old Proto-Indo-European word for milk; another argues it was borrowed from a substrate language spoken where Indo-Iranian speakers first arrived in the region. Neither side has won.

What is clear is the family it sits in: Avestan **xšūuidi-** and Persian *šīr* say roughly the same word, but as **relatives**, not children — all three come down from one shared Proto-Indo-Iranian ancestor, the way *gr̥h̥nāti* and English *grab* are cousins rather than the same word wearing different clothes.

The word's liveliest descendant is not a drink. Hindi खीर (*khīr*) is a sweet rice pudding cooked in milk — worn down, तद्भव — and English borrowed that dessert whole, as **kheer**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “kṣīram” — milk
- the two disputed accounts — an old root, or a borrowed one
- the dessert it became — *khīr*, borrowed into English as *kheer*

Before you move on

Is क्षीरम्'s own origin settled or disputed? (**Disputed** — inherited, or borrowed from a substrate.) Are Persian *šīr* and Sanskrit *kṣīram* parent and child, or relatives? (**Relatives**, from one shared ancestor.) What English word for a dessert comes from Hindi *khīr*? (**Kheer**.) And what does *pānīyam* literally mean? (“**The thing to be drunk.**”)

10.4 अन्नम् (annam) — “food,” the eaten thing

Say “milk” and “water.” (*Kṣīram, pānīyam.*) One more thing you would ask for, and this one carries a root you already own.

You’ll want to know: अन्नम्

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
अन्नम्	<i>annam</i>	food, grain
खाद्यम् अन्नम्	<i>khādyam annam</i>	edible food — खादति’s own adjective on it

Neuter, and -म् again — the third noun running.

The letters in this word

अ opens bare, no consonant to carry it. न्न doubles न *na* onto itself, held a beat longer than one *n* would be. म् closes it, the same stripped-vowel neuter ending: *an-na-m*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Chapter 7 taught खादति, the everyday word for eating, and set beside it its untaken cousin: अद्, PIE *ed-*, the very root of English *eat*, which Sanskrit keeps alive as अत्ति.

अन्नम् is built on that same अद्, plus the old participle suffix -न — “eaten.” The *d* and the *n* fuse into the doubled न्न you just sounded out. Food, named this way, is not a thing but an **event**: the thing that has been eaten.

Grammar Lens: three genders, one small system

Every noun in this chapter has ended in -म्, and that is not coincidence: Sanskrit sorts every noun into one of **three genders** — masculine, feminine, and neuter — the same system that put a gendered form on the numerals back in Chapter 6, where the daughter languages inherited specifically the **neuter** forms, *trīṇi* and *catvāri*. This book teaches only the plain nominative singular of each noun, never the full run of cases and numbers behind it — but the gender is worth carrying, because it is not optional, and it is not guessable from meaning alone.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “annam” — food
- the root and its participle — *ad* “eat” plus *-na* “eaten”
- the three genders — masculine, feminine, neuter

Before you move on

What does *annam* literally mean, and which root is it built on? (“**Eaten**”; अद्, the cousin of English *eat*.) Which everyday verb shares that root without being it? (*Khādati*.) Which gender have all three nouns this chapter shared? (**Neuter**, marked by -म्.) And which gendered form did the numerals hand the daughter languages back in Chapter 6? (**The neuter one** — *trīṇi*, *catvāri*.) Name this chapter’s three words. (*Pānīyam*, *kṣīram*, *annam* — the things you would ask for.)

10.5 ी — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: त · ं · स.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: ी

ी — ī.

It is a **vowel sign**. It is not a letter and never stands alone: it attaches to a consonant and **replaces** the *a* built into it. Replaces, not adds — the *a* is gone.

Where it sits: a curl to the right with a tail over the top bar.

Worked through: न + ी = नी — *nī*.

You already say these, and every one of them has ी somewhere inside it:

- पानीयम् *pānīyam* — water — “the thing to be drunk,” and the exact word your neighbors’ पानी grew from

Writing: ी — copy what you see

Put your pen on ी and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed.

This book does not yet tell you **where to start the character or which way to travel**. That is a real thing, taught with real variation from school to school, and it is not written down here until it can be written down with a source. Copying what is in front of you needs no such source, and it is how the shape gets into your hand in the meantime.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ी in it

पानीयम्

- *Trace it:* ी three times, saying ī as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ी once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ी? What vowel does it put on the consonant it attaches to — and what does it take off? (**Puts ī on; takes the built-in a off.**) Name one word you already say that contains it.

Chapter 11

The People You'd Introduce

Modes: 👁 eyes (4) ✍ pen (2) 🗣 Hands-free start: first 2 of 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a friend, a family, a brother and a sister in Sanskrit, and say which of those words travelled with English and which quietly did not.

Say भगिनी, name the share-word भग it is built on, name स्वस् as the real but non-living PIE cousin of English sister, and run the chapter's four people back together with the roads each one travelled.

11.1 मित्रम् (mitram) — “friend,” and the god of the given word

Say “food,” and its gender. (*Annam*; **neuter**.) The last three words named things you would ask for. This one names someone you would introduce.

You'll want to know: मित्रम्

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
मित्रम्	<i>mitram</i>	friend
मित्रम् मम	<i>mitram mama</i>	my friend

The letters in this word

मि is *mi*, a short vowel sign under म. त्र stacks त *ta* under र *ra*, said as one push, *tra*. म् closes it, neuter again: *mi-tra-m*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

मित्रम् comes from Proto-Indo-Iranian *mitras, “that which causes binding” — a promise, a pact, a bond between two people. The same word names **Mithra**, the Avestan and Zoroastrian god of covenant and contract: a friendship, at the root, is a kind of oath. It travelled east with almost no change at all: Hindi and Marathi मित्र, Gujarati *mitra*, all तत्सम, lifted straight out of Sanskrit rather than worn down the way पानीयम् became *pānī*.

Grammar Lens: a person, grammatically neuter

Here is the proof that gender is not about meaning. मित्रम् names a person, and Sanskrit still marks it **neuter** — the same -म् you have now seen on water, milk, and food. A noun’s gender is a fact about the *word*, inherited with its shape, not a fact about who or what it points to.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “mitram” — friend
- the god it shares a name with — *Mithra*
- three languages that kept it whole — Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati

Before you move on

What does the root behind मित्रम् mean, and what god shares it? (“**To bind**”; **Mithra**, the covenant god.) Is मित्र in Hindi तत्सम or तद्भव? (तत्सम.) What gender is *mitram*, and why is that surprising? (**Neuter** — it names a person, but gender tracks the word’s class, not the person.)

11.2 कुटुम्बम् (kuṭumbam) — “family,” a word that made a round trip

Say “friend,” and its gender. (*Mitram*; **neuter**.) One person’s name, now the group everyone belongs to.

You'll want to know: कुटुम्बम्

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
कुटुम्बम्	<i>kuṭumbam</i>	family , household
मम कुटुम्बम्	<i>mama kuṭumbam</i>	my family

The letters in this word

कु is *ku*, a short-*u* sign under क. टु repeats it under the curled-back ट, the retroflex *t* you first met in संस्कृत's neighbours. म्ब stacks ब *ba* under a silent म्, and a final म् closes it: *ku-ṭu-mba-m*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Every etymology so far in this chapter has run from Sanskrit outward. This one runs the other way first. कुटुम्बम् is a loanword **into** Sanskrit from a Dravidian language, compared to Tamil **kuṭimai**, “family, lineage, allegiance,” itself built on **kuṭi**, “a hut, a settlement.” A family, on this account, is literally *those who share one roof*. From Sanskrit the finished word travelled onward as a formal, learned तत्सम — Hindi कुटुंब and Bengali *kuṭumbo* — and then made a full circle: Kannada, Telugu and Tamil today all hold this same Sanskrit-shaped form, borrowed back into languages that, on one account, lent Sanskrit the word in the first place.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “kuṭumbam” — family
- which family lent Sanskrit the word — Dravidian
- the languages that later borrowed it back — Kannada, Telugu, Tamil

Before you move on

Which direction did कुटुम्बम् travel first — into Sanskrit, or out of it? (**Into it** — a Dravidian loanword.) What Tamil word is it compared to, and what does it literally build on? (**kuṭimai**, “family, lineage,” on **kuṭi**, “a hut.”) Which languages later borrowed the

Sanskrit-shaped form back? (Kannada, Telugu, Tamil.)

11.3 ह — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ं · स · ी.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: ह

ह — *ha*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *h*, it is **ha**.

What it is made of:

- a descending right stem joined to the leftward shoulder and clockwise hooked body
- a separate down-right outer curve and tail
- the top shirorekha

You already say these, and every one of them has ह somewhere inside it:

- अहम् *aham* — I
- अहं संस्कृतं वदामि *aham samiskṛtam vadāmi* — I speak Sanskrit
- स्निह्यति · प्रियम् *snihyati · priyam* — he, she, or it loves, and what is dear — affection named as stickiness, and the word behind English friend

Writing: ह

- 1. start at the right stem's headline junction, descend, sweep left through the shoulder, then curve clockwise around the hooked body to its lower-right tip without lifting

- **2.** lift at the body’s left junction and sweep down-left around the outer curve, then continue diagonally down-right through the tail
- **3.** lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified three-stroke teaching form; the corroborating deskbook stages the joined first body in more component steps

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-ह-order.gif’, strokes 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 9 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ह in it
अहम् · अहं संस्कृतं वदामि · स्निह्यति · प्रियम्
- *Trace it:* ह three times, saying *ha* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ह once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ह? What sound does it carry? (*ha*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

11.4 भ्राता (bhrātā) — “brother,” the same word, worn two ways

Say “family” and “friend.” (*Kuṭumbam, mitram*.) Now for the first person inside that family — and the plainest cousin in this book yet.

You’ll want to know: भ्राता

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
भ्राता	<i>bhrātā</i>	brother
मम भ्राता	<i>mama bhrātā</i>	my brother

Masculine — the first noun this chapter has not ended in -म्.

The letters in this word

भ्रा stacks र *ra* under भ *bha*, one push, then the long-*ā*: *bhrā*. ता closes it, *ta* plus long-*ā* again: *bhrā-tā*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

भ्राता is PIE **bhrāter-**, and the descent is about as unbroken as this family gets: English **brother**, Latin **frāter**, Greek **phrātēr** are not relatives of भ्राता — they **are** भ्राता, six thousand years and three different roads later.

One of those roads runs straight through the daughter languages. भ्राता wore down through Prakrit *bhāi* into Bengali *bhāi* and Gujarati *bhāi*, both तद्भव — the same word again, just worn smooth by everyday speech rather than lifted whole like मित्र.

Grammatically, भ्राता is a fossil of its own: an old kinship word built on the stem भ्रातृ (*bhrātṛ*), whose nominative singular lengthens the final vowel to -आ instead of following the plain patterns you have seen so far.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “bhrātā” — brother
- its English, Latin, and Greek selves — brother, frāter, phrātēr
- its worn-down grandchildren — *bhāi*, *bhāi*

Before you move on

Is English *brother* a cousin of भ्राता, or the same word? (**The same word**, unbroken from PIE.) Which two daughter languages wore it down to *bhāi*? (**Bengali, Gujarati.**) What gender is भ्राता, unlike every noun before it this chapter? (**Masculine.**)

11.5 भगिनी (bhaginī) — “sister,” one with a share

Say “brother,” and name the English word it is not a cousin of but literally **is**. (*Bhrātā*; **brother.**) The matching word does not tell the same story.

You'll want to know: भगिनी

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
भगिनी	<i>bhaginī</i>	sister
मम भगिनी	<i>mama bhaginī</i>	my sister

Feminine — marked by the -ई you can hear at the end.

The letters in this word

भ is *bha*. गि is ग *ga* under a short-*i* sign. नी closes it, न under the long-*ī* sign — the same feminine ending you will meet again this book: *bha-gi-nī*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Here the pattern breaks. भगिनी is built on भग (*bhaga*), “a share, good fortune,” plus the feminine suffix -इनी: literally, “one with a share.” Sanskrit’s actual cousin of English **sister** is a different word, स्वस् (*svasṛ*), from the same PIE root as *bhrātā*’s. It is real, attested in the old texts — but it did not become the everyday word. भगिनी did, and भगिनी is what wore down eastward: Bengali *bon* and Gujarati *bahen*, both तद्भव, both built on भग, not स्वस्.

So the honest connection to draw for “sister” is not the one nearest to English. Brother and sister do not travel the same road here — one is the same word worn down; the other took a different word entirely and left the matching one behind.

What you’ve built: four people

Mitram, *kuṭumbam*, *bhrātā*, *bhaginī* — a friend, a family, a brother, a sister. One borrowed into Sanskrit and then borrowed back out; two travelled in lockstep with their English match; one quietly swapped words along the way.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “bhaginī” — sister
- what it is built on — *bhaga* “a share” plus *-inī*
- the word it is NOT built on — *svasṛ*, the real cousin of *sister*

Before you move on

What does भगिनी literally mean? (“**One with a share.**”) What is the actual PIE cousin of English *sister*, and why is it not the word we learned? (स्वस् — attested, but never the living word.) Which two daughter languages descend from भगिनी instead? (**Bengali, Gujarati.**) Name this chapter’s four people. (*Mitram, kuṭumbam, bhrātā, bhaginī.*)

11.6 ए — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: स · ी · ह.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: ए

ए — *e*.

It is an **independent vowel**: the full-size letter a vowel wears when it opens a word and has no consonant to lean on. Inside a word the same vowel is written as a small sign instead.

What it is made of:

- a long left stem joined to the descending tail
- a shorter right stem with an inward hook
- the top shirorekḥā

You already say these, and every one of them has ए somewhere inside it:

- एक द्व त्रि चतुर् पञ्च *eka dva tri catur pañca* — one to five — Old Indo-Aryan ancestors preserved in Sanskrit, and cousins of the English ones
- एक · द्व · त्रि · चतुर् · पञ्च *eka · dva · tri · catur · pañca* — the Sanskrit, Latin, and English number family and the sound laws between them

Writing: ए

- 1. descend the left stem, curve right through the lower shoulder, and sweep down through the tail without lifting
- 2. lift and descend the shorter right stem into its inward hook
- 3. lift and draw the top shirorekḥā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified modern printed teaching form; everyday handwriting may simplify the curves

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Saurmandal, ‘Devanagari ए stroke order.svg’, panels 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 5 August 2023.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ए in it
- एक द्व त्रि चतुर् पञ्च · एक · द्व · त्रि · चतुर् · पञ्च
- *Trace it:* ए three times, saying *e* as you finish each one
 - *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ए once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ए? What sound does it carry? (*e*.) Name one word you already say that contains it.

Chapter 12

The Face, Part One

Modes: 👁 eyes (3) ✍ pen (1) 🗣 Hands-free start: first 2 of 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name an eye, an ear and a mouth in Sanskrit, say why eyes take a dual number, and say which of the three words has a settled Western cousin and which do not.

Say मुखम्, report both scholarly accounts of its origin without choosing between them, and run अक्षि, कर्णः and मुखम् back together against their daughter-language descendants and the neuter gender most of them share.

12.1 अक्षि (akṣi) — “eye,” and the number Sanskrit built for it

Say “sister.” (*Bhaginī*.) The people you would introduce are done. Now for the face you would check on someone with.

You’ll want to know: अक्षि

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
अक्षि	<i>akṣi</i>	eye
अक्षिणी	<i>akṣiṇī</i>	the two eyes

Neuter, like most of this book’s shortest nouns.

The letters in this word

अ opens bare. क्षि is the same क्ष conjunct you sounded out in क्षीरम्, now carrying a short-*i* instead of a long one: *a-kṣi*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

अक्षि is PIE **h3ekw-**, and the descent runs almost as clean as *bhrātā*’s: English **eye**, Latin **oculus** (→ *ocular*, *monocle*), Lithuanian **akis** — one root, barely disguised anywhere. It carries straight into Hindi आँख and Gujarati *āṅkh*, both inherited, not borrowed back the way मित्र was. And eyes are exactly the reason Sanskrit keeps a **dual number** at all — the exactly-two form Chapter 6 built around द्वौ, “two,” rather than an ordinary count word. A single eye is अक्षि; the two you were born with are not a small plural, they are अक्षिणी — grammar built for a body that comes in pairs.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “akṣi” — eye
- its English and Latin selves — eye, oculus
- the dual form for two of them — *akṣiṇī*

Before you move on

Name two English words from the same root as अक्षि. (**Eye**, and, through Latin, **ocular** or **monocle**.) What is the dual form for “two eyes,” and what grammatical number is that? (अक्षिणी; the **dual**, the same category as *dvau*.) And what did you learn just before this? (*Bhaginī*, sister.)

12.2 कर्णः (karṇaḥ) — “ear,” a word without a settled parent

Say “eye,” and its dual form for two of them. (*Akṣi*; **akṣiṇī**.)
The next sense is one Sanskrit itself never traced to its source.

You'll want to know: कर्णः

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
कर्णः	<i>karnah</i>	ear
कर्णौ	<i>karnau</i>	the two ears — dual again

Masculine, unlike अक्षि.

The letters in this word

कर् is *kar*, the *r* you have sounded since संस्कृत. ण is the curled-back retroflex *n*, familiar from गुह्यति. The final ः, a *visarga*, breathes the word out on an echo of its own vowel: *kar-ṇa-h*, the same puff first heard closing नमस्ते.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Where अक्षि (*akṣi*)'s ancestry runs clean back to PIE, कर्णः's does not run anywhere agreed. Proposed roots mean “a defect,” “a point,” “a handle,” and “to hear” — and no single account has won out over the others.

What is certain is where it went. कर्णः wore down through Prakrit **kaṇṇa** into Gujarati *kān* — and changed gender on the way: masculine in Sanskrit, feminine in Gujarati. A word can cross a language boundary and lose the very grammar that first classified it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “karnah” — ear
- the four disputed guesses — a defect, a point, a handle, to hear
- the daughter word and its new gender — *kān*, now feminine

Before you move on

Is कर्णः's root settled or disputed? (**Disputed** — four guesses, no winner.) What ending marks it masculine, and where did you meet that sound before? (-अः, a *visarga*, first heard on नमस्ते.) What gender does the Gujarati descendant *kān* take, and is that the same

as Sanskrit's? (**Feminine — it changed.**)

12.3 ठ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ी · ह · ए.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: ठ

ठ — *ṭha*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *ṭh*, it is **ṭha**.

What it is made of:

- a short top-to-bottom central stem
- a separate counterclockwise closed round body
- the top shirorekḥā

You already say these, and every one of them has ठ somewhere inside it:

- पठति *paṭhati* — he, she, or it reads — reading as reciting aloud, and the two ways a Sanskrit word survives into a modern language

Writing: ठ

- **1.** draw the short central stem top-to-bottom
- **2.** lift at the stem's lower junction and sweep left, then counterclockwise around the closed round body back to the junction without lifting
- **3.** lift and draw the top shirorekḥā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified three-stroke teaching form fitted to the bundled printed outline

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-ठ-order.gif’, strokes 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 10 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ठ in it

पठति

- *Trace it:* ठ three times, saying *ṭha* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ठ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ठ? What sound does it carry? (*ṭha*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

12.4 मुखम् (mukham) — “mouth,” a word two families both claim

Say “ear” and “eye.” (*Karṇah, akṣi*.) One more, and this one’s ancestry is argued over by two whole language families, not just two scholars.

You’ll want to know: मुखम्

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
मुखम्	<i>mukham</i>	mouth , face
सम्मुखम्	<i>sammukham</i>	face to face — सम् “together” plus मुखम्

Neuter, back to the family’s usual ending.

The letters in this word

मु is म under a short-*u* sign. ख is the aspirated *kha* you met in खादति — a *k* with a puff of breath, distinct from plain क. म् closes it: *mu-kha-m*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

मुखम् is genuinely contested territory. One line of scholarship derives it from Dravidian; another argues for an Indo-European source, pointing to its presence in the Rigveda and in Iranian languages. Neither claim has settled the question, and this book takes no side either.

What is not contested is where it lives now. Bengali *mukh* keeps it whole, a तत्सम — while Gujarati holds a worn-down तद्धव doublet, **moḍhū**, alongside its own formal **mukh**. That is the same shape this book already showed with चिन्ता and पठति: one word, two roads into the same daughter language, once carried whole and once worn down by speech. मुखम् closes this chapter neuter, like every noun here but *bhrātā*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “mukham” — mouth, face
- the two disputed families — Dravidian, or Indo-European
- its two Gujarati faces — *mukh*, and worn-down *moḍhū*

Before you move on

Which two language families both claim मुखम्? (**Dravidian, and Indo-European** — unsettled.) Name मुखम्’s two Gujarati descendants and which is तत्सम, which तद्धव. (**mukh, तत्सम; moḍhū, तद्धव.**) Name this chapter’s three words for the face. (*Akṣi, karṇaḥ, mukham.*)

Chapter 13

The Face, Part Two

Modes: 👁 eyes (2) ✍ pen (1) 🗋 Hands-free start: first 1 of 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a nose and a heart in Sanskrit, say which daughter-language nose-word नासिका is a relative of rather than a parent of, and close the chapter's twelve nouns against the cousin words this book has already shown.

Say हृदयम्, name the PIE root it shares with heart, cor and kardia, place हृदयम् beside the same root's other independent inheritances, and run all twelve of this tranche's nouns back together by group and by gender.

13.1 नासिका (nāsikā) — “nose,” kin to two words but parent of neither

Say “mouth.” (*Mukham.*) One more part of the face — and a chance to correct a connection this book has not yet made carefully enough.

You'll want to know: नासिका

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
नासिका	<i>nāsikā</i>	nose
मम नासिका	<i>mama nāsikā</i>	my nose

Feminine, marked by the same -आ you will hear again.

The letters in this word

ना is *nā*, न under the long-*ā* sign. सि is स under a short-*i*. का closes it, क under long-*ā* again: *nā-si-kā*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

नासिका is built on an older word, नासा (*nāsā*), “nose,” plus the diminutive suffix -इका. नासा itself, and the still-older root नस् (*nas*) behind it, go back to PIE **nehas-**, the unbroken root of English **nose** and Latin **nasus** (→ *nasal*).

Here is the correction worth making carefully: नासिका is *not* the ancestor of Bengali *nāk* or Gujarati *nāk*. Both of those wore straight down from नस् itself, through Prakrit **ṇakka**, by adding a completely different suffix. नासिका and नाक share a root, the way ग्रह and English *grab* share one — **relatives, not parent and child**. Reaching for the nearest-looking Sanskrit word is not always reaching for the right ancestor.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*nāsikā*” — nose
- the older word and root beneath it — *nāsā*, *nas*
- the word नासिका is NOT the parent of — *nāk*

Before you move on

What PIE root is नासिका’s family from, and name two of its Western cousins. (**nehas-**; **nose**, **nasus/nasal**.) Is नासिका the ancestor of Bengali *nāk*, or its relative? (**Relative** — both descend from नस्, neither from the other.) What did you learn just before this? (*Mukham*, mouth.)

13.2 ध — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ह · ए · ठ.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: ध

ध — *dha*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *dh*, it is **dha**.

What it is made of:

- an upper spiral ending in a rightward shoulder
- a separate lower bowl
- a top-to-bottom right stem
- the top shirorekhā

You already say these, and every one of them has ध somewhere inside it:

- धन्यवादः *dhanyavādah* — thank you

Writing: ध

- **1.** start at the upper spiral’s inner crossing, curl around the small opening, widen left and down around the outer loop, then sweep right through the shoulder without lifting
- **2.** lift at the left waist and sweep down and around the lower bowl to its right junction
- **3.** lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
- **4.** lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 3. The pen comes up 3 times and no more.

verified four-stroke teaching form; everyday handwriting may join or simplify the loops differently

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-ध-order.gif’, strokes 1–4, Wikimedia Commons, 10 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ध in it

धन्यवादः

- *Trace it:* ध three times, saying *dha* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ध once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ध? What sound does it carry? (*dha*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

13.3 हृदयम् (hṛdayam) — “heart,” a root barely disguised anywhere

Say “nose,” “eye,” and “mouth.” (*Nāsikā, akṣi, mukham*.) One last word, and it names what this whole chapter has been checking on.

You’ll want to know: हृदयम्

Sanskrit	sound	meaning
हृदयम्	<i>hṛdayam</i>	heart
मम हृदयम्	<i>mama hṛdayam</i>	my heart

Neuter — the family this whole chapter keeps returning to.

The letters in this word

हृ is *hṛ*: ह *ha* carrying the vocalic ऋ, the same buzzing vowel you first sounded out in गृह्णाति. द is *da*, य is *ya*, म् closes it neuter: *hṛ-da-ya-m*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

हृदयम् is PIE **kerd-**, and almost nothing about it has changed shape on the way anywhere: English **heart**, Latin **cor**, genitive **cordis** (→ *cordial, courage, accord*), Greek **kardia** (→ *cardiac*) — one root, four languages, all still recognisable. The same root anchors Italian **cuore**, Portuguese **coração**, and Russian *serdtse*, each an independent

inheritance of the identical PIE ancestor rather than a loan from any of the others.

Eastward, Bengali *hriday* keeps हृदयम् whole, a तत्सम; its worn-down twin *hiya* survives only in poetry and song, not everyday speech — the rarer pairing, where the carried-whole word is the common one and the worn-down word is the rare one.

What you’ve built: twelve words, three rooms

Three groups, twelve nouns: what you would ask for (*pānīyam*, *kṣīram*, *annam*), who you would introduce (*mitram*, *kuṭumbam*, *bhrātā*, *bhagini*), and your own face (*akṣi*, *karṇaḥ*, *mukham*, *nāsikā*, *hṛdayam*). Almost every one of them ended in the neuter -म् you first named beside अन्नम् — and almost every one pointed at a word some other language in this project already teaches as its own.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “hṛdayam” — heart
- four cousins across four languages — heart, cor, kardia, cuore
- the Bengali twin kept whole, and the one kept only in poetry — *hriday*, *hiya*

Before you move on

Name three languages, besides English, whose word for heart shares हृदयम्’s root. (Any three of **Latin, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Russian**.) Which Bengali form of “heart” is everyday, and which survives only in poetry? (*hriday*, everyday; *hiya*, poetry.) What gender has run through nearly this entire chapter’s nouns? (**Neuter**.) And what was the very first word of this chapter? (*Pānīyam*, water.)

Chapter 14

Pointing, and Asking

Modes: ⇄ voice (7) ✍ pen (4) ⇄ Hands-free start: first 1 of 11 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can point at something in Sanskrit and ask who or where it is — and I can say what the six words have in common.

Say the near word, the far word and the question word in a row, and name the part that changed.

14.1 एतत् (etat) — this one — the thing near me

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You'll want to know: एतत्

एतत् — *etat* — this one — the thing near me.

Say it, and point while you say it. That is the whole word: it does not mean anything on its own, it means whatever your finger is on.

Its partner is तत् *tat*, which you will meet in a moment. The two of them differ by one sound at the front — **a-** for near — and that is not a coincidence. It is the whole system, and the last lesson of this chapter says so.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “एतत्” three times, pointing at something different each time

- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *etat*? (this one — the thing near me.) What sound does it start with, and does that sound mean near, far, or a question? (**a** — near.)

14.2 ढ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ढ · ढ · ढ.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: ढ

ढ — *ṭa*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *ṭ*, it is **ṭa**.

What it is made of:

- a descending central stem joined to a counterclockwise open round body
- the top shirorekḥā

You already say this word, and ढ is one of the shapes inside it — the rest of its shapes are still ahead of you, so here the character stands on its own:

- *kuṭumbam* — family, household — a word Sanskrit itself borrowed, before other languages borrowed it back

Writing: ढ

- **1.** start at the central stem's headline junction, descend, turn left through the upper shoulder, and sweep counterclockwise around the open round body to its up-right tip without lifting

- **2.** lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 1. The pen comes up 1 times and no more.

verified two-stroke teaching form fitted to the bundled printed outline

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-त-order.gif’, strokes 1–2, Wikimedia Commons, 10 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find त in it

त

- *Trace it:* त three times, saying *ta* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find त once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — त? What sound does it carry? (*ta*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

14.3 तत् (tat) — that one — the thing over there

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You’ll want to know: तत्

तत् — *tat* — that one — the thing over there.

Say it, and point while you say it. That is the whole word: it does not mean anything on its own, it means whatever your finger is on.

Its partner is एतत् *etat*, which you will meet just now. The two of them differ by one sound at the front — **t-** for far — and that is not a coincidence. It is the whole system, and the last lesson of this chapter says so.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “तत्” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *tat*? (that one — the thing over there.) What sound does it start with, and does that sound mean near, far, or a question? (**t** — far.)

14.4 अत्र (atra) — here — where I am

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You’ll want to know: अत्र

अत्र — *atra* — here — where I am.

Say it, and point while you say it. That is the whole word: it does not mean anything on its own, it means whatever your finger is on.

Its partner is तत्र *tatra*, which you will meet in a moment. The two of them differ by one sound at the front — **a-** for near — and that is not a coincidence. It is the whole system, and the last lesson of this chapter says so.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “अत्र” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *atra*? (here — where I am.) What sound does it start with, and does that sound mean near, far, or a question? (**a-** — near.)

14.5 ल — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ठ · ध · ट.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: ल

ल — *la*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *l*, it is **la**.

What it is made of:

- a clockwise open left loop
- an up-right diagonal arm
- a top-to-bottom right stem
- the top shirorekhā

You already say these, and every one of them has ल somewhere inside it:

- लिखति *likhati* — he, she, or it writes — a root that means “scratch,” and the chapter’s four verbs gathered up

Writing: ल

- 1. start at the open lower-left tip, curve up and clockwise around the left loop, and finish at the inner junction
- 2. lift at that junction and sweep the diagonal arm up-right to the right stem
- 3. lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
- 4. lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 3. The pen comes up 3 times and no more.

verified four-stroke teaching form; another animated learner source writes the same parts in a stem-first order

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-ल-order.gif’, strokes 1–4, Wikimedia Commons, 11 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ल in it
लिखति
- *Trace it:* ल three times, saying *la* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ल once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ल? What sound does it carry? (*la.*)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

14.6 तत्र (tatra) — there — where I am not

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You’ll want to know: तत्र

तत्र — *tatra* — there — where I am not.

Say it, and point while you say it. That is the whole word: it does not mean anything on its own, it means whatever your finger is on.

Its partner is अत्र *atra*, which you will meet just now. The two of them differ by one sound at the front — **t-** for far — and that is not a coincidence. It is the whole system, and the last lesson of this chapter says so.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “तत्र” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *tatra*? (there — where I am not.) What sound does it start with, and does that sound mean near, far, or a question? (**t-** — far.)

14.7 कः (kaḥ) — who? — asking about a person

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You'll want to know: कः

कः — *kaḥ* — who? — asking about a person.

Say it, and point while you say it. That is the whole word: it does not mean anything on its own, it means whatever your finger is on.

Its partner is कुत्र *kutra*, which you will meet in a moment. The two of them differ by one sound at the front — **k-** for ask — and that is not a coincidence. It is the whole system, and the last lesson of this chapter says so.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “कः” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *kaḥ*? (who? — asking about a person.) What sound does it start with, and does that sound mean near, far, or a question? (**k-** — ask.)

14.8 ो — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: थ · ट · ल.

Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: ो

ो — *o*.

It is a **vowel sign**. It is not a letter and never stands alone: it attaches to a consonant and **replaces** the *a* built into it. Replaces, not adds — the *a* is gone.

Where it sits: the ā bar on the right plus a stroke above.

Worked through: न + ो = नो — *no*.

You already say these, and every one of them has ो somewhere inside it:

- करोमि *karomi* — I do, I make
- साहाय्यं करोति *sāhāyyam karoti* — he, she, or it helps — a noun plus “does,” and help named as going along with someone

Writing: ो — copy what you see

Put your pen on ो and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed.

This book does not yet tell you **where to start the character or which way to travel**. That is a real thing, taught with real variation from school to school, and it is not written down here until it can be written down with a source. Copying what is in front of you needs no such source, and it is how the shape gets into your hand in the meantime.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ो in it
करोमि · साहाय्यं करोति
- *Trace it:* ो three times, saying *o* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ो once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ो? What vowel does it put on the consonant it attaches to — and what does it take off? (**Puts o on;**

takes the built-in *a* off.) Name one word you already say that contains it.

14.9 कुत्र (kutra) — where? — asking about a place

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You'll want to know: कुत्र

कुत्र — *kutra* — where? — asking about a place.

Say it, and point while you say it. That is the whole word: it does not mean anything on its own, it means whatever your finger is on.

Its partner is कः *kah*, which you will meet just now. The two of them differ by one sound at the front — **k-** for ask — and that is not a coincidence. It is the whole system, and the last lesson of this chapter says so.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “कुत्र” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *kutra*? (where? — asking about a place.) What sound does it start with, and does that sound mean near, far, or a question? (**k-** — ask.)

14.10 a- / t- / k- — six words, one machine

Say the six words from this chapter out loud, in order. Listen to how they begin.

Grammar lens: one slot changes

You did not learn six words. You learned **three beginnings** and reused them.

meaning	word
near	अत्र <i>atra</i>
far	तत्र <i>tatra</i>
question	कुत्र <i>kutra</i>

Sanskrit is where Hindi's k- comes from: अत्र, तत्र, कुत्र.

Change the front, and the meaning walks from **near** to **far** to a **question**. Nothing else in the word moves.

The same three beginnings run the thing-words too: एतत् *etat* and तत् *tat* start exactly like the first two rows. This chapter did not teach you the matching question word for things — that one arrives later, and when it does you will already know what it has to start with.

This is worth more than the six words are. When you meet a new word in this family later, you will not have to be taught all three of it — you will be taught one and work out the others.

Your turn

- *Say it*: the near word, then the far word, then the question word
- *Say it*: them again for place, not for things
- *Notice*: the part that did NOT change

Before you move on

Which beginning means near? (a-) Far? (t-) And which one turns the word into a question? (k-)

14.11 थ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ट · ल · ो.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: थ

थ — *tha*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *th*, it is **tha**.

What it is made of:

- an upper spiral joined continuously to a broad lower bowl
- a top-to-bottom right stem
- the top shirorekha

You already say these, and every one of them has थ somewhere inside it:

- कथम् *katham* — how
- भवान् कथम् अस्ति? *bhavān katham asti?* — how are you?

Writing: थ

1. start at the upper spiral's inner-right tip, curl clockwise around the small opening and outward to the left waist, then continue down and clockwise around the broad lower bowl to the right-stem junction without lifting
2. lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
3. lift and draw the top shirorekha left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified three-stroke teaching form fitted to the bundled printed outline

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, 'Deva-थ-order.gif', strokes 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 10 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find थ in it

कथम् · भवान् कथम् अस्ति?

- *Trace it:* थ three times, saying *tha* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find थ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — थ? What sound does it carry? (*tha*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

Chapter 15

Describing Things

Modes: 🗣️ voice (6) ✍️ pen (4) 🗣️ Hands-free start: first 2 of 10 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can point at something in Sanskrit and ask who or where it is — and I can say what the six words have in common.

Say the near word, the far word and the question word in a row, and name the part that changed.

15.1 महत् (mahat) — big

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You'll want to know: महत्

महत् — *mahat* — big.

Put it in front of a word you already know and you have said something new. That is all an adjective does in this language.

The last lesson of this chapter gives the one rule that governs every adjective you will ever meet here.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “महत्” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *mahat*? (**big**.) Where does it go — before the word it describes, or after? (**Before**.)

15.2 अल्प (alpa) — small

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You'll want to know: अल्प

अल्प — *alpa* — small.

Put it in front of a word you already know and you have said something new. That is all an adjective does in this language.

You met महत् *mahat* a moment ago. Put them side by side and nothing about either one changes.

The last lesson of this chapter gives the one rule that governs every adjective you will ever meet here.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “अल्प” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *alpa*? (**small**.) Where does it go — before the word it describes, or after? (**Before**.)

15.3 ब — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ल · ो · थ.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: ब

ब — *ba*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *b*, it is **ba**.

What it is made of:

- a counterclockwise oval body
- a top-to-bottom right stem
- a down-right inner diagonal
- the top shirorekhā

You already say these, and every one of them has ब somewhere inside it:

- कुटुम्बम् *kuṭumbam* — family, household — a word Sanskrit itself borrowed, before other languages borrowed it back

Writing: ब

- 1. start at the body's upper-right junction and circle counterclockwise around the oval to its lower-right junction
- 2. lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
- 3. lift at the body's upper-left interior and draw the inner diagonal down-right
- 4. lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 3. The pen comes up 3 times and no more.

verified four-stroke teaching form; everyday handwriting may join or simplify the oval differently

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: JackPotte, 'Devanagari b ब.gif', strokes 1–4, Wikimedia Commons, 29 March 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ब in it

कुटुम्बम्

- *Trace it:* ब three times, saying *ba* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ब once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ब? What sound does it carry? (*ba.*)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

15.4 उत्तम (uttama) — good

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You'll want to know: उत्तम

उत्तम — *uttama* — good.

Put it in front of a word you already know and you have said something new. That is all an adjective does in this language.

You met अल्प *alpa* a moment ago. Put them side by side and nothing about either one changes.

The last lesson of this chapter gives the one rule that governs every adjective you will ever meet here.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “उत्तम” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *uttama*? (*good.*) Where does it go — before the word it describes, or after? (*Before.*)

15.5 नव (nava) — new

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You'll want to know: नव

नव — *nava* — new.

Put it in front of a word you already know and you have said something new. That is all an adjective does in this language.

You met उत्तम *uttama* a moment ago. Put them side by side and nothing about either one changes.

The last lesson of this chapter gives the one rule that governs every adjective you will ever meet here.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “नव” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *nava*? (**new.**) Where does it go — before the word it describes, or after? (**Before.**)

15.6 उ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ो · थ · ब.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: उ

उ — *u*.

It is an **independent vowel**: the full-size letter a vowel wears when it opens a word and has no consonant to lean on. Inside a word the same vowel is written as a small sign instead.

What it is made of:

- a joined upper bowl and lower loop
- the top shirorekhā

You already say these, and every one of them has उ somewhere inside it:

- उत्तम *uttama* — good

Writing: उ

- **1.** start at the headline junction, curve down and left around the upper bowl, then sweep back through the waist and around the lower loop without lifting
- **2.** lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 1. The pen comes up 1 times and no more.

verified modern printed teaching form; everyday handwriting may simplify the curves

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Saurmandal, ‘Devanagari उ stroke order.svg’, panels 1–2, Wikimedia Commons, 5 August 2023.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find उ in it

उत्तम

- *Trace it:* उ three times, saying *u* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find उ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — उ? What sound does it carry? (**u.**) Name one word you already say that contains it.

15.7 पुरातन (purātana) — old — of a thing, not of a person

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You'll want to know: पुरातन

पुरातन — *purātana* — old — of a thing, not of a person.

Put it in front of a word you already know and you have said something new. That is all an adjective does in this language.

You met नव *nava* a moment ago. Put them side by side and nothing about either one changes.

The last lesson of this chapter gives the one rule that governs every adjective you will ever meet here.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “पुरातन” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *purātana*? (**old — of a thing, not of a person.**) Where does it go — before the word it describes, or after? (**Before.**)

15.8 before the noun, and it AGREES — five words, one rule

Say the five words from this chapter out loud, then say each one in front of a noun you already know.

Grammar lens: where an adjective goes

You did not learn five separate words. You learned **where an adjective goes**, and five words that go there.

meaning	word
big	महत् <i>mahat</i>
small	अल्प <i>alpa</i>
good	उत्तम <i>uttama</i>

Sanskrit agrees too, and in more ways than Hindi does — this is where Hindi's habit comes from.

This is worth more than the five words are. Every noun you already know — your name, the house, the water, the day — can now take any of them in front, and every adjective you meet from here goes in the same place.

Your turn

- *Say it*: each of the five in front of a noun you already know
- *Say it*: two of them with the same noun, one after the other
- *Notice*: whether the adjective changed shape when the noun did

Before you move on

Where does an adjective go in this language? (**In front of the noun.**) Does it change shape to match the noun? (and it AGREES.)

15.9 ष — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: थ · ब · उ.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: ष

ष — *ṣa*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not ṣ, it is **ṣa**.

What it is made of:

- a U-shaped body drawn from the left side around the lower bowl and up the right side
- a retraced top-to-bottom right stem
- a down-right inner diagonal
- the top shirorekhā

You already say these, and every one of them has ष somewhere inside it:

- क्षीरम् *kṣīram* — milk — an origin scholars still argue over, and the dessert word it left behind
- अक्षि *akṣi* — eye — unbroken from Sanskrit to English, and the reason eyes get their own grammatical number

Writing: ष

1. descend the left side, curve counterclockwise around the lower bowl, and rise along the right side to the headline without lifting
2. lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom, retracing its upper body-side segment before continuing below the bowl
3. lift at the upper-left interior and draw the inner diagonal down-right to the bowl junction
4. lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 3. The pen comes up 3 times and no more.

verified four-stroke teaching form fitted to the bundled printed outline

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-ष-order.gif’, strokes 1–4, Wikimedia Commons, 10 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ष in it

क्षीरम् · अक्षि

- *Trace it:* ष three times, saying *ṣa* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ष once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ष? What sound does it carry? (*ṣa*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

15.10 ौ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ब · उ · ष.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: ौ

ौ — *au*.

It is a **vowel sign**. It is not a letter and never stands alone: it attaches to a consonant and **replaces** the *a* built into it. Replaces, not adds — the *a* is gone.

Where it sits: the ā bar plus a double stroke above.

Worked through: न + ौ = नौ — *nau*.

No word in this book has put ौ in front of you yet, and that is worth saying plainly rather than hiding: this one is here because it is built from two shapes you already know, and because the running text of later chapters uses it.

Writing: ौ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ौ and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed.

This book does not yet tell you **where to start the character or which way to travel**. That is a real thing, taught with real variation from school to school, and it is not written down here until it can be written down with a source. Copying what is in front of you needs no such source, and it is how the shape gets into your hand in the meantime.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ौ in it

ौ
- *Trace it:* ौ three times, saying *au* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ौ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ौ? What vowel does it put on the consonant it attaches to — and what does it take off? (**Puts *au* on; takes the built-in *a* off.**) Name one word you already say that contains it.

Chapter 16

Places — and the Two Noun Families

Modes: ⇌ voice (6) ✍ pen (3) ⇌ Hands-free start: first 2 of 9 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name five places in Sanskrit, put a known adjective in front of any of them, and hear from a noun’s ending whether it is neuter or masculine.

Complete SA-C16-noun-families: sort the chapter’s five places into the -am and -aH families and say a known adjective before each.

16.1 गृहम् (gr̥ham) — house, home

You can describe a thing now — big, small, new, old. This chapter gives you places to put those things.

You’ll want to know: गृहम्

गृहम् (gr̥ham) — “house, home.”

The traditional derivation ties it to the root √ग्रह् (grah), “to seize, to hold.” A house is *the thing that holds you* — the grasp you live inside. That is how Sanskrit’s own grammarians heard the word, and it is worth hearing that way.

You can already stack an adjective in front of it: महत् गृहम्, “a big house”; नव गृहम्, “a new house.” The adjective comes first, as you have already seen it do.

What you've built

This is your first **place**. Everything in this chapter is somewhere you can be, and every one of them takes the adjectives you already own.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *gr̥ham* — “house”
- “a big house” — *mahat gr̥ham*
- “a new house” — *nava gr̥ham*

Before you move on

What root is गृहम् traditionally tied to? (√ग्रह्, “to seize, to hold.”)
Where does the adjective go? (Before the noun.)

16.2 ग्रामः (grāmaḥ) — village

One house is a home. Many of them together are this.

You'll want to know: ग्रामः

ग्रामः (*grāmaḥ*) — “village.”

Its oldest sense is not “village” but “**a collection, a troop**” — a gathering of people considered as one body. The settlement took its name from the group, not the group from the settlement, which tells you how the word's first speakers saw the place: people first, buildings after.

Notice the ending. गृहम् ends in *-am*; ग्रामः ends in *-aḥ*. Sanskrit sorts its nouns into families, and that final syllable is the badge. You do not need the system yet — only the observation that the endings differ, and that the difference is not random.

What you've built

Two places now, and your first glimpse of the noun families — the *-am* ending and the *-aḥ* ending, sitting side by side.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *grāmaḥ* — “village”
- “a big village” — *mahat grāmaḥ*
- the two endings back to back — *gr̥ham, grāmaḥ*

Before you move on

What did ग्रामः mean before it meant “village”? (A collection, a troop.) Which two endings have you now seen? (*-am* and *-aḥ*.)

16.3 ण — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: उ · ष · ी.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: ण

ण — *ṇa*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *ṇ*, it is **ṇa**.

What it is made of:

- a joined left stem, clockwise lower bowl, and inner right stem
- a separate top-to-bottom outer right stem
- the top shirorekḥā

You already say these, and every one of them has ण somewhere inside it:

- कर्णः *karnah* — ear — a word Sanskrit itself never settled the origin of

Writing: ण

- **1.** start at the left stem's headline junction, descend, curve clockwise around the lower bowl, and rise along the inner right stem back to the headline without lifting
- **2.** lift and draw the outer right stem top-to-bottom
- **3.** lift and draw the top shirorekḥā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified three-stroke teaching form fitted to the bundled printed outline

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-ण-order.gif’, strokes 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 10 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ण in it

कर्णः

- *Trace it:* ण three times, saying ṇa as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ण once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ण? What sound does it carry? (ṇa.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

16.4 मार्गः (mārgaḥ) — road, path

Two places, and no way between them. Here is the way.

You'll want to know: मार्गः

मार्गः (*mārgaḥ*) — “road, path, way.”

From the root √मृग् (*mṛg*), “to track, to hunt, to search out.” A road is a **tracking** — the line left by someone who went looking. The same root gives मृगः (*mṛgaḥ*), “deer”: the animal that gets tracked.

So the word does not name a built thing at all. It names the trace of a search, and only later the paved version of it. English keeps that metaphor alive when it speaks of a *line of enquiry*.

What you've built

मार्गः takes the same *-aḥ* ending as ग्रामः. That is the second word in its family, and the pattern is becoming visible rather than asserted.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *mārgaḥ* — “road”
- “the old road” — *purātana mārgaḥ*
- the related animal — *mṛgaḥ*, “deer”

Before you move on

What does √मृग् mean? (To track, to hunt.) What animal shares the root? (मृगः, the deer.) Which ending does मार्गः take? (*-aḥ*.)

16.5 वनम् (vanam) — forest, wood

Follow the road far enough out of the village and you reach this.

You'll want to know: वनम्

वनम् (*vanam*) — “forest, wood, wilderness.”

In the older literature it carries a weight that “forest” does not quite catch: वनम् is where the settled world stops. To go to the वनम् is to leave the ग्रामः behind, and a great deal of Sanskrit narrative turns on somebody doing exactly that.

Its ending is *-am*, so it belongs with गृहम् — which gives the chapter a neat symmetry: the two *-am* words so far are the house you live inside and the wild you do not.

What you've built

Four places, and the two endings now have two words each. That is a pattern you have observed, not one you have been handed.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *vanam* — “forest”
- “a big forest” — *mahat vanam*
- the two *-am* words together — *grham, vanam*

Before you move on

What does वनम् mean beyond “forest”? (Where the settled world stops.) Which other word shares its ending? (गृहम्.)

16.6 ग — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ष · ौ · ण.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: ग

ग — *ga*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *g*, it is **ga**.

What it is made of:

- a counterclockwise left loop joined to an ascending stem

- a top-to-bottom right stem
- the top shirorekḥā

You already say these, and every one of them has ग somewhere inside it:

- स्वागतम् *svāgatam* — welcome (lit. “well come”)
- गृह्णाति *grhṇāti* — he, she, or it takes, seizes — the ninth class again, and the root English grabs with
- भगिनी *bhaginī* — sister — not built on English “sister”’s root at all, but on “one with a share”
- गृहम् *grham* — house, home

Writing: ग

1. start at the loop’s upper-right junction and sweep left over the top, down around the left side, back to the lower-right junction, and continue up the joined stem to the headline
2. lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
3. lift and draw the top shirorekḥā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified three-stroke teaching form; everyday handwriting may join or simplify the body differently

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-ग-order.gif’, strokes 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 9 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ग in it
स्वागतम् · गृह्णाति · भगिनी
- *Trace it:* ग three times, saying *ga* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ग once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ग? What sound does it carry? (*ga.*)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

16.7 नगरम् (nagaram) — city

The last of the five places, and the biggest.

You'll want to know: नगरम्

नगरम् (*nagaram*) — “city, town.”

Its origin is **genuinely unsettled**, and that is worth saying plainly rather than inventing a story. Sanskrit offers no agreed root for it. Some scholars have proposed that it came into the language from outside — one of a handful of everyday words that may record a borrowing from languages spoken in the subcontinent before Sanskrit arrived. Others resist that reading. The honest position is that nobody knows.

Whatever its history, it ends in *-am*, like गृहम् and वनम्.

What you've built

Five places: house, village, road, forest, city. Three take *-am* and two take *-ah*, and the next lesson says what that division actually is.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *nagaram* — “city”
- “a new city” — *nava nagaram*
- all three *-am* words — *grham*, *vanam*, *nagaram*

Before you move on

Why is नगरम् unusual among this chapter's words? (Its origin is unsettled; it may be a borrowing.) Which ending does it take? (*-am.*)

16.8 -अम् · -अः (-am · -aḥ) — the two noun endings, side by side

You have met five places and noticed their endings differ. This lesson names what you noticed.

You'll want to know: -अम् · -अः

Sanskrit sorts its nouns into **genders**, and the ending you have been hearing is the clue:

गृहम्, वनम्, नगरम् end in -अम् — these are **neuter**. ग्रामः, मार्गः end in -अः — these are **masculine**.

This is the same machinery the adjectives used without naming it: they change to match. महत् गृहम् and महान् ग्रामः are one adjective agreeing with two different families.

You do not need to produce that agreement yet. What you need is the ear for it — when you hear -अम् or -अः closing a word, you are hearing which family it belongs to, and Sanskrit will keep using that information for everything that follows.

What you've built

You can now hear a noun's family from its ending, which is the single most useful thing to know about a Sanskrit noun.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the three neuters — *grham, vanam, nagaram*
- the two masculines — *grāmaḥ, mārgaḥ*
- which family a new word ending in *-am* belongs to

Before you move on

Which ending marks the neuter? (-अम्.) Which marks the masculine? (-अः.) What else in the sentence responds to a noun's family? (The adjective.)

16.9 ज — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ौ · ण · ग.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: ज

ज — *ja*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *j*, it is **ja**.

What it is made of:

- an open left hook curling clockwise around the lower bowl and continuing through the middle bar
- a top-to-bottom right stem
- the top shirorekhā

You already say these, and every one of them has ज somewhere inside it:

- जानाति *jānāti* — he, she, or it knows — the root ज्ञा, the class that plants a syllable inside the verb, and the chapter's six roots gathered up

Writing: ज

- **1.** start at the open upper-left tip, sweep down and clockwise around the lower bowl, then rise through the inner shoulder and continue right along the middle bar to the right-stem junction without lifting
- **2.** lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
- **3.** lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified three-stroke teaching form fitted to the bundled printed outline

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-ज-order.gif’, strokes 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 10 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ज in it

जानाति

- *Trace it:* ज three times, saying *ja* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ज once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ज? What sound does it carry? (*ja.*)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

Chapter 17

Time — Day, Night, and When Things Happen

Modes: ⇌ voice (6) ✍ pen (2) ⇌ Hands-free start: first 2 of 8 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name the parts of a day in Sanskrit, say today, yesterday and always, and place a time word in a sentence.

Complete SA-C17-time-words and demonstrate the chapter promise.

17.1 दिनम् (dinam) — day

You have places. Now you need times to put in them.

You'll want to know: दिनम्

दिनम् (*dinam*) — “day.”

It belongs to one of the oldest word-families in the language. The Indo-European root for the bright sky, **dyew-*, gave Sanskrit द्यौः (*dyauh*), the sky itself, and it is the same root standing behind Latin *diēs*, “day,” and the god names *Iuppiter* and *Zeus*. A day, to the people who coined the word, was simply *the bright*.

Its ending is *-am*, so you already know its family without being told: neuter, like गृहम् and वनम्.

What you've built

Your first time word, and it arrived with its family badge already legible. That is what the ending work bought you.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *dinam* — “day”
- “a good day” — *uttama dinam*
- which family it belongs to, from the ending alone

Before you move on

What did the root behind दिनम् originally mean? (The bright sky.)
Which family does it belong to, and how do you know? (Neuter — the *-am* ending.)

17.2 रात्रिः (rātriḥ) — night

The other half of the day.

You'll want to know: रात्रिः

रात्रिः (*rātriḥ*) — “night.”

Where दिनम् is the bright, रात्रिः is its opposite, and the pair is one of the oldest ways any language divides the world. In the hymns it is a name as much as a noun: Rātrī is addressed directly, a presence rather than an absence of light.

The ending here is *-iḥ*, which is neither of the two you have met. Sanskrit has more than two families, and this is your first sight of a third. You do not need it yet — only the honest note that the system is bigger than the part you have seen.

What you've built

Day and night, and a quiet warning: the *-am* / *-aḥ* division you learned is real but not the whole map.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *rātriḥ* — “night”
- the pair together — *dinam, rātriḥ*
- which ending is new to you here

Before you move on

What is रात्रिः in the hymns, beyond a noun? (A presence addressed by name.) What does its ending tell you? (That there are more than two noun families.)

17.3 श — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ण · ग · ज.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: श

श — śa.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not ś, it is śa.

What it is made of:

- a joined upper loop, descending outer curve, lower loop, and diagonal tail
- a top-to-bottom right stem
- the top shirorekḥā

You already say these, and every one of them has श somewhere inside it:

- कुशलम् *kuśalam* — well-being — and the reply “अहं कुशली अस्मि”

- पुनर्दर्शनाय *punardarśanāya* — until we meet again (lit. “for seeing again”)
- श्वः *śvaḥ* — tomorrow — and “see you tomorrow”
- पश्यति *paśyati* — he, she, or it sees — a verb assembled from two different roots, one of which you already met

Writing: श

- 1. start at the upper loop’s lower inner tip, sweep left and clockwise around the upper loop, descend the outer curve, curl around the lower loop, and continue down-right through the diagonal tail without lifting
- 2. lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
- 3. lift and draw the top shirorekḥā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified three-stroke teaching form

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-श-order.gif’, strokes 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 10 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find श in it

कुशलम् · पुनर्दर्शनाय · श्वः

- *Trace it:* श three times, saying *śa* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find श once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — श? What sound does it carry? (*śa*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

17.4 अद्य (adya) — today

Naming the day you are standing in.

You'll want to know: अद्य

अद्य (*adya*) — “today.”

Take it apart and the older shape shows: *a-* (“this”) plus the same *dy-* that sits inside दिनम् and द्यौः. **This day** — said so often that the two halves fused and stopped being separable for ordinary speakers.

This is how a great many everyday words are built, in Sanskrit and elsewhere. English *today* is *to* + *day*, and *tomorrow* is *to* + *morrow*: the same trick, a thousand years later, in a different family.

What you've built

A word you can now see through. When a short everyday word looks unanalysable, it is usually a fused phrase that got worn smooth.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *adya* — “today”
- the two pieces inside it — *a-* and *dy-*
- the English word built the same way (*today*)

Before you move on

What are the two pieces of अद्य? (*A-*, “this,” and the *dy-* of “day.”)
What English word is built the same way? (*Today*.)

17.5 ह्यः (hyaḥ) — yesterday

The day behind you — and a word with relatives you already speak.

You'll want to know: ह्यः

ह्यः (*hyah*) — “yesterday.”

This one is a gift, because its cousins are everywhere. The same ancestral word gave Latin *heri*, which became Spanish *ayer* and French *hier*; and it gave Germanic *gester-*, which is the **yester-** still sitting inside English *yesterday*.

So ह्यः, *heri*, *ayer* and *yester-* are four survivals of one word for “the day before this one,” spoken continuously for as long as any of these languages have existed. Very few words let you see that far back this clearly.

What you've built

A word that is genuinely easier to keep because of what it is related to. When a Sanskrit word has a visible European cousin, learn them as one thing.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *hyah* — “yesterday”
- its Latin cousin — *heri*
- the English word that still carries it (*yesterday*)

Before you move on

Which Latin word is ह्यः related to? (*Heri*.) What English word still carries the same root? (*Yesterday*.) What does the family all mean? (The day before this one.)

17.6 छ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ग · ज · श.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: छ

छ — *cha*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *ch*, it is **cha**.

What it is made of:

- a continuous upper-left loop, lower bowl, outer-right rise, and inner loop
- a short upper stem
- the top shirorekhā

You already say these, and every one of them has छ somewhere inside it:

- गच्छामि *gacchāmi* — I go
- गच्छति *gacchati* — he, she, or it goes — the verb whose present stem you could never guess from its root
- आगच्छति *āgacchati* — he, she, or it comes — the same verb as “goes” with a prefix pointing it homeward
- अवगच्छति · बुध्यते *avagacchati* · *budhyate* — he, she, or it understands — “goes down into” a thing, or wakes up to it

Writing: छ

- **1.** start at the upper loop’s open right tip, sweep counterclockwise around the upper-left loop, continue clockwise around the broad lower bowl, rise along the outer right side, and curl counterclockwise around the inner loop to its down-right tip without lifting
- **2.** lift and draw the short upper stem top-to-bottom
- **3.** lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified three-stroke teaching form fitted to the bundled printed outline

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, ‘Deva-छ-order.gif’, strokes 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 10 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find छ in it

गच्छामि · गच्छति · आगच्छति

- *Trace it:* छ three times, saying *cha* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find छ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — छ? What sound does it carry? (*cha*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

17.7 सदा (sadā) — always

Today, yesterday — and the word for every day there is.

You’ll want to know: सदा

सदा (*sadā*) — “always, ever.”

It carries the sense of *sa-*, “together, whole, the same” — the element behind Sanskrit सम (*sama*), “same, equal,” and behind English **same** itself. Always is the whole of time taken at once.

Where the other four words in this chapter point at one particular time, सदा refuses to. That is what makes it useful with the verbs you already have: सदा पठति, “he reads always.”

What you’ve built

Five time words: two nouns, three that simply attach to a verb and say when.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *sadā* — “always”
- “he always reads” — *sadā paṭhati*
- the English word related to its first piece (*same*)

Before you move on

What does the *sa-* in सदा carry? (Together, whole, the same.)
Which English word shares it? (*Same.*)

17.8 कालशब्दाः (kāla-śabdāḥ) — where a time word stands

You have five time words. This is where they go.

You’ll want to know: कालशब्दाः

Three of this chapter’s words — अद्य, ह्यः, सदा — are not nouns at all. Look for an *-am* or *-aḥ* or *-iḥ* on them and you will not find one. They attach to a sentence, say *when*, and keep the same shape wherever they land.

Sanskrit lets them stand almost anywhere. सदा पठति and पठति सदा both say “he always reads,” and neither is more correct than the other. You have been given a lot of attention to endings, and this is the payoff: they are carrying the work that word order carries in English.

The two that *are* nouns, दिनम् and रात्रिः, behave like any other noun, and take adjectives in front of them the way गृहम् does.

What you’ve built

You can now say when something happens, and you have met the single most important fact about Sanskrit word order: it is loose because the endings are strict.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “he always reads,” both ways round
- “a good day” — *uttama dinam*
- which three of the five never change

Before you move on

Which three words never change their ending? (अद्य, ह्यः, सदा.) Why can Sanskrit move words around freely? (Because the endings carry the grammar, not the order.)

Chapter 18

Asking — Every Question Begins with K

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can ask when, why, how many and from where in Sanskrit, and I can see that every question word is built on one stem.

Complete SA-C18-k-words and demonstrate the chapter promise.

18.1 कदा (kadā) — when?

You can say when. This chapter is for asking when.

You'll want to know: कदा

कदा (kadā) — “when?”

Set it beside the word you just learned and something jumps out:

सदा — always. कदा — when?

One letter apart, and the difference is the whole of this chapter. Sanskrit builds its question words on क् (k-), and it builds several of its answering words on स् (s-) or त् (t-). Ask with k-, answer with t-.

What you've built

Your first k- word met deliberately. There are four more in this chapter, and by the end the pattern will be doing the remembering for you.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *kadā* — “when?”
- it against its answer — *kadā, sadā*
- “when does he read?” — *kadā paṭhati*

Before you move on

What single letter separates कदा from सदा? (*K-* against *s-*.) Which letter opens a Sanskrit question word? (*K-*.)

18.2 किमर्थम् (kimartham) — why?

The hardest question in any language, and Sanskrit builds it out of two words you can almost read.

You’ll want to know: किमर्थम्

किमर्थम् (*kimartham*) — “why?”

It is transparently two pieces:

किम् (“what”) + अर्थम् (“for the purpose of, for the sake of”)

— literally “**for what purpose?**” Sanskrit does not have a single opaque word for *why*; it asks what the aim was, and lets the shape of the question show.

अर्थ (*artha*) is worth keeping on its own. It means purpose, aim, meaning, and wealth all at once, and it is one of the four goals of life in the classical scheme. A word for “why” built on it is asking, quite seriously, *what is this for?*

What you’ve built

A compound you can take apart on sight — and *k-* again at the front, exactly as promised.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *kimartham* — “why?”
- its two pieces — *kim* and *artham*
- what अर्थ means on its own (purpose, aim, meaning, wealth)

Before you move on

What are the two pieces of किमर्थम्? (*Kim*, “what,” and *artham*, “for the purpose of.”) What does अर्थ mean by itself? (Purpose, aim, meaning, wealth.)

18.3 कति (kati) — how many?

You can count to five. This asks how many there are.

You’ll want to know: कति

कति (*kati*) — “how many?”

K- at the front again, and this time the relatives are visible outside Sanskrit too: Latin *quot*, “how many,” is the same word, and it survives in English **quota** and **quotient** — both of them, at root, answers to *how many*.

Pair it with the numbers you already have and it is immediately useful: कति गृहाणि, “how many houses?”

What you’ve built

Three *k-* words now, and one of them has handed you two English words as a souvenir.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *kati* — “how many?”
- its Latin cousin — *quot*
- the two English words built on it (*quota*, *quotient*)

Before you move on

Which Latin word is कति related to? (*Quot.*) Which English words carry it? (*Quota, quotient.*)

18.4 कुतः (kutaḥ) — from where?

You can ask where something is. This asks where it came from.

You'll want to know: कुतः

कुतः (*kutaḥ*) — “from where? whence?”

You already have कुत्र (*kutra*), “where?” Now compare the two endings:

कुत्र — where, at what place. कुतः — from where, out of what place.

The *-tas* ending means “from,” and Sanskrit uses it far beyond question words. English once had this distinction too and has mostly lost it: *where* against *whence*, *there* against *thence*. Sanskrit keeps them working.

What you've built

Four *k-* words, and a distinction English has let go of. When a language keeps a difference yours has dropped, that is worth noticing rather than flattening.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *kutaḥ* — “from where?”
- it against *kutra*, “where?”
- the English pair that used to make the same distinction (*where*, *whence*)

Before you move on

What does the *-tas* ending add? (“From.”) Which English word matches कुतः? (*Whence.*)

18.5 क-शब्दाः (ka-śabdāḥ) — every question begins with k-

Every question word you have met, gathered in one place, so you can see they are one word wearing different endings.

You'll want to know: क-शब्दाः

Line them up:

कः — who? · किम् — what? · कुत्र — where? · कुतः — from where? · कथम् — how? · कदा — when? · कति — how many?

Seven questions, one opening consonant. Sanskrit builds them all on a single interrogative stem क- and distinguishes them entirely by what follows.

The family reaches much further than Sanskrit. That *k-* is the ancestral **k^w-*, which became Latin *qu-* — *quis*, *quid*, *quando*, *quot* — and, by a regular sound change, Germanic *hw-*, which English writes **wh-**: *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *how*.

So कः and *who*, किम् and *what*, कदा and *when* are not lookalikes. They are the same words, separated by five thousand years.

What you've built

You now hold every basic question in Sanskrit, and one fact that makes them nearly impossible to forget: if it opens with क्, it is asking you something.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- all seven, in a row
- the English *wh-* word for each
- what the *k-* became in Latin (*qu-*)

Before you move on

What do all seven share? (An opening क्.) What did that consonant become in Latin, and in English? (*Qu-*, and *wh-*.) Are कः and *who* related? (Yes — the same word, five thousand years apart.)

Chapter 19

Counting On — Six to Ten, and What They Prove

Modes: ⇄ voice (6) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can count to ten in Sanskrit and explain why the numbers are evidence that Sanskrit, Latin and English are related.

Complete SA-C19-number-family and demonstrate the chapter promise.

19.1 षट् (ṣaṭ) — six

You can count to five. The next five are where the family resemblance becomes impossible to miss.

You'll want to know: षट्

षट् (ṣaṭ) — “six.”

Say it beside its relatives: Latin *sex*, Greek *hex*, English *six*. The Sanskrit form looks least like the others on the page, because ṣ is a retroflex sound English has no letter for — but it is the same word.

This chapter is the clearest evidence a beginner can be shown that Sanskrit, Latin and English are relatives rather than neighbours. The numbers are the proof, because numbers are borrowed less often than almost anything else.

What you've built

One number, and a claim you are about to see supported four more times.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *ṣaṭ* — “six”
- its Latin and English cousins — *sex*, *six*
- one to six, in order

Before you move on

What are the Latin and English cousins of षट्? (*Sex* and *six*.) Why are numbers good evidence of relatedness? (They are rarely borrowed.)

19.2 सप्त (sapta) — seven

The second of the five, and the resemblance is now visible without squinting.

You'll want to know: सप्त

सप्त (*sapta*) — “seven.”

Latin *septem*. Greek *hepta*. English *seven*. Line them up and the shape is one shape: *s-p-t* under the vowels, with Greek turning the initial *s* into a rough breathing and English softening the *-pt-* to *-v-*.

The Sanskrit form is not the ancestor of the others — that is a common misunderstanding worth heading off. All four descend from a **shared parent nobody wrote down**. Sanskrit is simply an old, well-recorded cousin.

What you've built

Two numbers, and one correction that matters: Sanskrit is a cousin of Latin and English, not their ancestor.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *sapta* — “seven”
- *septem*, *hepta*, *seven* after it
- whether Sanskrit is the parent of English (it is not — a cousin)

Before you move on

Which consonants survive across all four forms? (*S*, *p*, *t*.) Is Sanskrit the ancestor of Latin and English? (No — a cousin; the parent was never written down.)

19.3 अष्ट (aṣṭa) — eight

Eight — and a word that still shows its seams.

You’ll want to know: अष्ट

अष्ट (*aṣṭa*) — “eight.”

Latin *octo*, Greek *okto*, English *eight* (whose silent *-gh-* is the ghost of a consonant that used to be pronounced).

There is an old and appealing observation about this one: the form behaves like a **dual** — the grammatical number Sanskrit uses for things that come in pairs. Eight would then be “two fours,” counted on two hands with the thumbs left out. It is a hypothesis rather than a settled fact, and it is offered here as one, because a good story is not the same as evidence.

What you’ve built

Three numbers, and a reminder about how to hold an etymology that is attractive but unproven: enjoy it, label it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *aṣṭa* — “eight”

- *octo*, *eight*
- whether the “two fours” story is fact or hypothesis

Before you move on

Which English word is अष्ट related to, and what is its silent *-gh*? (*Eight* — the ghost of a pronounced consonant.) Is the “two fours” reading established? (No — a hypothesis.)

19.4 नवन् (navan) — nine

Nine — and a word you have met before meaning something else entirely.

You’ll want to know: नवन्

नवन् (*navan*) — “nine.” Latin *novem*, English *nine*.

Now the catch, and it is worth meeting deliberately rather than tripping over. You already learned नव (*nava*) meaning “**new**.” They look nearly identical and they are **not** the same word:

नव (*nava*) — new. Latin *novus*, English *new*. नवन् (*navan*) — nine. Latin *novem*, English *nine*.

Two distinct ancient words that drifted into near-identical shapes. Latin kept them apart (*novus* against *novem*) and so did English (*new* against *nine*). Sanskrit did not, quite — and a reader who assumes one word here will misread sentences.

What you’ve built

A pair of look-alikes, separated on purpose. This is the most common way to get a word wrong: assuming that similar shape means shared origin.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *navan* — “nine”
- *nava* — “new”

- which Latin word goes with each (*novem*, *novus*)

Before you move on

What is the difference between नव and नवन्? (New, and nine.) Are they the same word? (No — two ancient words that drifted into similar shapes.)

19.5 दश (daśa) — ten

The last of them, and the one hiding inside words you use every week.

You'll want to know: दश

दश (*daśa*) — “ten.” Latin *decem*, Greek *deka*, English *ten*.

The Latin form is the one that pays. *Decem* gives English **decimal**, **decade**, **December** — which was the *tenth* month before the calendar was rearranged and left the name stranded two months out of place.

So दश, *decem* and *ten* are one word, and a fossil of the old counting survives in the name of the wrong month.

What you've built

You can count to ten in Sanskrit, and every one of the second five arrived attached to a word you already knew.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *daśa* — “ten”
- one to ten, straight through
- why December is misnamed

Before you move on

Which English words carry Latin *decem*? (*Decimal*, *decade*, *December*.) Why is December's name wrong? (It was the tenth)

month before the calendar changed.)

19.6 सङ्ख्याशब्दाः (saṅkhyā-śabdāḥ) — the numbers, and what they prove

Ten numbers is enough to see something no single word could have shown you.

You'll want to know: सङ्ख्याशब्दाः

Set the ten side by side with Latin and English and the correspondence is not occasional — it is regular:

एक one · द्व two · त्रि three · चतुर् four · पञ्च five · षट् six · सप्त seven
· अष्ट eight · नवन् nine · दश ten

Where Sanskrit has *p*, Latin often has *p* and English often has *f*. Where Sanskrit has *d*, English often has *t*. Those are not impressions; they are **regular correspondences**, and their regularity is what turned the study of language into something testable in the nineteenth century.

That is what the numbers prove. Not that these languages borrowed from each other, but that they inherited from something older — and that the inheritance followed rules consistent enough to predict.

What you've built

You can count to ten, and you have seen the single piece of evidence that founded historical linguistics.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- all ten, in order
- the English cousin of each
- what the regularity proves — inheritance, not borrowing

Before you move on

What makes the correspondences evidence rather than coincidence? (They are regular.) What do they show? (Common inheritance from an older language.)

Chapter 20

People — and the Four Noun Endings

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 👁️ eyes (1) 🖱️ Hands-free start: first 1 of 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name five kinds of person in Sanskrit and hear which of the four noun families each one belongs to.

Complete SA-C20-people and demonstrate the chapter promise.

20.1 नरः (naraḥ) — man, person

Places, times, numbers — and nobody in them yet. This chapter supplies the people.

You'll want to know: नरः

नरः (naraḥ) — “man, person, human being.”

It is old enough to sit inside names you may already have heard: *Narasimha*, “man-lion,” and *Nārāyaṇa*. Its Greek cousin is *anēr* (genitive *andros*), the element inside English **android** and the name **Andrew**.

Ending in *-aḥ*, so you already know its family: masculine, like ग्रामः and मार्गः.

What you've built

Your first person, and the ending told you what it was before the lesson did.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *narah* — “man”
- *Say it:* “a good man” — *uttama nah*
- *Say it:* the English word built on its Greek cousin (*android*)
- *Recall:* say *kadā*, then read षट्

Before you move on

Which family does नरः belong to, and how do you know? (Masculine — the *-ah*.) Which English words carry its Greek cousin? (*Android*, *Andrew*.)

20.2 नारी (nārī) — woman

And the ending you have not met yet.

You’ll want to know: नारी

नारी (*nārī*) — “woman.”

Look at it beside नरः and the relationship is visible: the same *nar-*, a different ending. Sanskrit builds a great many feminine nouns with a long *-ई* (*-ī*), and this is your first.

So the map has grown again: *-am* neuter, *-ah* masculine, *-ih* a third family, and now *-ī* feminine. Four endings, four families. You are not being asked to produce them — only to hear them, because everything Sanskrit does with a noun starts here.

What you’ve built

A second person and a fourth ending. The system is bigger than two, exactly as the night lesson warned.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *nārī* — “woman”
- *Say it:* it against *narah*, and name the shared piece
- *Say it:* the four endings you have now met

- *Recall:* read किमर्थम्, then say sapta

Before you move on

What do नरः and नारी share? (The stem *nar-*.) Which ending marks this feminine? (Long *-ī*.)

20.3 बालः (bālaḥ) — child, boy

The youngest person in the chapter.

You'll want to know: बालः

बालः (*bālaḥ*) — “child, boy, a young one.”

It carries a sense wider than English “boy”: *bāla* is anything in its early state, and the word is used of young animals and of the newly-risen sun as readily as of a child. The feminine बाला (*bālā*) is a girl.

Notice that the feminine here is *-ā*, not the *-ī* you just met. Sanskrit has more than one way to make a feminine, which is inconvenient and true.

What you've built

Three people, and an honest complication: the feminine endings are not a single rule.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *bālaḥ* — “child”
- *Say it:* the feminine — *bālā*
- *Say it:* the two different feminine endings you have now seen
- *Recall:* say *kati*, then read अष्ट

Before you move on

What does बाल cover beyond “boy”? (Anything in its early state.) Which two feminine endings have you met? (*-ī* and *-ā*.)

20.4 वृद्धः (vr̥ddhaḥ) — an old person, an elder

The oldest person in the chapter — and a word that is careful in a way English is not.

You'll want to know: वृद्धः

वृद्धः (vr̥ddhaḥ) — “an old person, an elder, one who has grown.”

You already have पुरातन (purātana), which was glossed “old — of a thing, not of a person.” Here is the other half of that pair, and the distinction is the point.

पुरातन is old as in *ancient*: it has existed a long time. वृद्धः is old as in *grown*: from the root √वृध् (vr̥dh), “to grow, increase.” An elder is not a thing that has lasted; an elder is someone who has grown.

English flattens both into “old” and loses the compliment.

What you've built

Four people — and a pair of words that shows why a one-word gloss is sometimes a lie by omission.

Your turn

- *Say it*: vr̥ddhaḥ — “an elder”
- *Say it*: which of purātana and vr̥ddha you would use for a temple
- *Say it*: what √वृध् means (to grow)
- *Recall*: read कुतः, then say navan

Before you move on

What root is वृद्धः built on? (√वृध्, “to grow.”) Which word would you use of an old building? (Purātana.)

20.5 जनः (janaḥ) — people, folk

All of them at once.

You'll want to know: जनः

जनः (*janah*) — “people, folk, a person, a race.”

From the root √जन् (*jan*), “to be born, to beget” — the same root behind *janma*, “birth.” Its Latin cousin is *gens* (“clan, people”) and *genus*, and through them English has **genus**, **gene**, **generate**, **genesis** and **nation** (from *natio*, “a being born”).

So जनः does not mean a crowd. It means *those who were born* — kinship rather than quantity.

What you've built

Five people: man, woman, child, elder, folk — and every one of them arrived with its ending legible and a European cousin attached.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *janah* — “people”
- *Say it:* three English words from its Latin cousin
- *Say it:* all five people, in order
- *Recall:* say *daśa*

Before you move on

What does √जन् mean? (To be born.) Which English words share it? (*Gene*, *genesis*, *generate*, *nation*.)

Chapter 21

More Everyday Verbs

Modes: ⇌ voice (4) ⇌ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say that someone drinks, laughs, stands and remembers in Sanskrit.

Complete SA-C21-remember and say all four verbs in order.

21.1 नृत्यति (nṛtyati) — he, she or it dances

A short run of everyday verbs, one at a time.

You'll want to know: नृत्यति

नृत्यति (nṛtyati) — “he, she or it dances”.

From √नृत् (nṛt), ‘to dance’. It gives nṛtya, the danced half of the classical performing arts, as against nāṭya, the acted half — a distinction Sanskrit draws that English does not.

What you've built

One more everyday action. Three more follow, and each reuses the ones before it.

Your turn

- Say it: nṛtyati
- Say it: it again, to someone standing in a doorway
- Recall: say ṣaṭ, then read सप्त

Before you move on

What does नृत्यति mean? (“he, she or it dances”.) Say it once more.

21.2 हसति (hasati) — he, she or it laughs

Before the new one: what did *nṛtyati* mean?

You’ll want to know: हसति

हसति (*hasati*) — “he, she or it laughs”.

From √हस् (*has*). It is the word inside *hāsyā*, the comic mood in the classical theory of drama — one of the nine *rasas*, so laughter here is a category of art, not only a noise.

What you’ve built

One more everyday action. Three more follow, and each reuses the ones before it.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *hasati*
- *Say it:* it again, to someone standing in a doorway
- *Say it:* it after *nṛtyati*, so the two sit together
- *Recall:* read अष्ट

Before you move on

What does हसति mean? (“he, she or it laughs”.) Say it once more.

21.3 तिष्ठति (tiṣṭhati) — he, she or it stands

Before the new one: what did *hasati* mean?

You'll want to know: तिष्ठति

तिष्ठति (*tiṣṭhati*) — “he, she or it stands”.

From √स्था (*sthā*), ‘to stand’ — the same root as Latin *stare* and English **stand, stable, status**. The *ti-* at the front is reduplication again, exactly as in *nṛtyati*.

What you've built

One more everyday action. Three more follow, and each reuses the ones before it.

Your turn

- *Say it: tiṣṭhati*
- *Say it: it again, to someone standing in a doorway*
- *Say it: it after hasati, so the two sit together*
- *Recall: say navan*

Before you move on

What does तिष्ठति mean? (“he, she or it stands”.) Say it once more.

21.4 स्मरति (smarati) — he, she or it remembers

Before the new one: what did *tiṣṭhati* mean?

You'll want to know: स्मरति

स्मरति (*smarati*) — “he, she or it remembers”.

From √स्मृ (*smṛ*), ‘to remember’. It gives *smṛti*, ‘that which is remembered’ — the name for a whole class of texts, as against *śruti*, ‘that which is heard’. A memory word doing bibliographic work.

What you've built

One more everyday action. That closes the run: four everyday actions, each met on its own.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *smarati*
- *Say it:* it again, to someone standing in a doorway
- *Say it:* it after *tiṣṭhati*, so the two sit together
- *Recall:* read दश

Before you move on

What does स्मरति mean? (“he, she or it remembers”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 22

Verbs of Mind and Motion

Modes: 🔄 voice (4) ✍ pen (1) 🔄 Hands-free start: first 4 of 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say that someone hears, leads, plays and asks in Sanskrit, and name the root behind each.

Complete SA-C22-burn and say all four verbs in order.

22.1 शृणोति (śṛṇoti) — he, she or it hears

A short run of everyday verbs, one at a time.

You'll want to know: शृणोति

शृणोति (śṛṇoti) — “he, she or it hears”.

From √शृ (śru), ‘to hear’ — the same root as Latin *clueo* and Greek *kleos*, ‘fame’, which is what gets heard about you. It gives श्रुति (śruti), ‘that which is heard’: the Vedas, as against स्मृति, ‘that which is remembered’.

What you’ve built

One more everyday action. Three follow, and each reuses the ones before.

Your turn

- *Say it:* śṛṇoti
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Recall:* say *narah*, then read नारी

Before you move on

What does शृणोति mean? (“he, she or it hears”.) Say it once more.

22.2 नयति (nayati) — he, she or it leads

Before the new one: what did *śṛṇoti* mean?

You’ll want to know: नयति

नयति (*nayati*) — “he, she or it leads”.

From √नी (*nī*), ‘to lead’. It is inside *netṛ*, ‘leader’, and *naya*, ‘polity’ — the art of leading people, which Sanskrit treats as a subject with a name.

What you’ve built

One more everyday action. Three follow, and each reuses the ones before.

Your turn

- *Say it: nayati*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: it after śṛṇoti, so the two sit together*
- *Recall: read बालः*

Before you move on

What does नयति mean? (“he, she or it leads”.) Say it once more.

22.3 क्रीडति (krīḍati) — he, she or it plays

Before the new one: what did *nayati* mean?

You'll want to know: क्रीडति

क्रीडति (*krīḍati*) — “he, she or it plays”.

From √क्रीड् (*krīḍ*). The noun *krīḍā* covers a child's game, a sport, and divine play — *līlā*'s plainer cousin — so the word does not separate the trivial from the cosmic.

What you've built

One more everyday action. Three follow, and each reuses the ones before.

Your turn

- *Say it: krīḍati*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: it after nayati, so the two sit together*
- *Recall: say vrddhaḥ*

Before you move on

What does क्रीडति mean? (“he, she or it plays”.) Say it once more.

22.4 दहति (dahati) — he, she or it burns

Before the new one: what did *krīḍati* mean?

You'll want to know: दहति

दहति (*dahati*) — “he, she or it burns”.

From √दह् (*dah*), and its distant English cousin is **day** — by way of a Germanic word for the burning warmth of the sky, not the daylight itself.

What you've built

That closes the run: four more actions, each met on its own.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *dahati*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* it after *krīḍati*, so the two sit together
- *Recall:* read जनः

Before you move on

What does दहति mean? (“he, she or it burns”.) Say it once more.

22.5 ङ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ज · श · छ.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: ङ

ङ — ḍa.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not ḍ, it is **ḍa**.

What it is made of:

- a descending stem joined to an upper-left loop and broad open lower bowl
- the top shirorekhā

You already say these, and every one of them has ङ somewhere inside it:

- क्रीडति *krīḍati* — he, she or it plays

Writing: ङ

- **1.** start at the stem's headline junction, descend, turn left across the upper shoulder, sweep counterclockwise around the upper-left loop, then continue clockwise around the broad lower bowl to its open up-left tip without lifting
- **2.** lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 1. The pen comes up 1 times and no more.

verified two-stroke teaching form fitted to the bundled printed outline

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Opiaterein, 'Deva-ङ-order.gif', strokes 1–2, Wikimedia Commons, 10 May 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ङ in it
क्रीडति
- *Trace it:* ङ three times, saying *ḍa* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ङ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ङ? What sound does it carry? (*ḍa.*)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

Chapter 23

The Four Oldest Kinship Words

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) ✍️ pen (1) 🗣️ Hands-free start: first 4 of 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a father, a mother, a son and a daughter in Sanskrit, and name a cousin of each outside India.

Complete SA-C23-daughter and say all four words in order.

23.1 पिता (pitā) — father

Before the new one: what did *dahati* mean?

You'll want to know: पिता

पिता (pitā) — “father”.

The stem behind it is पितृ (pitṛ-), and its family reaches further than that of any word you have met: Latin *pater*, Greek *patēr*, Gothic *fadar*, Old Irish *athir*, English *father*. The people lesson laid out four noun endings; this is a fifth family, the *-r* stems, and most of Sanskrit's kinship words live in it.

What you've built

The first of the four oldest words in the family. Three follow, and each reuses the ones before.

Your turn

- Say it: pitā
- Say it: it once more, slowly

- *Say it:* it beside *pater* and *father*, and hear the one word underneath
- *Recall:* say *nṛtyati*, then read शृणोति

Before you move on

What does पिता mean? (“father”.) Say it once more.

23.2 माता (mātā) — mother

Before the new one: what did *pitā* mean?

You’ll want to know: माता

माता (*mātā*) — “mother”.

The stem is मातृ (*mātr-*) — the same *-r* family as पिता, and the same long reach: Latin *māter*, Greek *mētēr*, Old English *mōdor*, English *mother*, Russian *mat*. Put the father-word into the dual and Sanskrit gives you *pitarau*, ‘the two parents’, with the mother folded silently inside it.

What you’ve built

Two of the four, and one ending family carrying both.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *mātā*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* it after *pitā*, and name the ending they share
- *Recall:* read हसति, then say *nayati*

Before you move on

What does माता mean? (“mother”.) Say it once more.

23.3 सूनुः (sūnuḥ) — son

Before the new one: what did *mātā* mean?

You'll want to know: सूनुः

सूनुः (*sūnuḥ*) — “son”.

From √सू (*sū*), ‘to bring forth, to give birth’ — so the word means the one who was brought forth. Its cousins are Gothic *sunus*, Old English *sunu*, English *son*, Lithuanian *sunus*, Russian *syn*. Sanskrit’s other son-word, *putraḥ*, is far commoner in the texts and has no such relatives; this quieter one is the inherited word.

What you’ve built

Three of the four, and a root that names a person by what happened to them.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *sūnuḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* it beside *sunus* and *son*, and hear the one word underneath
- *Recall:* say *tiṣṭhati*, then read क्रीडति

Before you move on

What does सूनुः mean? (“son”.) Say it once more.

23.4 दुहिता (*duhitā*) — daughter

Before the new one: what did *sūnuḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: दुहिता

दुहिता (*duhitā*) — “daughter”.

Back to the *-ṛ* family: the stem is दुहितृ (*duhitṛ-*), standing beside पिता and माता. Its cousins are English *daughter*, Greek *thugatēr*, Gothic *dauhtar*, Persian *daxtar*. Indian tradition read it as ‘the one who milks’, from √दुह (*duh*) — a tidy story about a daughter’s work in the house, which comparative linguists do not accept, because the cousins are older than the pun. Keep the story, and keep the fact that it is one.

What you've built

That closes the run: father, mother, son, daughter — the four words the family kept longest.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *duhitā*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all four in order, and name the ending three of them share
- *Recall:* read स्मरति, then say *dahati*

Before you move on

What does दुहिता mean? (“daughter”.) Say it once more.

23.5 ू — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: श · छ · ड.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you'll notice: ू

ू — *ū*.

It is a **vowel sign**. It is not a letter and never stands alone: it attaches to a consonant and **replaces** the *a* built into it. Replaces, not adds — the *a* is gone.

Where it sits: a longer hook below the consonant.

Worked through: न + ू = नू — *nū*.

You already say these, and every one of them has ू somewhere inside it:

- सूनुः *sūnuḥ* — son

Writing: ॠ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ॠ and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed.

This book does not yet tell you **where to start the character or which way to travel**. That is a real thing, taught with real variation from school to school, and it is not written down here until it can be written down with a source. Copying what is in front of you needs no such source, and it is how the shape gets into your hand in the meantime.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ॠ in it

सूतः

- *Trace it:* ॠ three times, saying $\bar{u}$ as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ॠ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ॠ? What vowel does it put on the consonant it attaches to — and what does it take off? (**Puts $\bar{u}$ on; takes the built-in a off.**) Name one word you already say that contains it.

Chapter 24

Things You Ask For

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) ✍️ pen (2) 🗣️ Hands-free start: first 3 of 7 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name five everyday things I might ask someone for in Sanskrit, and say which noun family each one belongs to.

Complete SA-C24-lamp and demonstrate the chapter promise.

24.1 जलम् (jalam) — water (the stuff, not the drink)

Before the new word: what did *duhitā* mean?

You'll want to know: जलम्

जलम् (*jalam*) — “water (the stuff, not the drink)”.

You already have one water-word: पानीयम् (*pānīyam*), which names water by what you do with it — “the thing to be drunk”. जलम् names the stuff. Rain is *jalam*; the river is full of *jalam*; nobody offers you a cup of it in that word.

Sanskrit keeps several words here — *jalam*, *pānīyam*, *udakam*, *āpah* — and a poet chooses between them the way an English poet chooses between water, drink, and the waters. The ending puts जलम् in the neuter family you met with अन्नम् and गृहम्: -अम्.

What you've built

Two words for water now, and a reason to prefer one over the other.

Your turn

- *Say it: *jalam**
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: *pānīyam*, then *jalam*, and say which one you would ask for at a table*
- *Recall: say *śṛṇoti*, then read पिता*

Before you move on

What does जलम् mean? (“water (the stuff, not the drink)”). Say it once more.

24.2 ओदनः (odanaḥ) — cooked rice

Before the new word: what did *jalam* name, and what did *pānīyam* name?

You’ll want to know: ओदनः

ओदनः (*odanaḥ*) — “cooked rice”.

अन्नम् (*annam*) was food in general — “the eaten thing”. ओदनः is narrower and warmer: the grain after it has met the water. Cooked rice, on a plate, now.

The traditional derivation takes it from a root meaning “to wet”, which reads the word as *grain that has been moistened* — a description of cooking rather than of rice. Its ending -अः puts it in the masculine family beside मार्गः and ग्रामः, so ओदनः and अन्नम् sit in different families while naming the same meal.

What you’ve built

A general word for food, and a particular thing on the plate.

Your turn

- *Say it: *odanaḥ**
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*

- *Say it:* *annam*, then *odanaḥ*, and name the ending each one carries
- *Recall:* read नयति, then say *mātā*

Before you move on

What does ओदनः mean? (“cooked rice”.) Say it once more.

24.3 फलम् (phalam) — fruit (and the result of anything)

Before the new word: what did *odanaḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: फलम्

फलम् (*phalam*) — “fruit (and the result of anything)”.

फलम् is the fruit on the tree. It is also, in the same breath and with no metaphor felt, the fruit of an action — the result, the reward, the yield. A Sanskrit sentence about the *phalam* of your work is not reaching for a poetic image; it has one word where English has two.

The root behind it means “to burst, to bear fruit”, which is the fruit split open at the moment it is ripe. Neuter -अम्, like जलम् and अन्नम् before it.

What you’ve built

A word that carries an orchard and a consequence at once.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *phalam*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *phalam*, and then *jalam* and *phalam* together, naming the ending they share
- *Recall:* say *kṛīḍati*, then read सूनुः

Before you move on

What does फलम् mean? (“fruit (and the result of anything)”). Say it once more.

24.4 ओ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: छ · ड · ू.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: ओ

ओ — o.

It is an **independent vowel**: the full-size letter a vowel wears when it opens a word and has no consonant to lean on. Inside a word the same vowel is written as a small sign instead.

What it is made of:

- the joined upper and lower bowls of अ
- a separately swept middle shoulder
- the inner stem
- the trailing stem
- a separate upper arc
- the top shirorekḥā

You already say these, and every one of them has ओ somewhere inside it:

- ओदनः *odanaḥ* — cooked rice

Writing: ओ

- 1. curve right around the upper bowl and continue down and around the lower bowl without lifting
- 2. lift and sweep the middle shoulder right
- 3. lift and descend the inner stem
- 4. lift and descend the trailing stem
- 5. lift at the trailing stem's headline junction and sweep the upper arc upward and left
- 6. lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 5. The pen comes up 5 times and no more.

verified modern printed teaching form; traditional and everyday handwriting may divide or simplify the curves differently

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Saurmandal, 'Devanagari ओ stroke order.svg', panels 1–6, Wikimedia Commons, 5 August 2023.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ओ in it
- ओदनः
- *Trace it:* ओ three times, saying *o* as you finish each one
 - *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ओ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ओ? What sound does it carry? (*o*)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

24.5 वस्त्रम् (vastram) — cloth, a garment

Before the new word: what did *phalam* mean — both of its meanings?

You'll want to know: वस्त्रम्

वस्त्रम् (*vastram*) — “cloth, a garment”.

You know वसामि (*vasāmi*), “I dwell”, from the root *vas*. वस्त्रम् looks like it belongs to that root and does not. Sanskrit has two roots spelled *vas*: one for dwelling, one for wearing. वसामि belongs to the first, वस्त्रम् to the second, and no amount of staring at the letters will separate them — only the meanings do.

The wearing one travelled. Latin *vestis*, and through it English *vest*, *vestment*, *invest* — which originally meant to clothe someone in the robes of an office. Neuter -अम्.

What you've built

A word that warns you: same letters, different root.

Your turn

- *Say it: vastram*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: vasāmi, then vastram, and say which root each one belongs to*
- *Recall: read दहति, then say duhitā*

Before you move on

What does वस्त्रम् mean? (“cloth, a garment”.) Say it once more.

24.6 दीपः (dīpaḥ) — a lamp

Before the last word of this run: what did *vastram* mean, and what did *odanaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: दीपः

दीपः (*dīpaḥ*) — “a lamp”.

दीपः is a lamp — the small clay one with oil and a wick. Its root means “to blaze”, so the word names the burning rather than the vessel.

Put दीप together with a word meaning “a row” and you get *dīpāvalī*, “a row of lamps” — the festival English writes as Diwali. Masculine -अः, like ओदनः.

What you’ve built

Five things you might ask for: water, rice, fruit, cloth, a lamp.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *dīpaḥ*
- it once more, slowly
- all five in order, and sort them into the two noun families

Before you move on

What does दीपः mean? (“a lamp”.) Say it once more.

24.7 फ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ड · ढू · ओ.
Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: फ

फ — *pha*.

It is a **consonant**, and in this script a consonant is never bare: it comes with an *a* already in it. So it is not *ph*, it is **pha**.

What it is made of:

- a left stem joined through the lower bowl to a rising and retraced central stem
- a separate clockwise right arch

- the top shirorekha

You already say these, and every one of them has फ somewhere inside it:

- फलम् *phalam* — fruit

Writing: फ

- **1.** descend the left stem, curve right around the lower bowl, rise along the central side to the headline, then retrace down the central stem without lifting
- **2.** lift at the central junction and sweep clockwise over and down through the open right arch
- **3.** lift and draw the top shirorekha left-to-right

Pen lifts: 2. The pen comes up 2 times and no more.

verified three-stroke teaching form; another learner source stages the components differently

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: JackPotte, ‘Devanagari p^h फ.gif’, strokes 1–3, Wikimedia Commons, 29 March 2009.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find फ in it

फलम्

- *Trace it:* फ three times, saying *pha* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find फ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — फ? What sound does it carry? (*pha.*)
Name one word you already say that contains it.

Chapter 25

The Hand and the Foot

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name five more parts of the body in Sanskrit, and name the sound law that ties three of them to their English cousins.

Complete SA-C25-hair and demonstrate the chapter promise.

25.1 हस्तः (hastah) — hand

Before the new word: what did *dīpaḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: हस्तः

हस्तः (*hastah*) — “hand”.

You have अक्षि, कर्णः, मुखम्, नासिका and हृदयम् (*akṣi, karṇah, mukham, nāsikā, hṛdayam*). हस्तः adds the hand.

Its cousins run west rather than into Europe: Avestan *zasta*, Old Persian *dasta*, and modern Persian *dast*, all “hand”. Latin went its own way with *manus* and shares nothing with this word at all — a reminder that the family tree branches, and that two languages can both be cousins of Sanskrit without being cousins of each other in any given word.

What you’ve built

A sixth part of the body, and a cousin found next door rather than in Rome.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *hastah*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *hastah*, then *akṣi* and *hastah* together
- *Recall:* say *pitā*, then read जलम्

Before you move on

What does हस्तः mean? (“hand.”) Say it once more.

25.2 पादः (pādaḥ) — foot

Before the new word: what did *hastah* mean?

You’ll want to know: पादः

पादः (*pādaḥ*) — “foot”.

पादः is one of the most travelled words in this book. Latin *pēs*, in its other forms *pedem* — whence *pedal*, *pedestrian*, *biped*. Greek *pous*, *podos* — whence *podium*, *tripod*, *octopus*, the eight-foot.

And English *foot*, which looks unlike the rest until you apply the same sound law you met at पिता and *father*: an old *p* becomes *f* in the Germanic branch. *Pādaḥ* and *foot* are the same word, worn differently. Masculine -अः, like हस्तः.

What you’ve built

A word whose cousins you can now predict rather than be told.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *pādaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *pādaḥ*, then *pitā*, and name the sound law both share with their English cousins
- *Recall:* read माता, then say *odanaḥ*

Before you move on

What does पादः mean? (“foot”.) Say it once more.

25.3 शिरः (śiraḥ) — head

Before the new word: what did *pādaḥ* mean, and what did *hastāḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: शिरः

शिरः (*śiraḥ*) — “head”.

शिरः is the head. The old family it belongs to gathered around a sense of “head, horn”: Greek *kara*, “head”, and Latin *cerebrum*, “brain”, sit in it, and so — further out — does English *horn*.

Sanskrit has a second head-word, *mūrdhan*, for the top or the summit of a thing. शिरः is the ordinary one: the head you nod, the head you bow when you say नमस्ते.

What you’ve built

Three of five, and the bow you already knew has a body part in it now.

Your turn

- *Say it:* śiraḥ
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* śiraḥ, then say *namaste* and name what bends
- *Recall:* say *sūnuḥ*, then read फलम्

Before you move on

What does शिरः mean? (“head”.) Say it once more.

25.4 दन्तः (dantaḥ) — tooth

Before the new word: what did *śiraḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: दन्तः

दन्तः (*dantaḥ*) — “tooth”.

दन्तः is a tooth, and its family is as secure as पादः. Latin *dens*, in its other forms *dentem* — whence *dentist*, *dental*, *trident*, the three-tooth. Greek *odous*, *odontos* — whence *mastodon*.

English *tooth* belongs here too, by the same Germanic shift that turned *p* into *f*: an old *d* becomes *t*. So दन्तः, *dens* and *tooth* are three worn copies of one word, and you have now seen the same machinery produce पिता/*father*, पादः/*foot* and दन्तः/*tooth*.

What you've built

A third demonstration of one sound law, on a word you can point at.

Your turn

- Say it: *dantaḥ*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *dantaḥ*, then *pādaḥ*, then *pitā* — three words, one shift
- Recall: read दुहिता, then say *vastram*

Before you move on

What does दन्तः mean? (“tooth”.) Say it once more.

25.5 केशः (*keśaḥ*) — hair (of the head)

Before the last word of this run: what did *dantaḥ* mean, and what did *śiraḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: केशः

केशः (*keśaḥ*) — “hair (of the head)”.

केशः is the hair on the head — the hair that grows out of शिरः.

And here the trail stops. No secure cousin has been found for केशः outside India: scholars have proposed several and settled on none. That is worth meeting on purpose, because the last four lessons made travel look easy.

Some words have a history we can reconstruct in detail; some have one we cannot reconstruct at all. कर्णः, the ear, was the same case. Masculine -अः.

What you've built

Five more parts of the body: hand, foot, head, tooth, hair.

Your turn

- *Say it:* keśaḥ
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, and name the one with no known cousins
- *Recall:* say dīpaḥ

Before you move on

What does केशः mean? (“hair (of the head)”). Say it once more.

Chapter 26

Naming Who Someone Is

Modes: ⇌ voice (5) ⇌ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say what someone’s role is in Sanskrit — teacher, student, king, guest, physician — and name the everyday meaning hiding inside two of those words.

Complete SA-C26-physician and demonstrate the chapter promise.

26.1 गुरुः (guruḥ) — a teacher, and the word for heavy

Before the new word: what did *keśaḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: गुरुः

गुरुः (*guruḥ*) — “a teacher, and the word for heavy”.

गुरुः reached English on its own, so you already say it. What English lost on the way is the ordinary meaning: *guru* first of all means **heavy**. A heavy stone is *guru*; a teacher is *guru* because a teacher has weight.

The heavy-word travelled: Latin *gravis* — whence *grave*, *gravity*, *aggravate* — and Greek *barus*, whence *barometer*, the weight-measurer. So गुरुः, *gravity* and *barometer* all descend from one word for heaviness, and only Sanskrit made a person out of it.

What you’ve built

A word you already knew in English, returned to its first meaning.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *guruḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *guruḥ*, and say both of its meanings
- *Recall:* say *jalām*, then read हस्तः

Before you move on

What does गुरुः mean? (“a teacher, and the word for heavy”.) Say it once more.

26.2 शिष्यः (śiṣyaḥ) — a student, a disciple

Before the new word: what did *guruḥ* mean, and what did it mean before that?

You’ll want to know: शिष्यः

शिष्यः (*śiṣyaḥ*) — “a student, a disciple”.

शिष्यः stands opposite गुरुः. It is built from a root meaning “to instruct”, in a form that means *one who is to be taught* — not a person who studies, but a person who is owed teaching. The obligation points at the teacher.

English arrived at the same idea by another road: *disciple* is from Latin *discere*, “to learn”. Two languages, two independent words, one relationship. Masculine -अः, like गुरुः.

What you’ve built

The pair: the one with weight, and the one who is owed teaching.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *śiṣyaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *guruḥ*, then *śiṣyaḥ*, and say which one is owed something
- *Recall:* read ओदनः, then say *pādaḥ*

Before you move on

What does शिष्यः mean? (“a student, a disciple”.) Say it once more.

26.3 राजा (rājā) — a king

Before the new word: what did *śiṣyaḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: राजा

राजा (*rājā*) — “a king”.

राजा is a king, and it belongs to the same -*र*-shaped family as पिता and माता — the stem is *rājan-*.

Its cousin in Rome is *rēx*, in its other forms *rēgem*: *regal*, *royal*, *regent*, *rex*. In Gaul, chieftains’ names ended in *-rēx* — Vercingetorix. English borrowed *raj* and *maharaja* back from India in the nineteenth century, so the word has now entered English twice, three thousand years apart, by two different doors.

What you’ve built

One word, two arrivals in English, with millennia between them.

Your turn

- *Say it*: *rājā*
- *Say it*: it once more, slowly
- *Say it*: *rājā*, then *pitā*, and name the family both stems share
- *Recall*: say *phalam*, then read शिरः

Before you move on

What does राजा mean? (“a king”.) Say it once more.

26.4 अतिथिः (atithiḥ) — a guest

Before the new word: what did *rājā* mean, and what did *guruḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: अतिथिः

अतिथिः (*atithiḥ*) — “a guest”.

अतिथिः is a guest. Tradition reads the word as *a-tithi*, “one without a date” — the visitor who arrives unannounced, on no appointed day, and must be fed anyway. Linguists prefer a root meaning “to wander” and derive it as “the wanderer”.

Keep the traditional reading; keep also the fact that it is a reading. Either way the famous line अतिथिदेवो भव — “be one to whom the guest is a god” — tells you how much weight the word carries.

What you've built

Four roles, and one of them arrives without warning.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *atithiḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *atithiḥ*, and say what the traditional reading claims
- *Recall:* read वस्त्रम्, then say *dantāḥ*

Before you move on

What does अतिथिः mean? (“a guest”.) Say it once more.

26.5 वैद्यः (vaidyah) — a physician

Before the last word of this run: what did *atithiḥ* mean, and what did *śiṣyaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: वैद्यः

वैद्यः (*vaidyah*) — “a physician”.

वैद्यः is a physician — literally *one who has the knowledge*, built on *vidyā*, knowledge, from a root *vid*, “to know”.

That root is one of the great travellers: Latin *vidēre*, “to see” — *video*, *evident*; Greek *idea*; English *wit*, *wise*, *wisdom*. And Sanskrit already gave

you a second knowing-verb, जानाति, from a different root altogether. Sanskrit keeps two ways of knowing apart, and वैद्यः belongs to the one that also means seeing — the doctor as the one who has looked.

What you've built

Five roles: teacher, student, king, guest, physician.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *vaidyāḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, and name the two that make a pair
- *Recall:* say *dīpāḥ*, then read केशः

Before you move on

What does वैद्यः mean? (“a physician”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 27

Answering With More Than Yes

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) ✍️ pen (1) 🗣️ Hands-free start: first 1 of 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can answer in Sanskrit with more than yes and no, and hear the be-verb sitting inside three of the answers.

Complete SA-C27-thus and demonstrate the chapter promise.

27.1 अस्तु (astu) — so be it, all right

Before the new word: what did *vaidyaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: अस्तु

अस्तु (*astu*) — “so be it, all right”.

You have had आम् and न for yes and no since the first chapter, and they are blunt. अस्तु is the agreeable middle: *let it be so, all right, fine*.

It is not a new word so much as a new face on one you know. अस्ति (*asti*), “is”, was the third person of the root *as*, “to be”. अस्तु is the same verb in the commanding form: **let it be**. Sanskrit answers a request by ordering the world to comply.

What you've built

A reply softer than yes, built out of the be-verb you already had.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *astu*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *asti*, then *astu*, and say what changed between them
- *Recall:* say *hastah*, then read गुरुः

Before you move on

What does अस्तु mean? (“so be it, all right”.) Say it once more.

27.2 ऐ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ू · ओ · ऋ · ॠ. Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: ऐ

ॐ — *ai*.

It is a **vowel sign**. It is not a letter and never stands alone: it attaches to a consonant and **replaces** the *a* built into it. Replaces, not adds — the *a* is gone.

Where it sits: a double stroke above the top bar.

Worked through: न + ऐ = नै — *nai*.

You already say these, and every one of them has ऐ somewhere inside it:

- वैद्यः *vaidyah* — a physician

Writing: ऐ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ऐ and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed.

This book does not yet tell you **where to start the character or which way to travel**. That is a real thing, taught with real variation from school to school, and it is not written down here until it can be written down with a source. Copying what is in front of you needs no such source, and it is how the shape gets into your hand in the meantime.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ै in it
- वैद्यः
- *Trace it:* ै three times, saying *ai* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ै once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ै? What vowel does it put on the consonant it attaches to — and what does it take off? (**Puts *ai* on; takes the built-in *a* off.**) Name one word you already say that contains it.

27.3 साधु (sādhū) — well done, good

Before the new word: what did *astu* mean, and which verb was it built on?

You'll want to know: साधु

साधु (*sādhū*) — “well done, good”.

साधु is what you call out when something has been done well — *good*, *well said*, the Sanskrit *bravo*. An audience says it aloud at a concert.

Its root means “to accomplish, to reach the goal”, so the word praises a thing for having arrived where it was going. The same word, standing on its own as a noun, names a holy man: a *sādhū* is someone who has accomplished. English borrowed that sense and left the everyday one behind, exactly as it did with गुरु.

What you've built

A second borrowed word restored to its ordinary use.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *sādhū*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *sādhū*, then *guruḥ*, and say what English kept of each
- *Recall:* read पादः, then say *śiṣyaḥ*

Before you move on

What does साधु mean? (“well done, good”.) Say it once more.

27.4 अलम् (alam) — enough

Before the new word: what did *sādhū* mean?

You'll want to know: अलम्

अलम् (*alam*) — “enough”.

अलम् is *enough*. Enough food, enough talking, enough of that. It is short, common, and does a lot of work for its size.

Set beside it a small word you have not been given yet and will hear constantly — *alam* can also mean *able, equal to the task*. So the same two syllables cover “that will do” and “that is up to it”, which is roughly the distance English travels between *enough* and *sufficient*. No secure cousin outside India, so this one sits with केश.

What you've built

A one-word answer, and a second word with no travel history.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *alam*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly

- *Say it:* *alam*, then *keśah*, and name what those two have in common
- *Recall:* say *śirah*, then read राजा

Before you move on

What does अलम् mean? (“enough”.) Say it once more.

27.5 सत्यम् (satyam) — true; the truth

Before the new word: what did *alam* mean, and what did *astu* mean?

You’ll want to know: सत्यम्

सत्यम् (*satyam*) — “true; the truth”.

सत्यम् answers a claim: *true*. As a noun it is *the truth*, and it is the word on the national emblem of India — *satyam eva jayate*, “truth alone conquers”.

Look at what it is made of. *Sat-* is the being-form of that same root *as* you met in अस्ति and अस्तु: *what is*. Add an ending and truth is simply **the state of being what is**. English has a cousin, well hidden: *sooth*, as in *soothsayer* — a truth-sayer — and *forsooth*.

What you’ve built

A third word from the be-verb, and truth defined as what is.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *satyam*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *asti*, *astu*, *satyam* — three from one root, in that order
- *Recall:* read दन्तः, then say *atithih*

Before you move on

What does सत्यम् mean? (“true; the truth”.) Say it once more.

27.6 एवम् (evam) — thus, so

Before the last word of this run: what did *satyam* mean, and what did *sādhū* mean?

You'll want to know: एवम्

एवम् (*evam*) — “thus, so”.

एवम् means *thus, so, in this way*. On its own it answers a question: *just so*.

Its real value is that it combines. Put it in front of the first word of this run and you get एवम् अस्तु (*evam astu*) — “so be it”, the whole formula, made of two words you now own separately. That is what a small vocabulary buys: not five answers, but the joins between them.

What you've built

Five replies past yes and no: so be it, well done, enough, true, thus.

Your turn

- *Say it: evam*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: all five in order, then evam astu as one phrase*
- *Recall: say keśah, then read वैद्यः*

Before you move on

What does एवम् mean? (“thus, so”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 28

Taking Your Leave

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) ✍️ pen (1) 🗣️ Hands-free start: first 2 of 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can take my leave in Sanskrit, wish someone a good journey, and take the old farewell apart into the two words that built it.

Complete SA-C28-svasti and demonstrate the chapter promise.

28.1 इदानीम् (idānīm) — now

Before the new word: what did *evam* mean?

You'll want to know: इदानीम्

इदानीम् (idānīm) — “now”.

इदानीम् is *now*. It belongs with सदा, अद्य and ह्यः — always, today, yesterday — and it is the sharpest of them: not this day, this moment.

It is built on the near-pointing stem you met with एतत्, “this one”. The pointing system runs *a-* / *t-* / *k-*, and इदानीम् is the near end of it applied to time rather than to place: *this-time*. गच्छामि इदानीम् — “I am going now” — is a way to take your leave that reuses the verb you learned for exactly that purpose.

What you've built

A time word built out of the pointing system, and a way to leave.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *idānīm*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *idānīm*, then *gacchāmi idānīm* as one phrase
- *Recall:* say *guruḥ*, then read अस्तु

Before you move on

What does इदानीम् mean? (“now”.) Say it once more.

28.2 परश्चः (paraśvaḥ) — the day after tomorrow

Before the new word: what did *idānīm* mean?

You’ll want to know: परश्चः

परश्चः (*paraśvaḥ*) — “the day after tomorrow”.

You have चः (*śvaḥ*), “tomorrow”. परश्चः is *para* + *śvaḥ*: the further tomorrow, the day after it.

English needs four words for this and Sanskrit needs one, because *para* — “beyond, further” — can be bolted onto the front of a time word. The same trick runs backwards from ह्यः, yesterday, to give the day before it. So this is not really a new word to memorise; it is one you can assemble, which is the cheapest kind of vocabulary there is.

What you’ve built

A word you could have built yourself out of two you had.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *paraśvaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *śvaḥ*, then *paraśvaḥ*, and say what *para* contributes
- *Recall:* read शिष्यः, then say *sādhū*

Before you move on

What does परश्च mean? (“the day after tomorrow”.) Say it once more.

28.3 इ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one, the ones you have already met: ओ · फ · ै. Say what each of them does.

One character this time. One only — and you have been saying it for pages without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: इ

इ — *i*.

It is an **independent vowel**: the full-size letter a vowel wears when it opens a word and has no consonant to lean on. Inside a word the same vowel is written as a small sign instead.

What it is made of:

- a descending upright joined to an upper bowl
- a lower bowl and diagonal tail in the same run
- the top shirorekhā

You already say these, and every one of them has इ somewhere inside it:

- इदानीम् *idānīm* — now

Writing: इ

- **1.** descend the upright from the headline, turn left around the upper bowl, sweep right through the waist and around the lower bowl, then finish down-right through the tail without lifting
- **2.** lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 1. The pen comes up 1 times and no more.

verified modern printed teaching form; everyday handwriting may simplify the curves

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Saurmandal, ‘Devanagari इ stroke order.svg’, panels 1–2, Wikimedia Commons, 5 August 2023.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find इ in it

इदानीम्

- *Trace it:* इ three times, saying *i* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find इ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — इ? What sound does it carry? (*i*.) Name one word you already say that contains it.

28.4 यात्रा (yātrā) — a journey

Before the new word: what did *paraśvah* mean, and what did *śvah* mean?

You’ll want to know: यात्रा

यात्रा (yātrā) — “a journey”.

यात्रा is a journey — a going, and by long custom a going somewhere holy. Modern Indian languages kept it whole: a *yatra* is a pilgrimage.

It comes from a root *yā*, “to go”, which is not the root behind गच्छति. Sanskrit keeps several going-verbs apart, and this one leans toward setting out and travelling rather than the plain act of moving. Feminine, ending in -आ, like माता and नारी.

What you’ve built

A second going-root, and a noun made from it.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *yātrā*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *gacchati*, then *yātrā*, and say which one sounds like setting out
- *Recall:* say *rājā*, then read अलम्

Before you move on

What does यात्रा mean? (“a journey”.) Say it once more.

28.5 शुभम् (śubham) — good, auspicious

Before the new word: what did *yātrā* mean?

You’ll want to know: शुभम्

शुभम् (*śubham*) — “good, auspicious”.

You have उत्तम (*uttama*) for good in the sense of best. शुभम् is good in the sense of *auspicious* — bright, lucky, well-omened. Its root means “to shine, to be beautiful”, so the word praises a thing for looking well rather than for being best.

It is a wishing word, and it goes in front of what you wish for. शुभा यात्रा — a good journey. शुभा रात्रिः — a good night. Both halves are already yours.

What you’ve built

A wish you can attach to a journey or to a night.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *śubham*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *śubhā yātrā*, then *śubhā rātriḥ*
- *Recall:* read अतिथिः, then say *satyam*

Before you move on

What does शुभम् mean? (“good, auspicious”.) Say it once more.

28.6 स्वस्ति (svasti) — well-being (may it go well)

Before the last word of this run: what did *śubham* mean, and what did *idānīm* mean?

You’ll want to know: स्वस्ति

स्वस्ति (*svasti*) — “well-being (may it go well)”.

स्वस्ति is the oldest farewell in this book, and you can take it apart with what you already have. *Su-* means “well” — it is the *su-* inside स्वागतम्, “well-come”. *Asti* means “is”. So स्वस्ति is, exactly, **it is well** — said as a wish over someone leaving.

Add the little ending *-ka* and you have *svastika*, “the mark of well-being”, a good-luck sign that was drawn on doorways for thousands of years before the twentieth century took it and made it unusable in the West. The word is not the thing; but the word means what it means.

What you’ve built

Five ways to leave: now, the day after tomorrow, a journey, a good wish, and well-being itself.

Your turn

- *Say it: svasti*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: all five in order, then take svasti apart into its two pieces*
- *Recall: say vaidyah, then read एवम्*

Before you move on

What does स्वस्ति mean? (“well-being (may it go well)”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 29

Courtesy Words

Modes: ⇌ voice (5) ⇌ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can be polite in Sanskrit — please, pardon, a bow, a favour — and say what is inside the thank-you I learned on the first day.

Complete SA-C29-fortunate and demonstrate the chapter promise.

29.1 कृपया (kṛpayā) — please

Before the new word: what did *svasti* mean, and what were its two pieces?

You’ll want to know: कृपया

कृपया (*kṛpayā*) — “please”.

कृपया is *please*, and like most polite words in most languages it is not really a word for “please” at all. It is the noun *kṛpā*, “compassion, kindness”, put into the case that means *by means of*. You are saying **by your kindness**.

English does the same thing and hides it just as well: *please* was once *if it please you*. Two languages, two buried sentences, one small polite noise.

What you’ve built

A polite word with a whole clause folded inside it.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *kṛpayā*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *kṛpayā*, and say what it literally claims
- *Recall:* say *astu*, then read इदानीम्

Before you move on

What does कृपया mean? (“please”.) Say it once more.

29.2 क्षम्यताम् (kṣamyatām) — pardon me; let it be forgiven

Before the new word: what did *kṛpayā* literally claim?

You’ll want to know: क्षम्यताम्

क्षम्यताम् (*kṣamyatām*) — “pardon me; let it be forgiven”.

क्षम्यताम् is the apology. It is longer than *sorry* and it is doing more work: the root means “to be patient, to bear with, to forgive”, and the form is a command addressed to nobody in particular. *Let it be forgiven.*

Notice that Sanskrit has now given you three of these impersonal commands: अस्तु, “let it be”, क्षम्यताम्, “let it be forgiven”, and स्वस्ति, “may it be well”. A polite language often prefers to leave the person out.

What you’ve built

An apology that never names who should do the forgiving.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *kṣamyatām*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *astu*, then *kṣamyatām*, and say what both leave out
- *Recall:* read साधु, then say *paraśvaḥ*

Before you move on

What does क्षम्यताम् mean? (“pardon me; let it be forgiven”.) Say it once more.

29.3 प्रणामः (praṇāmaḥ) — a bow, a respectful salutation

Before the new word: what did *kṣamyatām* mean?

You’ll want to know: प्रणामः

प्रणामः (*praṇāmaḥ*) — “a bow, a respectful salutation”.

प्रणामः is a bow — the act, named as a thing. It is *pra* + *nam*, “to bend forward”.

And you have met that *nam* twice already without being told. नमस्ते is *namas* + *te*, “a bow to you”. नमस्कारः is *namas* + *kāra*, “the making of a bow”. Now प्रणामः the same bending root, a third time, with a prefix. Three of the first words in this book turn out to be one gesture described three ways.

What you’ve built

A root you had used twice, finally named.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *praṇāmaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *namaste*, *namaskāraḥ*, *praṇāmaḥ* — and name what all three share
- *Recall:* say *alam*, then read यात्रा

Before you move on

What does प्रणामः mean? (“a bow, a respectful salutation”.) Say it once more.

29.4 उपकारः (upakārah) — a favour, a good turn

Before the new word: what did *praṇāmaḥ* mean, and which root was inside it?

You'll want to know: उपकारः

उपकारः (*upakārah*) — “a favour, a good turn”.

उपकारः is a favour — something done for someone. Take it apart: *upa*, “near, toward”, plus *kāra*, “a doing”, from the root behind करोमि, “I do”.

So a favour is *a doing-toward*. And you have already seen *kāra* once, in नमस्कारः, “the making of a bow” — the same piece, in a word you have said since the first chapter. Prefixes and pieces are how Sanskrit builds, and by now you can watch it happen.

What you've built

A second word built from the doing-root you already had.

Your turn

- *Say it: upakārah*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: karomi, then namaskārah, then upakārah*
- *Recall: read सत्यम्, then say śubham*

Before you move on

What does उपकारः mean? (“a favour, a good turn”.) Say it once more.

29.5 धन्यः (dhanyah) — fortunate, blessed

Before the last word of this run: what did *upakārah* mean, and what did *kṛpayā* mean?

You'll want to know: धन्यः

धन्यः (*dhanyaḥ*) — “fortunate, blessed”.

धन्यः means *fortunate, blessed, rich in what matters*. It is built on *dhana*, wealth.

And it closes a circle. The very first thank-you in this book was धन्यवादः — and that word is *dhanya* + *vāda*, **a saying of “you are fortunate”**. Sanskrit does not thank you by reporting your gift; it thanks you by calling you lucky. You said the word on the first day and could not see inside it. You can now.

What you've built

Five courtesies, and the first word of this book opened up.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *dhanyaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then take *dhanyavādaḥ* apart into its two pieces
- *Recall:* say *evam*, then read स्वस्ति

Before you move on

What does धन्यः mean? (“fortunate, blessed”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 30

Welcoming a Guest

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name the five steps of a Sanskrit welcome, from the door to the hands that make the greeting.
Complete SA-C30-anjali and demonstrate the chapter promise.

30.1 द्वारम् (dvāram) — a door, a gate

Before the new word: what did *dhanyah* mean, and what was inside *dhanyavādah*?

You'll want to know: द्वारम्

द्वारम् (*dvāram*) — “a door, a gate”.

A guest is met at the द्वारम् — the door, the gate.

This is one of the securest cousins in the book. Latin *foris* and *forēs*, “door” — whence *forum*, the space outside the door, and *foreign*, what is out of doors. Greek *thura*. English *door*, German *Tür*, Russian *dver*. The word for the opening of a house survived every migration intact, which is what you would expect of a word every generation says every day. Indian place names keep it too: *Haridwar* is Hari’s gate.

What you’ve built

A door, and a word that reached every branch of the family.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *dvāram*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *dvāram*, and name two of its cousins outside India
- *Recall:* say *idānīm*, then read कृपया

Before you move on

What does द्वारम् mean? (“a door, a gate”.) Say it once more.

30.2 आसनम् (āsanam) — a seat

Before the new word: what did *dvāram* mean?

You’ll want to know: आसनम्

आसनम् (*āsanam*) — “a seat”.

Having met the guest at the door, you offer an आसनम् — a seat. The root means “to sit”, and the ending makes it the thing you sit on.

English borrowed the word without the furniture: an *āsana* in yoga is a posture, a way of being seated. Both senses live in the one Sanskrit word, and the ordinary one is the older. Neuter -अम्, like द्वारम् before it.

What you’ve built

The second step of a welcome, and a third borrowed word restored.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *āsanam*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *dvāram*, then *āsanam*, in the order a guest meets them
- *Recall:* read परश्च, then say *kṣamyatām*

Before you move on

What does आसनम् mean? (“a seat”.) Say it once more.

30.3 पुष्पम् (puṣpam) — a flower

Before the new word: what did *āsanam* mean, and what did *dvāram* mean?

You’ll want to know: पुष्पम्

पुष्पम् (*puṣpam*) — “a flower”.

पुष्पम् is a flower. Its root means “to bloom, to thrive, to nourish”, so the word names the opening rather than the petals.

You already have फलम्, the fruit, and now the flower that precedes it — and in Sanskrit the pair *puṣpa-phala* travels together as a set phrase, flower-and-fruit, the way English says *bricks and mortar*. Neuter -अम्, like फलम् itself.

What you’ve built

A flower to set beside the fruit you already had.

Your turn

- *Say it: puṣpam*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: puṣpam, then phalam, and say them as one pair*
- *Recall: say yātrā, then read प्रणामः*

Before you move on

What does पुष्पम् mean? (“a flower”.) Say it once more.

30.4 माला (mālā) — a garland

Before the new word: what did *puṣpam* mean?

You'll want to know: माला

माला (*mālā*) — “a garland”.

Threaded, the flowers become a माला — a garland, put over the head of a guest of honour, and also the string of beads counted through in prayer. English borrowed the second sense as *mala*.

Its own history is unsettled: no agreed cousin outside India, like केशः and अलम् before it. Feminine, ending in -आ, like यात्रा and माता.

What you've built

A third word with no proven travels, and a garland made of the last one.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *mālā*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *puṣṣam*, then *mālā*, and name what turns one into the other
- *Recall:* read शुभम्, then say *upakāraḥ*

Before you move on

What does माला mean? (“a garland”.) Say it once more.

30.5 अञ्जलिः (añjaliḥ) — the two hands cupped together

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *mālā* mean, and what did *dvāram* mean?

You'll want to know: अञ्जलिः

अञ्जलिः (*añjaliḥ*) — “the two hands cupped together”.

अञ्जलिः is the two hands brought together, palms cupped — the gesture your hands make when you say नमस्ते.

The root means “to anoint, to smear”, and the cupped hands were first of all a vessel: the shape you make to carry water, or an offering. The gesture

of greeting began as the shape of giving something away. So the welcome closes where the book opened, on the first word you learned, with the hands finally named.

What you've built

Five steps of a welcome — door, seat, flower, garland, and the hands themselves.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *añjaliḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then say *namaste* and name what your hands are doing
- *Recall:* say *svasti*, then read धन्यः

Before you move on

What does अञ्जलिः mean? (“the two hands cupped together”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 31

The Sky and Its Lights

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name five things overhead in Sanskrit — sky, moon, star, wind and snow — and take apart the name of the mountain range built on the last of them.

Complete SA-C31-snow and demonstrate the chapter promise.

31.1 आकाशः (ākāśaḥ) — the sky, open space

Before the new word: what did *añjaliḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: आकाशः

आकाशः (*ākāśaḥ*) — “the sky, open space”.

आकाशः is the openness overhead. It is built on a piece meaning “to shine, to be visible”, with आ in front — so the sky is named as the bright open place where things can be seen at all, rather than as a lid over the world.

This one stayed home. Hindi, Marathi, Bengali and Telugu all keep it as *ākāś* or *ākāśam*, and traders carried it east, where Malay and Indonesian say *angkasa* for the sky to this day. Ends in -अः, like दीपः and हस्तः.

What you’ve built

A new set of words, and the space that everything else in this chapter sits in.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *ākāśaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *añjaliḥ*, then *ākāśaḥ*
- *Recall:* say *kṛpayā*, then read द्वारम्

Before you move on

What does आकाशः mean? (“the sky, open space”.) Say it once more.

31.2 चन्द्रः (candraḥ) — the moon

Before the new word: what did *ākāśaḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: चन्द्रः

चन्द्रः (*candraḥ*) — “the moon”.

Sanskrit names the moon by what it does: the root behind चन्द्रः means “to shine, to glitter”. The moon is simply the shining one.

Latin kept that root in *candere*, “to glow white”, and English is full of its children — *candle*, *candid*, *incandescent*, and the *candidate*, who once wore a bleached white toga to be seen in a crowd. Sanskrit called the moon the glowing thing; Latin called a candle the same thing.

What you’ve built

A second word overhead, and a candle lit from the same root.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *candraḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *ākāśaḥ*, then *candraḥ*
- *Recall:* read क्षम्यताम्, then say *āsanam*

Before you move on

What does चन्द्रः mean? (“the moon”). Say it once more.

31.3 तारा (tārā) — a star

Before the new word: what did *candraḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: तारा

तारा (tārā) — “a star”.

तारा is a star, and it is among the most travelled words in the family. English *star*, German *Stern*, Latin *stella*, Greek *astēr* — behind *astronomy* and *asterisk* and *disaster*, “a bad star” — and Persian *setāre* are all the same word, from a shape like ***ster-**.

Sanskrit dropped the *s-* at the front and kept the rest. Ends in -आ, like माला and यात्रा.

What you’ve built

A third light overhead, and a word that reached every branch of the family.

Your turn

- *Say it:* tārā
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* tārā, and one of its cousins outside India
- *Recall:* say *praṇāmaḥ*, then read पुष्पम्

Before you move on

What does तारा mean? (“a star”). Say it once more.

31.4 वायुः (vāyuḥ) — wind, air

Before the new word: what did *tārā* mean?

You'll want to know: वायुः

वायुः (*vāyuh*) — “wind, air”.

वायुः is the wind, and also the air it is made of. Its root means “to blow”, so the word says what the thing does.

English *wind* is the same word worn down, and so are German *Wind*, Gothic *winds* and Latin *ventus*, which gives *vent* and *ventilate*. Ends in *-uh*, the ending you had on गुरुः.

What you've built

A fourth thing overhead — the one you feel rather than the one you look for.

Your turn

- Say it: *vāyuh*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *candraḥ*, *tārā*, then *vāyuh*
- Recall: read उपकारः, then say *mālā*

Before you move on

What does वायुः mean? (“wind, air”.) Say it once more.

31.5 हिमम् (himam) — snow, frost

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *vāyuh* mean, and what did *ākāśaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: हिमम्

हिमम् (*himam*) — “snow, frost”.

हिमम् is snow, and cold generally: the word covers the frost on a field and the season it belongs to.

Its cousins name the season rather than the snow: Greek *kheimōn* and Latin *hiems*, both “winter”, the second giving English *hibernate*. And the mountains carry it: *Himālaya* is हिमम् joined to *ālaya*, “a dwelling” — the abode of snow. Neuter -अम्, like वस्त्रम्.

What you've built

Five things overhead, and a mountain range whose name you can now take apart.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *himam*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then say what *Himālaya* means
- *Recall:* say *dhanyah*, then read अञ्जलिः

Before you move on

What does हिमम् mean? (“snow, frost”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 32

The Tree and What Grows

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a tree and four things that grow in Sanskrit, and name the two English words that are cousins of grass and of wood.

Complete SA-C32-wood and demonstrate the chapter promise.

32.1 तरुः (taruḥ) — a tree

Before the new word: what did *himam* mean?

You'll want to know: तरुः

तरुः (taruḥ) — “a tree”.

You have had वनम्, a forest, for a long while now. तरुः is one tree standing in it.

Sanskrit keeps several names for a tree — *vrkṣa*, *druma*, and this one — and तरुः is the shortest and the easiest to say. It ends in *-uḥ*, like गुरुः and वायुः, so you already know how it behaves.

What you've built

One tree, picked out of a forest you already know.

Your turn

- Say it: taruḥ

- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *himam*, then *taruḥ*
- *Recall:* say *dvāram*, then read आकाशः

Before you move on

What does तरुः mean? (“a tree”.) Say it once more.

32.2 पत्रम् (patram) — a leaf

Before the new word: what did *taruḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: पत्रम्

पत्रम् (*patram*) — “a leaf”.

पत्रम् is a leaf. It is also a wing, and also a written page — one word for all three, because the root under it means “to fly”. A leaf is the flying thing on a branch; a page is a leaf of another kind.

Greek *pteron*, “wing”, is its cousin, behind *helicopter* and *pterodactyl*; so is Latin *penna*, “feather”, behind *pen* and *pinnate*; and so is English *feather* itself. Neuter -अम्, like वस्त्रम् and आसनम्.

What you’ve built

A leaf, a wing and a page, all carried by one word.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *patram*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *taruḥ*, then *patram*
- *Recall:* read आसनम्, then say *candrah*

Before you move on

What does पत्रम् mean? (“a leaf”.) Say it once more.

32.3 तृणम् (tṛṇam) — grass, a blade of grass

Before the new word: what did *patram* mean?

You'll want to know: तृणम्

तृणम् (tṛṇam) — “grass, a blade of grass”.

तृणम् covers a single blade and a whole field of it. It is the low green stuff a तरुः stands in.

English *thorn* is the same word: Old English *thorn*, Gothic *thaurmus*, from a shape like ***trnus**, “a stiff thing that grows up out of the ground”. Sanskrit kept the mild end of that meaning and Germanic kept the sharp end, which is a common way for one word to become two things.

What you've built

A third growing thing, and the reason grass and a thorn are the same word.

Your turn

- Say it: *tṛṇam*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *patram*, then *tṛṇam*
- Recall: say *puṣpam*, then read तारा

Before you move on

What does तृणम् mean? (“grass, a blade of grass”.) Say it once more.

32.4 लता (latā) — a creeper, a climbing plant

Before the new word: what did *tṛṇam* mean?

You'll want to know: लता

लता (latā) — “a creeper, a climbing plant”.

लता is anything that climbs rather than stands: a vine, a creeper, a trailing branch.

Sanskrit poetry pairs it with तरुः so often that the two almost arrive together — the creeper and the tree it climbs. Unlike most of this chapter it has no European cousin worth naming; it is homegrown, and it went on to become one of the commonest given names in India. Ends in -आ, like तारा.

What you've built

A fourth growing thing, and a name half of India answers to.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *latā*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *taruḥ*, then *latā*, in the order they grow
- *Recall:* read माला, then say *vāyuh*

Before you move on

What does लता mean? (“a creeper, a climbing plant”.) Say it once more.

32.5 दारु (dāru) — wood, timber

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *latā* mean, and what did *taruḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: दारु

दारु (*dāru*) — “wood, timber”.

दारु is the substance a तरुः is made of.

It is one of the securest cousins in this book. English *tree* is it, and so are Gothic *triu*, Greek *drus* “oak”, Welsh *derwen* and Russian *derevo*; through a Celtic word for one who knows the oak comes *druid*. English *true* and *trust* belong to the same family, on the old idea that to be true is to be as firm as a tree. Ends in short -u, like साधु.

What you've built

Five growing things, and the tree standing inside the English word *true*.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *dāru*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then name the English word hiding in *dāru*
- *Recall:* say *añjaliḥ*, then read हिमम्

Before you move on

What does दारु mean? (“wood, timber”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 33

The River and the Road

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a river, a bridge, a mountain, a town and the sea in Sanskrit, and say which of them is a cousin of the Greek word behind *police*.

Complete SA-C33-sea and demonstrate the chapter promise.

33.1 नदी (nadī) — a river

Before the new word: what did *dāru* mean?

You’ll want to know: नदी

नदी (*nadī*) — “a river”.

नदी says what a river does rather than what it is: the root behind it means “to roar, to sound”. A river is the noisy one.

It ends in long *-ī*, like नारी and भगिनी, and it has outlasted almost everything around it — Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Gujarati and Nepali all still say *nadī*, and every river name ending in *-nadī* on an Indian map carries it whole.

What you’ve built

A river, and a word that survived every one of its neighbours.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *nadī*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *dāru*, then *nadī*
- *Recall:* say *ākāśaḥ*, then read तरुः

Before you move on

What does नदी mean? (“a river”.) Say it once more.

33.2 सेतुः (setuḥ) — a bridge, a causeway

Before the new word: what did *nadī* mean?

You’ll want to know: सेतुः

सेतुः (*setuḥ*) — “a bridge, a causeway”.

सेतुः is literally “the binding”, from a root meaning “to bind, to tie”. A bridge is what ties two banks to each other, and Sanskrit names it for the tying rather than for the crossing.

The causeway between India and Lanka is the *Rāma-setu*, and that is this word, unchanged, on a modern map. Ends in *-uḥ*, like तरुः, वायुः and गुरुः.

What you’ve built

A bridge, and a word that means the tying rather than the crossing.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *setuḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *nadī*, then *setuḥ*
- *Recall:* read चन्द्रः, then say *patram*

Before you move on

What does सेतुः mean? (“a bridge, a causeway”.) Say it once more.

33.3 पर्वतः (parvataḥ) — a mountain

Before the new word: what did *setuḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: पर्वतः

पर्वतः (*parvataḥ*) — “a mountain”.

पर्वतः is built on *parvan*, “a knot, a joint” — the same word for the joints of a bamboo cane and for the sections of a long poem. A mountain is the knotted, jointed land, and a range of them is a knotted spine.

Hindi, Marathi and Nepali keep *parvat*. You met one range of them last chapter, in the snow.

What you’ve built

A mountain, named for the knots in it.

Your turn

- *Say it: parvataḥ*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: setuḥ, then parvataḥ*
- *Recall: say tārā, then read तृणम्*

Before you move on

What does पर्वतः mean? (“a mountain”.) Say it once more.

33.4 पुरम् (puram) — a town, a walled town

Before the new word: what did *parvataḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: पुरम्

पुरम् (*puram*) — “a town, a walled town”.

You already have नगरम् for a city. पुरम् is the older word, and it meant a stronghold first: a place with a wall around it.

Its Greek cousin is *polis*, behind *police*, *policy*, *politics* and every *-polis* on a map. Sanskrit's own -पुरम् is on the map just as thickly, worn down to *-pur*: *Jaipur*, *Nagpur*, *Kanpur*, and *Singapore*, which began as *Simihapura*, the lion town. Neuter -अम्.

What you've built

A town, and the reason *police* and *Nagpur* are relatives.

Your turn

- *Say it: puram*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: parvataḥ, then puram*
- *Recall: read वायुः, then say latā*

Before you move on

What does पुरम् mean? (“a town, a walled town”.) Say it once more.

33.5 समुद्रः (samudraḥ) — the sea

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *puram* mean, and what did *nadī* mean?

You'll want to know: समुद्रः

समुद्रः (*samudraḥ*) — “the sea”.

समुद्रः is *sam*, “together”, joined to *udra*, “water”: the sea is the gathering of the waters, which is where a नदी ends up.

That *sam-* at the front is the one inside संस्कृतम्, “put together, made complete”, the name of the language you have been saying since you first said you speak it. And *udra* has cousins everywhere: Greek *hudōr* behind

hydrant and *hydrogen*, English *water*, Russian *voda*, and the *otter*, who is nothing more than the water animal.

What you've built

Five pieces of country, and the place a river finishes.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *samudrah*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then say where a *nadī* ends
- *Recall:* say *himam*, then read दारु

Before you move on

What does समुद्रः mean? (“the sea”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 34

More of the Body

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🖐️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name an arm, a neck, a bone, blood and the body itself in Sanskrit, and name the Latin word for bone that is a cousin of one of them.

Complete SA-C34-body and demonstrate the chapter promise.

34.1 बाहुः (bāhuḥ) — an arm

Before the new word: what did *samudraḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: बाहुः

बाहुः (bāhuḥ) — “an arm”.

You already have हस्तः, the hand. बाहुः is the arm above it.

Its English cousin is *bough* — the arm of a tree, which is exactly the picture Sanskrit had. Greek *pēkhus*, “forearm”, is the same word again, and it named the cubit that measured out temples and ships. Ends in *-uḥ*, like तरुः and सेतुः.

What you've built

A sixth part of the body, and the branch of a tree hiding inside it.

Your turn

- Say it: bāhuḥ

- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *samudraḥ*, then *bāhuḥ*
- *Recall:* say *taruḥ*, then read नदी

Before you move on

What does बाहुः mean? (“an arm”.) Say it once more.

34.2 ग्रीवा (grīvā) — the neck

Before the new word: what did *bāhuḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: ग्रीवा

ग्रीवा (*grīvā*) — “the neck”.

ग्रीवा is the neck, and its family kept the swallowing that the old root began with.

Latin *gula*, “throat”, is a cousin, behind *gullet*; Russian *griva* is a mane, the hair along a neck; and Latin *vorāre*, “to devour”, belongs to the same wide family, giving *devour*, *voracious* and *carnivore*. Ends in -आ, like तारा and लता.

What you’ve built

A neck, and a throat full of English words.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *grīvā*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *bāhuḥ*, then *grīvā*
- *Recall:* read पत्रम्, then say *setuḥ*

Before you move on

What does ग्रीवा mean? (“the neck”.) Say it once more.

34.3 अस्थि (asthi) — a bone

Before the new word: what did *grīvā* mean?

You'll want to know: अस्थि

अस्थि (*asthi*) — “a bone”.

अस्थि is short, neuter and very old — the same shape as *akṣi*, “eye”, which you have already had.

Its cousins line up letter for letter: Latin *os*, *ossis*, behind *osseous* and *ossify*; Greek *osteon*, behind *osteopath*; Avestan *ast*; Hittite *hastai*. Hittite was written down three and a half thousand years ago, which makes this one of the oldest words you can still say out loud.

What you've built

A bone, and one of the oldest words anyone has written down.

Your turn

- *Say it: asthi*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: grīvā, then asthi*
- *Recall: say tṛṇam, then read पर्वतः*

Before you move on

What does अस्थि mean? (“a bone”.) Say it once more.

34.4 रक्तम् (raktam) — blood

Before the new word: what did *asthi* mean?

You'll want to know: रक्तम्

रक्तम् (*raktam*) — “blood”.

रक्तम् began as a description rather than a name: it means “reddened, dyed”, from a root *rañj*, “to colour”. Sanskrit names blood by its colour and lets the colour word do the work.

The same root gives राग (*rāga*), which is a colour, a passion and a mode of music all at once — a thing that has been dyed a particular way. Neuter -अम्, like हिमम्.

What you've built

Blood, named for its colour rather than for what it is.

Your turn

- Say it: *raktam*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *asthi*, then *raktam*
- Recall: read लता, then say *puram*

Before you move on

What does रक्तम् mean? (“blood”). Say it once more.

34.5 देहः (*dehaḥ*) — the body

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *raktam* mean, and what did *bāhuh* mean?

You'll want to know: देहः

देहः (*dehaḥ*) — “the body”.

देहः is the whole of it — the thing the other four belong to. Its root means “to knead, to shape, to plaster”, so a body is a moulded thing, formed the way clay is formed.

English *dough* is the plain cousin. Latin *ingere*, “to shape”, gives *figure*, *fiction* and *effigy*. And an Old Persian relative, a wall of kneaded clay, sits inside *paradise*: *pairi-daēza*, a walled garden.

What you've built

Ten parts of the body between this chapter and the earlier one, and a single word for all of them.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *dehaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then say what *paradise* was built out of
- *Recall:* say *dāru*, then read समुद्रः

Before you move on

What does देहः mean? (“the body”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 35

In the House

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗋️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name five things in a house in Sanskrit, and say which one of them came into the language from Persian.

Complete SA-C35-bed and demonstrate the chapter promise.

35.1 दुग्धम् (dugdham) — milk

Before the new word: what did *dehaḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: दुग्धम्

दुग्धम् (*dugdham*) — “milk”.

Sanskrit has two words for milk. You met *kṣīram* early on; दुग्धम् is the other one, and it is the one the modern languages kept.

It comes from *duh*, “to milk”, so दुग्धम् is “the milked thing” — the action first, the drink second. Hindi and Gujarati say *dūdh*, Punjabi *duddh*, and you can hear the whole word still inside them. Neuter -अम्.

What you’ve built

The second word for milk, and the one you would be handed today.

Your turn

- Say it: *dugdham*

- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *dehaḥ*, then *dugdham*
- *Recall:* say *nadī*, then read बाहुः

Before you move on

What does दुग्धम् mean? (“milk”.) Say it once more.

35.2 मधु (madhu) — honey

Before the new word: what did *dugdham* mean?

You’ll want to know: मधु

मधु (*madhu*) — “honey”.

मधु is honey, and sweetness in general.

Almost nothing in this book has cousins this far-flung. English *mead* is the same word; Greek *methu* is wine, and *amethyst* — *a-methustos*, “not drunk” — is the stone that was thought to keep you sober; Lithuanian *medus* and Old Irish *mid* are honey and mead again. Even Chinese *mì*, “honey”, was borrowed from an early Indo-European neighbour. Ends in short *-u*, like साधु and दारु.

What you’ve built

Honey, and a word that reached from Ireland to China.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *madhu*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *dugdham*, then *madhu*
- *Recall:* read सेतुः, then say *grīvā*

Before you move on

What does मधु mean? (“honey”.) Say it once more.

35.3 लवणम् (lavaṇam) — salt

Before the new word: what did *madhu* mean?

You'll want to know: लवणम्

लवणम् (*lavaṇam*) — “salt”.

लवणम् is salt, and salty as a taste.

Here Sanskrit went its own way: Latin *sal* and English *salt* come from a different old word altogether, and लवणम् has no cousin among them. It stayed at home instead — *lavaṇa* still names the salty one among the six tastes of Indian cooking, while everyday Hindi took *namak* from Persian for the thing in the jar. Neuter -अम्.

What you've built

Salt, and a word with no European relatives at all.

Your turn

- *Say it: lavaṇam*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: madhu, then lavaṇam*
- *Recall: say parvataḥ, then read अस्थि*

Before you move on

What does लवणम् mean? (“salt”.) Say it once more.

35.4 पुस्तकम् (pustakam) — a book

Before the new word: what did *lavaṇam* mean?

You'll want to know: पुस्तकम्

पुस्तकम् (*pustakam*) — “a book”.

पुस्तकम् is a traveller. It came into Sanskrit from Persian *post*, “hide, skin” — what a book was written on before paper — and then India handed it back out again.

Hindi *pustak*, Bengali *pustak*, Kannada *pustaka*, Telugu *pustakam* and Tamil *puttakam* are all this word. Most of what you have learned here was inherited; this one was borrowed, and you can tell, because its relatives live outside the language rather than inside it.

What you've built

A book, and the one borrowed word in the chapter.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *pustakam*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *lavaṇam*, then *pustakam*
- *Recall:* read पुस्तम्, then say *raktam*

Before you move on

What does पुस्तकम् mean? (“a book”.) Say it once more.

35.5 शय्या (śayyā) — a bed

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *pustakam* mean, and what did *dugdham* mean?

You'll want to know: शय्या

शय्या (*śayyā*) — “a bed”.

शय्या comes from *śī*, “to lie down”, so a bed is simply the lying-down place.

Its cousins settle rather than sleep: Greek *keitai*, “he lies”; Latin *civis*, a citizen — one who lies down in a place instead of moving on — behind *city*, *civil* and *civilian*; and English *home*, and *hide*, once a measure of land a single family could settle. A bed and a city turn out to be one idea at two sizes. Ends in -आ, like लता.

What you've built

Five things in a house, and a bed with a city inside it.

Your turn

- *Say it:* śayyā
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then say which one came in from Persian
- *Recall:* say *samudraḥ*, then read देहः

Before you move on

What does शय्या mean? (“a bed”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 36

More Short Replies

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say also, all, likewise, slowly and rightly in Sanskrit, and use any of the five on its own as a reply.

Complete SA-C36-rightly and demonstrate the chapter promise.

36.1 अपि (api) — also, too

Before the new word: what did *śayyā* mean?

You'll want to know: अपि

अपि (*api*) — “also, too”.

अपि adds what you have just said to what came before. Put it after a word and you have piled that word on top: *dugdham api*, “milk as well”.

Greek *epi-* is the same small word, and it fronts *epidemic*, *epilogue*, *epicentre* and *epitaph*. Latin *ob* is a cousin too. It is short, it never changes shape, and it does a great deal of work.

What you've built

A small word that adds one thing to another.

Your turn

- Say it: *api*
- Say it: it once more, slowly

- *Say it:* śayyā, then *dugdham api*
- *Recall:* say *bāhuḥ*, then read दुग्धम्

Before you move on

What does अपि mean? (“also, too”.) Say it once more.

36.2 सर्वम् (sarvam) — all, the whole of it

Before the new word: what did *api* mean?

You’ll want to know: सर्वम्

सर्वम् (*sarvam*) — “all, the whole of it”.

सर्वम् answers “how much?” with “all of it”, and it can stand alone as that answer.

Its cousins lean on *whole* rather than on *every*: Greek *holos*, behind *holistic* and *catholic*; Latin *sollus*, “entire”, and *salvus*, “safe and whole”, behind *save*, *salvage* and *salute*. सर्वम्, *holistic* and *salvage* all start from one idea — nothing missing.

What you’ve built

A reply that says nothing has been left out.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *sarvam*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *api*, then *sarvam*
- *Recall:* read ग्रीवा, then say *madhu*

Before you move on

What does सर्वम् mean? (“all, the whole of it”.) Say it once more.

36.3 तथा (tathā) — so, in that way, likewise

Before the new word: what did *sarvam* mean?

You'll want to know: तथा

तथा (*tathā*) — “so, in that way, likewise”.

कथम्, which you have had for a long time, asks “how?”. तथा answers it: “that way”.

The *t-* at the front is the one you met on तत् and तत्र, and it does the same job here — it points back at what has just been said. On its own, as a reply, तथा means “just so”, and doubled it agrees warmly: *tathā tathā*.

What you've built

The answer that matches a question you have had since early on.

Your turn

- Say it: *tathā*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *katham*, then *tathā*, as question and answer
- Recall: say *asthi*, then read लवणम्

Before you move on

What does तथा mean? (“so, in that way, likewise”.) Say it once more.

36.4 मन्दम् (mandam) — slowly, gently

Before the new word: what did *tathā* mean?

You'll want to know: मन्दम्

मन्दम् (*mandam*) — “slowly, gently”.

मन्दम् asks for less speed. Doubled — *mandam mandam* — it means “slowly now, slowly”, which is how it is most often said.

This is the word you want when somebody is talking faster than you can follow, and it goes well with कृपया: *krpayā mandam*, “slowly, please”. Said kindly, it repairs a conversation instead of stopping it.

What you’ve built

The repair word for a conversation moving too fast.

Your turn

- Say it: *mandam*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *krpayā mandam*, said kindly
- Recall: read रक्तम्, then say *pustakam*

Before you move on

What does मन्दम् mean? (“slowly, gently”.) Say it once more.

36.5 सम्यक् (samyak) — rightly, properly, exactly so

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *mandam* mean, and what did *api* mean?

You’ll want to know: सम्यक्

सम्यक् (*samyak*) — “rightly, properly, exactly so”.

सम्यक् confirms that a thing has been done right.

It is *sam*, “together” — the *sam*- inside समुद्रः and संस्कृतम् — joined to a piece meaning “turned, directed”: turned the right way, all of a piece. Beside साधु it is the cooler of the two. साधु praises the person; सम्यक् confirms the thing.

What you’ve built

Five short replies, and the difference between praising and confirming.

Your turn

- *Say it: samyak*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *sādhū* and *samyak* one after the other
- *Recall:* say *dehaḥ*, then read शय्या

Before you move on

What does सम्यक् mean? (“rightly, properly, exactly so”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 37

More Courtesy

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can wish someone peace, speak respectfully, call a host gracious, congratulate a friend and give a blessing in Sanskrit.

Complete SA-C37-blessing and demonstrate the chapter promise.

37.1 शान्तिः (śāntiḥ) — peace, stillness

Before the new word: what did *samyak* mean?

You'll want to know: शान्तिः

शान्तिः (śāntiḥ) — “peace, stillness”.

शान्तिः is peace of a particular kind: not the absence of war so much as the settling of something that had been disturbed. It comes from śam, “to grow calm, to come to rest”.

A great many Sanskrit texts close on it, said three times over, once for each of the troubles a person can meet. You already have स्वस्ति for a wish of wellbeing; शान्तिः is the quieter one, and the one you would say last.

What you've built

A word for peace, and the way Sanskrit texts stop.

Your turn

- *Say it: śāntiḥ*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: samyak, then śāntiḥ*
- *Recall: say dugdham, then read अपि*

Before you move on

What does शान्तिः mean? (“peace, stillness”.) Say it once more.

37.2 सादरम् (sādaram) — respectfully, with respect

Before the new word: what did śāntiḥ mean?

You’ll want to know: सादरम्

सादरम् (sādaram) — “respectfully, with respect”.

सादरम् is *sa-*, “with”, joined to *ādara*, “regard, esteem” — so, “with regard”.

It goes at the front of a request, where English would put its politeness at the end of a letter. Set beside कृपया it makes a request about as courteous as Sanskrit gets: *sādaram kṛpayā*.

What you’ve built

A politeness that goes at the front rather than the end.

Your turn

- *Say it: sādaram*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: śāntiḥ, then sādaram kṛpayā*
- *Recall: read मधु, then say sarvam*

Before you move on

What does सादरम् mean? (“respectfully, with respect”.) Say it once more.

37.3 प्रसन्नः (prasannah) — pleased, gracious, clear

Before the new word: what did *sādaram* mean?

You’ll want to know: प्रसन्नः

प्रसन्नः (*prasannah*) — “pleased, gracious, clear”.

प्रसन्नः describes a face that has cleared. The one word covers still water, a settled mind and a kindly host, because it is *pra-*, “forth”, with *sad*, “to settle”: what was cloudy has dropped its silt.

To say that a guest left you प्रसन्नः is to say they left you at ease. The offering handed back from a temple, *prasāda*, is this same word — grace, given a physical form.

What you’ve built

A word for water, a mind and a host, all at once.

Your turn

- Say it: *prasannah*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *sādaram*, then *prasannah*
- Recall: say *lavaṇam*, then read तथा

Before you move on

What does प्रसन्नः mean? (“pleased, gracious, clear”.) Say it once more.

37.4 अभिनन्दनम् (abhinandanam) — congratulation, a greeting of delight

Before the new word: what did *prasannah* mean?

You'll want to know: अभिनन्दनम्

अभिनन्दनम् (*abhinandanam*) — “congratulation, a greeting of delight”.

अभिनन्दनम् is what you offer when something has gone well for somebody else. It is *abhi*, “towards”, with *nand*, “to rejoice” — gladness turned towards another person rather than kept.

That *nand* is the piece inside आनन्दः, the joy you met near the beginning of this book. The two words are the same delight, one held and one given away. Neuter -अम्.

What you've built

Joy from the beginning of this book, turned outwards towards somebody else.

Your turn

- *Say it: abhinandanam*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: ānandaḥ, then abhinandanam*
- *Recall: read पुस्तकम्, then say mandam*

Before you move on

What does अभिनन्दनम् mean? (“congratulation, a greeting of delight”.) Say it once more.

37.5 आशीर्वादः (āśīrvādaḥ) — a blessing

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *abhinandanam* mean, and what did *śāntiḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: आशीर्वादः

आशीर्वादः (*āśīrvādaḥ*) — “a blessing”.

आशीर्वादः is a blessing spoken aloud: *āśīs*, “a wish, a prayer”, joined to *vāda*, “a speaking”.

That second piece is the one inside धन्यवादः, the thanks you learned on your very first page — thanks is a speaking too. An elder gives आशीर्वादः;

you answer with धन्यवादः; and the two are built the same way, out of a wish and a word for saying it.

What you've built

Five courtesies, and the piece shared by a blessing and a thanks.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *āśīrvādaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *āśīrvādaḥ* and *dhanyavādaḥ* together
- *Recall:* say *śayyā*, then read सम्यक्

Before you move on

What does आशीर्वादः mean? (“a blessing”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 38

Fire and Stone

Modes: ⇌ voice (5) ⇌ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name fire, ash, a stone, sand and soil in Sanskrit.

Complete SA-C38-soil and demonstrate the chapter promise.

38.1 अग्निः (agniḥ) — fire

Before the new word: what did *āśīrvādaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: अग्निः

अग्निः (*agniḥ*) — “fire”.

अग्निः is fire itself — the flame on a hearth, and the fire an offering is poured into.

You have had the doing-word for a while: दहति, “burns”. अग्निः is the thing that does it.

Latin *ignis* is the very same word, and English carries it in *ignite* and *igneous*; Russian *ogon'* is another of its brothers. It went west almost unchanged, and in Sanskrit it stands as the first word of the oldest hymn there is.

What you've built

Fire, named as a thing rather than as an action.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *agniḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *āśīrvādaḥ*, then *agniḥ*
- *Recall:* say *api*, then read शान्तिः

Before you move on

What does अग्निः mean? (“fire”.) Say it once more.

38.2 भस्म (bhasma) — ash

Before the new word: what did *agniḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: भस्म

भस्म (*bhasma*) — “ash”.

भस्म is what अग्निः leaves behind — ash, and the grey line of it drawn across a forehead.

It stands on *bhas*, “to chew, to grind small”, so ash is the ground-down thing: what is left when fire has finished eating.

Hindi and Marathi keep *bhasm* with the meaning untouched.

What you’ve built

Fire, and what fire leaves.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *bhasma*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *agniḥ*, then *bhasma*
- *Recall:* read सर्वम्, then say *sādaram*

Before you move on

What does भस्म mean? (“ash”.) Say it once more.

38.3 शिला (śilā) — a stone, a slab of rock

Before the new word: what did *bhasma* mean?

You’ll want to know: शिला

शिला (śilā) — “a stone, a slab of rock”.

शिला is a stone large enough to sit on: a slab, a flat rock, the piece a step is cut from.

Beside पर्वतः, which is the whole raised land, शिला is one piece of it you can put a hand on.

Its history outside India is unsettled — nobody has agreed a cousin for it, the way nobody has for केशः or माला. Feminine, ending in -आ.

What you’ve built

One piece of the mountain, small enough to touch.

Your turn

- Say it: śilā
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: bhasma, then śilā
- Recall: say tathā, then read प्रसन्नः

Before you move on

What does शिला mean? (“a stone, a slab of rock”.) Say it once more.

38.4 सिकता (sikata) — sand

Before the new word: what did śilā mean?

You'll want to know: सिकता

सिकता (*sikatā*) — “sand”.

सिकता is sand — the grit of a bank, and the bank itself where it piles up.

It has long been tied to *sic*, “to pour, to sprinkle”: sand is the stuff that pours.

Set it beside नदी and you have the two halves of a bank — the water, and what the water leaves at its edge.

What you've built

What a river puts down at its edge.

Your turn

- *Say it: sikatā*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: śilā, then sikatā*
- *Recall: read मन्दम्, then say abhinandanam*

Before you move on

What does सिकता mean? (“sand”). Say it once more.

38.5 मृत्तिका (mṛttikā) — soil

Before the last word of the chapter: what did śilā mean, and what did *sikatā* mean?

You'll want to know: मृत्तिका

मृत्तिका (*mṛttikā*) — “soil”.

मृत्तिका is soil — damp, workable, the stuff a potter digs and a wall is plastered with.

It stands on *mṛd*, and Latin *mordēre*, “to bite”, is its cousin: the sense underneath both is pressing something soft until it gives. English took *mordant* from that Latin side.

Eastward it wore down into Hindi *mittī*, still the ordinary word for the ground you dig.

What you've built

Five things underfoot and in the hearth: fire, ash, stone, sand, soil.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *mṛttikā*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *agniḥ* and *mṛttikā* together
- *Recall:* say *samyak*, then read आशीर्वादः

Before you move on

What does मृत्तिका mean? (“soil”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 39

Animals

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗋️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a cow, a bird, a fish, a dog and a snake in Sanskrit.

Complete SA-C39-snake and demonstrate the chapter promise.

39.1 धेनुः (dhenuḥ) — a cow

Before the new word: what did *mṛttikā* mean?

You'll want to know: धेनुः

धेनुः (*dhenuḥ*) — “a cow”.

धेनुः is a cow, and first of all a cow in milk.

It stands on *dhe*, “to suckle” — a root that reaches a long way west: Latin *fēmina*, the one who nurses, and *filius*, the one nursed, and English *fecund* behind them both.

दुग्धम्, the milk you already ask for, comes from a different root altogether, the one that means to draw milk off. The animal is named for the giving, the drink for the taking.

What you've built

The animal behind the milk word.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *dhenuḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *mṛttikā*, then *dhenuḥ*
- *Recall:* say *śāntiḥ*, then read अग्निः

Before you move on

What does धेनुः mean? (“a cow”.) Say it once more.

39.2 विहगः (vihagaḥ) — a bird

Before the new word: what did *dhenuḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: विहगः

विहगः (*vihagaḥ*) — “a bird”.

विहगः is a bird, and the word says how it moves: *vi-*, “apart, across”, with *ga*, “going”.

That going-piece is the one inside गच्छति, the first doing-word in this book. A विहगः is simply the one that goes across.

Across what is unsaid, and does not need saying: आकाशः, the open sky, is the only place it could be.

What you’ve built

A bird named for crossing the sky.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *vihagaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *dhenuḥ*, then *vihagaḥ*
- *Recall:* read सादरम्, then say *bhasma*

Before you move on

What does विहगः mean? (“a bird”.) Say it once more.

39.3 मत्स्यः (matsyaḥ) — a fish

Before the new word: what did *vihagaḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: मत्स्यः

मत्स्यः (*matsyaḥ*) — “a fish”.

मत्स्यः is a fish, in a नदी or in a market basket.

It wore down eastward into *machh*, which is why the fish on a Hindi menu is *machhlī* and the Bengali one is *machh*.

Westward there is nothing to point at: no agreed European cousin has been found. A fish seems to be one of the things each family named for itself.

What you’ve built

A fish, and a word that travelled east but not west.

Your turn

- *Say it: matsyaḥ*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: vihagaḥ, then matsyaḥ*
- *Recall: say prasannaḥ, then read शिला*

Before you move on

What does मत्स्यः mean? (“a fish”.) Say it once more.

39.4 शुनकः (śunakaḥ) — a dog

Before the new word: what did *matsyaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: शुनकः

शुनकः (*śunakah*) — “a dog”.

शुनकः is a dog — an affectionate little form of an older and much bigger word, *śvan*.

That *śvan* is one of the unbroken ones. Greek *kuōn* is behind *cynic*; Latin *canis* is behind *canine* and *kennel*; English *hound* and German *Hund* are the same word worn down the Germanic way.

The small ending on शुनकः is the difference between naming a species and naming the animal at your द्वारम्.

What you've built

A dog, in the small friendly form of a very old word.

Your turn

- Say it: *śunakah*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *matsyah*, then *śunakah*
- Recall: read अभिनन्दनम्, then say *sikatā*

Before you move on

What does शुनकः mean? (“a dog”.) Say it once more.

39.5 सर्पः (sarpah) — a snake

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *matsyah* mean, and what did *śunakah* mean?

You'll want to know: सर्पः

सर्पः (*sarpah*) — “a snake”.

सर्पः is a snake, named for what it does: *srp*, “to creep, to glide”.

Latin has the same root, showing up as *serpere*, and *serpent* comes to English straight out of it. *Reptile* arrives by a parallel road from a Latin word meaning much the same thing.

A सर्पः belongs in the तृणम् rather than on the शिला, and that is where the old texts usually put it.

What you've built

Five creatures: one in milk, one across the sky, one in the river, one at the door, one in the grass.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *sarpaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *dhenuḥ* and *sarpaḥ* together
- *Recall:* say *āśīrvādaḥ*, then read मृत्तिका

Before you move on

What does सर्पः mean? (“a snake”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 40

In the Kitchen

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name curd, sugar, fresh butter, a vegetable and a sweet in Sanskrit.

Complete SA-C40-sweet and demonstrate the chapter promise.

40.1 दधि (dadhi) — curd

Before the new word: what did *sarpah* mean?

You'll want to know: दधि

दधि (*dadhi*) — “curd”.

दधि is curd — दुग्धम् set thick, the *dahī* of every kitchen in India.

The word is a doubled thing: *da-dh-i*, the root *dhā*, “to set, to place”, said twice over. Curd is milk that has been set, and the name says so twice for emphasis.

Hindi *dahī*, Marathi *dahī*, Gujarati *dahī* — the word barely moved.

What you've built

Milk, set thick.

Your turn

- *Say it: dadhi*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*

- *Say it:* *sarpaḥ*, then *dadhi*
- *Recall:* say *agniḥ*, then read धेनुः

Before you move on

What does दधि mean? (“curd”.) Say it once more.

40.2 शर्करा (śarkarā) — sugar

Before the new word: what did *dadhi* mean?

You’ll want to know: शर्करा

शर्करा (*śarkarā*) — “sugar”.

शर्करा is sugar, and before that it was grit and gravel — then the sweet grit that comes off boiled cane.

This one word is behind every sugar in Europe. It went into Arabic as *sukkar*, into Latin as *saccharum*, and from there into Italian *zucchero*, French *sucre*, German *Zucker* and English *sugar* and *saccharine*.

Feminine, ending in -आ, like माला and शिला.

What you’ve built

The Sanskrit word inside every European sugar.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *śarkarā*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *dadhi*, then *śarkarā*
- *Recall:* read भस्म, then say *vihaḡaḥ*

Before you move on

What does शर्करा mean? (“sugar”.) Say it once more.

40.3 नवनीतम् (navanītam) — fresh butter

Before the new word: what did *śarkarā* mean?

You'll want to know: नवनीतम्

नवनीतम् (*navanītam*) — “fresh butter”.

नवनीतम् is butter just off the churn, and both of its pieces are already yours.

The first piece, *nava*, is “new” — the word you learned beside महत् and अल्प. *nīta* is “brought, led”, from the same *nī* that stands inside नयति. Butter is the newly-brought thing — what has just been led up out of the दधि.

It is the butter of the Kṛṣṇa stories, stolen by the handful, and Hindi *navnīt* is still a name people give a child.

What you've built

Butter, named as the new thing brought up out of the curd.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *navanītam*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *śarkarā*, then *navanītam*
- *Recall:* say *śilā*, then read मत्स्यः

Before you move on

What does नवनीतम् mean? (“fresh butter”.) Say it once more.

40.4 शाकम् (śākam) — a vegetable, a green

Before the new word: what did *navanītam* mean?

You'll want to know: शाकम्

शाकम् (*śākam*) — “a vegetable, a green”.

शाकम् is a vegetable, and especially a leaf one — the cooked greens that a Hindi menu calls साग.

Where पत्रम् is the leaf on a लता, शाकम् is the leaf in a pot.

No cousin outside India has been agreed for it. The word stayed home, and it is doing the same work today it was doing three thousand years ago.

What you've built

Leaves on the plant, and leaves in the pot.

Your turn

- Say it: *śākam*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *navanītam*, then *śākam*
- Recall: read सिकता, then say *śunakah*

Before you move on

What does शाकम् mean? (“a vegetable, a green”.) Say it once more.

40.5 मोदकः (modakah) — a sweet dumpling

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *navanītam* mean, and what did *śākam* mean?

You'll want to know: मोदकः

मोदकः (*modakah*) — “a sweet dumpling”.

मोदकः is a sweet — the round steamed dumpling put before a guest, and before a god.

It is built on *mud*, “to be glad”, so the name of the sweet is the name of the gladness it makes. आनन्दः, the joy you offered at a first meeting, reaches for the same idea by a different root.

Set one in front of an अतिथिः and the word does its own explaining.

What you've built

Five things from a kitchen: curd, sugar, butter, greens, a sweet.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *modakah*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *dadhi* and *modakah* together
- *Recall:* say *mṛttikā*, then read सर्पः

Before you move on

What does मोदकः mean? (“a sweet dumpling”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 41

Things People Make

Modes: ⇌ voice (5) ⇌ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a wheel, a water-pot, a boat, a mirror and a parasol in Sanskrit.

Complete SA-C41-parasol and demonstrate the chapter promise.

41.1 चक्रम् (cakram) — a wheel

Before the new word: what did *modakaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: चक्रम्

चक्रम् (*cakram*) — “a wheel”.

चक्रम् is a wheel, a disc, a circle of anything.

It is an old root for turning, ***k^wel-**, said twice — and the same doubling gives Greek *kuklos*, which English keeps in *cycle* and *cyclone*. English *wheel* is the same word by the Germanic road.

English later borrowed the Sanskrit itself, unworn, as *chakra*, so the word now sits in the language twice over.

What you've built

A wheel, and a root that turns in three languages at once.

Your turn

- Say it: *cakram*

- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *modakaḥ*, then *cakram*
- *Recall:* say *dhenuḥ*, then read दधि

Before you move on

What does चक्रम् mean? (“a wheel”.) Say it once more.

41.2 कलशः (kalaśaḥ) — a water-pot

Before the new word: what did *cakram* mean?

You’ll want to know: कलशः

कलशः (*kalaśaḥ*) — “a water-pot”.

कलशः is the round-bellied water-pot — the one set at a द्वारम् with leaves and a coconut on top, and any pot of that shape.

Fill it with पानीयम् and it is doing its everyday job; put it at a doorway and it is doing its other one.

Greek *kalux*, a husk or a cup, has been offered as a cousin, and Latin *calix*, which English keeps in *chalice*, names the same swelling shape.

What you’ve built

The pot that holds water and welcomes people.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *kalaśaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *cakram*, then *kalaśaḥ*
- *Recall:* read विहगाः, then say *śarkarā*

Before you move on

What does कलशः mean? (“a water-pot”.) Say it once more.

41.3 प्लवः (plavaḥ) — a boat, a raft

Before the new word: what did *kalaśaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: प्लवः

प्लवः (*plavaḥ*) — “a boat, a raft”.

प्लवः is a boat, and more exactly a float — a raft, a hull, anything that swims rather than sinks.

From *plu*, “to float, to swim”, and the family is enormous: Greek *plein*, “to sail”, Latin *pluere*, “to rain”, English *flow*, *float* and *fleet*.

Where there is no सेतुः across the नदी, there is a प्लवः.

What you've built

What carries you over when there is no bridge.

Your turn

- Say it: *plavaḥ*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *kalaśaḥ*, then *plavaḥ*
- Recall: say *matsyaḥ*, then read नवनीतम्

Before you move on

What does प्लवः mean? (“a boat, a raft”.) Say it once more.

41.4 दर्पणः (darpaṇaḥ) — a mirror

Before the new word: what did *plavaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: दर्पणः

दर्पणः (*darpaṇaḥ*) — “a mirror”.

दर्पणः is a mirror — a disc of metal polished bright, centuries before glass could do the job.

It stands on *dr̥p*, “to be proud”, so the object is named for what people do in front of it rather than for what it is made of. That is a small joke three thousand years old.

Hindi *darpaṇ* is the same word, unchanged.

What you’ve built

A mirror, named for vanity rather than for glass.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *darpaṇaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *plavaḥ*, then *darpaṇaḥ*
- *Recall:* read शुनकः, then say *śākam*

Before you move on

What does दर्पणः mean? (“a mirror”.) Say it once more.

41.5 छत्रम् (chatram) — a parasol

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *plavaḥ* mean, and what did *darpaṇaḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: छत्रम्

छत्रम् (*chatram*) — “a parasol”.

छत्रम् is a parasol: the shade held over a *rājā*, and the umbrella carried in the rain.

From *chad*, “to cover”. The covering is the whole of it — what the छत्रम् covers you from, sun or water, the word does not say.

It went east as well as up in the world: Hindi *chātā*, the umbrella anyone carries, is this word worn smooth.

What you’ve built

Five things made by hand: a wheel, a pot, a boat, a mirror, a parasol.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *chatram*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *cakram* and *chatram* together
- *Recall:* say *sarpah*, then read मोदकः

Before you move on

What does छत्रम् mean? (“a parasol”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 42

Five More Replies

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say sometimes, suddenly, mostly, a little and much in Sanskrit, and use any of the five on its own as a reply.

Complete SA-C42-much and demonstrate the chapter promise.

42.1 कदाचित् (kadācit) — sometimes

Before the new word: what did *chatram* mean?

You'll want to know: कदाचित्

कदाचित् (*kadācit*) — “sometimes”.

कदाचित् answers “when?” with “now and then”.

Both pieces are yours already: कदा, the *when* you ask questions with, and a small *cit* fastened on the end. कदाचित् is *when* gone vague — at some time or other, and no promise which.

It is also the polite way to leave a door open: not yes, not no, perhaps sometimes.

What you've built

A reply that answers *when* without saying when.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *kadācit*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *chatram*, then *kadācit*
- *Recall:* say *dadhi*, then read चक्रम्

Before you move on

What does कदाचित् mean? (“sometimes”.) Say it once more.

42.2 सहसा (sahasā) — suddenly

Before the new word: what did *kadācit* mean?

You’ll want to know: सहसा

सहसा (*sahasā*) — “suddenly”.

सहसा is “all at once, without warning”.

Underneath it is *sahas*, “force, a sudden strength”, put into the shape that means *by means of*: by force, and so at a rush. कृपया, the please you already say, is made the very same way out of *krpā*.

It carries a shade of judgement with it — a thing done सहसा is a thing done without thinking first.

What you’ve built

One thing happening at a rush, and a mild opinion about it.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *sahasā*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *kadācit*, then *sahasā*
- *Recall:* read शर्करा, then say *kalaśaḥ*

Before you move on

What does सहसा mean? (“suddenly”.) Say it once more.

42.3 प्रायः (prāyaḥ) — mostly, for the most part

Before the new word: what did *sahasā* mean?

You’ll want to know: प्रायः

प्रायः (*prāyaḥ*) — “mostly, for the most part”.

प्रायः is “for the most part, in the main, usually”.

Say it when something holds most of the time and you would rather not promise more than that. It is *pra-*, “forward”, with the going-piece you met in विहगः: what runs out in front, what happens in the main.

Beside सर्वम्, which claims everything, प्रायः claims almost everything and keeps its hedge.

What you’ve built

A reply that is honest about not being certain.

Your turn

- Say it: *prāyaḥ*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *sahasā*, then *prāyaḥ*
- Recall: say *navanītam*, then read प्लवः

Before you move on

What does प्रायः mean? (“mostly, for the most part”.) Say it once more.

42.4 किञ्चित् (kiñcit) — a little, somewhat

Before the new word: what did *prāyaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: किञ्चित्

किञ्चित् (*kiñcit*) — “a little, somewhat”.

किञ्चित् is “a bit, somewhat, a small amount”.

It is किम्, the *what* you have been asking with since your first questions, wearing the same little *cit* that softened कदाचित्. *What* gone vague is *something* — and *something* said of a quantity is *a little*.

अल्पम् describes a small thing; किञ्चित् measures a small amount of it.

What you've built

A small helping of an answer.

Your turn

- Say it: *kiñcit*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *prāyaḥ*, then *kiñcit*
- Recall: read शाकम्, then say *darpaṇaḥ*

Before you move on

What does किञ्चित् mean? (“a little, somewhat”.) Say it once more.

42.5 बहु (bahu) — much, many

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *prāyaḥ* mean, and what did *kiñcit* mean?

You'll want to know: बहु

बहु (*bahu*) — “much, many”.

बहु is “much” of one thing and “many” of several — the far end of the answer किञ्चित् starts.

Greek *pakhus*, “thick, stout”, is its cousin, and thickness is the sense underneath: plenty as bulk rather than as a count.

Hindi *bahut*, “very, a lot”, is बहु with an ending on it, and it is one of the commonest words anyone says today.

What you've built

Five replies about how much and how often: sometimes, suddenly, mostly, a little, much.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *bahu*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *kadācit* and *bahu* together
- *Recall:* say *modakaḥ*, then read उत्तम्

Before you move on

What does बहु mean? (“much, many”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 43

Good Manners

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name hospitality, good conduct, humility, trust and plain dealing in Sanskrit.

Complete SA-C43-honest and demonstrate the chapter promise.

43.1 आतिथ्यम् (ātithyam) — hospitality

Before the new word: what did *bahu* mean?

You'll want to know: आतिथ्यम्

आतिथ्यम् (*ātithyam*) — “hospitality”.

आतिथ्यम् is hospitality: not the guest, but everything owed to one.

The अतिथिः you already know is stretched into the treatment that guest receives, so the word names a duty rather than a person.

Classically it runs in an order, and you have the words for all of it: an आसनम् first, then पानीयम्, then अन्नम्. आतिथ्यम् is that whole sequence in one word.

What you've built

The guest word, turned into what is owed to the guest.

Your turn

- Say it: *ātithyam*

- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *bahu*, then *ātithyam*
- *Recall:* say *cakram*, then read कदाचित्

Before you move on

What does आतिथ्यम् mean? (“hospitality”.) Say it once more.

43.2 विनयः (vinayaḥ) — good conduct, training

Before the new word: what did *ātithyam* mean?

You’ll want to know: विनयः

विनयः (*vinayaḥ*) — “good conduct, training”.

विनयः is the bearing of someone well brought up — modest, disciplined, easy to be near.

Its pieces are *vi-*, “away, apart”, and the leading doing-word नयति: to have विनयः is to have been led away from what was rough in you. Training and good manners are one word here, because the second is thought to come out of the first.

The Buddhist books of monastic training carry this word as their name.

What you’ve built

Manners understood as training rather than as polish.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *vinayaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *ātithyam*, then *vinayaḥ*
- *Recall:* read कलशः, then say *sahasā*

Before you move on

What does विनयः mean? (“good conduct, training”.) Say it once more.

43.3 नम्रता (namratā) — humility

Before the new word: what did *vinayaḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: नम्रता

नम्रता (*namratā*) — “humility”.

नम्रता is humility — bendingness, the quality of one who bows.

It stands on *nam*, “to bow”, which is the *nam* that opens नमस्ते on your first page and sits inside प्रणामः. Those two are single acts; नम्रता is the same bow turned into a settled habit.

Hindi *namratā* is the word people still use of someone who carries success lightly.

What you’ve built

The bow you already make, become a habit.

Your turn

- Say it: *namratā*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *vinayaḥ*, then *namratā*
- Recall: say *plavaḥ*, then read प्रायः

Before you move on

What does नम्रता mean? (“humility”.) Say it once more.

43.4 विश्वासः (viśvāsaḥ) — trust, confidence

Before the new word: what did *namratā* mean?

You'll want to know: विश्वासः

विश्वासः (*viśvāsaḥ*) — “trust, confidence”.

विश्वासः is trust — and the picture inside it is breathing out.

It is *vi-* with *śvas*, “to breathe”: to trust someone is to let the breath go, to stop holding it. English says much the same thing when it calls a friend a confidant, from Latin for *with faith*.

Hindi *viśvās* is unchanged, and *viśvāsgḥāt*, a betrayal, is the same word with the breaking of it attached.

What you've built

Trust, described as the moment you stop holding your breath.

Your turn

- Say it: *viśvāsaḥ*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *namratā*, then *viśvāsaḥ*
- Recall: read दर्पणः, then say *kiñcit*

Before you move on

What does विश्वासः mean? (“trust, confidence”.) Say it once more.

43.5 सरलः (saralaḥ) — straightforward, honest

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *namratā* mean, and what did *viśvāsaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: सरलः

सरलः (*saralaḥ*) — “straightforward, honest”.

सरलः is straight: of a मार्गः, of a piece of दारु, and of a person who says the thing plainly.

The pine is called *sarala* because it grows straight up, and the same word does duty for a road with no bends and for someone with no side to them.

English runs the metaphor the same way — *straight, upright, a straight answer* — which is worth noticing, because the two languages arrived at it separately.

What you've built

Five words for how a person carries themselves: hospitality, conduct, humility, trust, plain dealing.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *saralah*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *ātithyam* and *saralah* together
- *Recall:* say *chatram*, then read बहु

Before you move on

What does सरलः mean? (“straightforward, honest”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 44

Colours

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say white, dark, yellow, green and blue in Sanskrit.

Complete SA-C44-blue and demonstrate the chapter promise.

44.1 श्वेतः (śvetah) — white

Before the new word: what did *saralah* mean?

You'll want to know: श्वेतः

श्वेतः (śvetah) — “white”.

श्वेतः is white, and bright along with it.

English *white* is the same word by the Germanic road, and Russian *svet*, “light”, is another of its brothers — brightness and whiteness were one idea for a long time.

हिमम् is श्वेतम्, and so is दधि.

What you've built

White, and the brightness that comes with it.

Your turn

- Say it: śvetah
- Say it: it once more, slowly

- *Say it:* *saralaḥ*, then *śvetāḥ*
- *Recall:* say *kadācit*, then read आतिथ्यम्

Before you move on

What does श्वेतः mean? (“white”.) Say it once more.

44.2 श्यामः (śyāmaḥ) — dark, black

Before the new word: what did *śvetāḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: श्यामः

श्यामः (*śyāmaḥ*) — “dark, black”.

श्यामः is dark — black, but also the blue-black of a rain cloud and the deep green of standing water.

It is the darkness of a thundercloud rather than of soot, which is why the god whose name means “the dark one” is also called *Śyām* with affection.

No European cousin has been agreed. The word stayed home, and *Śyām* and *Śyāmā* are ordinary names in India today.

What you’ve built

Dark, with a rain cloud in it rather than ash.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *śyāmaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *śvetāḥ*, then *śyāmaḥ*
- *Recall:* read सहसा, then say *vinayaḥ*

Before you move on

What does श्यामः mean? (“dark, black”.) Say it once more.

44.3 पीतः (pītaḥ) — yellow

Before the new word: what did *śyāmaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: पीतः

पीतः (*pītaḥ*) — “yellow”.

पीतः is yellow — turmeric, ripe grain, a marigold, the silk a bridegroom wears.

Its older force is “made yellow”, so a पीतम् वस्त्रम् is a cloth that has been dyed rather than one that grew that colour.

Hindi *pīlā* is the same word with an ending on it, and it is the yellow of every wall and every taxi.

What you've built

Yellow, understood as a thing that was dyed.

Your turn

- Say it: *pītaḥ*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *śyāmaḥ*, then *pītaḥ*
- Recall: say *prāyaḥ*, then read नम्रता

Before you move on

What does पीतः mean? (“yellow”.) Say it once more.

44.4 हरितः (haritaḥ) — green

Before the new word: what did *pītaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: हरितः

हरितः (*haritaḥ*) — “green”.

हरितः is green — and before it settled it covered yellow-green and gold as well.

English *yellow* and *gold* are its cousins, from ***ǵhel-**, a root that runs across the whole band from green to yellow. One family, one word, two colours pulled apart by different daughters.

तृणम् is हरितम्, and so is a young पत्रम् on a तरुः.

What you've built

Green, from a root that could not decide between green and gold.

Your turn

- Say it: *haritaḥ*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *pītaḥ*, then *haritaḥ*
- Recall: read किञ्चित्, then say *viśvāsaḥ*

Before you move on

What does हरितः mean? (“green”). Say it once more.

44.5 नीलः (nīlaḥ) — blue

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *pītaḥ* mean, and what did *haritaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: नीलः

नीलः (nīlaḥ) — “blue”.

नीलः is blue, and dark blue at that — the blue of the समुद्रः rather than of the आकाशः at noon.

The indigo plant is *nīlī*, and when Europe began buying that dye the word travelled with the cargo: Arabic *nīl*, Portuguese *anil*, and the *aniline* English still uses for the dyes that replaced it.

So a Sanskrit colour word is sitting inside a modern chemistry term, carried there by trade.

What you've built

Five colours: white, dark, yellow, green and blue.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *nīlaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *śvetaḥ* and *nīlaḥ* together
- *Recall:* say *bahu*, then read सरलः

Before you move on

What does नीलः mean? (“blue”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 45

Times of the Day

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name morning, noon, evening, a month and a year in Sanskrit.

Complete SA-C45-year and demonstrate the chapter promise.

45.1 प्रातः (prātaḥ) — morning

Before the new word: what did *nīlaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: प्रातः

प्रातः (prātaḥ) — “morning”.

प्रातः is early morning: the stretch before the sun stands high, and the hour the first greeting of the day belongs to.

You have said *pra-* at the front of a word twice already, in प्रणामः and in प्रसन्नः, where it carries the sense “forward, out in front”. प्रातः is the front end of the day.

Greek *prōi*, “early”, is the same small piece put to the same work, and Latin *prae* is its cousin; English carries it as the *pre-* in front of a thousand words.

What you've built

The first part of the day, named.

Your turn

- *Say it: prātaḥ*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: nālaḥ, then prātaḥ*
- *Recall: say ātithyam, then read श्वेतः*

Before you move on

What does प्रातः mean? (“morning”.) Say it once more.

45.2 मध्याह्नः (madhyāhnaḥ) — noon

Before the new word: what did *prātaḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: मध्याह्नः

मध्याह्नः (*madhyāhnaḥ*) — “noon”.

मध्याह्नः is midday, the sun at the top of its climb.

It is two pieces joined: *madhya*, “middle”, and *ahan*, a day. Sanskrit keeps more than one word for a day, and this is the other one — दिनम् is the day you count, *ahan* the day you are standing in. English *mid* is *madhya*’s own worn-down cousin.

So noon is the middle of the day said in one breath, which is what noon is in most languages once you take the word apart.

What you’ve built

The top of the day, between its two ends.

Your turn

- *Say it: madhyāhnaḥ*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: prātaḥ, then madhyāhnaḥ*
- *Recall: read विनयः, then say śyāmaḥ*

Before you move on

What does मध्याह्नः mean? (“noon”). Say it once more.

45.3 सायम् (sāyam) — evening

Before the new word: what did *madhyāhnaḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: सायम्

सायम् (*sāyam*) — “evening”.

सायम् is evening: the end of the working day, when a thing is set down rather than picked up.

Put it beside प्रातः and you hold the two ends of the daylight — the greeting at one end and the leave-taking at the other. *sāyami prātaḥ*, “evening and morning”, is one of the oldest paired phrases the language has.

It rests on a piece meaning “to finish, to let go”, so evening is named as the slackening of the day rather than as its darkness.

What you’ve built

Both ends of the daylight, and the middle between them.

Your turn

- *Say it: sāyam*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: madhyāhnaḥ, then sāyam*
- *Recall: say namratā, then read पीतः*

Before you move on

What does सायम् mean? (“evening”). Say it once more.

45.4 मासः (māsaḥ) — a month

Before the new word: what did *sāyam* mean?

You'll want to know: मासः

मासः (*māsaḥ*) — “a month”.

मासः is a month, and it is the moon's own word.

You have चन्द्रः for the moon overhead. मासः is that same moon counted: the stretch from one to the next.

Latin *mēnsis*, Greek *mēn*, English *month* and *moon* are all one word travelled west, and this is among the securest cousins in the whole family. Ends in -अः.

What you've built

A stretch of time measured by the moon you already know.

Your turn

- Say it: *māsaḥ*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *sāyam*, then *māsaḥ*
- Recall: read विश्वासः, then say *haritaḥ*

Before you move on

What does मासः mean? (“a month”.) Say it once more.

45.5 संवत्सरः (sānvatsaraḥ) — a year

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *sāyam* mean, and what did *māsaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: संवत्सरः

संवत्सरः (*sānvatsaraḥ*) — “a year”.

संवत्सरः is a year: the whole round of months, come back to where it started.

The *sam-* in front is the piece meaning “together, complete” that also opens the name of the language itself. The *vatsara* behind it is kin to Latin *vetus*, “old”, and to Greek *etos*, a year — a year being what leaves a thing one year older. English *veteran* sits on that same piece.

Beside मासः, the small round, संवत्सरः is the large one. Ends in -अः.

What you've built

Five stretches of time: morning, noon, evening, a month, a year.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *samivatsarah*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *prātaḥ* and *samivatsarah* together
- *Recall:* say *saralah*, then read नीलः

Before you move on

What does संवत्सरः mean? (“a year”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 46

Sun and Shade

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name the sun, a ray, light, shade and heat in Sanskrit.

Complete SA-C46-heat and demonstrate the chapter promise.

46.1 रविः (raviḥ) — the sun

Before the new word: what did *saṁvatsaraḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: रविः

रविः (raviḥ) — “the sun”.

रविः is the sun: the disc itself, not the light it sends.

You have आकाशः for the open sky and चन्द्रः for the moon. रविः is the third thing overhead, and the one the other two are measured against.

Sanskrit keeps several sun-words and this one has no agreed cousin outside India, so its history stops at the border. Its life since then has not: Hindi still calls Sunday *ravivār*, so the word gets said once a week by people who have never studied it.

What you've built

The third thing overhead, beside the sky and the moon.

Your turn

- *Say it: raviḥ*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: samivatsarah, then raviḥ*
- *Recall: say śvetah, then read प्रातः*

Before you move on

What does रविः mean? (“the sun”.) Say it once more.

46.2 रश्मिः (raśmiḥ) — a ray

Before the new word: what did *raviḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: रश्मिः

रश्मिः (*raśmiḥ*) — “a ray”.

रश्मिः is a ray: one line of light, reaching down from रविः.

The same word means a rein or a cord held in the hand, and the two senses share one picture — something long and thin, stretched from a holder to the thing it holds. A ray reaches out of the sun the way a rein reaches out of a fist.

That doubling is worth noticing, because it shows how Sanskrit builds: not two words for two things, but one shape lent to both.

What you’ve built

The sun, and the line of light it lets down.

Your turn

- *Say it: raśmiḥ*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: raviḥ, then raśmiḥ*
- *Recall: read श्यामः, then say madhyāhnaḥ*

Before you move on

What does रश्मिः mean? (“a ray”.) Say it once more.

46.3 प्रकाशः (prakāśaḥ) — light

Before the new word: what did *raśmīḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: प्रकाशः

प्रकाशः (*prakāśaḥ*) — “light”.

प्रकाशः is light: brightness itself, and the state of a thing being visible at all.

You met a piece meaning “to shine, to be seen” once before, sitting inside आकाशः, the open sky. प्रकाशः is that very piece with *pra-*, “forward”, in front of it — light as shining sent out.

So the sky and the light in it are built out of one word, parting only at the small piece each carries at the front. Ends in -अः.

What you’ve built

Light, and the piece it shares with the sky.

Your turn

- *Say it: prakāśaḥ*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: raśmīḥ, then prakāśaḥ*
- *Recall: say pītaḥ, then read सायम्*

Before you move on

What does प्रकाशः mean? (“light”.) Say it once more.

46.4 छाया (chāyā) — shade, a shadow

Before the new word: what did *prakāśaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: छाया

छाया (*chāyā*) — “shade, a shadow”.

छाया is shade, and equally the shadow a thing throws.

You have छत्रम् for the parasol. छाया is what the parasol makes: the cool patch, not the object holding it up. One is the tool and the other is the result, and now you can name both.

Greek *skiā*, “shadow”, is the same word, and English *shine* is usually put in the family too — brightness and the dark it casts named from one root. Feminine, ending in -आ.

What you've built

The thing the parasol makes, told apart from the parasol.

Your turn

- Say it: *chāyā*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *prakāśaḥ*, then *chāyā*
- Recall: read हरितः, then say *māsaḥ*

Before you move on

What does छाया mean? (“shade, a shadow”.) Say it once more.

46.5 तापः (tāpaḥ) — heat

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *prakāśaḥ* mean, and what did *chāyā* mean?

You'll want to know: तापः

तापः (*tāpaḥ*) — “heat”.

तापः is heat: the warmth of the sun on a back, and by an easy stretch the heat of trouble.

It stands on *tap*, “to be hot, to burn” — the same root under *tapas*, the heat a person is said to build up by hard practice. Sanskrit treats effort and warmth as one thing.

Latin *tepēre*, “to be warm”, is that root gone west, and English took *tepid* straight from it. Ends in -अः.

What you’ve built

Five things about light and warmth: the sun, a ray, light, shade, heat.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *tāpaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *raviḥ* and *tāpaḥ* together
- *Recall:* say *nīlaḥ*, then read संवत्सरः

Before you move on

What does तापः mean? (“heat”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 47

Parts of a House

Modes: ⇌ voice (5) ⇌ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a wall, a window, a stair, a pillar and the floor in Sanskrit.

Complete SA-C47-floor and demonstrate the chapter promise.

47.1 भित्तिः (bhittih) — a wall

Before the new word: what did *tāpaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: भित्तिः

भित्तिः (*bhittih*) — “a wall”.

भित्तिः is a wall: the built side of a room.

You know पुरम्, the town with a wall around it. भित्तिः is one such wall brought down to the size of a house — the thing itself rather than the place it encloses.

It stands on *bhid*, “to split, to break apart”, which is exactly what a wall does to a space: inside on one hand, outside on the other. Latin *findere*, “to cleave”, is the same root, behind English *fissure*, and English *bite* belongs to it as well.

What you've built

One wall, told apart from the walled town.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *bhittiḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *tāpaḥ*, then *bhittiḥ*
- *Recall:* say *prātaḥ*, then read रविः

Before you move on

What does भित्तिः mean? (“a wall.”) Say it once more.

47.2 वातायनम् (vātāyanam) — a window

Before the new word: what did *bhittiḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: वातायनम्

वातायनम् (*vātāyanam*) — “a window”.

वातायनम् is a window, and the word says plainly what a window is for.

It is *vāta*, wind, joined to *ayana*, a going: a window is the wind’s way in. You already say वायुः for wind, and *vāta* is its near relative from the same root, “to blow”.

Set it against भित्तिः and the pair makes sense of a room: the wall shuts, the window opens. Neuter, ending in -अम्.

What you’ve built

The opening in the wall, named for what comes through it.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *vātāyanam*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *bhittiḥ*, then *vātāyanam*
- *Recall:* read मध्याह्नः, then say *raśmiḥ*

Before you move on

What does वातायनम् mean? (“a window”.) Say it once more.

47.3 सोपानम् (sopānam) — a stair

Before the new word: what did *vātāyanam* mean?

You’ll want to know: सोपानम्

सोपानम् (*sopānam*) — “a stair”.

सोपानम् is a stair, a flight of steps.

The usual way of taking it apart reads it as “the means of going up” — a small joining word in front, and behind it the sense of rising. The word carries its purpose on its face, the way वातायनम् does.

It stayed home and stayed itself: Hindi and Marathi both keep *sopān* for a stair. Neuter, ending in -अम्.

What you’ve built

The way up, added to the wall and the window.

Your turn

- *Say it: sopānam*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: vātāyanam, then sopānam*
- *Recall: say sāyam, then read प्रकाशः*

Before you move on

What does सोपानम् mean? (“a stair”.) Say it once more.

47.4 स्तम्भः (stambhaḥ) — a pillar

Before the new word: what did *sopānam* mean?

You'll want to know: स्तम्भः

स्तम्भः (*stambhaḥ*) — “a pillar”.

स्तम्भः is a pillar, a post: the upright that carries a roof.

It rests on *stambh*, “to prop, to make firm”. Where भित्तिः splits a space, स्तम्भः holds one open — a wall you can walk past.

English *staff* and *stamp* sit near it, and the picture under all three is one thing: something planted hard and standing. Ends in -अः.

What you've built

What holds the roof up, beside what closes the room in.

Your turn

- Say it: *stambhaḥ*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *sopānam*, then *stambhaḥ*
- Recall: read मासः, then say *chāyā*

Before you move on

What does स्तम्भः mean? (“a pillar”.) Say it once more.

47.5 तलम् (talam) — the floor

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *sopānam* mean, and what did *stambhaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: तलम्

तलम् (*talam*) — “the floor”.

तलम् is the floor: the flat under a room, and the underside of anything at all.

The palm of a hand is a *tala*, and so is the sole of a foot. The word names a flat bottom rather than a room in particular, which is why it reaches from a building to a body without changing shape.

Latin *tellūs*, “the ground”, is a cousin of it. Neuter, ending in -अम्.

What you've built

Five parts of a building: a wall, a window, a stair, a pillar, the floor.

Your turn

- *Say it: talam*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: all five in order, then bhittiḥ and talam together*
- *Recall: say samivatsarah, then read तापः*

Before you move on

What does तलम् mean? (“the floor”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 48

More Animals

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a lion, a wolf, a goat, a monkey and a goose in Sanskrit.

Complete SA-C48-geese and demonstrate the chapter promise.

48.1 सिंहः (simhaḥ) — a lion

Before the new word: what did *talam* mean?

You'll want to know: सिंहः

सिंहः (*simhaḥ*) — “a lion”.

सिंहः is a lion.

You have been handed this word twice without being told it. *Simhapura*, the lion town, is what *Singapore* was worn down from; and *Narasimha*, the man-lion, sets it beside नरः, the man you can already say. Here is the word on its own at last.

Its own parentage is unsettled — no cousin outside the family has been agreed on. How far it travelled is not in doubt: the language and the people of Sri Lanka are called Sinhala after it. Ends in -अः.

What you've built

A word you had already met twice, now yours to say.

Your turn

- *Say it: simhaḥ*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: talam, then simhaḥ*
- *Recall: say raviḥ, then read भित्तिः*

Before you move on

What does सिंहः mean? (“a lion”.) Say it once more.

48.2 वृकः (vrkaḥ) — a wolf

Before the new word: what did *simhaḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: वृकः

वृकः (*vrkaḥ*) — “a wolf”.

वृकः is a wolf.

Where सिंहः stops at the border, this one runs the whole way: Latin *lupus*, Greek *lykos*, English *wolf*, Russian *volk*. One animal that kept one name from the Ganges to the Atlantic.

The Sanskrit word is used of a tearing thing more generally too, which fits the root sense of tearing. Ends in -अः.

What you’ve built

Two animals, one with cousins abroad and one without.

Your turn

- *Say it: vrkaḥ*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: simhaḥ, then vrkaḥ*
- *Recall: read रश्मिः, then say vātāyanam*

Before you move on

What does वृकः mean? (“a wolf”.) Say it once more.

48.3 छागः (chāgaḥ) — a goat

Before the new word: what did वृकाḥ mean?

You’ll want to know: छागः

छागः (chāgaḥ) — “a goat”.

छागः is a goat.

Like सिंहः and unlike वृकः, it has no agreed cousin outside India: the goat words of Europe and this one do not line up. Two animals out of the same field, and only one of them carried its name across the family.

That is worth holding on to, because it is what makes वृकः remarkable rather than ordinary. Ends in -अः.

What you’ve built

Three animals, and two different fates for a name.

Your turn

- Say it: chāgaḥ
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: वृकाḥ, then chāgaḥ
- Recall: say prakāśaḥ, then read सोपानम्

Before you move on

What does छागः mean? (“a goat”.) Say it once more.

48.4 वानरः (vānaraḥ) — a monkey

Before the new word: what did chāgaḥ mean?

You'll want to know: वानरः

वानरः (*vānaraḥ*) — “a monkey”.

वानरः is a monkey.

Two words you own are sitting inside it: वनम्, the forest, and नरः, the man. Sanskrit's own commentators read वानरः as the forest-man, and that reading has held for two thousand years, whatever later scholars have made of it.

So the word costs you one new shape and pays back two old ones. Ends in -अः.

What you've built

A word built out of two you had already.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *vānaraḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *chāgaḥ*, then *vānaraḥ*
- *Recall:* read छाया, then say *stambhaḥ*

Before you move on

What does वानरः mean? (“a monkey”.) Say it once more.

48.5 हंसः (haṁsaḥ) — a goose

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *chāgaḥ* mean, and what did *vānaraḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: हंसः

हंसः (*haṁsaḥ*) — “a goose”.

हंसः is a goose, and in poetry a swan.

Another secure cousin, as far-travelled as वृकः: Latin *ānser*, Greek *khēn*, German *Gans*, English *goose* and *gander*. The bird held on to its name as faithfully as the wolf did.

In Sanskrit poetry it is the bird that can take milk out of water, so the word came to carry a sense of a mind that sorts things — and दुग्धम् is already yours to put beside it. Ends in -अः.

What you've built

Five animals: a lion, a wolf, a goat, a monkey, a goose.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *hamisaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *simhaḥ* and *hamisaḥ* together
- *Recall:* say *tāpaḥ*, then read तलम्

Before you move on

What does हंसः mean? (“a goose”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 49

Five Small Answers

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say then, as, only, again and again and oh in Sanskrit, and use any of the five on its own as a reply.
Complete SA-C49-oh and demonstrate the chapter promise.

49.1 तर्हि (tarhi) — then, in that case

Before the new word: what did *hamisah* mean?

You'll want to know: तर्हि

तर्हि (*tarhi*) — “then, in that case”.

तर्हि — “then, in that case”.

Said on its own it answers a condition. Somebody tells you how matters stand; तर्हि is your “then, all right”.

It is built on the same *t-* that points for you in तत् and in तत्र. Those two point at a thing and at a place; तर्हि points at a moment — at that time, and so, therefore.

What you've built

A one-word answer to how things stand.

Your turn

- Say it: *tarhi*

- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *hamisaḥ*, then *tarhi*
- *Recall:* say *bhittih*, then read सिंहः

Before you move on

What does तर्हि mean? (“then, in that case”.) Say it once more.

49.2 यथा (yathā) — as, in the way that

Before the new word: what did *tarhi* mean?

You’ll want to know: यथा

यथा (*yathā*) — “as, in the way that”.

यथा — “as, in the way that”.

You already say तथा, “so, in that way”. यथा is its partner, and the two travel together: *yathā ... tathā*, “as ... so”. Holding one of the pair, you now hold both.

Said back to somebody on its own, it works as “just so, as you say” — an agreement rather than a description.

What you’ve built

The other half of a pair you already had half of.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *yathā*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *tarhi*, then *yathā*
- *Recall:* read वातायनम्, then say *vrkaḥ*

Before you move on

What does यथा mean? (“as, in the way that”.) Say it once more.

49.3 केवलम् (kevalam) — only, merely

Before the new word: what did *yathā* mean?

You'll want to know: केवलम्

केवलम् (*kevalam*) — “only, merely”.

केवलम् — “only, merely, nothing but”.

Put it in front of what you are naming and it narrows the claim: केवलम् दुधम्, “only milk”. It is the ordinary Sanskrit “only”, not a poetic one.

It also stands alone. Asked how much of a thing there is, केवलम् on its own is a complete and slightly rueful answer.

What you've built

A word that narrows whatever it stands in front of.

Your turn

- *Say it: kevalam*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: yathā, then kevalam*
- *Recall: say sopānam, then read छागः*

Before you move on

What does केवलम् mean? (“only, merely”.) Say it once more.

49.4 मुहुः (muhuh) — again and again

Before the new word: what did *kevalam* mean?

You'll want to know: मुहुः

मुहुः (*muhuh*) — “again and again”.

मुहुः — “again and again, over and over”.

You have पुनः for “again”, meaning one more time. मुहुः is the stronger one: not once more but repeatedly, and doubled as *muhur muhuh* it is stronger still.

It belongs with *muhūrta*, a short measured stretch of time. The picture underneath is a thing happening moment after moment after moment.

What you've built

A stronger “again” than the one you had.

Your turn

- Say it: *muhuh*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *kevalam*, then *muhuh*
- Recall: read स्तम्भः, then say *vānarah*

Before you move on

What does मुहुः mean? (“again and again”.) Say it once more.

49.5 अहो (aho) — oh!

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *kevalam* mean, and what did *muhuh* mean?

You'll want to know: अहो

अहो (*aho*) — “oh!”.

अहो — “oh!”.

It is the sound of being struck by something: delight, surprise or dismay, with the tone deciding which. अहो on its own is a whole reply, and one of the few you can give without knowing what comes next.

It is two small cries stuck together rather than a word with parts, which is why there is no history to trace under it. Sanskrit wrote its exclamations down, and this one has been in the language for as long as anything in it.

What you've built

Five more replies: then, as, only, again and again, and oh.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *aho*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *tarhi* and *aho* together
- *Recall:* say *talam*, then read हंसः

Before you move on

What does अहो mean? (“oh!.”) Say it once more.

Chapter 50

Sound and Song

Modes: ⇌ voice (5) ⇌ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a sound, a question, the voice, a song and a verse in Sanskrit.

Complete SA-C50-verse and demonstrate the chapter promise.

50.1 शब्दः (śabdah) — a sound

Before the new word: what did *aho* mean?

You'll want to know: शब्दः

शब्दः (śabdah) — “a sound”.

शब्दः is a sound, and by an easy stretch a word said aloud.

This one has been handed to you three times without ever being named. *kāla-śabdāḥ* were the time ones; *ka-śabdāḥ* were the question ones; *saṅkhyā-śabdāḥ* were the number ones. The *-śabdāḥ* ending each of those three names is this very word, said of more than one thing at a time.

So you have been reading it since long before this page. Now the piece itself is yours. Ends in -अः.

What you've built

The piece three earlier names were built out of.

Your turn

- *Say it: śabdaḥ*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: aho, then śabdaḥ*
- *Recall: say simhaḥ, then read तर्हि*

Before you move on

What does शब्दः mean? (“a sound”). Say it once more.

50.2 प्रश्नः (praśnaḥ) — a question

Before the new word: what did śabdaḥ mean?

You’ll want to know: प्रश्नः

प्रश्नः (*praśnaḥ*) — “a question”.

प्रश्नः is a question: the thing asked, rather than the asking of it.

You already say पृच्छति, “asks”. प्रश्नः stands on that same root, held still as a thing instead of running as an action — and the pair is worth saying together, because Sanskrit does this everywhere.

The root reaches a long way west: Latin *precārī*, “to beg”, behind English *pray* and *precarious*, and German *fragen*, “to ask”. Ends in -अः.

What you’ve built

The asking, and the thing asked, from one root.

Your turn

- *Say it: praśnaḥ*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: śabdaḥ, then praśnaḥ*
- *Recall: read वृक्, then say yathā*

Before you move on

What does प्रश्नः mean? (“a question”.) Say it once more.

50.3 वाणी (vāṇī) — the voice

Before the new word: what did *praśnaḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: वाणी

वाणी (*vāṇī*) — “the voice”.

वाणी is the voice: speech as a thing heard, rather than speech as a thing meant.

It rests on a piece meaning “to sound”. Beside शब्दः, which is any sound at all, वाणी is the sound a person makes on purpose.

Capitalised, *Vāṇī* is a name of the goddess of speech, so the word carries a good deal more weight in poetry than its plain sense suggests. Feminine, ending in *-ī*.

What you’ve built

A sound narrowed down to the human one.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *vāṇī*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *praśnaḥ*, then *vāṇī*
- *Recall:* say *chāgaḥ*, then read केवलम्

Before you move on

What does वाणी mean? (“the voice”.) Say it once more.

50.4 गीतम् (gītam) — a song

Before the new word: what did *vāṇī* mean?

You'll want to know: गीतम्

गीतम् (*gītām*) — “a song”.

गीतम् is a song: the thing sung.

It stands on *gai*, “to sing”. The *Bhagavad Gītā* is this same word wearing a feminine ending — “the song”, and nothing more mysterious than that.

No secure western cousin has been agreed for it, but it kept its ground at home: Hindi *gīt* and Bengali *gīt* are still the everyday word for a song. Neuter, ending in -अम्.

What you've built

What the voice does when it is not talking.

Your turn

- *Say it: gītām*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: vāṇī, then gītām*
- *Recall: read वानरः, then say muhuh*

Before you move on

What does गीतम् mean? (“a song”.) Say it once more.

50.5 श्लोकः (ślokaḥ) — a verse

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *vāṇī* mean, and what did *gītām* mean?

You'll want to know: श्लोकः

श्लोकः (*ślokaḥ*) — “a verse”.

श्लोकः is a verse: two lines, balanced against each other.

Its older sense is “sound, and what is heard of a person” — fame, in other words. So a verse is named as a thing that carries a sound outward. Beside शब्दः, which is any sound, श्लोकः is a sound cut to a shape that can be remembered.

Nearly the whole of the long Sanskrit story-poems is in this one shape, which is how the word came to mean the shape as well as the fame. Ends in -अः.

What you've built

Five things the ear takes in: a sound, a question, the voice, a song, a verse.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *ślokaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *śabdaḥ* and *ślokaḥ* together
- *Recall:* say *hamisaḥ*, then read अहो

Before you move on

What does श्लोकः mean? (“a verse”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 51

More of the Family

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a husband, a wife, a grandfather, a grandmother and a mother’s brother in Sanskrit.

Complete SA-C51-uncle and demonstrate the chapter promise.

51.1 पतिः (patih) — a husband

Before the new word: what did *ślokaḥ* mean?

You’ll want to know: पतिः

पतिः (*patih*) — “a husband”.

पतिः is a husband, and more widely the master of a household.

It is one of the oldest words the family holds: Latin *potis*, “able, in command”, behind English *possible* and *power*, and Greek *posis*, a husband. The *-pati* that ends a great many Indian names and titles is this word doing the same work.

Beside *kuṭumbam*, the household you can already name, पतिः is the one who answers for it. Ends in *-ih*.

What you’ve built

One end of a household, named.

Your turn

- *Say it: patih*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: ślokaḥ, then patih*
- *Recall: say tarhi, then read शब्दः*

Before you move on

What does पतिः mean? (“a husband”.) Say it once more.

51.2 पत्नी (patnī) — a wife

Before the new word: what did *patih* mean?

You’ll want to know: पत्नी

पत्नी (*patnī*) — “a wife”.

पत्नी is a wife, the mistress of the household.

It is पतिः with a feminine ending laid on it, and the two have travelled together since before Sanskrit was Sanskrit: Greek *potnia*, “lady”, is the very same formation made in the very same way.

So the second word costs almost nothing once the first is yours. Feminine, ending in *-ī*.

What you’ve built

The pair that a household is built on.

Your turn

- *Say it: patnī*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: patih, then patnī*
- *Recall: read यथा, then say praśnaḥ*

Before you move on

What does पत्नी mean? (“a wife”.) Say it once more.

51.3 पितामहः (pitāmahaḥ) — a grandfather

Before the new word: what did *patnī* mean?

You’ll want to know: पितामहः

पितामहः (*pitāmahaḥ*) — “a grandfather”.

पितामहः is a grandfather — and, precisely, the father’s father.

Both halves are already yours. पिता is the father, and महत् is big; the ending shifts a little in the joining, but the sense does not. A grandfather is the great father.

Sanskrit keeps the two sides of a family apart, so this word does not stretch to the mother’s side. Ends in -अः.

What you’ve built

A new word made of two old ones.

Your turn

- Say it: *pitāmahaḥ*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *patnī*, then *pitāmahaḥ*
- Recall: say *kevalam*, then read वाणी

Before you move on

What does पितामहः mean? (“a grandfather”.) Say it once more.

51.4 मातामही (mātāmahī) — a grandmother

Before the new word: what did *pitāmahaḥ* mean?

You'll want to know: मातामही

मातामही (*mātāmahī*) — “a grandmother”.

मातामही is a grandmother — and, precisely, the mother's mother.

It is built exactly as पितामहः is, with माता standing in front instead of पिता. Having watched the joining once, you can read this one before it is explained.

The pair also shows the line Sanskrit draws down the middle of a family: one word for each side, and no word covering both. Feminine, ending in -ī.

What you've built

The same joining, worked a second time.

Your turn

- Say it: *mātāmahī*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *pitāmahah*, then *mātāmahī*
- Recall: read मुहुः, then say *gītām*

Before you move on

What does मातामही mean? (“a grandmother”.) Say it once more.

51.5 मातुलः (*mātulaḥ*) — a mother's brother

Before the last word of the chapter: what did *pitāmahah* mean, and what did *mātāmahī* mean?

You'll want to know: मातुलः

मातुलः (*mātulaḥ*) — “a mother's brother”.

मातुलः is a mother's brother.

Sanskrit has no single word covering both uncles, and this is the one for the mother's side, with माता standing plainly inside it. The line drawn by पितामहः and मातामही is drawn here too.

Latin drew it in the same place: *avunculus* was the mother’s brother, and it is the word English wore down into *uncle*. Two languages, one distinction, one border apart. Ends in -अः.

What you’ve built

Five more of a household: a husband, a wife, a grandfather, a grandmother, a mother’s brother.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *mātulaḥ*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *patiḥ* and *mātulaḥ* together
- *Recall:* say *aho*, then read श्लोकः

Before you move on

What does मातुलः mean? (“a mother’s brother”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 52

Two Things Joined

Modes: ⇨ voice (4) 👁 eyes (1) ⇨ Hands-free start: first 2 of 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can join two Sanskrit nouns with and, offer a choice between them with or, set one clause against another with but, and deny both with a doubled na.

Complete SA-R52-joins and say all four joins in order, naming for each one where it stands in the sentence.

52.1 च (ca) — and

Two words back: what does *mātāmahī* mean, and who is a *mā-tulah*? You can now name a great many things one at a time. You cannot yet name two.

You'll want to know: च

च (*ca*) — “and”.

One syllable, and until this lesson the track had no way to put two things in one sentence. Everything you have learnt to name — a house, a river, a mother, a moon — you have named alone.

च does not stand between the two things. It stands after the second one.

अन्नं पानीयं च — *annam pānīyam ca* — food and water

English puts *and* in the gap. Sanskrit puts च at the end and leaves the gap empty. Read the phrase again and notice that nothing sits between the

two nouns at all: they stand side by side, and च at the back is what tells you they were a pair.

च can never begin a sentence. A word that must lean on the word before it is called an **enclitic**, and this is Sanskrit’s commonest one.

What you’ve built

Two things in one sentence, for the first time.

Your turn

- *Recall:* say *mātulaḥ*, then read मातामही and say what it means
- *Hear:* *annam pānīyam ca*, said once slowly and once at speed
- *Say it:* *annam pānīyam ca*
- *Read it:* च, and say where in the phrase it stands

Before you move on

What does च mean, and where does it stand? (“And”, and after the second thing.) Say “food and water” once more.

52.2 वा (vā) — or

Say “food and water”, and then say where च stood in it. Then say *mātulaḥ*, from two chapters back, and who it names.

You’ll want to know: वा

वा (*vā*) — “or”.

Everything the last lesson said about च is true of वा, unchanged. It is an enclitic; it goes after the second item; it cannot open a sentence.

पानीयं क्षीरं वा — *pānīyam kṣīraṁ vā* — **water or milk**

So the two words share one slot, and swapping them swaps the meaning of the whole phrase without moving anything else:

पानीयं क्षीरं च — water **and** milk

पानीयं क्षीरं वा — water or milk

That is worth pausing on. In English *and* and *or* are two different words in the same middle position. In Sanskrit they are two different words in the same **final** position, and the sentence around them does not shift at all.

What you've built

Both halves of the joining pair: च for both, वा for either.

Your turn

- Say it: *pānīyaṃ kṣīraṃ vā*
- Say it: the same two nouns with च instead, and say what changed
- Read it: पानीयं क्षीरं वा, then say what it means

Before you move on

Which of च and वा means “or”? Say “water or milk”.

52.3 किन्तु (kintu) — but

Say “water or milk”. Then say what किम् means on its own.

You'll want to know: किन्तु

किन्तु (*kintu*) — “but”.

Look at it before you use it. It is किम् — the question word you have held since your first questions — welded to the small particle तु, “however”. *What-however*. Sanskrit built its “but” out of a question and a shrug.

And here is the thing that matters for using it: **किन्तु is not an enclitic**. Unlike च and वा it does not lean backwards. It stands at the **front** of the clause it contradicts.

बालः गच्छति किन्तु गुरुः न गच्छति

bālaḥ gacchati kintu guruḥ na gacchati

the boy goes, but the teacher does not go

Three joining words, two different habits. Say the rule to yourself once: च and वा go last, किन्तु goes first.

What you've built

Three joins: add, offer, contradict.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *bālaḥ gacchati kintu guruḥ na gacchati*
- *Read it:* किन्तु, and find the किम् inside it
- *Contrast:* वा at the end of its phrase, किन्तु at the front of its clause

Before you move on

What does किन्तु mean, and where does it stand? (“But”, and first.)
Say the boy-and-teacher sentence once more.

52.4 न ... न (na ... na) — neither ... nor

Where does किन्तु stand in its clause? And what does न mean on its own?

Grammar Lens: the fourth join needs no new word

You have had न since the very first chapter. Said once it denies one thing. **Said twice, once before each item, it denies both.**

न अन्नं न पानीयम्

na annam na pānīyam

neither food nor water

There is no new vocabulary here at all. The join is made out of repetition, which is why Sanskrit never needed a word like English *neither*.

Set the four joins of this chapter side by side and the pattern in their positions is the whole lesson:

join	meaning	where it stands
च	and	after the second item
वा	or	after the second item
किन्तु	but	first in its clause
न ... न	neither ... nor	before each item
Three positions, four joins. Nothing else about the sentence moves.		

What you've built

Every basic join: both, either, contrary, and neither.

Your turn

- *Say it: na annam na pānīyam*
- *Say it: bālah na khādati* — the boy does not eat — then double the न to deny both nouns
- *Read it: न अन्नं न पानीयम्*, then say what it means

Before you move on

How does Sanskrit say “neither ... nor”? (न before each item.) Say “neither food nor water”.

52.5 च · वा · किन्तु · न ... न — the four joins

Name the two joins that stand after the second item.

What you've built

Before this chapter every Sanskrit sentence you could build named exactly one thing. Four small words later you can name two, offer a choice between them, set one against the other, and refuse both. None of the four changed anything else in the sentence. That is the point worth carrying: Sanskrit joins by **placing a particle**, not by rearranging what is already there. When you meet the longer joins later — the ones that link whole clauses rather than nouns — they will behave the same way.

Your turn

- *Say it: annamī pānīyamī ca*, then *annamī pānīyamī vā*, and say what changed
- *Say it: pānīyamī kṣīramī vā*
- *Say it: na annamī na pānīyam*
- *Recall:* which of the four stands FIRST in its clause

Before you move on

Say all four joins in order, and for each one say where it stands.

Chapter 53

Which One, That One

Modes: ⇐ voice (5) ⇐ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can open a clause with a य- word and answer it with the matching त- word, so that two Sanskrit clauses hold together as one sentence.

Complete SA-R53-correlative and say both correlative sentences, naming for each the axis it joins on.

53.1 यः (yah) — who, which

Say the deixis system out loud: the **a-** word for near, the **t-** word for far, the **k-** word that asks. Then say “neither food nor water”.

You’ll want to know: यः

यः (yah) — “who, which”.

The deixis lesson taught you that Sanskrit points with three initial letters. अ- points near, त- points far, क- asks. The system was presented as three legs, and it has always had four.

य- is the fourth. It does not point and it does not ask. It **hands the question forward** — it opens a clause and says: hold on, I am about to tell you which one I mean.

कः — *who?* — I am asking you

यः — *who / the one who* — I am about to tell you

Nothing else about the word is new. Its -ः ending is the masculine ending you have read on नरः, बालः and मार्गः since the place words, and it agrees exactly as those do.

Say the four together, because from here on they behave as one family: अ- · त- · क- · य-.

What you've built

The missing fourth leg of a system you already half knew.

Your turn

- Say it: *kaḥ*, then *yaḥ*, and say which one asks
- Say it: the four openings — *a-*, *ta-*, *ka-*, *ya-*
- Read it: यः, and name the ending it shares with नरः

Before you move on

What does यः do that कः does not? (It hands the question forward instead of asking it.)

53.2 सः (saḥ) — he, that one

What does यः do? And what does तत् point at?

You'll want to know: सः

सः (saḥ) — “he, that one”.

You have known तत् since the deixis lesson — the **t-** word that points at something over there. सः is the same pointing word for a **masculine** person or thing: *that man, he, that one*.

The odd part is the स-. Everywhere else in this family the far-pointer is त-: तत्, तत्र, and every other form of the word. Only the masculine and feminine nominative singulars break out and begin with स- — सः and सा. It is one of the oldest irregularities in the language, and it is inherited rather than invented: Greek's article does exactly the same thing, with *ho* and *hē* beside a *t-* everywhere else.

So the rule to hold is small and strange: **the word is a t- word that starts with स- only when it is the subject.**

What you've built

The pointer that will answer यः in the next lesson.

Your turn

- Say it: saḥ
- Say it: yaḥ, then saḥ, and say which one opens and which one answers
- Read it: तत् and सः, and say what the two have in common

Before you move on

What does सः mean, and which letter does it begin with only as a subject? (“He, that one”, and स-.)

53.3 यः ... सः (yaḥ ... saḥ) — the correlative

Say यः, then सः. Which one opens, and which one answers?

Grammar Lens: two clauses, one hinge

Put the two words in one sentence, each opening its own clause, and you have Sanskrit's entire relative-clause system.

यः गच्छति सः पश्यति

yaḥ gacchati saḥ paśyati

the one who goes, sees

Read it literally and it is stranger and simpler than the English: *which one goes, that one sees*. The य- clause raises a candidate; the त- clause picks it up and says what happens to it.

This is not the English shape with the words translated.

English hangs the relative clause off a noun — *the man who goes* — and the clause sits inside the main sentence. Sanskrit sets two whole clauses side by side and pins them together with the य-/त- pair. There is no noun for the clause to hang from and none is needed.

Three consequences, all of which you can check on the sentence above:

1. **The य- clause usually comes first.** English almost always puts the main clause first; Sanskrit almost always puts the relative one first.
2. **Both halves are complete sentences.** *yaḥ gacchati* would stand on its own as “he goes” if यः were सः.
3. **Nothing is subordinated by word order.** The pair of pronouns does all the work, so the halves can be swapped for emphasis without the grammar breaking.

From here, every “the one that...”, “whoever...”, and “what I said” you will meet in Sanskrit is this same hinge with different endings on it.

What you’ve built

A sentence with two clauses in it, for the first time in this track.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *yaḥ gacchati saḥ paśyati*
- *Say it:* it again, and name which half is the y- clause
- *Read it:* यः गच्छति सः पश्यति, then say what it means in English
- *Contrast:* English hangs the clause on a noun; Sanskrit pins two clauses with a pronoun pair

Before you move on

Which clause comes first in Sanskrit, the य- one or the त- one? (The य- one.) Say the sentence once more.

53.4 यत्र ... तत्र (yatra ... tatra) — where ... there

Say the correlative sentence from the last lesson. Then say अत्र and तत्र, and what each one means.

Grammar Lens: the hinge is not about people

यः ... सः joined two clauses through a *person*. Change the pair and the same hinge joins them through a *place*, with no other change at all.

यत्र ग्रामः तत्र मार्गः

yatra grāmaḥ tatra mārgaḥ

where there is a village, there is a road

तत्र is not new — you have had it since the deixis lesson. यत्र is तत्र with the य- opening swapped in, exactly as यः was सः with the same swap. That is the real lesson of this chapter, and it is worth saying plainly: **the correlative is a slot, not a word**. Any त- word you already know has a य- partner, and putting the pair in two clauses joins them:

य- clause opens	त- clause answers	joins by
यः	सः	person
यत्र	तत्र	place

You have met two of these. The pattern that generates them is one you can now recognise anywhere.

What you've built

The same two-clause hinge, on a second axis.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *yatra grāmaḥ tatra mārgaḥ*
- *Recall:* say तत्र, then read यत्र and say what the swap did
- *Read it:* यत्र ग्रामः तत्र मार्गः, then say what it means

Before you move on

How do you make a य- word from a त- word? (Swap the opening letter.) Say the village-and-road sentence once more.

53.5 य- · त- — the correlative, reviewed

Say यः and तः, and say which one opens its clause.

What you've built

The deixis lesson taught you three pointing letters and called it a system. It was three quarters of one. य- is the fourth, and adding it turns a set of question-and-answer words into a way of building sentences with two clauses in them.

The whole of it fits in one line: **a य- word raises a candidate, and the matching त- word picks it up.**

Everything else in this chapter was that line applied twice — once through a person, once through a place — plus one small irregularity worth keeping: the far-pointer is a त- word that wears स- when it is the subject.

Your turn

- *Say it: yaḥ gacchati saḥ paśyati*
- *Say it: yatra grāmaḥ tatra mārgaḥ*
- *Recall:* name the four openings of the pointing system, in order
- *Contrast:* कः asks, यः hands forward

Before you move on

Say both correlative sentences, and for each one name the axis it joins on — person or place.

Chapter 54

Thus It Was Said

Modes: ⇐ voice (3) ⇐ Hands-free start: all 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can close a quoted clause with इति and make a whole Sanskrit sentence the object of a verb of thinking or saying.

Complete SA-R54-iti and name the two joining mechanisms the track now has, saying which of them subordinates.

54.1 इति (iti) — thus

Say both correlative sentences — the one who goes, and where the village is. Then say *cintayati* and what it means.

You'll want to know: इति

इति (*iti*) — “thus, so”.

Sanskrit has no quotation marks. It has this word instead, and it does the job better than a pair of commas in the air: इति **stands after the quoted words and closes them.**

... इति — “...” — *that is what was said*

Whatever comes before इति is quoted; whatever comes after it is the frame. Everything the frame needs to say — who said it, who thought it, who asked it — comes afterwards, so the reader hears the words first and learns whose they were second.

Two things follow from that, and both are worth knowing before you build a sentence with it:

1. **The quoted words are not changed.** English shifts tense and person when it reports — *he said he was going*. Sanskrit does not. It hands you the words as they were spoken and lets इति mark where they stop.
2. **इति is not a verb and never inflects.** It is the same three letters in every sentence you will ever meet it in.

You have probably met it already without knowing. इत्यादि (*ityādi*) — “and so on” — is इति plus आदि, “beginning”: *thus, and the rest*. And the closing line of every chapter of a classical text begins इति — *thus ends...*

What you’ve built

The mark that closes a quotation, in a language with no quotation marks.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *iti*
- *Read it:* इति, and say which side of it the quoted words sit on
- *Recall:* what इत्यादि is made of

Before you move on

Where do the quoted words stand relative to इति? (Before it.) Say इति once more.

54.2 ... इति चिन्तयति — a clause as the object

Say इति, and say which side of it the quoted words sit on.

Grammar Lens: what a thinking verb thinks

चिन्तयति has been in this book since the thinking verb arrived, with nothing to think. Every verb you have used takes a *noun* as its object — you see a house, you eat food. इति lets a verb take a **whole sentence** instead.

बालः गच्छति इति गुरुः चिन्तयति

bālah gacchati iti guruḥ cintayati

the teacher thinks that the boy is going

Take it apart in the order Sanskrit gives it to you:

piece	meaning	job
बालः गच्छति	the boy goes	the clause being thought
इति	thus	the clause ends here
गुरुः चिन्तयति	the teacher thinks	the frame around it

The inner clause is a complete sentence and stays one. Nothing is bent to make it fit inside the outer one — no *that*, no change of ending, no reordering. इति does all the joining by standing between them. Swap the outer verb and you have every reporting sentence at once: ... इति वदति (says), ... इति पृच्छति (asks), ... इति जानाति (knows). The inner clause never changes.

Compare this with the chapter before. यः ... सः joined two clauses by putting a pronoun in each. इति joins two clauses by putting one particle at the seam. Two joins, two mechanisms — and neither of them is a conjunction in the English sense.

What you've built

A sentence that reports another sentence.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *bālah gacchati iti guruḥ cintayati*
- *Say it:* it again, and name where the inner clause stops
- *Read it:* बालः गच्छति इति गुरुः चिन्तयति, then say what it means
- *Contrast:* the correlative puts a pronoun in each clause; इति puts one particle at the seam

Before you move on

Does the inner clause change when it is reported? (No.) Say the teacher-and-boy sentence once more.

54.3 इति — reviewed

Say इति, and say what it does to the words in front of it.

What you've built

Two chapters, two ways of putting two clauses in one sentence, and they work differently on purpose.

The correlative marks **both** clauses — a य- word in one, a त- word in the other — and the clauses stay equals. इति marks **one** seam, and makes the clause in front of it into the object of the verb behind it. That is the difference between *which one goes, that one sees* and *the teacher thinks that the boy goes*. In the first, neither clause is inside the other. In the second, the whole first clause is what the second one is about.

Your turn

- Say it: *bālaḥ gacchati iti guruḥ cintayati*
- Say it: *yaḥ gacchati saḥ paśyati*
- Contrast: which sentence puts one clause INSIDE the other

Before you move on

Name the two joining mechanisms you now have, and say which one subordinates.

Chapter 55

Having Gone, and In Order to Go

Modes: ⇌ voice (3) ⇌ Hands-free start: all 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can put two actions in one Sanskrit clause — one finished before the other with -त्वा, or one as the point of the other with -तुम्.

Complete SA-R55-non-finite and say both endings with one sentence apiece.

55.1 गत्वा (gatvā) — having gone

Say the teacher-and-boy sentence from the last chapter, and say where the inner clause stops. Then say *gacchati* and what it means.

Grammar Lens: one action finished, the next beginning

Every verb you have used so far has been the main verb of its sentence. Sanskrit has a form that is deliberately **not** the main verb: it names an action that finished before the main one started, and it never changes its ending.

Add -त्वा to the root and you have it.

गम् → गत्वा — *having gone*

पठ् → पठित्वा — *having read*

Now chain two actions in one clause, with one subject:

बालः गृहं गत्वा पठति

bālaḥ gṛhaṁ gatvā paṭhati

the boy, having gone home, reads

Three things make this form worth its own lesson:

1. **It carries no person, no number and no tense.** *gatvā* is the same word whoever went and whenever. The main verb at the end of the sentence carries all of that for both actions.
2. **Both actions belong to the same subject.** The boy goes and the boy reads. If the subjects differed, this form could not be used.
3. **It orders the actions.** *gatvā paṭhati* can only mean going first and reading second. English needs a word — *after, then* — to fix the order. Sanskrit fixes it with the ending.

This form has no English counterpart at all. *Having gone* is the nearest, and it is stiff in a way **गत्वा** is not: in Sanskrit this is ordinary, everyday, and extremely common.

What you've built

Two actions in one clause, in the order they happened.

Your turn

- Say it: *gatvā*
- Say it: *bālaḥ gṛhaṁ gatvā paṭhati*
- Say it: *paṭhitvā*, and say which action it puts first
- Read it: **गत्वा**, and name the ending that makes it

Before you move on

What does the **-त्वा** ending do to a root? (Makes an action that finished before the main one.) Say the boy-goes-home-and-reads sentence.

55.2 गन्तुम् (gantum) — to go

Say गत्वा and what its ending does. Which of the two actions in *gr̥hami gatvā paṭhati* happened first?

Grammar Lens: the form that names the action itself

-त्वा put an action *before* another one. -तुम् does something different: it names the action without placing it in time at all.

गम् → गन्तुम् — to go

पठ् → पठितुम् — to read

Used on its own it says why:

बालः पठितुम् गच्छति

bālaḥ paṭhitum gacchati

the boy goes in order to read

Set the pair side by side and the division of labour is clean:

form	ending	what it does
गत्वा	-त्वा	an action finished before the main one
गन्तुम्	-तुम्	the action named, with no time of its own

Now the part that is worth stopping for. Latin has a form called the **supine**, used after verbs of motion to say why you went — and it ends in **-tum**: *īre dormitum*, “to go to sleep”; *spectātum venīre*, “to come to watch”. That is the same ending, in the same job, inherited from the same ancestor. Not a borrowing and not a coincidence: Sanskrit -तुम् and Latin -tum are one suffix, split apart before either language existed.

What you’ve built

Both non-finite forms, and a reason to go somewhere.

Your turn

- Say it: *gantum*
- Say it: *bālāḥ paṭhitum gacchati*
- Contrast: *paṭhitvā gacchati* and *paṭhitum gacchati*, and say what each one means
- Read it: गन्तुम्, and name the Latin ending it matches

Before you move on

Which ending names the action itself, -त्वा or -तुम्? Say “the boy goes in order to read”.

55.3 -त्वा · -तुम् — the two endings, reviewed

Say गत्वा and गन्तुम्, and say which one puts its action first.

What you’ve built

Both of these endings do the same large thing: they let a sentence hold **two actions with one finite verb**. Everything about person, number and tense is carried by the verb at the end; the extra action rides along uninflected.

That is why they matter more than their size suggests. Until this chapter a Sanskrit sentence in this book had exactly one action in it, unless two clauses were pinned together with a pronoun pair or with इति. From here a single clause can carry two.

Keep the contrast, because it is the only thing you have to choose between:

- -त्वा — the action **happened first**
- -तुम् — the action is **the point of the other one**

Your turn

- Say it: *bālāḥ grāhami gatvā paṭhati*
- Say it: *bālāḥ paṭhitum gacchati*

- *Contrast*: say which sentence has the reading happen first
- *Recall*: the Latin ending that matches -तुम्

Before you move on

Say both endings and, for each, one sentence that uses it.

Chapter 56

What Happened Yesterday

Modes: ⇨ voice (2) 👁 eyes (1) ⇨ Hands-free start: first 1 of 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can put a Sanskrit verb into the past by prefixing the augment and shortening the ending, and finally say what happened yesterday.

Complete SA-R56-past and build the past of a verb nobody has shown you in the past.

56.1 अगच्छत् (agacchat) — he went

Say ह्यः, and what it means. Then say *gacchati*. You have had the word for yesterday since the time words and no verb to put in it.

Grammar Lens: two changes, and the present becomes the past

This is the largest hole in the book so far, and it closes with two small changes to a verb you already say.

गच्छति — *he goes*

अगच्छत् — *he went*

Put अ- on the front. **Cut the ending from -ति back to -त्.** That is the whole operation.

The अ- on the front has a name — the **augment** — and it does one job: it says *this happened before now*. It carries no person and no

number. It is a single syllable meaning “past”, glued to the front of the verb.

Now put it with the word you have been holding all that time:

ह्यः बालः अगच्छत्

hyaḥ bālaḥ agacchat

yesterday the boy went

That sentence was impossible one page ago. Not difficult —

impossible: the track had a word for yesterday and no verb form that could stand in it.

Here is the part that makes the augment worth remembering. **Greek does exactly the same thing.** Greek *lúei* is “he loosens”; *élue* is “he was loosening” — the same **e-** on the front, in the same job. Two branches of the family, two thousand miles and two alphabets apart, marking the past by prefixing one vowel. Neither borrowed it. Both inherited it.

What you’ve built

The past tense, and a use at last for ह्यः.

Your turn

- Say it: *gacchati*, then *agacchat*
- Say it: *hyaḥ bālaḥ agacchat*
- Read it: अगच्छत्, and point at the two things that changed
- Recall: the Greek prefix that does the same job

Before you move on

What two changes turn गच्छति into अगच्छत्? (अ- on the front, -ति cut to -त्.) Say “yesterday the boy went”.

56.2 अपठत् · अखादत् — the same two changes, on any verb

Turn गच्छति into the past out loud, and name the two things you changed.

Grammar Lens: it is a rule, not a word

अगच्छत् was not a new word to memorise. It was गच्छति with a rule applied, and the rule applies to every verb of its class in the same way.

present	past	meaning
गच्छति	अगच्छत्	goes / went
पठति	अपठत्	reads / read
खादति	अखादत्	eats / ate

Read down the middle column and the shape is identical every time: अ- in front, -त् at the back, the stem untouched in between.

बालः अन्नम् अखादत्

bālaḥ annam akhādat

the boy ate the food

This is the first time in this book that learning one verb form has given you several. Up to now each verb arrived as its own word. From here, every first-class present you already hold has a past you can build without being told it.

A caution worth having, said once and not laboured: Sanskrit has more than one past tense, and the classical language uses others too. This one — the **imperfect** — is the one a beginner meets first, forms most easily, and reads most often in narrative.

What you've built

A past for every first-class verb you already say.

Your turn

- Say it: *paṭhati*, then *apaṭhat*
- Say it: *khādati*, then *akhādat*

- *Say it:* *bālah annam akhādat*
- *Read it:* अपठत्, and say which verb it came from

Before you move on

Build the past of खादति without being told it. Say “the boy ate the food”.

56.3 अ- ... -त् — the past, reviewed

Say ह्यः, then say “yesterday the boy went”.

What you’ve built

Three time words have been sitting in this book waiting for a verb.

- ह्यः — yesterday, from the time words
- अद्य — today, from the time words
- श्वः — tomorrow, learnt with your first farewell

Until this chapter only one of the three could be used: अद्य, with the present. The other two named times the language could not talk about. अद्य and the present, ह्यः and the past — two of the three now work, and the third waits on a tense this book has not reached. That is worth naming plainly rather than glossing over. A track can teach a word and leave it unusable, and the only way to notice is to check what the learner can actually build with it.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *adya bālah gacchati* — today the boy goes
- *Say it:* *hyah bālah agacchat* — yesterday the boy went
- *Contrast:* the two sentences, and name every difference between them
- *Recall:* build the past of पठति and of खादति

Before you move on

Say the two changes that make a past, and use them on a verb
nobody has shown you in the past.

Chapter 57

Able, and Willing

Modes: ⇌ voice (2) ⇌ Hands-free start: all 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say what somebody is able to do and what they want to do, by putting the -तुम् form in front of शक्नोति or इच्छति.

Complete SA-C57-icchati and say both frames — the boy can read, and the boy wants to read.

57.1 शक्नोति (śaknoti) — is able

Build the past of पठति. Then say गन्तुम् and what its ending does.

You'll want to know: शक्नोति

शक्नोति (*śaknoti*) — “is able, can”.

Until now this book could say what somebody does and, since last chapter, what they did. It could not say what they **could** do.

शक्नोति takes the -तुम् form as its object — which is why it arrives two chapters after that ending and not before:

बालः गन्तुं शक्नोति

bālaḥ gantunī śaknoti

the boy can go

Read the Sanskrit literally and it says *the boy is-able to-go*. English puts *can* in front of a bare verb; Sanskrit puts शक्नोति at the end after an infinitive. Same idea, opposite order, and the infinitive is the piece that makes it possible.

You already know a word from this root without knowing it: शक्ति (*śakti*), “power, capacity” — the same शक्, made into a noun. English borrowed that one whole.

(The म् of गन्तुम् is written ँ here — *gantum* — because a following consonant softens it. You have read that mark since the asking verb.)

What you’ve built

Ability: what somebody is able to do, not merely what they do.

Your turn

- Say it: *śaknoti*
- Say it: *bālāḥ gantum śaknoti*
- Say it: the same sentence with *paṭhitum* instead, and say what it now means
- Read it: शक्नोति, and name the noun English borrowed from its root

Before you move on

What form does शक्नोति take as its object? (The -तुम् form.) Say “the boy can go”.

57.2 इच्छति (icchatī) — wants

Say “the boy can go”. Which of the two words in it is the -तुम् form?

You’ll want to know: इच्छति

इच्छति (*icchatī*) — “wants, wishes”.

There is nothing new to learn about the frame. It is the frame you built one lesson ago, with a different verb at the end of it:

बालः पठितुम् इच्छति

bālaḥ paṭhitum icchati

the boy wants to read

Compare the pair and the shape holds still while the meaning turns:

sentence	meaning
बालः पठितुम् शक्नोति	the boy can read
बालः पठितुम् इच्छति	the boy wants to read

That is what makes the -तुम् form worth the lesson it got two chapters back. It is not one construction; it is a socket, and ability and desire are the first two things to plug into it.

The root is इष्, “to seek” — and the noun it makes is one you may have met in English writing about India: इच्छा (*icchā*), “wish, desire”.

What you’ve built

Desire, in the frame you already had.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *bālaḥ paṭhitum icchati*
- *Contrast:* the same sentence with *śaknoti*, and say what changed
- *Read it:* इच्छति, then say what it means

Before you move on

Say “the boy wants to read”, then say “the boy can read”.

Chapter 58

What Pleases Me

Modes: ⇨ voice (2) 👁 eyes (1) ⇨ Hands-free start: first 1 of 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say what I like in Sanskrit, putting myself in the dative and the thing I like in the nominative as the subject.

Complete SA-R58-likes and say all three frames, naming the subject of each.

58.1 मह्यम् (mahyam) — to me, for me

Say अहम् and what it means. Then recall पुनर्दर्शनाय — what did its -आय ending do?

You'll want to know: मह्यम्

मह्यम् (*mahyam*) — “to me, for me”.

You have used the dative case once already, without a pronoun in it. पुनर्दर्शनाय — *for seeing again*, your first farewell — was a noun in the dative, and the ending said “this is what it is **for**”.

मह्यम् is that same case, on अहम्. *I* becomes *to me*.

अहम् — I, the one doing

मह्यम् — to me, the one it is done for

The word looks less like अहम् than you might expect, and that is not irregularity for its own sake: अहम् and मह्यम् come from two different ancient

stems that the language pressed into one pronoun. English does exactly the same — *I* and *me* share no letters either, for the same reason.

On its own मह्यम् is not much. In the next lesson it becomes the whole point, because Sanskrit's ordinary way of saying that you like something puts **you** in this case and the thing you like in the subject.

What you've built

The word for the person something is done to or for.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *aham*, then *mahyam*
- *Say it:* which of the two is the subject, and which is the one receiving
- *Recall:* the chapter-4 word whose ending was the same case
- *Read it:* मह्यम्, then say what it means

Before you move on

What does मह्यम् mean, and what case is it? (“To me”, the dative.)

58.2 रोचते (rocate) — is pleasing to

Say मह्यम्, and say what case it is in.

Grammar Lens: the thing you like is the subject

Sanskrit has no verb that means “to like” with the liker as its subject. It says something else, and once you see the shape it is easy:

मह्यं फलं रोचते

mahyani phalami rocate

the fruit is pleasing to me — that is, **I like the fruit**

Look at what is doing what:

piece	case	job
मह्यम्	dative	the person who does the liking
फलम्	nominative	the thing liked — and the SUBJECT
रोचते	verb	agrees with the fruit, not with me

The verb agrees with the thing you like. If two things pleased you, the verb would be plural, and मह्यम् would not change at all. The liker is never the subject of this sentence.

If you have met Spanish, you have met this exact shape: *me gusta la fruta* — the fruit pleases me. Two unrelated branches of Indo-European settled on the same answer, which is a good sign that the English way round is the odd one.

And the root is worth a moment. रुच् means “to shine”. *The fruit shines for me* is what the sentence originally said. The same root gives Latin *lūx*, “light”, and *lūcere*, “to shine” — and through Latin it gives English *lucid* and *translucent*. Liking something, in Sanskrit, is that thing lighting up for you.

What you’ve built

A way to say what you like, with the grammar the language actually uses.

Your turn

- *Say it:* mahyam phalam rocate
- *Say it:* which word the verb agrees with
- *Read it:* मह्यं फलं रोचते, then say what it means in ordinary English
- *Contrast:* English makes the liker the subject; Sanskrit makes the thing liked the subject

Before you move on

In मह्यं फलं रोचते, who is the subject? (The fruit.) Say “I like the fruit” in Sanskrit.

58.3 मह्यं ... रोचते — the liking frame, reviewed

Say “I like the fruit” in Sanskrit, and name the subject of the sentence you said.

What you’ve built

Three sentences about what a person is able to do, wants to do, and likes — and two of the three share a shape while the third breaks it deliberately.

- बालः पठितुम् शक्नोति — the boy **can** read
- बालः पठितुम् इच्छति — the boy **wants to** read
- मह्यं फलं रोचते — I **like** the fruit

The first two put the person in the nominative and an infinitive before the verb. The third puts the person in the **dative** and makes the liked thing the subject.

That is not an inconsistency to be smoothed over — it is the fact about Sanskrit worth carrying out of this chapter. Ability and desire belong to the person. Pleasing is something the **thing** does.

Your turn

- *Say it: bālāḥ paṭhitum śaknoti*
- *Say it: bālāḥ paṭhitum icchati*
- *Say it: mahyāni phalaṇi rocate*
- *Contrast:* name which of the three puts the person in the dative

Before you move on

Say all three sentences, and for each one name who or what the subject is.

Chapter 59

Where You Come From

Modes: ⇄ voice (4) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a country, name India, say that somebody is Indian, and answer कुतः with the ablative.

Complete SA-C59-bharatat and answer कुतः out loud, then say that he comes from India.

59.1 देशः (deśah) — a country

Say कुतः and what it asks. Then say “I like the fruit”. You have been able to ask *from where?* since the question words and had nothing to answer it with.

You’ll want to know: देशः

देशः (deśah) — “a country, a region”.

The track has taught you a village, a city, a road and a forest. It has never taught you the largest of the containers, and it is the one a form asks for first.

The word is built on दिश् (dis-), “to point out, to show”. A देशः began as whatever a pointing hand took in — a stretch of land indicated rather than measured.

That root travelled a long way west. Latin *dīcere*, “to say”, and *index*, the pointing finger, grow from the same ancient root as दिश्. The finger you use to show somebody where you are from is the finger the word is named after.

What you've built

The first of three words for saying where you are from.

Your turn

- *Recall:* say *grāmaḥ*, then say कुतः and what it asks
- *Hear:* *deśaḥ*, said once slowly and once at speed
- *Say it:* *deśaḥ*
- *Read it:* देशः, then say what it means

Before you move on

What does देशः mean, and which root is it built on? (“A country”, and दिश्, to point out.)

59.2 भारतम् (Bhāratam) — India

Say *deśaḥ* and what it means. Then say अस्ति.

You'll want to know: भारतम्

भारतम् (*Bhāratam*) — “India”.

A country and the name of one:

भारतं देशः अस्ति — *Bhāratam deśaḥ asti* — **India is a country**

The name is older than any modern country. भरत (*Bharata*) is a figure the Sanskrit epics name, and भारत is the form built from it meaning “belonging to Bharata” — the land of his people. The great epic is called the महाभारतम्, and the महा- on the front of it is the महत् you learnt in the adjectives: *the great [story] of the Bharatas*.

English *India* took an entirely different road. It came through Greek and Persian from सिन्धु (*Sindhu*), the river — the same word that gives *Sindh* and, by a further turn, *Hindu*. So one country carries two names that began as two different things: a people and a river.

What you've built

A country, and the name of one.

Your turn

- Say it: *Bhāratam*
- Say it: *Bhāratam deśaḥ asti*
- Recall: read देशः and say what it means
- Read it: महाभारतम्, and find the महा- you already know inside it

Before you move on

What is भारतम्, and where does the name come from? (India, from भरत.) Say “India is a country”.

59.3 भारतीयः (bhāratīyaḥ) — Indian

Say भारतम्. Then recall the adjective rule: where does an adjective stand, and what does it do to match its noun?

You'll want to know: भारतीयः

भारतीयः (*bhāratīyaḥ*) — “Indian”.

A country name is a noun. Saying that a **person** belongs to it needs an adjective, and Sanskrit makes one with a suffix you can now watch working:

भारतम् → भारतीयः — *of Bhārata, Indian*

सः भारतीयः — *saḥ bhāratīyaḥ* — **he is Indian**

The piece that does the work is the *-īya* suffix, and you can see it in the word: the ी after भारत, then य, then the masculine -ः. It is a machine, not a one-off. Give it a place and it gives you the adjective for belonging to that place, and the ending then agrees with whoever you are describing exactly as महत् and नव do.

Notice what the sentence does **not** have. There is no अस्ति in it. Sanskrit can leave the *is* out when its only work is to link two things, and here it

does — *he, Indian*. You have seen that before in न चिन्ता; this is the same economy.

What you’ve built

A country, its name, and the word for somebody who belongs to it.

Your turn

- Say it: *bhāratīyaḥ*
- Say it: *saḥ bhāratīyaḥ*
- Recall: say भारतम्, then build the adjective from it out loud
- Read it: भारतीयः, and find the ी and the य that build it

Before you move on

What suffix turns a place into “belonging to that place”? (*-īya*.)
Say “he is Indian”.

59.4 भारतात् (Bhāratāt) — from India

Say कुतः. Then say “he is Indian”.

Grammar Lens: the ending that answers the question

कुतः has been in this book since the question words asking *from where?* and until now the book had no way to answer it. Naming the country was only half the fix. The other half is an ending.

कुतः? — *from where?*

भारतात्! — *from India*.

The -आत् is the **ablative** — the case whose one job is *away from*. Put it on a place and the place becomes a starting point:

word	ending	meaning
भारतम्	-अम्	India
भारतात्	-आत्	from India
देशात्	-आत्	from the country

And in a whole sentence, with the come-verb you already hold:

सः भारतात् आगच्छति

saḥ Bhāratāt āgacchati

he comes from India

This is the pattern to keep, because it is how Sanskrit answers most questions of place: **the question word carries the sense, and the answer carries the case.** कुतः itself ends in -तः, which is the same *away-from* meaning frozen onto a question word — the question is built out of the answer’s grammar.

What you’ve built

An answer to a question this book has been asking for forty chapters.

Your turn

- *Say it: kutaḥ?* — then answer it: *Bhāratāt*
- *Say it: saḥ Bhāratāt āgacchati*
- *Say it: deśāt*, and say what it means
- *Read it: भारतात्*, and name the ending that makes it “from”

Before you move on

Which ending means “from”? (-आत्.) Answer कुतः out loud.

Chapter 60

The Stick at the End

Modes: ✍ pen (1) ⇌ Hands-free start: none of the 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can read and write the daṇḍa that ends a Sanskrit sentence, and say what classical Sanskrit punctuates with instead of the marks English uses.

Complete SA-C60-danda and say what a single stroke marks and what a doubled one marks.

60.1 । — the daṇḍa

Answer कुतः out loud. You have been reading Sanskrit sentences for fifty-nine chapters. Nobody has told you how one ends.

Script: the whole of Sanskrit punctuation

। — the daṇḍa, “the stick”.

One vertical stroke, drawn from the headline down. It marks the end of a sentence, and it is very nearly the entire punctuation system of classical Sanskrit.

सः भारतात् आगच्छति।

यः गच्छति सः पश्यति।

Doubled — ॥ — it closes a verse, and the pair of strokes is what you see at the end of every line of a printed śloka.

What is worth noticing is everything the list does **not** contain. Classical Sanskrit has no comma, no colon, no brackets, no quotation marks, no question mark and no exclamation mark. Where English reaches for punctuation, Sanskrit reaches for a word: you met इति two chapters ago closing a quotation that no quotation mark was ever going to close, and किम् at the front of a sentence does the work of a question mark.

That is not a gap in the writing system. It is a different division of labour — the grammar carries what the marks carry in English, and one stick is enough for the rest.

Writing: ।

- **1.** draw a single vertical stroke top-to-bottom, the height of a letter, immediately after the last letter of the sentence

Pen lifts: 0. The stroke is one movement and there is nothing to add to it.

The daṇḍa is a mark of punctuation rather than a letter: it carries no sound, takes no vowel sign, and never joins to what stands beside it.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find the mark that ends it

यः गच्छति सः पश्यति।

- *Trace it:* । three times
- *Say it:* three things English punctuates that Sanskrit does not

Before you move on

What does । mark, and what does ॥ mark? (The end of a sentence, and the end of a verse.)

Chapter 61

The Turning Season

Modes: 👁 eyes (1) ✍ pen (1) 🖐 Hands-free start: none of the 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a season in Sanskrit and write the independent vowel ऋ that its name begins with.

Complete SA-S225-letter-vocalic-r and name the word you already say that begins with ऋ.

61.1 ऋतुः (ṛtuḥ) — a season

What does ळ mark? Then say दिनम् and मासः, and say which names the longer stretch.

You’ll want to know: ऋतुः

ऋतुः (ṛtuḥ) — “a season”.

You have a word for a day. This is the word for the largest division of the year below the year itself — and in India the count is traditionally **six** rather than four.

The word comes from the root ऋ, “to go, to move” — a season is a **turn that comes round**. That is worth holding, because the same root gives one of the most important words in the whole language: ऋतम् (ṛtam), the fixed order of things, the way the world turns as it should. A season is one turn of that order.

The far end of that family reaches English. From the same root, through Latin *rītus*, comes English **rite** — a thing done at its proper turn. And *ars*, “art”, is a cousin: skill as things fitted together in their proper order.

Look at the first letter. ऋ is the independent vowel *r* — and it is the first word in this book that begins with it. You have written its small form, the ृ hanging under a consonant, in गृहम् and हृदयम्. This is the full-size letter it becomes when nothing carries it.

The next lesson draws it.

What you’ve built

A season, and a word that needs a letter you have never been shown whole.

Your turn

- *Hear:* ṛtuḥ, said once slowly and once at speed
- *Say it:* ṛtuḥ
- *Recall:* say *dinam*, then *māsaḥ*, and place *ṛtuḥ* between them by length
- *Look:* at ऋतुः and at गृहम्, and find the same vowel in two shapes

Before you move on

What does ऋतुः mean, and how many seasons does the Indian count traditionally have? (“A season”, and six.)

61.2 ऋ — the independent vowel

Say ऋतुः and what it means. Then find the ृ under the ग in गृहम्.

Script: ऋ

ऋ — *r*.

It is an **independent vowel**: the full-size letter this vowel wears when it opens a word and has no consonant to lean on. You have known its other half for a long time — inside a word the same vowel is the small ृ written under the consonant, which you have been reading in गृहम् and हृदयम् for a long while.

What it is made of:

- a short upper-left shoulder turning into a diagonal hook

- a separate rounded middle body continuing into the lower tail
- a top-to-bottom right stem
- the top shirorekhā

You already say these, and every one of them has ऋ somewhere inside it:

- ऋतुः *ṛtuḥ* — a season

Writing: ऋ

1. start at the open upper-left tip, sweep right through the short shoulder, then turn down-left through the diagonal hook
2. lift at the middle body's left edge, loop anticlockwise round its little ball, then run down to the right and swing the lower bowl left, round the bottom, and out to the right without lifting
3. lift and draw the right stem top-to-bottom
4. lift and draw the top shirorekhā left-to-right

Pen lifts: 3. The pen comes up 3 times and no more.

verified four-stroke modern printed teaching form; Hindi normally reads the inherited vowel as ri

This is one attested teaching order and not a national standard — handwriting here is taught with school-to-school variation. Source: Saurmandal, ‘Devanagari ऋ stroke order.svg’, panels 1–4, Wikimedia Commons, 5 August 2023.

Your turn

- *Look:* at this, and find ऋ in it

ऋतुः

- *Trace it:* ऋ three times, saying *r* as you finish each one
- *Contrast:* the full ऋ at the front of ऋतुः and the small ृ under the ग of गृहम्

Before you move on

Which character is this — र? What sound does it carry? (r.)
Name the word you already say that begins with it.

Chapter 62

The Ending That Counts

Modes: ⇐ voice (4) 👁 eyes (2) ⇐ **Hands-free start:** first 1 of 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can make a Sanskrit ordinal from a number by putting -ma on it, and I can name the one number between five and ten where that does not work.

Complete SA-R62-the-ending and run pañcamah to daśamah, then name the number the chapter walked past and why.

62.1 पञ्चमः (pañcamah) — fifth

A second kind of number word begins here, so the recalls come first, at the four growing distances this book measures.

- *Recall:* read ऋ — **R1**, one lesson back
- *Recall:* say bhāratīyaḥ — **R2**, five lessons back
- *Recall:* close a quoted thought with iti — **R3**, twenty lessons back
- *Recall:* say sahasā — **R4**, eighty lessons back

You'll want to know: पञ्चमः

पञ्चमः (pañcamah) — “fifth”.

You have counted एक द्व त्रि चतुर् पञ्च since chapter six. Those words answer **how many**. This one answers **which one in the line**, and Sanskrit keeps a second set of words for that job.

An ordinal is an ordinary adjective, so it wears the endings you already know: पञ्चमः for a masculine thing, पञ्चमम् for a neuter one.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

पञ्च + म्.

The number is not worn down and not replaced. It stands there whole, and a single syllable goes on the end.

Macdonell's dictionary prints the word with the join marked — *pañca-má* — and it will print four more the same way before this chapter is out.

This lesson does not begin at *first*. It begins at *fifth* because -म् is the ending that WORKS, and a rule has to be visible before anything can be seen departing from it. The words for *first*, *second* and *third* all depart from it, and they wait.

What you've built

One ordinal, and the ending that will make the next four for free.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *pañca*, then *pañcamah*
- which of the two answers *how many* — *pañca*
- the ending that turned one into the other — *-ma*

Before you move on

What is पञ्च plus -म्? (पञ्चमः.) Why did this chapter not begin at *first*? (**Because the rule has to be seen before a departure from it can be read as one.**)

Source: Macdonell, *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary*, p. 149 (DSAL).

62.2 सप्तमः (saptamah) — seventh

Four recalls, at four distances.

- *Recall*: say the ending that makes an ordinal — **R1**, one lesson back

- *Recall:* say *Bhāratāt* and name the ending that means “from” — **R2**, five lessons back
- *Recall:* say *iti* — **R3**, twenty-two lessons back
- *Recall:* say *prāyaḥ* — **R4**, eighty lessons back

You’ll want to know: सप्तमः

सप्तमः (*saptamaḥ*) — “seventh”.

Build it before you read it: you have सप्त, and you have -म.

सप्त + म. Nothing else changed.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Chapter nineteen showed you that सप्त, Latin *septem* and English *seven* are the same word travelling three roads. The ordinal carries the same news one step further.

Latin’s seventh is **septimus**. Look at the two endings side by side: Sanskrit -म, Latin -mus. That is not a coincidence and it is not a borrowing — it is one inherited ordinal ending, worn slightly differently in two mouths.

English went the other way and used a different suffix for all of them, which is why English says *seven-th* where Latin says *septi-mus*. Both endings are old. Sanskrit kept both, and the rest of this chapter and the next is the story of which numbers got which.

What you’ve built

A second ordinal, made rather than learned, and the first sign that the ending is older than Sanskrit.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *sapta*, then *saptamaḥ*
- *pañcamah*, then *saptamaḥ*
- the Latin word with the same ending — *septimus*

Before you move on

What is सप्त plus -म? (सप्तमः.) Which Latin word shows the same ending? (*Septimus*.)

Source: Macdonell, *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary*, p. 335 (DSAL).

62.3 अष्टमः (aṣṭamaḥ) — eighth

Four recalls, at four distances.

- *Recall*: say *saptamaḥ* — **R1**, one lesson back
- *Recall*: draw the 1 and say what it marks — **R2**, five lessons back
- *Recall*: say *gatvā* and name what the -त्वा does — **R3**, twenty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *kiñcit* — **R4**, eighty lessons back

You'll want to know: अष्टमः

अष्टमः (aṣṭamaḥ) — “eighth”.

अष्ट + म. Third time, same move.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Eight is where the cousins stop agreeing. Latin's eighth is **octāvus** — not *octimus*, not *octus*, but a shape that matches nothing else in its own row. English says *eighth*, keeping its own **-th**.

Sanskrit does nothing unusual at all here. अष्ट takes -म exactly as सप्त did.

That is worth noticing for a reason beyond the word: it tells you that the -म ending is not merely common in Sanskrit but **PRODUCTIVE** — the ending a speaker reaches for by default, rather than one of several stored shapes. You will meet the one number in this range where that is not true, and it will stand out.

What you've built

A third ordinal for free, and a reason to expect the fourth.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *aṣṭa*, then *aṣṭamaḥ*
- *pañcamah saptamah aṣṭamah*
- which language broke step at eight — **Latin**

Before you move on

What is अष्ट plus -म्? (अष्टम्.) Did Sanskrit do anything special at eight? (No.)

Source: Macdonell, *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary*, p. 33 (DSAL).

62.4 नवमः (navamaḥ) — ninth

Four recalls, at four distances.

- *Recall*: say *aṣṭamaḥ* — **R1**, one lesson back
- *Recall*: say *ṛtuḥ* — **R2**, five lessons back
- *Recall*: say *gantum* and name what the -तुम् does — **R3**, twenty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *bahu* — **R4**, eighty lessons back

You'll want to know: नवमः

नवमः (*navamaḥ*) — “ninth”.

नव + म. Chapter nineteen taught the number as नवन्; the final न् drops before the ending and नव is what the ordinal is built on.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Now a warning, because two Sanskrit words meet here and look identical.

नव — *nava* — “**new**” (chapter fifteen)

नव — *nava* — “**nine**”, the stem under नवन् (chapter nineteen)

They are not one word with two senses. They are two different words that happened to wear down to the same shape, and Sanskrit lives with the collision.

नवमः is built on the SECOND of them. It means *ninth*, never *newest*. Latin has the same pair and the same trouble — *novus* “new” beside *novem* “nine” — which is a good reason to believe the collision is inherited rather than invented in India.

What you’ve built

A fourth ordinal, and a pair of look-alikes told apart.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *navan*, then *navamaḥ*
- the other नव, the one that means *new*
- *saptamaḥ aṣṭamaḥ navamaḥ*

Before you move on

Which नव is नवमः built on? (**The one that means nine.**) What does the other one mean? (**New.**)

Source: Macdonell, *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary*, p. 137 (DSAL).

62.5 दशमः (daśamaḥ) — tenth

Four recalls, at four distances.

- *Recall*: say *navamaḥ* — **R1**, one lesson back
- *Recall*: read ऋ — **R2**, five lessons back
- *Recall*: say *patiḥ* — **R3**, forty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *ātithyam* — **R4**, eighty lessons back

You'll want to know: दशमः

दशमः (*daśamaḥ*) — “tenth”.

दश + म, and Latin's tenth is **decimus** — the same ending again, in the same place.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Count what this chapter has done:

number	ordinal
पञ्च	पञ्चमः
सप्त	सप्तमः
अष्ट	अष्टमः
नवन्	नवमः
दश	दशमः

Five ordinals, one ending, nothing memorised.

Now look at the left-hand column and find what is missing. षट् is not there. You have counted with it since chapter nineteen and this chapter has walked straight past it.

That was on purpose, and it is not because *sixth* is rare. षट् is the one number between five and ten whose ordinal does NOT take -म, and the next chapter opens on it — because a hole is only interesting once the thing around it is solid.

What you've built

Five ordinals from one ending, and one number deliberately left out.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *daśa*, then *daśamaḥ*
- the run — *pañcamaḥ saptamaḥ aṣṭamaḥ navamaḥ daśamaḥ*
- the number this chapter skipped — *ṣaṭ*

Before you move on

How many ordinals did this chapter build from one ending? (**Five.**)

Which number did it leave out, and why? (षट् — **because its**

ordinal does not take -ऋ.)

Source: Macdonell, *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary*, p. 117 (DSAL).

62.6 Five ordinals, one ending, and a hole at six

Four recalls, at four distances, before the run.

- *Recall*: say *daśamaḥ* — **R1**, one lesson back
- *Recall*: say *pañcamaḥ* — **R2**, five lessons back
- *Recall*: say *agacchat* and name the ऋ- at the front — **R3**, twenty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *vinayaḥ* — **R4**, eighty lessons back

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the five in order — *pañcamaḥ saptaṁ aṣṭamaḥ navamaḥ daśamaḥ*
- each number with its ordinal — *pañca pañcamaḥ, sapta saptaṁ,* and on
- how many of the five you had to be told — **none of them**
- the number missing from the run, and what it is — *ṣaṭ*, **six**

What you've built

Five ordinals for the price of one syllable, and one question left open. The question is worth stating exactly, because the next chapter answers it and then keeps going. It is not “*why is sixth irregular?*” — that phrasing assumes the ending you learned is the only one Sanskrit has. It is:

If -ऋ is not what sixth uses, what does it use, and is it alone?

It is not alone. There are two more endings in this system, and between them they account for every ordinal below five as well as the one this chapter walked past.

Before you move on

What ending makes an ordinal out of a number? (-म.) Which number between five and ten does not use it? (षट्.)

Chapter 63

The Endings Before It

Modes: ⇨ voice (5) 👁 eyes (1) ⇨ **Hands-free start:** first 5 of 6 lessons.

***By the end of this chapter:** I can say all ten Sanskrit ordinals, sort them by which of three endings they take, and say why the word for first belongs to none of them.*

Complete SA-R63-all-ten and run prathamah to daśamah, then group the ten by ending and name the one that belongs to no group.

63.1 षष्ठः (ṣaṣṭhaḥ) — sixth

Four recalls, at four distances.

- *Recall:* say *daśamah* — **R1**, two lessons back
- *Recall:* say *saptamah* — **R2**, five lessons back
- *Recall:* say *apaṭhat* and name the two things that mark a past tense — **R3**, twenty lessons back
- *Recall:* say *namratā* — **R4**, eighty lessons back

You'll want to know: षष्ठः

षष्ठः (ṣaṣṭhaḥ) — “sixth”.

The last chapter would have predicted षष्टमः. That word does not exist.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Macdonell prints the join, as he does for every one of these words. For *fifth* he prints *pañca-má*. For *sixth* he prints:

ṣaṣ-thá

Not -म. -थ.

So *sixth* is not a broken -म word. It is a whole word made with a DIFFERENT ending — one you have not met, which is why the last chapter could not have taught it and did not try.

Two things follow, and the second is the useful one:

1. Sanskrit has at least two ordinal endings, not one.
2. -थ is the one the cousins kept. English still says *six-th*, *seven-th*, *ten-th*; Latin says *sextus* and *quartus*. Both endings were inherited — Latin has the other one too, in *septimus* and *decimus* — and each language divided its numbers between them differently.

So *sixth* is not a broken Sanskrit word. It is one of the numbers that stayed on the ending the whole family shares, while -म took the rest.

What you've built

The missing ordinal, and a second ending the family shares.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *ṣaṣ*, then *ṣaṣthaḥ*
- the ending it uses, and the ending it does not — *-tha*, not *-ma*
- the English word with the same ending — *sixth*

Before you move on

What ending does षष्ठः carry? (-थ.) Which of the two endings did English keep? (-थ — *six-th*.)

Source: Macdonell, *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary*, p. 324 (DSAL).

63.2 चतुर्थः (caturthaḥ) — fourth

Four recalls, at four distances.

- Recall: say *ṣaṣṭhaḥ* — **R1**, one lesson back
- Recall: say *aṣṭamaḥ* — **R2**, five lessons back
- Recall: say *yaḥ* and name the word it always calls for — **R3**, thirty-three lessons back
- Recall: say *viśvāsaḥ* — **R4**, eighty lessons back

You'll want to know: चतुर्थः

चतुर्थः (caturthaḥ) — “fourth”.

Macdonell prints it **katur-thá**. That is the same -थ you met one lesson ago.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

One lesson ago षष्ठः was a single odd word. Now it has company:

number	ordinal	ending
चतुर्	चतुर्थः	-थ
षट्	षष्ठः	-थ

Two words with the same ending are not an exception. They are a **set** — a small one, but a set, and it has its own territory: -थ sits at four and at six, and -म् sits at five and at everything from seven up.

That arrangement is worth pausing on, because it is genuinely strange. The two endings are not divided by size, or by sound, or by anything a learner could guess. They are interleaved: four, then five, then six, and the ending changes at every step.

Latin does the same thing at the same numbers and draws the line in a different place — *quārtus*, *quīntus*, *sextus* all take the -t- ending, and only from *septimus* does Latin switch to -m-. The two languages sorted an inherited pair of endings into different piles.

What you've built

A second **-थ** word, which turns yesterday's exception into today's pattern.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *catur*, then *caturthaḥ*
- the two words that share **-थ** — *caturthaḥ*, *ṣaṣthaḥ*
- the number between them, and its ending — *pañcamah*, **-ma**

Before you move on

Which two numbers take **-थ**? (**Four and six.**) What sits between them? (**Five, with -म.**)

Source: Macdonell, *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary*, p. 91 (DSAL).

63.3 तृतीयः (tṛtīyaḥ) — third

Four recalls, at four distances.

- *Recall*: say *caturthaḥ* — **R1**, one lesson back
- *Recall*: say *navamaḥ* — **R2**, five lessons back
- *Recall*: say *śaknoti* — **R3**, twenty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *saralaḥ* — **R4**, eighty lessons back

You'll want to know: तृतीयः

तृतीयः (tṛtīyaḥ) — “third”.

Neither **-म** nor **-थ**. This is a third ending, and the number under it has moved as well.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Macdonell prints it **tri-tīya**, and the printed form is तृतीयः. Two things happened:

1. The ending is -तीय, longer than the other two and unlike either.
2. The इ of त्रि became ऋ — the vowel you learned to read two chapters ago, here doing ordinary work inside an ordinary word.

That second point is why this lesson is worth its place even for a reader who only wanted the vocabulary. ऋ arrived in this book as the first letter of ऋतुः, a word where it simply is what it is. Here it is the RESULT of something: a vowel that shifted when an ending was put on. The letter has a job, not just a shape.

The English cousin kept the -t- ending instead: *thir-d*, from an older *thrid-*. Latin took the same road with *tertius*.

What you've built

A third ending, and the vocalic ऋ caught doing grammar.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *tri*, then *ṛtīyaḥ*
- the three endings so far — *-ma*, *-tha*, *-tīya*
- what happened to the vowel of *tri* — **it became ṛ**

Before you move on

What ending does तृतीयः carry? (-तीय.) Which vowel replaced the इ of त्रि? (ऋ.)

Source: Macdonell, *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary*, p. 111 (DSAL).

63.4 द्वितीयः (dvitīyaḥ) — second

Four recalls, at four distances.

- *Recall*: say *ṛtīyaḥ* — **R1**, one lesson back
- *Recall*: say *daśamaḥ* — **R2**, five lessons back
- *Recall*: say *icchatī* — **R3**, twenty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *śvetaḥ* — **R4**, eighty lessons back

You'll want to know: द्वितीयः

द्वितीयः (*dvitīyaḥ*) — “second”.

द्वि + तीय. Macdonell prints it **dvi-tīya**.

Chapter six gave you the number as द्व (*dva*). द्वि- is the shape that same word takes when something is built on it. The ordinal uses that shape and adds nothing else.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

So -तीय is not a one-off either:

number	ordinal
द्व (द्वि-) त्रि	द्वितीयः तृतीयः

Two and three take -तीय; four and six take -थ; five and seven upward take -म. Three endings, each with its own numbers, and no way to predict from the number which one it gets.

There is something else worth saying about this one in particular.

Chapter six taught you that द्व is grammatically DUAL — Sanskrit's own third number, used for exactly two of anything. The ordinal shows no trace of that. द्वितीयः is an ordinary singular adjective describing one thing, the second one. Being *second* is not being *two*.

Sanskrit also uses द्वितीयः for “a companion” — the second person in a pair. Macdonell lists that sense right beside the numeral.

What you've built

The third ending confirmed as a pair, and one ordinal left.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *dvi*, then *dvitīyaḥ*
- the two words that share -तीय — *dvitīyaḥ*, *tritīyaḥ*
- which of the two changed its vowel — *tr̥tīyaḥ*

Before you move on

Which numbers take -तीय? (**Two and three.**) Is द्वितीयः a dual word? (**No — an ordinary singular adjective.**)

Source: Macdonell, *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary*, p. 128 (DSAL).

63.5 प्रथमः (prathamah) — first

Four recalls, at four distances.

- Recall: say *dvitīyaḥ* — **R1**, one lesson back
- Recall: say *pañcamah* — **R2**, ten lessons back
- Recall: say *mahyam* — **R3**, twenty lessons back
- Recall: say *śyāmah* — **R4**, eighty lessons back

You'll want to know: प्रथमः

प्रथमः (*prathamah*) — “first”.

Look for एक in it. There is none — not a letter of it.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Macdonell prints this one with a note the other nine do not get:

pra-thamá [= pra-tama, spv. *foremost*]

Read it in three pieces.

प्र (*pra*) is “forward, in front”. -तम is the ending that makes a superlative — the *most* of something. And *spv.* is Macdonell’s abbreviation for exactly that.

So प्रथमः is not *one-th*. It is **foremost** — the most forward thing — and it landed in the ordinal series because that is what being first amounts to, not because anyone built it out of a number.

English did the identical thing on its own road. *First* is the superlative of *fore*: *fore*, *former*, *first*. Two languages, no contact, the same idea: the word for *first* is not counted to, it is a claim about being ahead.

That is why this chapter saved it for last. Every other ordinal in these two chapters answered the question *what happens to the number?* This one answers a different question, and it could only be heard as different once the other nine had answered the first one.

What you've built

All ten ordinals, and the knowledge that the tenth one you learned is not built like any of the others.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *prathamah*, then *dvitīyah*
- which number is inside *prathamah* — **none**
- what it literally claims — **foremost**

Before you move on

Is एक anywhere inside प्रथमः? (**No.**) What does the word literally mean? (**Foremost** — प्र, “forward”, with a superlative ending.)
Source: Macdonell, *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary*, p. 178 (DSAL).

63.6 All ten, and the three endings that made them

Four recalls, at four distances, before the run.

- Recall: say *prathamah* — **R1**, one lesson back
- Recall: say *ṣaṣṭhaḥ* — **R2**, five lessons back
- Recall: say *mahyami rocate* — **R3**, twenty lessons back
- Recall: say *pītaḥ* — **R4**, eighty lessons back

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- all ten in order — *prathamah dvitīyah tṛtīyah caturthaḥ pañcamah ṣaṣṭhaḥ saptamah aṣṭamah navamah daśamah*
- the five that share -म् — *pañcamah saptamah aṣṭamah navamah daśamah*

- the two that share -थ, and the two that share -तीय
- the one that shares nothing — *prathamah*

What you've built

Ten ordinals, and they sort into four groups rather than one list. The evidence is not this book's; it is printed in the dictionary, because Macdonell marks the join inside every headword:

ordinal	Macdonell's join	ending
प्रथमः	<i>pra-thamá</i> [= pra-tama, spv.], p. 178	none — a superlative
द्वितीयः	<i>dvi-tīya</i> , p. 128	-तीय
तृतीयः	<i>tri-tīya</i> , p. 111	-तीय
चतुर्थः	<i>katur-thá</i> , p. 91	-थ
पञ्चमः	<i>pañca-má</i> , p. 149	-म
षष्ठः	<i>ṣaṣ-thá</i> , p. 324	-थ
सप्तमः	<i>sapta-má</i> , p. 335	-म
अष्टमः	<i>aṣṭa-má</i> , p. 33	-म
नवमः	<i>nava-má</i> , p. 137	-म
दशमः	<i>daśa-má</i> , p. 117	-म

Read the right-hand column downward and the order these two chapters used stops looking odd. Chapter sixty-two taught the block of five that share one ending. Chapter sixty-three worked outward from the hole that block left, and every step was licensed by the one before it: षष्ठः was strange until चतुर्थः made it a pair; तृतीयः was a third oddity until द्वितीयः made it a pair; and प्रथमः could only be recognised as a word of a different KIND once nine words of the same kind had gone past. Numerical order would have taught all four groups in the first four lessons and named none of them.

Before you move on

How many endings make the ten ordinals? (**Three** — -म, -थ, -तीय — **and one word that uses none of them.**) Which ending has the most numbers? (-म, **with five.**)

Chapter 64

Reading — Words, Lines, and a First Passage

Modes:  voice (1)  eyes (2)  Hands-free start: none of the 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can read a Sanskrit word cold by looking at its ending first, see that three shuffles of one sentence are still one sentence, and hold a whole passage about one village without translating it word by word.

Fourteen lines standing in one village, where च and वा follow what they join, किन्तु opens its line, and the whole thing closes on शान्तिः.

64.1 (reading) — six words, and the end of each one

Every word below you have already met. Not one is new.

What is new is that nobody says them to you first.

Read this

ग्रामः मार्गः दीपः गृहम् वनम् पुस्तकम्

Read down the list once, without stopping.

Again — and this time read the last letter of each one first.

What to know first

The six sorted themselves into two families before you read one of them for meaning. Three close on -अः, three close on -अम्, and you were told in Chapter 16 what that difference is.

This is the habit Sanskrit asks for and English never does. An English word carries its job in WHERE IT STANDS. A Sanskrit word carries its job in HOW IT ENDS.

So a reader of Sanskrit reads the end of a word first. It is not a trick for beginners — it is what the writing system is built to be read with, and the next lesson shows what it buys you.

Notice too that each word is printed with space around it and its ending whole. Running Sanskrit does not keep them that separate; a first reader needs to see the joints while they are still learning where they are.

Your turn

- *Say it:* the six words down the list, once, without stopping

Twice through:

Before you move on

How many of the six were new? (**None.**)

Where does an English word carry its job, and where does a Sanskrit one? (**English in its position; Sanskrit in its ending.**)

64.2 (reading) — six lines, and only two of them say anything different

The last lesson gave you words. These put them somewhere.

Six lines — and six is more than the number of things they say.

Read this

ग्रामः अत्र अस्ति। अत्र ग्रामः अस्ति। अस्ति अत्र ग्रामः। वनम् तत्र अस्ति। तत्र वनम् अस्ति। अस्ति तत्र वनम्।

Read the six once, straight down.

Now read the first three again and say what changed.

What to know first

Nothing changed. The first three lines are one sentence written three ways, and the second three are another. **The village is here. The forest is there.** That is the whole content of the page.

Do the same thing in English and it breaks, or it turns into something else. *The village is here* and *here is the village* and *is here the village* are not one sentence three ways.

This is what the last lesson bought. Because ग्रामः announces its own job with its ending, it does not need a position to hold that job for it — so the position is free, and a writer can put the emphasis wherever it belongs.

The usual order still puts the verb last, and the passage in the next lesson mostly keeps it there. The freedom is real; it is not disorder.

Read the ending, not the seat. Everything else in Sanskrit follows from that one habit.

Your turn

- *Say it:* the six lines aloud, once, straight down

Twice through:

Before you move on

Why can the words be shuffled? (**The ending carries the job**, so the position does not have to.)

What does a Sanskrit reader look at first? (**The end of the word.**)

64.3 (reading) — the first passage

Six words, then six lines. Now fourteen of them together.

Still not one new word.

Read this

एतत् गृहम् अस्ति। महत् गृहम् अस्ति। अत्र दीपः अस्ति। अत्र पुष्पम् च माला च। तत्र मार्गः अस्ति। तत्र वनम् च नदी च। पर्वतः तत्र अस्ति। किन्तु अत्र पर्वतः न अस्ति। अद्य बालः क्रीडति। बालः पुष्पम् वा फलम् वा गृह्णाति। धेनुः तृणम् खादति। वृद्धः अत्र तिष्ठति। नरः वनम् पश्यति। शान्तिः अत्र अस्ति।

Read it once without stopping. Do not translate as you go — let the lines arrive.

Now read it again, and watch where अत्र turns into तत्र.

What to know first

The passage stands in one village. The first half of it looks around — अत्र for what is at hand, तत्र for what is past the road — and the second half watches what the village is doing.

Three joiners carry all of it. च adds, वा offers, and किन्तु turns the page against itself: there is a mountain over there, BUT there is none here.

Two of the three sit where English would never put them. पुष्पम् च माला च is *the-flower-and the-garland-and* — च and वा stand AFTER what they join, once for each thing, while किन्तु stands first, which is why that line opens differently from every other line on the page.

The passage closes on शान्तिः. That is not a flourish added for an ending — it is the word Sanskrit recitation has closed on for a very long time, said three times over, and a reader meeting it at the foot of a page is meeting it where it has always been.

Your turn

- *Say it:* the passage aloud, once, without stopping

Twice through:

Before you move on

Where do च and वा stand? (**After** the thing they join, once for each.)
Which joiner stands first in its line? (किन्तु.)

The Devanagari script and Sanskrit sounds — a reference

A **reference**, not a chapter — the lessons teach reading through real words. This page gathers the system and the points Sanskrit needs even from a Devanagari reader.

How Devanagari works (the three facts)

1. **Consonants carry a built-in “a”.** क = ka, न = na, म = ma — left to right under a connecting top line.
2. **A vowel sign changes it:** का k̄a · कि ki · की kī · कु ku · के ke · को ko. A word-initial vowel has its own letter: अ a · आ ā · इ i · उ u · ए e · ओ o.
3. **A *halant* (ँ) removes the vowel**, and the bare consonant joins the next as a conjunct: स् + त → स्त, न् + य → न्य.

What Sanskrit needs even from a Devanagari reader

- **The visarga ः (ḥ)** — a soft breathed echo of the preceding vowel at a word’s end (*namaskārah*, *rāmah*), usually the masculine-singular ending, so grammatical as well as phonetic.
- **The anusvāra ँ (ṁ, also written ṅ)** — a dot above the line, nasalising the vowel or standing for a nasal before another consonant; very frequent in Sanskrit.
- **The vocalic र ऋ** — Sanskrit treats र as a *vowel*: *māṭr* “mother,” *pitṛ* “father” (the words that proved Sanskrit’s kinship with Latin)

māter/pater and English *mother/father*), *Ṛgveda*.

- **Sandhi** — fixed sound-rules fuse words at their seams: *su + āgata* → *svāgata*. The lessons flag each fusion where it happens.

Sanskrit in the family

Sanskrit is the classical language of India — the tongue of the Vedas, of Kālidāsa, of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain learning — and the ancestor of the modern Indo-Aryan languages (Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi, Bengali, and more). It is a senior branch of **Indo-European**, sister to Greek, Latin, and the Germanic languages including English. This curriculum treats it, with Latin, as a **taproot**: its words reach east into South Asia and west into Europe, and the lessons trace both directions.

Glossary

This glossary collects every word and phrase taught in the book. Pronunciation appears when it differs from the written form; chapter numbers show where each entry is introduced.

अभिनन्दनम् *abhinandanam*
congratulation, a greeting of delight
Introduced in Chapter 37.

अद्य *adya*
today
Introduced in Chapter 17.

आगच्छति *āgacchati*
he, she, or it comes — the same verb as “goes” with a prefix pointing it homeward
Introduced in Chapter 7.

अग्निः *agniḥ*
fire
Introduced in Chapter 38.

अहम् *aham*
I
Introduced in Chapter 3.

अहं कुशली अस्मि *aham kuśalī asmi*
I am well (*aham kuśalī asmi*)
Introduced in Chapter 3.

अहं संस्कृतं वदामि *aham saṁskṛtam vadāmi*
I speak Sanskrit
Introduced in Chapter 5.

अहो *aho*
oh!
Introduced in Chapter 49.

आकाशः *ākāśaḥ*
the sky, open space
Introduced in Chapter 31.

अक्षि *akṣi*

eye — unbroken from Sanskrit to English, and the reason eyes get their own grammatical number
Introduced in Chapter 12.

अलम् *alam*

enough
Introduced in Chapter 27.

अल्प *alpa*

small
Introduced in Chapter 15.

आम् *ām*

yes (ām)
Introduced in Chapter 1.

आनन्दः *ānandaḥ*

joy — and “meeting you is a joy”
Introduced in Chapter 2.

अञ्जलिः *añjaliḥ*

the two hands cupped together
Introduced in Chapter 30.

अन्नम् *annam*

food, grain — literally “the eaten thing,” built on the very root खादति left uneaten
Introduced in Chapter 10.

अपि *api*

also, too
Introduced in Chapter 36.

आसनम् *āsanam*

a seat
Introduced in Chapter 30.

आशीर्वादः *āśīrvādaḥ*

a blessing
Introduced in Chapter 37.

अष्ट *aṣṭa*

eight
Introduced in Chapter 19.

अष्टमः *aṣṭamaḥ*

eighth — where Latin breaks step and Sanskrit does not
Introduced in Chapter 62.

अस्थि *asthi*

a bone
Introduced in Chapter 34.

अस्ति *asti*

is

Introduced in Chapter 2.

अस्ति · भवति *asti · bhavati*

is, and becomes — the two be-verbs Sanskrit keeps apart, and the root-plus-class system behind every Sanskrit verb

Introduced in Chapter 7.

अस्तु *astu*

so be it, all right

Introduced in Chapter 27.

अतिथिः *atithiḥ*

a guest

Introduced in Chapter 26.

आतिथ्यम् *ātithyam*

hospitality

Introduced in Chapter 43.

अत्र *atra*

here — where I am

Introduced in Chapter 14.

अवगच्छति · बुध्यते *avagacchati · budhyate*

he, she, or it understands — “goes down into” a thing, or wakes up to it

Introduced in Chapter 8.

बहु *bahu*

much, many

Introduced in Chapter 42.

बाहुः *bāhuḥ*

an arm

Introduced in Chapter 34.

बालः *bālāḥ*

child, boy

Introduced in Chapter 20.

भगिनी *bhagini*

sister — not built on English “sister”’s root at all, but on “one with a share”

Introduced in Chapter 11.

भारतम् *Bhāratam*

India — the country’s name in its own language

Introduced in Chapter 59.

भारतीयः *bhāratīyaḥ*

Indian — the relational adjective, and the -iya suffix that makes one

Introduced in Chapter 59.

भस्म *bhasma*

ash

Introduced in Chapter 38.

भवान् *bhavān*

you (respectful)

Introduced in Chapter 2.

भवान् कथम् अस्ति? *bhavān katham asti?*

how are you? (respectful)

Introduced in Chapter 3.

भित्तिः *bhittiḥ*

a wall

Introduced in Chapter 47.

भ्राता *bhrātā*

brother — unbroken from Sanskrit to English, worn down two different ways

Introduced in Chapter 11.

च *ca*

and — the enclitic that joins two things, and stands after them

Introduced in Chapter 52.

चक्रम् *cakram*

a wheel

Introduced in Chapter 41.

चन्द्रः *candraḥ*

the moon

Introduced in Chapter 31.

चतुर्थः *caturthaḥ*

fourth — the same ending as sixth, so sixth stops being alone

Introduced in Chapter 63.

छागः *chāgaḥ*

a goat

Introduced in Chapter 48.

छत्रम् *chatram*

a parasol

Introduced in Chapter 41.

छाया *chāyā*

shade, a shadow

Introduced in Chapter 46.

चिन्तयति *cintayati*

he, she, or it thinks — the tenth class, which plants a whole syllable अय between root and ending

Introduced in Chapter 8.

दधि *dadhi*

curd

Introduced in Chapter 40.

दहति *dahati*

he, she or it burns

Introduced in Chapter 22.

दन्तः *dantaḥ*

tooth

Introduced in Chapter 25.

दर्पणः *darpaṇaḥ*

a mirror

Introduced in Chapter 41.

दारु *dāru*

wood, timber

Introduced in Chapter 32.

दश *daśa*

ten

Introduced in Chapter 19.

दशमः *daśamaḥ*

tenth — the fifth in a row made the same way, and the hole that is left

Introduced in Chapter 62.

देहः *dehaḥ*

the body

Introduced in Chapter 34.

देशः *deśaḥ*

a country — from the root that means to point out

Introduced in Chapter 59.

धन्यः *dhanyaḥ*

fortunate, blessed

Introduced in Chapter 29.

धन्यवादः *dhanyavādaḥ*

thank you (dhanyavādaḥ)

Introduced in Chapter 1.

धेनुः *dhenuḥ*

a cow

Introduced in Chapter 39.

दिनम् *dinam*

day

Introduced in Chapter 17.

दीपः *dīpaḥ*

a lamp

Introduced in Chapter 24.

दुग्धम् *dugdham*

milk

Introduced in Chapter 35.

दुहिता *duhitā*

daughter

Introduced in Chapter 23.

द्वारम् *dvāram*

a door, a gate

Introduced in Chapter 30.

द्वितीयः *dvitīyaḥ*

second — the same -tiya, so two and three are a pair

Introduced in Chapter 63.

एक द्व त्रि चतुर् पञ्च *eka dva tri catur pañca*

one to five — Old Indo-Aryan ancestors preserved in Sanskrit, and cousins of the English ones

Introduced in Chapter 6.

एतत् *etat*

this one — the thing near me

Introduced in Chapter 14.

एवम् *evam*

thus, so

Introduced in Chapter 27.

गच्छामि *gacchāmi*

I go (a way to take leave)

Introduced in Chapter 4.

गच्छति *gacchati*

he, she, or it goes — the verb whose present stem you could never guess from its root

Introduced in Chapter 7.

गीतम् *gītam*

a song

Introduced in Chapter 50.

ग्रामः *grāmaḥ*

village

Introduced in Chapter 16.

गृहम् *gr̥ham*

house, home

Introduced in Chapter 16.

गृह्णाति *gr̥hṇāti*

he, she, or it takes, seizes — the ninth class again, and the root English grabs with

Introduced in Chapter 9.

ग्रीवा *grīvā*

the neck

Introduced in Chapter 34.

गुरुः *guruḥ*

a teacher, and the word for heavy

Introduced in Chapter 26.

हंसः *hanṣaḥ*

a goose

Introduced in Chapter 48.

हरितः *haritaḥ*

green

Introduced in Chapter 44.

हसति *hasati*

he, she or it laughs

Introduced in Chapter 21.

हस्तः *hastāḥ*

hand

Introduced in Chapter 25.

हिमम् *himam*

snow, frost

Introduced in Chapter 31.

हृदयम् *hṛdayam*

heart — the oldest, most secure cousin this book has shown, and kept whole two chapters east

Introduced in Chapter 13.

ह्यः *hyaḥ*

yesterday

Introduced in Chapter 17.

इच्छति *icchatī*

wants — the same frame as शक्नोति, with wanting in place of being able

Introduced in Chapter 57.

इदानीम् *idānīm*

now

Introduced in Chapter 28.

इति *iti*

thus — the particle that closes what was said, and Sanskrit's only quotation mark

Introduced in Chapter 54.

जलम् *jalam*

water (the stuff, not the drink)

Introduced in Chapter 24.

जनः *janah*

people, folk

Introduced in Chapter 20.

जानाति *jānāti*

he, she, or it knows — the root ज्ञा, the class that plants a syllable inside the verb, and the chapter's six roots gathered up

Introduced in Chapter 7.

कदा *kadā*

when?

Introduced in Chapter 18.

कदाचित् *kadācit*

sometimes

Introduced in Chapter 42.

कः *kaḥ*

who? — asking about a person

Introduced in Chapter 14.

कलशः *kalaśaḥ*

a water-pot

Introduced in Chapter 41.

कर्णः *karnaḥ*

ear — a word Sanskrit itself never settled the origin of

Introduced in Chapter 12.

करोमि *karomi*

I do, I make (kāryam karomi, “I work”)

Introduced in Chapter 5.

कथम् *katham*

how

Introduced in Chapter 3.

कति *kati*

how many?

Introduced in Chapter 18.

केशः *keśaḥ*

hair (of the head)

Introduced in Chapter 25.

केवलम् *kevalam*

only, merely

Introduced in Chapter 49.

खादति *khādati*

he, she, or it eats — the everyday eat-verb, which is not the one English is related to

Introduced in Chapter 7.

किम् *kim*

what

Introduced in Chapter 2.

किमर्थम् *kimartham*

why?

Introduced in Chapter 18.

किञ्चित् *kiñcit*

a little, somewhat

Introduced in Chapter 42.

किन्तु *kintu*

but — and unlike च and वा it stands first

Introduced in Chapter 52.

क्रीडति *krīḍati*

he, she or it plays

Introduced in Chapter 22.

कृपया *kṛpayā*

please

Introduced in Chapter 29.

क्षम्यताम् *kṣamyatām*

pardon me; let it be forgiven

Introduced in Chapter 29.

क्षीरम् *kṣīram*

milk — an origin scholars still argue over, and the dessert word it left behind

Introduced in Chapter 10.

कुशलम् *kuśalam*

well-being (kuśalam)

Introduced in Chapter 3.

कुतः *kutaḥ*

from where?

Introduced in Chapter 18.

कुत्र *kutra*

where? — asking about a place

Introduced in Chapter 14.

कुटुम्बम् *kuṭumbam*

family, household — a word Sanskrit itself borrowed, before other languages borrowed it back

Introduced in Chapter 11.

लता *latā*

a creeper, a climbing plant

Introduced in Chapter 32.

लवणम् *lavaṇam*

salt

Introduced in Chapter 35.

लिखति *likhati*

he, she, or it writes — a root that means “scratch,” and the chapter’s four verbs gathered up

Introduced in Chapter 8.

मधु *madhu*

honey

Introduced in Chapter 35.

मध्याह्नः *madhyāhnaḥ*

noon

Introduced in Chapter 45.

महत् *mahat*

big

Introduced in Chapter 15.

मह्यम् *mahyam*

to me, for me — the dative of अहम्, and the case you already met in पुनर्दर्शनाय

Introduced in Chapter 58.

माला *mālā*

a garland

Introduced in Chapter 30.

मम *mama*

my

Introduced in Chapter 2.

मम नाम ... अस्ति *mama nāma ... asti*

my name is...

Introduced in Chapter 2.

मन्दम् *mandam*

slowly, gently

Introduced in Chapter 36.

मार्गः *mārgaḥ*

road, path

Introduced in Chapter 16.

मासः *māsaḥ*

a month

Introduced in Chapter 45.

माता *mātā*

mother

Introduced in Chapter 23.

मातामही *mātāmahī*

a grandmother

Introduced in Chapter 51.

मत्स्यः *matsyaḥ*

a fish

Introduced in Chapter 39.

मातुलः *mātulaḥ*

a mother's brother

Introduced in Chapter 51.

मित्रम् *mitram*

friend — the word behind a covenant-god's name, naming a person while itself being neuter

Introduced in Chapter 11.

मोदकः *modakaḥ*

a sweet dumpling

Introduced in Chapter 40.

मृत्तिका *mṛttikā*

soil

Introduced in Chapter 38.

मुहुः *muhuh*

again and again

Introduced in Chapter 49.

मुखम् *mukham*

mouth, face — a word so old, scholars still argue which family it belongs to

Introduced in Chapter 12.

न *na*

no, not (na)

Introduced in Chapter 1.

न चिन्ता *na cintā*

no worry / it's nothing / you're welcome

Introduced in Chapter 3.

नदी *nadī*

a river

Introduced in Chapter 33.

नगरम् *nagaram*

city

Introduced in Chapter 16.

नाम *nāma*

name

Introduced in Chapter 2.

नमस्कारः *namaskāraḥ*

hello (lit. “the making of a bow”) (namaskāraḥ)
Introduced in Chapter 1.

नमस्ते *namaste*

hello (lit. “a bow to you”) (namaste)
Introduced in Chapter 1.

नम्रता *namratā*

humility
Introduced in Chapter 43.

नरः *naraḥ*

man, person
Introduced in Chapter 20.

नारी *nārī*

woman
Introduced in Chapter 20.

नासिका *nāsikā*

nose — kin to two modern words, but the parent of neither
Introduced in Chapter 13.

नव *nava*

new
Introduced in Chapter 15.

नवमः *navamaḥ*

ninth — built on the nine, not on the new
Introduced in Chapter 62.

नवन् *navan*

nine
Introduced in Chapter 19.

नवनीतम् *navanītam*

fresh butter
Introduced in Chapter 40.

नयति *nayati*

he, she or it leads
Introduced in Chapter 22.

नीलः *nīlaḥ*

blue
Introduced in Chapter 44.

नृत्यति *nṛtyati*

he, she or it dances
Introduced in Chapter 21.

ओदनः *odanaḥ*

cooked rice
Introduced in Chapter 24.

पादः *pādaḥ*

foot

Introduced in Chapter 25.

पञ्चमः *pañcamah*

fifth — and the ending that makes most of the ordinals in the language

Introduced in Chapter 62.

पानीयम् *pānīyam*

water — “the thing to be drunk,” and the exact word your neighbors’ पानी grew from

Introduced in Chapter 10.

परश्चः *paraśvaḥ*

the day after tomorrow

Introduced in Chapter 28.

पर्वतः *parvataḥ*

a mountain

Introduced in Chapter 33.

पश्यति *paśyati*

he, she, or it sees — a verb assembled from two different roots, one of which you already met

Introduced in Chapter 7.

पठति *paṭhati*

he, she, or it reads — reading as reciting aloud, and the two ways a Sanskrit word survives into a modern language

Introduced in Chapter 8.

पतिः *patiḥ*

a husband

Introduced in Chapter 51.

पत्नी *patnī*

a wife

Introduced in Chapter 51.

पत्रम् *patram*

a leaf

Introduced in Chapter 32.

फलम् *phalam*

fruit (and the result of anything)

Introduced in Chapter 24.

पिता *pitā*

father

Introduced in Chapter 23.

पीतः *pītaḥ*

yellow

Introduced in Chapter 44.

पितामहः *pitāmahaḥ*

a grandfather

Introduced in Chapter 51.

प्लवः *plavaḥ*

a boat, a raft

Introduced in Chapter 41.

प्रकाशः *prakāśaḥ*

light

Introduced in Chapter 46.

प्रणामः *praṇāmaḥ*

a bow, a respectful salutation

Introduced in Chapter 29.

प्रसन्नः *prasannaḥ*

pleased, gracious, clear

Introduced in Chapter 37.

प्रश्नः *praśnaḥ*

a question

Introduced in Chapter 50.

प्रातः *prātaḥ*

morning

Introduced in Chapter 45.

प्रथमः *prathamah*

first — and it is not a number word at all

Introduced in Chapter 63.

प्रायः *prāyaḥ*

mostly, for the most part

Introduced in Chapter 42.

पृच्छति *prcchati*

he, she, or it asks — the root that became Latin *prayer* and German *fragen*

Introduced in Chapter 9.

पुनः *punaḥ*

again

Introduced in Chapter 4.

पुनर्दर्शनाय *punardarśanāya*

until we meet again (lit. “for seeing again”)

Introduced in Chapter 4.

पुरम् *puram*

a town, a walled town

Introduced in Chapter 33.

पुरातन *purātana*

old — of a thing, not of a person

Introduced in Chapter 15.

पुष्पम् *puṣpam*

a flower

Introduced in Chapter 30.

पुस्तकम् *pustakam*

a book

Introduced in Chapter 35.

राजा *rājā*

a king

Introduced in Chapter 26.

रक्तम् *raktam*

blood

Introduced in Chapter 34.

रश्मिः *raśmiḥ*

a ray

Introduced in Chapter 46.

रात्रिः *rātriḥ*

night

Introduced in Chapter 17.

रविः *raviḥ*

the sun

Introduced in Chapter 46.

ऋतुः *ṛtuḥ*

a season — the fixed turn of the year, and the first word in this book that opens with ऋ

Introduced in Chapter 61.

शब्दः *śabdaḥ*

a sound

Introduced in Chapter 50.

सदा *sadā*

always

Introduced in Chapter 17.

सादरम् *sādaram*

respectfully, with respect

Introduced in Chapter 37.

साधु *sādhū*

well done, good

Introduced in Chapter 27.

सः *saḥ*

he, that one — the t- word that answers यः

Introduced in Chapter 53.

सहसा *sahasā*

suddenly

Introduced in Chapter 42.

साहाय्यं करोति *sāhāyyam karoti*

he, she, or it helps — a noun plus “does,” and help named as going along with someone

Introduced in Chapter 9.

शाकम् *śākam*

a vegetable, a green

Introduced in Chapter 40.

शक्नोति *śaknoti*

is able — and it takes the -तुम् form you learnt two chapters ago

Introduced in Chapter 57.

समुद्रः *samudraḥ*

the sea

Introduced in Chapter 33.

संवत्सरः *samivatsaraḥ*

a year

Introduced in Chapter 45.

सम्यक् *samyak*

rightly, properly, exactly so

Introduced in Chapter 36.

शान्तिः *śāntiḥ*

peace, stillness

Introduced in Chapter 37.

सप्त *sapta*

seven

Introduced in Chapter 19.

सप्तमः *saptamaḥ*

seventh — and the ending turns out to be Latin’s too

Introduced in Chapter 62.

सरलः *saralaḥ*

straightforward, honest

Introduced in Chapter 43.

शर्करा *śarkarā*

sugar

Introduced in Chapter 40.

सर्पः *sarpaḥ*

a snake

Introduced in Chapter 39.

सर्वम् *sarvam*

all, the whole of it

Introduced in Chapter 36.

षष्ठः *ṣaṣṭhaḥ*

sixth — the hole in the last chapter, and the second ending that fills it

Introduced in Chapter 63.

षट् *ṣaṭ*

six

Introduced in Chapter 19.

सत्यम् *satyam*

true; the truth

Introduced in Chapter 27.

सायम् *sāyam*

evening

Introduced in Chapter 45.

शय्या *śayyā*

a bed

Introduced in Chapter 35.

सेतुः *setuḥ*

a bridge, a causeway

Introduced in Chapter 33.

सिकता *sikata*

sand

Introduced in Chapter 38.

शिला *śilā*

a stone, a slab of rock

Introduced in Chapter 38.

सिंहः *siṃhaḥ*

a lion

Introduced in Chapter 48.

शिरः *śiraḥ*

head

Introduced in Chapter 25.

शिष्यः *śiṣyaḥ*

a student, a disciple

Introduced in Chapter 26.

श्लोकः *ślokaḥ*

a verse

Introduced in Chapter 50.

स्मरति *smarati*

he, she or it remembers

Introduced in Chapter 21.

स्निह्यति · प्रियम् *snihyati · priyam*

he, she, or it loves, and what is dear — affection named as stickiness, and the word behind English friend
Introduced in Chapter 9.

सोपानम् *sopānam*

a stair
Introduced in Chapter 47.

शृणोति *śṛṇoti*

he, she or it hears
Introduced in Chapter 22.

स्तम्भः *stambhaḥ*

a pillar
Introduced in Chapter 47.

शुभम् *śubham*

good, auspicious
Introduced in Chapter 28.

शुनकः *śunakaḥ*

a dog
Introduced in Chapter 39.

सूनुः *sūnuḥ*

son
Introduced in Chapter 23.

स्वागतम् *svāgatam*

welcome (lit. “well come”) (svāgatam)
Introduced in Chapter 1.

श्वः *śvaḥ*

tomorrow — and “see you tomorrow”
Introduced in Chapter 4.

स्वस्ति *svasti*

well-being (may it go well)
Introduced in Chapter 28.

श्वेतः *śvetaḥ*

white
Introduced in Chapter 44.

श्यामः *śyāmaḥ*

dark, black
Introduced in Chapter 44.

तलम् *talam*

the floor
Introduced in Chapter 47.

तापः *tāpaḥ*

heat

Introduced in Chapter 46.

तारा *tārā*

a star

Introduced in Chapter 31.

तर्हि *tarhi*

then, in that case

Introduced in Chapter 49.

तरुः *taruḥ*

a tree

Introduced in Chapter 32.

तत् *tat*

that one — the thing over there

Introduced in Chapter 14.

तथा *tathā*

so, in that way, likewise

Introduced in Chapter 36.

तत्र *tatra*

there — where I am not

Introduced in Chapter 14.

तव नाम किम्? *tava nāma kim?*

what's your name?

Introduced in Chapter 2.

तिष्ठति *tiṣṭhati*

he, she or it stands

Introduced in Chapter 21.

तृणम् *trṇam*

grass, a blade of grass

Introduced in Chapter 32.

तृतीयः *tr̥tīyaḥ*

third — a third ending, and the vowel that changes under it

Introduced in Chapter 63.

त्वम् *tvam*

you (familiar)

Introduced in Chapter 2.

उपकारः *upakāraḥ*

a favour, a good turn

Introduced in Chapter 29.

उत्तम *uttama*

good

Introduced in Chapter 15.

वा *vā*

or — the same enclitic slot as च, and the other half of the pair
Introduced in Chapter 52.

वदामि *vadāmi*

I speak (from vad, to speak)
Introduced in Chapter 5.

वैद्यः *vaidyaḥ*

a physician
Introduced in Chapter 26.

वनम् *vanam*

forest, wood
Introduced in Chapter 16.

वानरः *vānaraḥ*

a monkey
Introduced in Chapter 48.

वाणी *vāṇī*

the voice
Introduced in Chapter 50.

वसामि *vasāmi*

I live, I dwell (from vas, to dwell)
Introduced in Chapter 5.

वस्त्रम् *vastram*

cloth, a garment
Introduced in Chapter 24.

वातायनम् *vātāyanam*

a window
Introduced in Chapter 47.

वायुः *vāyuḥ*

wind, air
Introduced in Chapter 31.

विहगः *vihaḡaḥ*

a bird
Introduced in Chapter 39.

विनयः *vinayaḥ*

good conduct, training
Introduced in Chapter 43.

विश्वासः *viśvāsaḥ*

trust, confidence
Introduced in Chapter 43.

वृद्धः *vṛddhaḥ*

an old person, an elder
Introduced in Chapter 20.

वृकः *vr̥kaḥ*

a wolf

Introduced in Chapter 48.

यः *yaḥ*

who, which — the fourth leg of the a- / t- / k- system

Introduced in Chapter 53.

यथा *yathā*

as, in the way that

Introduced in Chapter 49.

यात्रा *yātrā*

a journey

Introduced in Chapter 28.

Review Questions

Try these without looking ahead. Every prompt comes from the same canonical lesson data as its chapter. Answers begin in the next section.

Chapter 6

6.1 *The Sanskrit numbers are English cousins*

Were the Latin and Sanskrit number forms borrowed from one another?

Chapter 64

64.1 *(reading) — six words, and the end of each one*

Which three words end in -अम्?

64.2 *(reading) — six lines, and only two of them say anything different*

Six lines. How many different things do they say?

64.3 *(reading) — the first passage*

What is there, but not here?

Answer Key

The first response is the canonical display answer. When a question accepts other authored forms, they appear underneath.

Chapter 6

6.1 *The Sanskrit numbers are English cousins*

Answer: no

Also accepted: no they were not; they are inherited cousins; inherited cousins

Chapter 64

64.1 *(reading) — six words, and the end of each one*

Answer: gr̥ham vanam pustakam

Also accepted: गृहम् वनम् पुस्तकम्; house forest book

64.2 *(reading) — six lines, and only two of them say anything different*

Answer: two

Also accepted: 2

64.3 *(reading) — the first passage*

Answer: the mountain

Also accepted: पर्वतः; mountain

Index

Look up an English meaning, a dedicated language topic, or a chapter topic. Each linked reference opens the chapter where the material is introduced; the focus labels name only explicitly typed lesson sections.

A

a bed शय्या (śayyā)

Chapter 35, p. 289

a bird विहगः (vihagaḥ)

Chapter 39, p. 313

a blessing आशीर्वादः (āśīrvādaḥ)

Chapter 37, p. 301

a boat, a raft प्लवः (plavaḥ)

Chapter 41, p. 325

a bone अस्थि (asthi)

Chapter 34, p. 283

a book पुस्तकम् (pustakam)

Chapter 35, p. 289

a bow, a respectful salutation प्रणामः (praṇāmaḥ)

Chapter 29, p. 253

a bridge, a causeway सेतुः (setuḥ)

Chapter 33, p. 277

a country — from the root that means to point out देशः (deśaḥ)

Chapter 59, p. 427

a cow धेनुः (dhenuḥ)

Chapter 39, p. 313

a creeper, a climbing plant लता (latā)

Chapter 32, p. 271

a dog शुनकः (śunakaḥ)

Chapter 39, p. 313

a door, a gate द्वारम् (dvāram)

Chapter 30, p. 259

- a favour, a good turn** उपकारः (upakāraḥ)
Chapter 29, p. 253
- a fish** मत्स्यः (matsyaḥ)
Chapter 39, p. 313
- a flower** पुष्पम् (puṣṣam)
Chapter 30, p. 259
- a garland** माला (mālā)
Chapter 30, p. 259
- a goat** छागः (chāgaḥ)
Chapter 48, p. 367
- a goose** हंसः (hamisaḥ)
Chapter 48, p. 367
- a grandfather** पितामहः (pitāmahaḥ)
Chapter 51, p. 385
- a grandmother** मातामही (mātāmahī)
Chapter 51, p. 385
- a guest** अतिथिः (atithiḥ)
Chapter 26, p. 235
- a husband** पतिः (patiḥ)
Chapter 51, p. 385
- a journey** यात्रा (yātrā)
Chapter 28, p. 247
- a king** राजा (rājā)
Chapter 26, p. 235
- a lamp** दीपः (dīpaḥ)
Chapter 24, p. 221
- a leaf** पत्रम् (patram)
Chapter 32, p. 271
- a lion** सिंहः (simhaḥ)
Chapter 48, p. 367
- a little, somewhat** किञ्चित् (kiñcit)
Chapter 42, p. 331
- a mirror** दर्पणः (darpaṇaḥ)
Chapter 41, p. 325
- a monkey** वानरः (vānaraḥ)
Chapter 48, p. 367
- a month** मासः (māsaḥ)
Chapter 45, p. 349
- a mother's brother** मातुलः (mātulaḥ)
Chapter 51, p. 385
- a mountain** पर्वतः (parvataḥ)
Chapter 33, p. 277

a parasol छत्रम् (chatram)

Chapter 41, p. 325

a physician वैद्यः (vaidyaḥ)

Chapter 26, p. 235

a pillar स्तम्भः (stambhaḥ)

Chapter 47, p. 361

a question प्रश्नः (praśnaḥ)

Chapter 50, p. 379

a ray रश्मिः (raśmiḥ)

Chapter 46, p. 355

a river नदी (nadī)

Chapter 33, p. 277

a season — the fixed turn of the year, and the first word in this book that opens with ऋ ऋतुः (ṛtuḥ)

Chapter 61, p. 435

a seat आसनम् (āsanam)

Chapter 30, p. 259

a snake सर्पः (sarpaḥ)

Chapter 39, p. 313

a song गीतम् (gītam)

Chapter 50, p. 379

a sound शब्दः (śabdaḥ)

Chapter 50, p. 379

a stair सोपानम् (sopānam)

Chapter 47, p. 361

a star तारा (tārā)

Chapter 31, p. 265

a stone, a slab of rock शिला (śilā)

Chapter 38, p. 307

a student, a disciple शिष्यः (śiṣyaḥ)

Chapter 26, p. 235

a sweet dumpling मोदकः (modakaḥ)

Chapter 40, p. 319

a- / t- / k- — six words, one machine

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 14, p. 139

a teacher, and the word for heavy गुरुः (guruḥ)

Chapter 26, p. 235

a town, a walled town पुरम् (puram)

Chapter 33, p. 277

a tree तरुः (taruḥ)

Chapter 32, p. 271

a vegetable, a green शाकम् (śākam)

Chapter 40, p. 319

a verse श्लोकः (ślokaḥ)

Chapter 50, p. 379

a wall भित्तिः (bhittiḥ)

Chapter 47, p. 361

a water-pot कलशः (kalaśaḥ)

Chapter 41, p. 325

a wheel चक्रम् (cakram)

Chapter 41, p. 325

a wife पत्नी (patnī)

Chapter 51, p. 385

a window वातायनम् (vātāyanam)

Chapter 47, p. 361

a wolf वृकः (vṛkaḥ)

Chapter 48, p. 367

a year संवत्सरः (samivatsaraḥ)

Chapter 45, p. 349

Able, and Willing

chapter topic; Chapter 57, p. 419

again पुनः (punaḥ)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 4, p. 43

again and again मुहुः (muhuh)

Chapter 49, p. 373

all, the whole of it सर्वम् (sarvam)

Chapter 36, p. 295

also, too अपि (api)

Chapter 36, p. 295

always सदा (sadā)

Chapter 17, p. 175

an arm बाहुः (bāhuḥ)

Chapter 34, p. 283

an old person, an elder वृद्धः (vṛddhaḥ)

Chapter 20, p. 199

and — the enclitic that joins two things, and stands after

them च (ca)

Chapter 52, p. 391

Animals

chapter topic; Chapter 39, p. 313

Answering With More Than Yes

chapter topic; Chapter 27, p. 241

as, in the way that यथा (yathā)

Chapter 49, p. 373

ash भस्म (bhasma)

Chapter 38, p. 307

Asking — Every Question Begins with K

chapter topic; Chapter 18, p. 185

B**before the noun, and it AGREES — five words, one rule**

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 15, p. 151

big महत् (mahat)

Chapter 15, p. 151

blood रक्तम् (raktam)

Chapter 34, p. 283

blue नीलः (nīlaḥ)

Chapter 44, p. 343

brother — unbroken from Sanskrit to English, worn down two**different ways** भ्राता (bhrātā)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 11, p. 117

but — and unlike च and वा it stands first किन्तु (kintu)

Chapter 52, p. 391

C**child, boy** बालः (bālaḥ)

Chapter 20, p. 199

city नगरम् (nagaram)

Chapter 16, p. 163

cloth, a garment वस्त्रम् (vastram)

Chapter 24, p. 221

Colours

chapter topic; Chapter 44, p. 343

congratulation, a greeting of delight अभिनन्दनम् (abhinandanam)

Chapter 37, p. 301

cooked rice ओदनः (odanaḥ)

Chapter 24, p. 221

Counting On — Six to Ten, and What They Prove

chapter topic; Chapter 19, p. 191

Courtesy Words

chapter topic; Chapter 29, p. 253

curd दधि (dadhi)

Chapter 40, p. 319

D

dark, black श्यामः (śyāmaḥ)

Chapter 44, p. 343

daughter दुहिता (duhitā)

Chapter 23, p. 215

day दिनम् (dinam)

Chapter 17, p. 175

Describing Things

chapter topic; Chapter 15, p. 151

E

ear — a word Sanskrit itself never settled the origin of कर्णः (karṇaḥ)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 12, p. 127

eight अष्ट (aṣṭa)

Chapter 19, p. 191

eighth — where Latin breaks step and Sanskrit does not अष्टमः (aṣṭamaḥ)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 62, p. 439

enough अलम् (alam)

Chapter 27, p. 241

evening सायम् (sāyam)

Chapter 45, p. 349

eye — unbroken from Sanskrit to English, and the reason eyes get their own grammatical number अक्षि (akṣi)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 12, p. 127

F

family, household — a word Sanskrit itself borrowed, before other languages borrowed it back कुटुम्बम् (kuṭumbam)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 11, p. 117

Farewells

chapter topic; Chapter 4, p. 43

father पिता (pitā)

Chapter 23, p. 215

fifth — and the ending that makes most of the ordinals in the language पञ्चमः (pañcamah)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 62, p. 439

fire अग्निः (agnih)

Chapter 38, p. 307

Fire and Stone

chapter topic; Chapter 38, p. 307

first — and it is not a number word at all प्रथमः (prathamah)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 63, p. 449

Five More Replies

chapter topic; Chapter 42, p. 331

Five Small Answers

chapter topic; Chapter 49, p. 373

food, grain — literally “the eaten thing,” built on the very root

खादति left uneaten अन्नम् (annam)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 10, p. 109

foot पादः (pādah)

Chapter 25, p. 229

forest, wood वनम् (vanam)

Chapter 16, p. 163

fortunate, blessed धन्यः (dhanyah)

Chapter 29, p. 253

fourth — the same ending as sixth, so sixth stops being

alone चतुर्थः (caturthah)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 63, p. 449

fresh butter नवनीतम् (navanītam)

Chapter 40, p. 319

friend — the word behind a covenant-god’s name, naming a

person while itself being neuter मित्रम् (mitram)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 11, p. 117

from where? कुतः (kutaḥ)

Chapter 18, p. 185

fruit (and the result of anything) फलम् (phalam)

Chapter 24, p. 221

G

good उत्तम (uttama)

Chapter 15, p. 151

good, auspicious शुभम् (śubham)

Chapter 28, p. 247

good conduct, training विनयः (vinayah)

Chapter 43, p. 337

Good Manners

chapter topic; Chapter 43, p. 337

grass, a blade of grass तृणम् (tṛṇam)

Chapter 32, p. 271

green हरितः (haritaḥ)

Chapter 44, p. 343

Greetings

chapter topic; Chapter 1, p. 1

H

hair (of the head) केशः (keśaḥ)

Chapter 25, p. 229

hand हस्तः (hastāḥ)

Chapter 25, p. 229

Having Gone, and In Order to Go

chapter topic; Chapter 55, p. 407

he, she, or it asks — the root that became Latin prayer and

German fragen पृच्छति (pṛcchati)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 9, p. 99

he, she or it burns दहति (dahati)

Chapter 22, p. 209

he, she, or it comes — the same verb as “goes” with a prefix

pointing it homeward आगच्छति (āgacchati)

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 7, p. 73

he, she or it dances नृत्यति (nṛtyati)

Chapter 21, p. 205

he, she, or it eats — the everyday eat-verb, which is not the one

English is related to खादति (khādati)

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 7, p. 73

he, she, or it goes — the verb whose present stem you could

never guess from its root गच्छति (gacchati)

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 7, p. 73

he, she or it hears शृणोति (śṛṇoti)

Chapter 22, p. 209

he, she, or it helps — a noun plus “does,” and help named as

going along with someone साहाय्यं करोति (sāhāyyam karoti)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 9, p. 99

he, she, or it knows — the root ज्ञा, the class that plants a syllable

inside the verb, and the chapter’s six roots gathered

up जानाति (jānāti)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 7, p. 73

he, she or it laughs हसति (hasati)

Chapter 21, p. 205

he, she or it leads नयति (nayati)

Chapter 22, p. 209

he, she, or it loves, and what is dear — affection named as stickiness, and the word behind English friend स्निह्यति ·

प्रियम् (snihyati · priyam)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 9, p. 99

he, she or it plays क्रीडति (krīḍati)

Chapter 22, p. 209

he, she, or it reads — reading as reciting aloud, and the two ways a Sanskrit word survives into a modern language पठति (paṭhati)

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 8, p. 89

he, she or it remembers स्मरति (smarati)

Chapter 21, p. 205

he, she, or it sees — a verb assembled from two different roots, one of which you already met पश्यति (paśyati)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 7, p. 73

he, she or it stands तिष्ठति (tiṣṭhati)

Chapter 21, p. 205

he, she, or it takes, seizes — the ninth class again, and the root English grabs with गृह्णाति (grhṇāti)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 9, p. 99

he, she, or it thinks — the tenth class, which plants a whole syllable अय between root and ending चिन्तयति (cintayati)

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 8, p. 89

he, she, or it understands — “goes down into” a thing, or wakes up to it अवगच्छति · बुध्यते (avagacchati · budhyate)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 8, p. 89

he, she, or it writes — a root that means “scratch,” and the chapter’s four verbs gathered up लिखति (likhati)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 8, p. 89

he, that one — the t- word that answers यः सः (saḥ)

Chapter 53, p. 397

head शिरः (śiraḥ)

Chapter 25, p. 229

heart — the oldest, most secure cousin this book has shown, and kept whole two chapters east हृदयम् (hṛdayam)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 13, p. 133

heat तापः (tāpaḥ)

Chapter 46, p. 355

hello (lit. “a bow to you”) (namaste) नमस्ते (namaste)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 1, p. 1

hello (lit. “the making of a bow”)

(**namaskāraḥ**) नमस्कारः (namaskāraḥ)

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 1, p. 1

here — where I am अत्र (atra)

Chapter 14, p. 139

honey मधु (madhu)

Chapter 35, p. 289

hospitality आतिथ्यम् (ātithyam)

Chapter 43, p. 337

house, home गृहम् (gṛham)

Chapter 16, p. 163

how कथम् (katham)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 3, p. 31

How Are You?

chapter topic; Chapter 3, p. 31

how are you? (respectful) भवान् कथम् अस्ति? (bhavān katham asti?)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 3, p. 31

how many? कति (kati)

Chapter 18, p. 185

humility नम्रता (namratā)

Chapter 43, p. 337

I

I अहम् (aham)

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 3, p. 31

I am well (aham kuśalī asmi) अहं कुशली अस्मि (aham kuśalī asmi)

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 3, p. 31

I do, I make (kāryam karomi, “I work”) करोमि (karomi)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 5, p. 53

I go (a way to take leave) गच्छामि (gacchāmi)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 4, p. 43

I live, I dwell (from vas, to dwell) वसामि (vasāmi)

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 5, p. 53

I speak (from vad, to speak) वदामि (vadāmi)

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 5, p. 53

I speak Sanskrit अहं संस्कृतं वदामि (aham saṁskṛtaṁ vadāmi)

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 5, p. 53

In the House

chapter topic; Chapter 35, p. 289

In the Kitchen

chapter topic; Chapter 40, p. 319

India — the country’s name in its own language भारतम् (Bhāratam)

Chapter 59, p. 427

Indian — the relational adjective, and the -iya suffix that makes

one भारतीयः (bhāratīyaḥ)

Chapter 59, p. 427

Introducing Yourself

chapter topic; Chapter 2, p. 15

is अस्ति (asti)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 2, p. 15

is able — and it takes the -तुम् form you learnt two chapters

ago शक्नोति (śaknoti)

Chapter 57, p. 419

is, and becomes — the two be-verbs Sanskrit keeps apart, and

the root-plus-class system behind every Sanskrit verb अस्ति ·

भवति (asti · bhavati)

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 7, p. 73

J

joy — and “meeting you is a joy” आनन्दः (ānandaḥ)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 2, p. 15

L

light प्रकाशः (prakāśaḥ)

Chapter 46, p. 355

M

man, person नरः (naraḥ)

Chapter 20, p. 199

milk दुग्धम् (dugdham)

Chapter 35, p. 289

milk — an origin scholars still argue over, and the dessert word

it left behind क्षीरम् (kṣīram)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 10, p. 109

More Animals

chapter topic; Chapter 48, p. 367

More Courtesy

chapter topic; Chapter 37, p. 301

More Everyday Verbs

chapter topic; Chapter 21, p. 205

More of the Body

chapter topic; Chapter 34, p. 283

More of the Family

chapter topic; Chapter 51, p. 385

More Short Replies

chapter topic; Chapter 36, p. 295

morning प्रातः (prātaḥ)

Chapter 45, p. 349

mostly, for the most part प्रायः (prāyaḥ)

Chapter 42, p. 331

mother माता (mātā)

Chapter 23, p. 215

mouth, face — a word so old, scholars still argue which family it belongs to मुखम् (mukham)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 12, p. 127

much, many बहु (bahu)

Chapter 42, p. 331

my मम (mama)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 2, p. 15

my name is... मम नाम ... अस्ति (mama nāma ... asti)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 2, p. 15

N**name** नाम (nāma)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 2, p. 15

Naming Who Someone Is

chapter topic; Chapter 26, p. 235

new नव (nava)

Chapter 15, p. 151

night रात्रिः (rātriḥ)

Chapter 17, p. 175

nine नवन् (navan)

Chapter 19, p. 191

ninth — built on the nine, not on the new नवमः (navamaḥ)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 62, p. 439

no, not (na) न (na)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 1, p. 1

no worry / it's nothing / you're welcome न चिन्ता (na cintā)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 3, p. 31

noon मध्याह्नः (madhyāhnaḥ)

Chapter 45, p. 349

nose — kin to two modern words, but the parent of

neither नासिका (nāsikā)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 13, p. 133

now इदानीम् (idānīm)

Chapter 28, p. 247

Numbers One to Five

chapter topic; Chapter 6, p. 65

O

oh! अहो (aho)

Chapter 49, p. 373

old — of a thing, not of a person पुरातन (purātana)

Chapter 15, p. 151

◌् — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 1, p. 1

◌ः — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 2, p. 15

◌ि — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 2, p. 15

◌ी — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 3, p. 31

◌ु — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 3, p. 31

◌ृ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 5, p. 53

◌े — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 8, p. 89

◌ँ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 9, p. 99

◌ी — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 10, p. 109

◌ो — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 14, p. 139

◌ौ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 15, p. 151

◌ू — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 23, p. 215

◌ै — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 27, p. 241

one to five — Old Indo-Aryan ancestors preserved in Sanskrit, and cousins of the English ones एक द्व त्रि चतुर् पञ्च (eka dva tri catur pañca)
Chapter 6, p. 65

only, merely केवलम् (kevalam)
Chapter 49, p. 373

or — the same enclitic slot as च, and the other half of the pair वा (vā)
Chapter 52, p. 391

P

***Pañca* hiding in familiar words**
etymology topic; explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 6, p. 65

pardon me; let it be forgiven क्षम्यताम् (kṣamyatām)
Chapter 29, p. 253

Parts of a House
chapter topic; Chapter 47, p. 361

peace, stillness शान्तिः (śāntiḥ)
Chapter 37, p. 301

People — and the Four Noun Endings
chapter topic; Chapter 20, p. 199

people, folk जनः (janaḥ)
Chapter 20, p. 199

Places — and the Two Noun Families
chapter topic; Chapter 16, p. 163

please कृपया (kṛpayā)
Chapter 29, p. 253

pleased, gracious, clear प्रसन्नः (prasannaḥ)
Chapter 37, p. 301

Pointing, and Asking
chapter topic; Chapter 14, p. 139

R

Reading — Words, Lines, and a First Passage
chapter topic; Chapter 64, p. 459

respectfully, with respect सादरम् (sādaram)
Chapter 37, p. 301

rightly, properly, exactly so सम्यक् (samyak)
Chapter 36, p. 295

road, path मार्गः (mārgaḥ)
Chapter 16, p. 163

S

salt लवणम् (lavaṇam)

Chapter 35, p. 289

sand सिकता (sikata)

Chapter 38, p. 307

second — the same -tiya, so two and three are a pair द्वितीयः (dvitīyaḥ)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 63, p. 449

seven सप्त (sapta)

Chapter 19, p. 191

seventh — and the ending turns out to be Latin’s

too सप्तमः (saptamaḥ)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 62, p. 439

shade, a shadow छाया (chāyā)

Chapter 46, p. 355

sister — not built on English “sister”’s root at all, but on “one with a share” भगिनी (bhaginī)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 11, p. 117

six षट् (ṣaṭ)

Chapter 19, p. 191

sixth — the hole in the last chapter, and the second ending that fills it षष्ठः (ṣaṣṭhaḥ)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 63, p. 449

slowly, gently मन्दम् (mandam)

Chapter 36, p. 295

small अल्प (alpa)

Chapter 15, p. 151

snow, frost हिमम् (himam)

Chapter 31, p. 265

so be it, all right अस्तु (astu)

Chapter 27, p. 241

so, in that way, likewise तथा (tathā)

Chapter 36, p. 295

soil मृत्तिका (mṛttikā)

Chapter 38, p. 307

sometimes कदाचित् (kadācit)

Chapter 42, p. 331

son सूनुः (sūnuḥ)

Chapter 23, p. 215

Sound and Song

chapter topic; Chapter 50, p. 379

straightforward, honest सरलः (saralāḥ)

Chapter 43, p. 337

suddenly सहसा (sahasā)

Chapter 42, p. 331

sugar शर्करा (śarkarā)

Chapter 40, p. 319

Sun and Shade

chapter topic; Chapter 46, p. 355

T

Taking, Asking, Helping, Loving

chapter topic; Chapter 9, p. 99

Taking Your Leave

chapter topic; Chapter 28, p. 247

ten दश (daśa)

Chapter 19, p. 191

tenth — the fifth in a row made the same way, and the hole that

is left दशमः (daśamaḥ)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 62, p. 439

thank you (dhanyavādah) धन्यवादः (dhanyavādah)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 1, p. 1

that one — the thing over there तत् (tat)

Chapter 14, p. 139

the body देहः (dehah)

Chapter 34, p. 283

The Core Verbs

chapter topic; Chapter 7, p. 73

I — the daṇḍa

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 60, p. 433

the day after tomorrow परश्चः (paraśvaḥ)

Chapter 28, p. 247

The Ending That Counts

chapter topic; Chapter 62, p. 439

The Endings Before It

chapter topic; Chapter 63, p. 449

The Face, Part One

chapter topic; Chapter 12, p. 127

The Face, Part Two

chapter topic; Chapter 13, p. 133

The First Verbs

chapter topic; Chapter 5, p. 53

the floor तलम् (talam)

Chapter 47, p. 361

The Four Oldest Kinship Words

chapter topic; Chapter 23, p. 215

The Hand and the Foot

chapter topic; Chapter 25, p. 229

The Mind and the Palm Leaf

chapter topic; Chapter 8, p. 89

the moon चन्द्रः (candraḥ)

Chapter 31, p. 265

the neck ग्रीवा (grīvā)

Chapter 34, p. 283

The People You'd Introduce

chapter topic; Chapter 11, p. 117

The River and the Road

chapter topic; Chapter 33, p. 277

The Sanskrit numbers are English cousins

etymology topic; explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 6, p. 65

the sea समुद्रः (samudraḥ)

Chapter 33, p. 277

The Sky and Its Lights

chapter topic; Chapter 31, p. 265

the sky, open space आकाशः (ākāśaḥ)

Chapter 31, p. 265

The Stick at the End

chapter topic; Chapter 60, p. 433

the sun रविः (raviḥ)

Chapter 46, p. 355

The Tree and What Grows

chapter topic; Chapter 32, p. 271

The Turning Season

chapter topic; Chapter 61, p. 435

the two hands cupped together अञ्जलिः (añjaliḥ)

Chapter 30, p. 259

the voice वाणी (vāṇī)

Chapter 50, p. 379

then, in that case तर्हि (tarhi)

Chapter 49, p. 373

there — where I am not तत्र (tatra)

Chapter 14, p. 139

Things People Make

chapter topic; Chapter 41, p. 325

Things You Ask For

chapter topic; Chapter 24, p. 221

third — a third ending, and the vowel that changes under

it तृतीयः (tṛtīyaḥ)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 63, p. 449

this one — the thing near me एतत् (etat)

Chapter 14, p. 139

Thus It Was Said

chapter topic; Chapter 54, p. 403

thus, so एवम् (evam)

Chapter 27, p. 241

thus — the particle that closes what was said, and Sanskrit’s

only quotation mark इति (iti)

Chapter 54, p. 403

Time — Day, Night, and When Things Happen

chapter topic; Chapter 17, p. 175

Times of the Day

chapter topic; Chapter 45, p. 349

to me, for me — the dative of अहम्, **and the case you already met**

in पुनर्दर्शनाय मह्यम् (mahyam)

Chapter 58, p. 423

today अद्य (adya)

Chapter 17, p. 175

tomorrow — and “see you tomorrow” श्वः (śvaḥ)

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 4, p. 43

tooth दन्तः (dantaḥ)

Chapter 25, p. 229

true; the truth सत्यम् (satyam)

Chapter 27, p. 241

trust, confidence विश्वासः (viśvāsaḥ)

Chapter 43, p. 337

Two Things Joined

chapter topic; Chapter 52, p. 391

U

until we meet again (lit. “for seeing

again”) पुनर्दर्शनाय (punardarśanāya)

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 4, p. 43

V

Verbs of Mind and Motion

chapter topic; Chapter 22, p. 209

village ग्रामः (grāmaḥ)
Chapter 16, p. 163

W

wants — the same frame as शक्नोति, with wanting in place of being able इच्छति (icchatī)

Chapter 57, p. 419

water (the stuff, not the drink) जलम् (jalam)

Chapter 24, p. 221

water — “the thing to be drunk,” and the exact word your neighbors’ पानी grew from पानीयम् (pānīyam)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 10, p. 109

welcome (lit. “well come”) (svāgatam) स्वागतम् (svāgatam)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 1, p. 1

Welcoming a Guest

chapter topic; Chapter 30, p. 259

well-being (kuśalam) कुशलम् (kuśalam)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 3, p. 31

well-being (may it go well) स्वस्ति (svasti)

Chapter 28, p. 247

well done, good साधु (sādhu)

Chapter 27, p. 241

what किम् (kim)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 2, p. 15

What Happened Yesterday

chapter topic; Chapter 56, p. 413

What Pleases Me

chapter topic; Chapter 58, p. 423

what’s your name? तव नाम किम्? (tava nāma kim?)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 2, p. 15

What You’d Ask For

chapter topic; Chapter 10, p. 109

when? कदा (kadā)

Chapter 18, p. 185

where? — asking about a place कुत्र (kutra)

Chapter 14, p. 139

Where You Come From

chapter topic; Chapter 59, p. 427

Which One, That One

chapter topic; Chapter 53, p. 397

white श्वेतः (śvetah)

Chapter 44, p. 343

who? — asking about a person कः (kaḥ)

Chapter 14, p. 139

who, which — the fourth leg of the a- / t- / k- system यः (yaḥ)

Chapter 53, p. 397

why? किमर्थम् (kimartham)

Chapter 18, p. 185

wind, air वायुः (vāyuh)

Chapter 31, p. 265

woman नारी (nārī)

Chapter 20, p. 199

wood, timber दारु (dāru)

Chapter 32, p. 271

Y

yellow पीतः (pītaḥ)

Chapter 44, p. 343

yes (ām) आम् (ām)

explicit focus: pronunciation, usage and culture; Chapter 1, p. 1

yesterday ह्यः (hyaḥ)

Chapter 17, p. 175

you (familiar) त्वम् (tvam)

explicit focus: pronunciation, etymology; Chapter 2, p. 15

you (respectful) भवान् (bhavān)

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar, etymology; Chapter 2, p. 15

Other

अ — one character, met inside words you already say

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 5, p. 53

अगच्छत् (agacchat) — he went

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 56, p. 413

अपठत् · अखादत् — the same two changes, on any verb

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 56, p. 413

-अम् · -अः (-am · -aḥ) — the two noun endings, side by side

grammar topic; Chapter 16, p. 163

आ — one character, met inside words you already say

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 2, p. 15

इ — one character, met inside words you already say

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 28, p. 247

... इति चिन्तयति — a clause as the object

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 54, p. 403

- उ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 15, p. 151
- ऋ — **the independent vowel**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 61, p. 435
- ए — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 11, p. 117
- ओ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 24, p. 221
- क — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 7, p. 73
- क-शब्दाः (ka-śabdāḥ) — **every question begins with k-**
grammar topic; Chapter 18, p. 185
- कालशब्दाः (kāla-śabdāḥ) — **where a time word stands**
grammar topic; Chapter 17, p. 175
- ख — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 7, p. 73
- ग — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 16, p. 163
- गत्वा (gatvā) — **having gone**
grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 55, p. 407
- गन्तुम् (gantum) — **to go**
grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 55, p. 407
- च — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 7, p. 73
- छ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 17, p. 175
- ज — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 16, p. 163
- झ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 6, p. 65
- ट — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 14, p. 139
- ठ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 12, p. 127
- ड — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 22, p. 209
- ण — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 16, p. 163
- त — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 9, p. 99
- थ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 14, p. 139
- द — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 1, p. 1

- ध — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 13, p. 133
- न — **copy it in three strokes, counting the lifts**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: writing; Chapter 1, p. 1
- न — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 1, p. 1
- न — **the letter from the sound**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: writing; Chapter 1, p. 1
- न — **write it with the model covered**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: writing; Chapter 1, p. 1
- न ... न (na ... na) — **neither ... nor**
grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 52, p. 391
- प — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 4, p. 43
- फ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 24, p. 221
- ब — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 15, p. 151
- भ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 2, p. 15
- भारतात् (Bhāratāt) — **from India**
grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 59, p. 427
- म — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 3, p. 31
- य — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 5, p. 53
- यः ... सः (yaḥ ... saḥ) — **the correlative**
grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 53, p. 397
- यत्र ... तत्र (yatra ... tatra) — **where ... there**
grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 53, p. 397
- र — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 4, p. 43
- रोचते (rocate) — **is pleasing to**
grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 58, p. 423
- ल — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 14, p. 139
- व — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 8, p. 89
- श — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 17, p. 175
- ष — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 15, p. 151
- स — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 10, p. 109

सङ्ख्याशब्दाः (saṅkhyā-śabdāḥ) — the numbers, and what they
prove
grammar topic; Chapter 19, p. 191
ह — one character, met inside words you already say
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 11, p. 117