

Telugu, 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.

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Preface

This book teaches Telugu one word at a time, and it teaches each word by taking it apart. It is written for someone starting from zero — who may not read a single Telugu letter — so the script is taught *inside the word lessons themselves*: each word introduces exactly the letters it needs, so you learn to read నమస్కారం *and* learn that it means “greetings” in the same few minutes. There is no alphabet drill to sit through first. (A reader who already reads Telugu simply skims the “letters in this word” notes.)

Telugu — famous as “the Italian of the East” for its open, vowel-final music — is one of the four literary **Dravidian** languages, a family entirely separate from the Indo-European one that gave us English, Latin, and Sanskrit. Like its sister Kannada, and unlike Tamil, it borrowed *heavily* from Sanskrit; so “hello” is the Sanskrit నమస్కారం (*namaskāram*), yet “yes” and “okay” are the native అవును (*avunu*) and సరే (*sarē*). Telugu also shows the family is no monolith: where its sisters say “no” with a word from the root *il-*, Telugu goes its own way with లేదు (*lēdu*). Each lesson sets the word beside its cousins across the family — English always, and Sanskrit, Hindi, and the other Dravidian languages where they illuminate — every form supplied in full, so no prior knowledge of any of them is assumed.

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 Telugu 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.

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Chapter 1

Greetings

Modes: 👁 eyes (6) ✍ pen (6) 🗣 Hands-free start: first 1 of 12 lessons.

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

The greetings and the words that oil a first conversation — and, taught through them, how to read the Telugu script and how Telugu sits inside the Dravidian family. Each word introduces the letters it needs, so you learn to read it and understand it at once: నమస్కారం · ధన్యవాదములు · అవును · లేదు · సరే.

1.1 నమస్కారం (namaskāram) — “greetings,” a making of a bow

Meet your first Telugu word. Say **namaskāram** with a small bow: “hello” or “greetings.” Now read it one small piece at a time.

The letters in this word

Telugu runs **left to right**. A consonant normally carries a built-in **a**.

- న · మ · ర = *na · ma · ra*.
- కా = క *ka* plus the long-*ā* vowel sign: *kā*.
- In స్క, స loses its vowel and stacks below క: *s + ka = ska*.
- The dot ం adds the final nasal sound *m*.

Left to right: న · మ · స్ · కా · ర · ం = *na-ma-s-kā-ram* →

నమస్కారం = **namaskāram**

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

నమస్కారం came from Sanskrit **namas** (“a bow”) + **kāra** (“a making,” from *kr*, “to do”): literally “**the making of a bow.**” Telugu added its own final sound. Tamil instead kept its native greeting, *vaṇakkam*.

Across the family — the same idea, six ways:

Language	“Hello”	Source
Telugu	నమస్కారం <i>namaskāram</i>	Sanskrit
Kannada	<i>namaskāra</i>	Sanskrit — the same word
Malayalam	<i>namaskāram</i>	Sanskrit — the same word
Hindi	<i>namaste</i>	Sanskrit — the same <i>namas</i>
Tamil	<i>vaṇakkam</i>	native Dravidian
English	<i>hello</i>	Germanic

Four of the six borrowed the Sanskrit bow. **Tamil alone kept its own word** — the first sign that “Dravidian family” does not mean “same vocabulary.”

Why it’s said this way

With palms together and a small bow, *namaskāram* works as **hello or goodbye**. It is respectful without being stiff.

The letters in this word

Telugu reads **left to right**, and every consonant carries a built-in “a” (many under a little check-mark hat, the *talakaṭṭu*). న *na*, మ *ma*, ర *ra*. A **vowel sign** changes it: క *ka* + long-ā → కా *kā*. A vowel-less consonant **stacks below** the next as a conjunct: స్ tucks under *ka* → స్క *“ska.”* And the **anusvāra** ం adds a final nasal “-m.” Read న · మ · స్ · కా · ర · ం → *namaskāram*.

Your turn

- Say it: na · ma · s · kā · ram → “namaskāram”

- *Say it:* what the anusvāra ు adds (a final nasal, “-m”)
- *Say it:* “namaskāram,” with a small bow
- *Write it:* trace నమస్కారం with a finger, then copy it once

Before you move on

Read నమస్కారం. What does it mean? (“Greetings.”) What does the dot ు add? (A final nasal.) What does the whole word literally mean? (“The making of a bow.”)

1.2 ధన్యవాదములు (dhanyavādamulu) — “thank you,” utterances of “worthy”

Another Sanskrit loan — and a first look at a Telugu *ending*, the plural that turns “a thanks” into “thanks.”

The letters in this word

(Skim if you read Telugu.)

- ధ = “dha” — an **aspirated** *d* (a puff of breath after it).
- న్య = “nya” — న (na) vowel-stripped and stacked with య (ya).
- వా = “vā” · ద = “da” · ము = “mu” · లు = “lu.”

Left to right: ధ · న్య · వా · ద · ము · లు = *dha-nya-vā-da-mu-lu*
→

ధన్యవాదములు = dhanyavādamulu

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

The core is **Sanskrit: dhanya** (“worthy, blessed,” from *dhana*, “wealth”) + **vāda** (“a saying,” root *vad*, “to speak”) = “an utterance of [you are] worthy.” Telugu then adds its own **plural ending -mulu**, so *dhanyavāda-mulu* is literally “**worthy-sayings**,” thanks in the plural of courtesy. (You’ll also hear the shorter *dhanyavādālu*.) The Sanskrit stem is the same one inside Hindi *dhanyavād* and

Kannada *dhanyavāda*.

Across the family — the same idea, five ways:

Language	“Thanks”	Note
Telugu	<i>dhanyavādamulu</i> (ధన్యవాదములు)	Sanskrit stem + Telugu plural
Kannada	<i>dhanyavāda</i> (ಧನ್ಯವಾದ)	Sanskrit — same stem
Hindi	<i>dhanyavād</i> (धन्यवाद)	Sanskrit — same stem
Tamil	<i>nanri</i> (நன்றி)	native (“goodness”)
Malayalam	<i>nandi</i> (നന്ദി)	native — Tamil’s cousin

Telugu, Kannada, and Hindi share the Sanskrit stem; Tamil and Malayalam keep the native *nanri* / *nandi*.

Grammar Lens: Telugu builds words by gluing endings on

-*mulu* is your first taste of how Telugu (like all Dravidian languages) works: it is **agglutinative** — it stacks meaning by gluing endings onto a stem, one after another, rather than using separate little words. Here a plural rides on a borrowed Sanskrit noun. Later endings will mark case (“to,” “from,” “with”) the same way. Bank the idea: in Telugu, grammar is mostly **suffixes**.

The letters in this word

New: ధ *dha* (aspirated *d*), the conjunct న్య (*na* stacked with *ya*), then వా · ద · ము · లు. Read ధ · న్య · వా · ద · ము · లు → *dhanyavādamulu*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- dha · nya · vā · da · mu · lu → “dhanyavādamulu”
- the pieces — Sanskrit *dhanya-vāda* + Telugu plural -*mulu*
- the shorter everyday form, “dhanyavādālu”

Before you move on

Read ధన్యవాదములు. What is Sanskrit in it, and what is Telugu? (*dhanya-vāda* is Sanskrit; the plural *-mulu* is Telugu.) What does “agglutinative” mean for how Telugu builds words? (It glues endings onto a stem.)

1.3 మ — one character, and it is in the first word of the book

Say the greeting this book opened with. Then say the word for thank you. You have both of them in your mouth already.

Script you’ll notice: మ

మ — *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**.

Both of the words you said a moment ago carry it:

- నమస్కారం *namaskāram* — hello / greetings (namaskāram — “a making of a bow”)
- ధన్యవాదములు *dhanyavādamulu* — thank you (dhanyavādamulu — “utterances of ‘worthy’”)

This is the character the book uses more than any other. It sits in the second syllable of the very first word you were taught, and it will be in front of you on nearly every page from here on.

Writing: మ — copy what you see

Put your pen on మ 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 these two words, and find మ in each

నమస్కారం · ధన్యవాదములు

- *Trace it:* మ three times, saying *ma* as you finish each one
- *Look:* at the greeting again and say which syllable మ carries

Before you move on

Which character is this — మ? What sound does it carry? (*ma*.)
Name the two words in this chapter that contain it. (నమస్కారం and ధన్యవాదములు — once each.)

1.4 ధ — the character the thank-you word opens with

Before the new one: మ — what sound does it carry?

This one is at the very front of the word for thank you, where your eye lands first.

Script you'll notice: ధ

ధ — *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**.

- ధన్యవాదములు *dhanyavādamulu* — thank you (dhanyavādamulu — “utterances of ‘worthy’”)

One word so far, and it is the one this character opens. The *dh* is a single sound made at the teeth with a puff of breath after it, not the English *th* of *this*. More words with ధ arrive as the book goes on; this is where the shape gets into your eye.

Writing: ధ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ధ 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 the word below, and find ధ at its front and మ further in
- ధన్యవాదములు
- *Trace it:* ధ three times, saying *dha* as you finish each one
- *Look:* at the two characters side by side and say which is which

Before you move on

Which character is this — ధ? What sound does it carry? (*dha*.)
Where in the thank-you word does it sit? (At the front.)

1.5 క — one character, met inside words you already say

Rounded, curvy letters, most crowned with a small tick or check-mark headstroke; no continuous top line. This is the first one.

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

Script you'll notice: క

క — *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**.

You already say this one, and it has క inside it:

- నమస్కారం *namaskāram* — hello / greetings (namaskāram — “a making of a bow”)

Writing: క — copy what you see

Put your pen on క 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 these words, and find క in the ones that have it

నమస్కారం · ధన్యవాదములు

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

Before you move on

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

1.6 అవును (avunu) — “yes”

After two Sanskrit loans, a **native Telugu** word: the plain “yes.”

The letters in this word

(*Skim if you read Telugu.*)

- అ = “a” — an **independent vowel** (the word starts with a vowel, so it gets a full letter, not a hooked-on sign).
- వు = “vu” — వ (va) with the “u” **vowel sign**.

- ను = “nu” — న (na) with the “u” sign.

Left to right: అ · వు · ను = *a-vu-nu* →

అవును = **avunu** = “yes.”

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

అవును (*avunu*) is the everyday “**yes / it is so,**” a native Telugu word. It comes from the verb of being — literally close to “it is” — which is why the next lesson’s “no” (*kādu*, “is not”) is its exact mirror.

Grammar Lens: yes and no as “it is” / “it is not”

Telugu’s yes/no pair are really little **statements of being**: *avunu* (“it is [so]”) and *kādu* (“it is not”). This is a very Dravidian instinct — answer by asserting or denying existence, rather than with a bare particle. You’ll also hear a “yes” come back as the question’s own verb, echoed (*vaccānu*, “I came,” for “did you come?”). Bank *avunu* as the simple word.

The letters in this word

అ is the **independent vowel** “a” (word-initial). వు is *vu*, ను is *nu* (each a consonant with the “u” sign). Read అ · వు · ను → *avunu*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- a · vu · nu → “avunu”
- why అ is a full letter here (the word starts with the vowel)
- “avunu” — “yes, it is so”

Before you move on

Read అవును. Native Telugu or Sanskrit loan? (Native.) At root, what kind of statement is a Telugu “yes”? (An assertion of being — “it is [so],” mirrored by *kādu*, “it is not.”)

1.7 అ — the vowel you have been saying since the first page

Before the new one: క — what sound does it carry? Say it out loud.

You said *ka*, not *k*. Hold on to that vowel at the end.

Script you'll notice: అ

అ — *a*.

It is an **independent vowel** — a vowel that is a letter in its own right, not a mark hung on a consonant.

Every consonant lesson so far has told you the same thing: a consonant in this script is never bare, it comes with an *a* already inside it. **అ is that vowel, standing on its own.**

Here is what makes it the odd one out. Most vowels in Telugu have two forms — a letter, and a mark that rides on a consonant. This vowel has a letter and **no mark at all**, because a consonant with nothing hanging off it is already carrying it. The absence is the writing.

So Telugu reaches for అ in one situation: when the vowel opens a word and has no consonant in front of it to sit inside.

- అవును *avunu* — yes

That word begins on today's character. Everything after it is consonants with their own vowels attached.

Writing: అ — copy what you see

Put your pen on అ 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 the word below and put a finger on అ at its front

అవును

- *Trace it:* అ three times, saying *a* as you finish each one
- *Say it:* క, then అ — the same vowel, once tucked inside a consonant and once out on its own

Before you move on

Which character is this — అ? What sound does it carry? (*a*.) Why does this vowel have no mark to hang on a consonant? (**Because a consonant with no mark on it is already carrying it.**) Which word from this chapter begins with it? (అవును.)

1.8 ా — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: క — what does it do?

One character this time — 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 with ā. Replaces, not adds — the *a* is gone.

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

- నమస్కారం *namaskāram* — hello / greetings (namaskāram — “a making of a bow”)
- ధన్యవాదములు *dhanyavādamulu* — thank you (dhanyavādamulu — “utterances of ‘worthy’”)

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 these words, and find ు in the ones that have it

నమస్కారం · ధన్యవాదములు · అవును

- *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.

1.9 లేదు (lēdu) — “no,” where Telugu parts ways with its sisters

The partner of *avunu* — and a small surprise. Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam all say “no” with a word built on *il-* (*illai* / *illa*). Telugu does **not**: it goes its own way with *lēdu*.

The letters in this word

(*Skim if you read Telugu.*)

- లే = “lē” — ల (la) with the long-“ē” vowel sign.

- దు = “du” — ద (da) with the “u” sign.

Left to right: లే • దు = *lē-du* →

లేదు = *lēdu*

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

లేదు (*lēdu*) means “**there is not, it is absent.**” It is native Dravidian, but built on a **different root** (*lē-*, absence) from the *il-* of Tamil and Kannada. Telugu also has కాదు (*kādu*), “it is **not** [that]” — so Telugu splits “no” into two:

- **lēdu** — denies **existence** (“there isn’t”): *pustakam lēdu*, “there is no book.”
- **kādu** — denies **identity** (“it isn’t [that]”): *idi pustakam kādu*, “this is not a book.”

Across the family — the same idea, five ways:

Language	“No / isn’t”	Note
Telugu	<i>lēdu</i> / <i>kādu</i> (లేదు / కాదు)	native, but a different root (<i>lē-</i> , <i>kā-</i>)
Tamil	<i>illai</i> (இல்லை)	native, root <i>il-</i>
Kannada	<i>illa</i> (ಇಲ್ಲ)	native, root <i>il-</i>
Malayalam	<i>illa</i> (ഇല്ല)	native, root <i>il-</i>
Hindi	<i>nahī</i> (नहीं)	Indo-European (unrelated)

Three sisters share *il-*; Telugu alone picked *lē-* / *kā-*. Same family, not a uniform one — a reminder that Dravidian has real internal branches.

Grammar Lens: two “no”s, existence vs. identity

English leans on one flat “no.” Telugu — carefully — keeps **two negatives**: *lēdu* for “there isn’t / doesn’t exist,” *kādu* for “is not [the thing you said].” Choosing between them is choosing *what* you’re denying. (This two-way negative is a Dravidian trait; Tamil has an echo of it too, but Telugu draws the line most sharply — and with a different root-word from its sisters.)

The letters in this word

లే is *lē* (ల *la* with the long-“ē” sign); దు is *du*. Read లే · దు → *lēdu*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *lē* · *du* → “*lēdu*”
- the pair — *avunu* (“yes”) / *lēdu* (“no”)
- the two no’s — *pustakam lēdu* (“no book”) vs. *idi pustakam kādu* (“this isn’t a book”)

Before you move on

Read లేదు. What does it deny — existence or identity? (Existence — “there isn’t”; *kādu* denies identity.) How does Telugu’s “no” differ from Tamil’s and Kannada’s? (Different root: *lē-* / *kā-*, not the shared *il-*.)

1.10 సరి (sarē) — “okay,” the family word in Telugu dress

The easy middle between “yes” and “no”: “okay, alright, fine.” It’s the same Dravidian word you’d meet as *sari* in Tamil and Kannada — Telugu just rounds it off to *sarē*.

The letters in this word

(Skim if you read Telugu.)

- స = “sa.”
- రి = “rē” — ర (ra) with the long-“ē” vowel sign (the same sign you met on *lē* in *lēdu*).

Left to right: స · రి = *sa-rē* →

సరి = **sarē** = “okay / alright.”

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

సరి (sarē) is native Dravidian “correct, right → okay, agreed” — the verbal nod of Telugu. It is the same family word as Tamil and Kannada ಸರಿ/ಸರಿ/ಸರಿ (sari), worn to sarē in Telugu. Say it once to agree; say sarē sarē to mean “yes yes, fine, enough.”

Grammar Lens: one Dravidian word, three scripts

sari / sarē is a clean demonstration of family closeness: essentially one word, one meaning, dressed in three different scripts — Tamil, Kannada, Telugu. As you learn to read each, spotting a shared word shift its shape but not its sense is the quickest way to feel the relationship (and the whole reason to learn these four side by side).

The letters in this word

స is sa; రి is rē (ర ra with the long-“ē” sign you just met on lē). Read స · రి → sarē.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- sa · rē → “sarē”
- the everyday triple — avunu (yes) · lēdu (no) · sarē (okay)
- “sarē sarē” — “alright, alright”

Before you move on

Read సరి. What does it mean, and what is its Tamil/Kannada twin? (“Okay, agreed”; sari.) Which vowel sign does rē share with lēdu? (The long-“ē” sign.)

1.11 రి — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: రి — what does it do?

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

Script you'll notice: ే

ే — ē.

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 with *ē*. Replaces, not adds — the *a* is gone.

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

- లేదు *lēdu* — no / there isn't (lēdu)
- సరే *sarē* — okay / alright (sarē)

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 these words, and find ే in the ones that have it

లేదు · సరే · నమస్కారం

- *Trace it:* ే three times, saying *ē* 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 *ē* on; takes the built-in *a* off.**) Name one word you already say that contains it.

1.12 Chapter 1 — a five-word recap

Five words, and a first handful of Telugu letters read straight off the page. Let’s gather only what you have already learned and make it feel easy.

The exchange — read them back

Sound each out, left to right, before checking:

Read		Meaning	Origin
నమస్కారం	<i>namaskāram</i>	hello / greetings	Sanskrit
ధన్యవాదములు	<i>dhanyavādamulu</i>	thank you	Sanskrit stem + Telugu plural
అవును	<i>avunu</i>	yes	native
లేదు	<i>lēdu</i>	no / there isn’t	native (root <i>lē-</i> , not <i>il-</i>)
సరే	<i>sarē</i>	okay	native (= <i>sari</i>)

The letters that did it: consonants carry a built-in “a” (many under the little *talakattu* hat); a **vowel sign** swaps that vowel (అ ā, య u, ి ē); a **virama** lets a consonant **stack below** the next as a conjunct (స్క్ర); a dot **anusvāra** (ం) adds a final nasal; and a word-initial vowel gets a **full letter** (అ).

The now-familiar pattern: the two **greeting/politeness** words are Sanskrit; the three **everyday grammar** words are native — though Telugu’s “no” (*lēdu*) takes a *different* native root from its sisters’ *il-*.

Why it’s said this way

Telugu has a warm departure exchange built around going and coming back. It belongs in the later chapter where you learn those actions one at a time. For now, repeating the greeting is enough when you part.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- all five — namaskāram · dhanyavādamulu · avunu · lēdu · sarē
- greet and thank — “namaskāram!” ... “dhanyavādamulu.”

Before you move on

Read all five aloud. Which two are Sanskrit, which three native? (Sanskrit: *namaskāram*, *dhanyavādamulu*. Native: *avunu*, *lēdu*, *sarē*.) How does Telugu's "no" differ from its sisters'? (Different root — *lē-* / *kā-*, not *il-*.) Which word means "okay"? (*sarē*.) Next chapter starts introducing yourself, one short possession form at a time.

Chapter 2

Introducing Yourself

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 👁️ eyes (4) ✍️ pen (10) 🗣️ Hands-free start: first 1 of 18 lessons.

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

A first real exchange — give your name, ask for someone else’s, say you are glad to meet them. Built the same way as the greetings: each piece taken apart, its letters and its root, then assembled. నా పేరు అరుణ్. / మీ పేరు ఏమిటి?

2.1 పేరు (pēru) — “name,” the native Dravidian word

“Name” — native Dravidian, even in Sanskrit-loving Telugu.

The letters in this word

(Skim if you read Telugu.) ప (pa) + ే (the ē-sign) → పే (pē); రు (ru). Read పే · రు → pēru.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

పేరు (pēru, “name”) is **native Dravidian**, from Proto-Dravidian *pēr — the same word as Tamil *peyar* and Malayalam *pēr*, and a cousin of Kannada *hesaru* (which softened *p* → *h*). It is *not* Sanskrit *nāma* (Hindi *nām*, English *name*). Even Telugu — the most Sanskritised of the Dravidian tongues — kept its home-grown word for “name.”

Across the family — the same idea, six ways:

Language	“Name”	Source
Telugu	పేరు <i>pēru</i>	native Dravidian (*pēr)
Tamil	<i>peyar</i>	the <i>same</i> Dravidian root
Malayalam	<i>pēr</i>	the <i>same</i> Dravidian root
Kannada	<i>hesaru</i>	Dravidian (*pesar, <i>p</i> → <i>h</i>)
Hindi	<i>nām</i>	Sanskrit (Indo-European)
English	<i>name</i>	Indo-European

Four Dravidian tongues, one inherited word — even Kannada’s *hesaru*, once you know the old *p* went soft. Only the last two rows come from somewhere else.

The letters in this word

ప (*pa*) + ే (the *ē*-sign) → పే (*pē*); రు (*ru*). Read పే · రు → *pēru*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “pēru”
- its Dravidian cousins — *pēru* / *peyar* / *pēr*

Before you move on

Is పేరు native or a Sanskrit loan, and what Tamil word is its twin?
(Native Dravidian, **pēr*; Tamil *peyar*.)

2.2 స — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ే — what does it do?

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

Script you’ll notice: న

న — *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**.

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

- నమస్కారం *namaskāram* — hello / greetings (namaskāram — “a making of a bow”)
- ధన్యవాదములు *dhanyavādamulu* — thank you (dhanyavādamulu — “utterances of ‘worthy’”)
- అవును *avunu* — yes (avunu)

Writing: న — copy what you see

Put your pen on న 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 these words, and find న in the ones that have it

నమస్కారం · ధన్యవాదములు · లేదు

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

Before you move on

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

2.3 న (nā) — “my”

“My” — native Dravidian, no European cousin.

The letters in this word

(*Skim if you read Telugu.*) న (na) + ా (long ā) → న (nā).

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

న (nā) means “my.” It belongs to Telugu’s native Dravidian first-person family, not to the Indo-European family behind English *I/my*. You will meet the related word for “I” in its own lesson; today you only need *nā*.

The letters in this word

న (na) + ా (long ā) → న (nā).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “nā”
- *nā* once with its meaning, “my”

Before you move on

What does న mean? (“My.”) Is it native Dravidian or an Indo-European loan? (Native Dravidian.)

2.4 ு — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: న — what does it do? And one from further back: క?

One character this time — 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 with *u*. Replaces, not adds — the *a* is gone.

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

- ధన్యవాదములు *dhanyavādamulu* — thank you (dhanyavādamulu — “utterances of ‘worthy’”)
- అవును *avunu* — yes (avunu)
- లేదు *lēdu* — no / there isn’t (lēdu)
- పేరు *pēru* — 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 these words, and find ு in the ones that have it

ధన్యవాదములు · అవును · నమస్కారం

- *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.

2.5 నా పేరు ... (nā pēru ...) — “my name is...,” with no “is”

Assemble the two atoms — and note, as in Tamil and Kannada, no word for “is.”

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

- nā (my) + pēru (name) + your name.

నా పేరు ... = “my name ...” → “**my name is...**”

Nā pēru Arun. → “My name is Arun.”

Grammar Lens: the zero copula

There is **no verb**. Telugu sets “my name” beside “Arun” and lets the “is” be understood — the **zero copula** of the Dravidian family. *Nā pēru Arun* = literally “my name Arun.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “nā pēru ...” with your name
- notice — no word for “is”

Before you move on

Give your name in Telugu. (*Nā pēru ...*) What does Telugu leave out that English needs? (The verb “is” — zero copula.)

2.6 ఓ — the Telugu numeral for 1

Before the new one: ం — what does it do? And one from further back: ం?

One numeral this time, and it is read the way every numeral is read: as an amount.

Script you’ll notice: ఓ

Telugu writes its numbers twice. The digits you already use — 1, 2, 3 — are everywhere in modern Telugu, on price tags and phone screens. Beside them the language keeps **its own ten numerals**, and they have never gone away: they number the pages of Telugu books, they date the almanac, and they are painted on buses and doorplates.

ఓ is **one**.

You do not need a Telugu word for it yet. A numeral is read as a quantity, not as a sound, which is why this ladder can start here: the shape can be learned months before the word for it arrives.

Writing: ఓ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ఓ 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 row and say the value of each numeral in it, left to right

౧

- *Trace it:* ౧ three times, saying “1” as you finish each one
- *Look:* for ౧ on any page of a Telugu book, calendar or doorplate you can find

Before you move on

Which numeral is this — ౧? What amount does it stand for? (౧ and 1 mean the same thing.)

2.7 నువ్వు / మీరు (nuvvu / mīru) — “you,” familiar and respectful

“You” — respect made the same way as Tamil, Kannada, and French.

The letters in this word

(*Skim if you read Telugu.*) నువ్వు (nuvvu); మీరు (mīru) = మీ (mī) + రు (ru).

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

నువ్వు (nuvvu, familiar “you”) traces to Proto-Dravidian ***nīn** — the same native root as Tamil *nī* and Kannada *nīnu*. మీరు (mīru) is the respectful/plural “you.”

Grammar Lens: respect by the plural

nuvvu (familiar) vs. mīru (respectful, and literally plural) — the same politeness-by-plural as Tamil *nīṅgaḷ*, Kannada *nīvu*, and French *vous*. For a first meeting, **mīru**.

The letters in this word

నువ్వు (nuvvu); మీరు (mīru, మీ mī + రు ru).

Your turn

- *Say it:* “nuvvu” (familiar), “mīru” (respectful)

Before you move on

How does Telugu make “you” respectful, and which languages share the trick? (By the plural — *mīru*; Tamil *nīṅal*, Kannada *nīvu*, French *vous*.)

2.8 ీ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ీ — what amount does it stand for? And one from further back: ీ?

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

Script you’ll notice: ీ

ీ — *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.

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

- నమస్కారం *namaskāram* — hello / greetings (namaskāram — “a making of a bow”)
- ధన్యవాదములు *dhanyavādamulu* — thank you (dhanyavādamulu — “utterances of ‘worthy’”)
- నువ్వు / మీరు *nuvvu / mīru* — you (familiar / respectful)

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 these words, and find ీ in the ones that have it
నమస్కారం · ధన్యవాదములు · అవును
- *Trace it:* ీ 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 ీ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ీ? 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.

2.9 ఏమిటి (ēmiṭi) — “what”

The last piece of the question: “what.”

The letters in this word

(*Skim if you read Telugu.*) ఏ (independent long ē) + మి (mi) + టి (ti, retroflex) → ēmiṭi.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

ఏమిటి (ēmiṭi, “what”) is native Dravidian, on the interrogative stem *yā-/*e- — the same Dravidian question-root as Tamil *ēṇṇa* and Kannada *ēnu*, heading Telugu’s question family: *ēmiṭi* (what), *evaru* (who), *ekkaḍa* (where), *enduku* (why).

The letters in this word

ఏ (independent long ē) + మి (mi) + టి (ti, retroflex) → ēmiṭi.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “ēmiṭi”
- the question family — ēmiṭi, evaru, ekkāḍa

Before you move on

What Dravidian stem heads ఏమిటి and the other Telugu question-words? (*yā-/ *e-, same as Tamil *eṇṇa*, Kannada *ēnu*.)

2.10 ట — the curled t, in the question from this chapter

Say the word for *what*. Listen to the consonant in the middle and notice where your tongue goes for it.

Script you’ll notice: ట

ట — 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.

- ఏమిటి *ēmiṭi* — what (ēmiṭi)

The tongue curls back to the roof of the mouth for this one. English has a single *t* and lets the mouth decide where to put it; Telugu has two, and they are different letters. The dot under the ṭ in the romanization is the only warning you get there — on the page the two shapes are nothing alike, which is easier.

Writing: ట — copy what you see

Put your pen on ట 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 the word below and find ట in it

ఏమిటి

- *Trace it:* ట three times, saying *ta* as you finish each one
- *Say it:* where your tongue goes for it, against where it goes for a plain *t*
- *Look:* back at the greeting chapter and find మ and ధ once each

Before you move on

Which character is this — ట? What sound does it carry? (*ta*.)
Which word from this chapter contains it? (ఏమిటి.)

2.11 ఏ — the sign you know, as a letter

Two from before: ే — what does it do to the consonant it sits on? And అ — why does that one need no mark?

Today the two ideas meet.

Script you'll notice: ఏ

ఏ — ē.

It is an **independent vowel** — a vowel that is a letter in its own right, not a mark hung on a consonant.

You have read ే, the long-ē sign, since the first chapter. It rides on a consonant and needs one to exist. **ఏ is that same vowel with nothing in front of it.**

This is the pattern behind every vowel in the script. A vowel has two written forms — a sign for when a consonant carries it, a letter for when the vowel opens the word. అ was the odd one out because its sign is the absence of any sign at all; ఏ is the ordinary case, and from here you can expect the pair everywhere.

- ఏమిటి *ēmiti* — what?

The question word you have been saying opens on today's letter, and the *i* inside it is carried by a sign. One word, both forms.

Writing: ఏ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ఏ 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 the word below and find ఏ at its front

ఏమిటి

- *Trace it:* ఏ three times, saying ē as you finish each one
- *Say it:* which form of a vowel goes at the front of a word, the sign or the letter

Before you move on

Which character is this — ఏ? What sound does it carry? (ē.) When does Telugu write the letter ఏ rather than the sign ఀ? (**When the vowel has no consonant in front of it.**) And which vowel met so far has a letter but no sign? (అ.)

2.12 ౨ — the Telugu numeral for 2

Before the new one: ఀ — what does it do? And one from further back: స?

One numeral this time, and it is read the way every numeral is read: as an amount.

Script you'll notice: ౨**౨ is two.**

Two numerals now, and that is enough for the first real reading skill: telling them apart. A digit is never met alone on a page — it is met in a row of other digits, and the work is picking the one you want out of the row.

Writing: ౨ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ౨ 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 row and say the value of each numeral in it, left to right

౧ · ౨

- *Trace it:* ౨ three times, saying “2” as you finish each one
- *Look:* for ౨ on any page of a Telugu book, calendar or doorplate you can find

Before you move on

Which numeral is this — ౨? What amount does it stand for? (౨ is 2, and ౧ beside it is 1.)

2.13 మీ పేరు ఏమిటి? (mī pēru ēmiṭi?) — “what’s your name?”

Assemble the question — your + name + what — still no “is.”

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

- మీ (*mī*, “your”) = the possessive of *mīru* (“you,” respectful).

మీ పేరు ఏమిటి? = literally “**your name what?**” =
“what’s your name?”

Three words, **no verb** — the zero copula holds for questions too.

Grammar Lens: answer, and the familiar version

Answer with the sentence you built: **Nā pēru Arun.** The familiar “your” is *nī* (from *nuvvu*): *nī pēru ēmiṭi?*

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “mī pēru ēmiṭi?”
- ask, then answer — “mī pēru ēmiṭi?” / “nā pēru ...”

Before you move on

What does మీ పేరు ఏమిటి? literally say, and what’s missing vs. English? (“Your name what?”; no “is” — zero copula.)

2.14 ీ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ు — what amount does it stand for? And one from further back: ు?

One character this time — 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 with *i*. Replaces, not adds — the *a* is gone.

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

- మీ పేరు ఏమిటి? *mī pēru ēmiṭi?* — what is your name?
- ఏమిటి *ēmiṭi* — what

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 these words, and find ీ in the ones that have it

ఏమిటి · మీ పేరు ఏమిటి? · నమస్కారం

- *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.

2.15 సంతోషం (santōṣam) — “joy,” and “pleased to meet you”

The warm close — and, as in Kannada, a Sanskrit word.

You’ll want to know: the full phrase

The full form is మిమ్మల్ని కలిసినందుకు సంతోషం (*mimmalni kalisinanduku santōṣam*) — “joy at having met you.”

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

సంతోషం (*santōṣam*, “joy, gladness”) is **Sanskrit** — *sam-* (“fully”) + *toṣa* (“satisfaction”) — the *same* loan Kannada uses (*santōṣa*). Both reach for Sanskrit where Tamil keeps its native *magilcci*. Telugu — the most Sanskritised of the four Dravidian tongues — does so most readily of all.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “santōṣam”
- the split — Telugu/Kannada *santōṣa(m)* (Sanskrit) vs. Tamil *magilcci* (native)

Before you move on

Is సంతోషం native or borrowed, and what does the contrast with Tamil show? (Sanskrit; Telugu borrows Sanskrit — here for “pleased” — where Tamil keeps native *magilcci*.)

2.16 ె — a sign, not a letter

Before the new one: ె — what does it do to the consonant it sits on?

This one does the same job with a different vowel.

Script you’ll notice: ె

ౌ — *ō*.

It is a **sign**, not a letter. A Telugu consonant arrives with an *a* already inside it, and a sign is how you swap that *a* for something else. On its own it says nothing; hung on a consonant it turns that consonant’s vowel into a long *ō*.

- సంతోషం *santōṣam* — happiness, gladness (*santōṣam* — “a being well pleased”)

Look at the middle of that word: the శ carries the sign, and *ta* becomes *tō*.

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. Then write it again attached to a consonant, the way it actually appears.

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 the word below and find the consonant carrying ె
- సంతోషం
- *Trace it:* ె three times, saying *ō* as you finish each one
 - *Say it:* what the sign does to the consonant underneath it
 - *Look:* at ఏమిటి again and name the curled letter in it

Before you move on

Is ె a letter or a sign? (A sign.) What does it do? (It swaps the consonant’s built-in *a* for a long *ō*.) Can it stand on its own? (No.)

2.17 ె — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ె — what does it do? And one from further back: ె?

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

Script you'll notice: ె

ె — *a nasal, ridden on the syllable before it.*

It is a **nasal**, written as a mark rather than as a letter. It rides on the syllable before it and turns the end of it nasal.

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

- సంతోషం — joy / pleased to meet you
- నమస్కారం *namaskāram* — hello / greetings (namaskāram — “a making of a bow”)

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 these words, and find ె in the ones that have it

నమస్కారం · సంతోషం · ధన్యవాదములు

- *Trace it:* ె three times, humming the nasal at the end of the syllable 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 syllable before it? (**A nasal.**) Name one word you already say that contains it.

2.18 Chapter 2 — the introduction, whole

No new words. Everything you have met in this chapter, said once through as the exchange it was always for.

The exchange — the dialogue

Telugu	English
నా పేరు మీరా. (<i>nā pēru Mira</i>)	My name is Mira.
మీ పేరు ఏమిటి? (<i>mī pēru ēmiṭi</i>)	What's your name?
నా పేరు అరుణ్. (<i>nā pēru Arun</i>)	My name is Arun.
సంతోషం. (<i>santōṣam</i>)	Pleased to meet you.

Every atom traced:

- **pēru** ← Dravidian **pēr* (*not name*; twin of Tamil *peyar*)
- **nā** ← *nēnu* (“I”)
- **ēmiṭi** ← Dravidian question-stem **yā-/e-*
- **santōṣam** ← **Sanskrit** (Telugu borrows for “pleased”; Tamil keeps native *magilcci*)

The Telugu habit: the **zero copula** (no “is”).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the whole exchange, both voices
- your own introduction — “*nā pēru ...*”
- ask it back — “*mī pēru ēmiṭi?*”

Before you move on

Give your name, ask someone else's, say you're pleased. (*Nā pēru ...* / *Mī pēru ēmiṭi?* / *Santōṣam.*) Which word is Sanskrit, not native? (*santōṣam.*)

Next chapter: *elā unnāru?* (“how are you?”) and answering with *bāgunnānu* — the responding cycle.

Chapter 3

How Are You?

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 👁️ eyes (5) ✍️ pen (6) 🗣️ Hands-free start: none of the 12 lessons.

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

After the name comes the exchange everyone actually has — and, for the first time, a Telugu verb “to be.” మీరు ఎలా ఉన్నారు? / నేను బాగున్నాను, ధన్యవాదములు.

3.1 3 — the Telugu numeral for 3

Before the new one: ౧౦ — what does it do? And one from further back: ౧?

One numeral this time, and it is read the way every numeral is read: as an amount.

Script you’ll notice: 3

3 is three.

Three of the ten. Read the row below left to right and say the values out loud in your own language — **one, two, three**. Saying the value rather than a Telugu word is not a shortcut around the language; it is what a numeral is for.

Writing: ౩ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ౩ 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 row and say the value of each numeral in it, left to right

౧ · ౨ · ౩

- *Trace it:* ౩ three times, saying “3” as you finish each one
- *Look:* for ౩ on any page of a Telugu book, calendar or doorplate you can find

Before you move on

Which numeral is this — ౩? What amount does it stand for? (౩ is 3.)

3.2 ఎలా (elā) — “how,” another of the e-questions

You met ఏమిటి (*ēmiti*, “what”) in Chapter 2. Here is its sibling — and, like all of Telugu’s question-words, it begins with e-.

The letters in this word

(*Skim if you read Telugu.*) ఎ (independent short e) + లా (*lā, la* + the long-ā sign) → ఎలా (*elā*).

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

ఎలా (*elā*, “how”) is native Dravidian, on the interrogative base ఎ- (*e-*) you already met in *ēmiṭi*. Telugu gathers nearly all its questions under this *e-*: *ēmiṭi* (what), *elā* (how), *evaru* (who), *ekkaḍa* (where), *eppuḍu* (when), *enduku* (why). It is the same Dravidian question-root that heads Tamil’s *eppaḍi* and Kannada’s *ēnu* — a family older than the Sanskrit words that Telugu otherwise borrows so freely.

The letters in this word

ఎ (independent short *e*) + లా (*lā*) → ఎలా (*elā*).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*elā*”
- the *e-* question family — *ēmiṭi*, *elā*, *evaru*, *ekkaḍa*, *eppuḍu*

Before you move on

What base do Telugu’s question-words share, and which cousins head their own? (The interrogative *e-*; Tamil’s *eppaḍi*, Kannada’s *ēnu*.)

3.3 మీరు ఎలా ఉన్నారు? (*mīru elā unnāru?*)

The everyday “how are you?” — and the verb “to be” that carries it.

The letters in this word

The new word is ఉన్నారు (*unnāru*, “you are/exist”): from the verb ఉండు (*undu*, “to be, to exist, to stay”) + the respectful-you ending -ఱు (*-āru*). Note the doubled న్న (*nn*).

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

మీరు ఎలా ఉన్నారు? = మీరు (*mīru*, “you,” respectful) + ఎలా (*elā*, “how”) + ఉన్నారు (*unnāru*, “are”) — “you how are?”, the verb **last**, as

in every Telugu sentence. The verb is ఉండు (*undu*), “to be / to exist / to stay” — native Dravidian, and the workhorse behind “how are you,” “I’m well,” and (you’ll see in Chapter 5) “I live.”

Grammar Lens: the verb carries “you”

The ending -ఱు (*-āru*) already means “you (respectful),” so *māru* can be dropped: *elā unnāru?* is a complete “how are you?” To a friend (*nuvvu*), the ending changes: నువ్వు ఎలా ఉన్నావు? (*nuvvu elā unnāvu?* — *-āvu* for the familiar “you”). Match the “you” to the verb-ending, as Telugu always does.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the respectful question — *māru elā unnāru?*
- the familiar version — *nuvvu elā unnāvu?*
- the verb and its meaning (*undu* — “to be / exist / stay”)

Before you move on

What verb powers “how are you?”, and how does the ending change for a friend? (*Undu*, “to be”; *-āru* → *-āvu* for the familiar *nuvvu*.)

3.4 ఉ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ౩ — what amount does it stand for? And one from further back: ౨?

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

Script you’ll notice: ఉ

ఉ — *u*.

It is an **independent vowel** — the shape the vowel *u* takes when a word begins with it, rather than the sign it becomes inside a word.

You met it on the page before this one, standing at the front of a word:

- మీరు ఎలా ఉన్నారు? — how are you? (respectful)

Writing: ఉ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ఉ 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 these words, and find ఉ in the ones that have it
మీరు ఎలా ఉన్నారు? · నమస్కారం
- *Trace it:* ఉ three times, saying *u* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ఉ once more

Before you move on

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

3.5 నేను (nēnu) — “I,” the Dravidian first person

To answer “how are you?” you first need “I.” In Chapter 2 you learned *nā* (“my”); here is its owner.

The letters in this word

నే (*nē*, *na* + long-*ē* sign) + ను (*nu*) → నేను (*nēnu*).

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

నేను (*nēnu*, “I”) ← Proto-Dravidian ***yān** / ***nēn** — native, and (unlike Hindi’s *mainī*, cousin of English *me*) **not** related to the

European “I/me” family. Its possessive is the నా (*nā*, “my”) you already met: *nēnu* “I,” *nā* “my.” For all that Telugu borrows Sanskrit vocabulary elsewhere, its most basic pronouns stayed Dravidian to the core — the grammar’s foundations never changed hands.

Grammar Lens: “I” you can drop

Telugu verbs carry the person in their ending — *unnānu* already means “I am” — so *nēnu* is often left out. You still learn it first, because the answer to *elā unnāru?* begins with it.

The letters in this word

నే (*nē*) + ను (*nu*) → నేను (*nēnu*).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*nēnu*”
- the pair — *nēnu* (I), *nā* (my)
- is it related to English *me*? (No — native Dravidian)

Before you move on

What is *nēnu*’s possessive, and is Telugu’s “I” cousin to English *me*? (*Nā*, “my”; no — it is native Dravidian, unlike the borrowed Sanskrit nouns around it.)

3.6 ఐ — the Telugu numeral for 4

Before the new one: ఐ — what does it do? And one from further back: ఏ?

One numeral this time, and it is read the way every numeral is read: as an amount.

Script you’ll notice: ఛ

ఛ is **four**.

From here the row is deliberately shuffled. A digit you can only read in counting order is a digit you cannot read; the test is whether you know it when it turns up out of sequence.

Writing: ఛ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ఛ 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 row and say the value of each numeral in it, left to right

ఛ · ౨ · ౩ · ౧

- *Trace it*: ఛ three times, saying “4” as you finish each one
- *Look*: for ఛ on any page of a Telugu book, calendar or doorplate you can find

Before you move on

Which numeral is this — ఛ? What amount does it stand for? (ఛ is 4.)

One more, from much earlier: ఌ — what does it do?

3.7 బాగా (bāgā) — “well,” and how to answer

The word that answers “how are you?” — and one Telugu says all the time.

The letters in this word

బా (*bā*, *ba* + long *ā*) + గా (*gā*, *ga* + long *ā*) → బాగా (*bāgā*).

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

బాగా (*bāgā*, “well, nicely, very”) comes from బాగు (*bāgu*, “goodness, well-being”). It is the everyday “well/good/very much”: *bāgā undi* (“it’s good”), *bāgā ceppāru* (“well said”). To answer “how are you,” fuse it with the *unḍu* verb:

నేను బాగున్నాను (*nēnu bāgunnānu*) — “I am well” (*bāgā* + *unnānu*, “I am,” run together).

The whole exchange:

— *mīru elā unnāru?* (“How are you?”) — *nēnu bāgunnānu, dhanyavādamulu.* (“I’m well, thank you.”)

The letters in this word

బా (*bā*) + గా (*gā*) → బాగా (*bāgā*).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “bāgā”
- the full reply — *nēnu bāgunnānu*
- add thanks (from Chapter 1) — *dhanyavādamulu*

Before you move on

Give the full reply to *mīru elā unnāru?* (*Nēnu bāgunnānu* — *bāgā* “well” fused with *unnānu* “I am.”)

3.8 బ — the letter your answer starts with

Say how you are. Then say the one word inside that answer that means “well.” It starts on your two lips, closed and then opened.

Script you’ll notice: బ

బ — *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**.

The word from the warm-up opens with it:

- బాగా *bāgā* — well, fine
- బాగున్నాను *bāgunnānu* — I am well

Both start with బ carrying the long-*ā* sign you have been reading since the greeting. The shape underneath that sign is today’s character.

Telugu gives *b* a letter of its own, and Tamil does not. Tamil writes one letter, ப, for the sound at the front of *pattu* (“ten”) and for the sound in the middle of தம்பி *tambi* (“younger brother”), and lets the place in the word decide which one you say. Telugu, Kannada and Hindi each keep బ / బ / ब apart from their *p* letter and spell the difference out. That is one of the sharpest splits between the two halves of this family, and you are meeting it on a page from chapter three.

Writing: బ — copy what you see

Put your pen on బ 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 these two words, and find బ at the front of each

బాగా · బాగున్నాను

- *Trace it:* బ three times, saying *ba* as you finish each one
- *Say it:* whether the mark leaning on బ in both words is the same one

Before you move on

Which character is this — బ? What sound does it carry? (*ba*.) Which word in this chapter begins with it? (బాగా — and its longer answer form బాగున్నాను.) Does Tamil have a separate letter for this sound? (No — it writes ూ and lets the place in the word decide.)

3.9 ఓ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ఓ — what amount does it stand for? And one from further back: ృఓ?

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

Script you'll notice: ఓ

ఓ — *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**.

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

- నమస్కారం *namaskāram* — hello / greetings (*namaskāram* — “a making of a bow”)
- సరే *sarē* — okay / alright (*sarē*)
- పేరు *pēru* — name
- నువ్వు / మీరు *nuvvu / mīru* — you (familiar / respectful)

Writing: ఓ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ఓ 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 these words, and find ర in the ones that have it
నమస్కారం · సరే · ధన్యవాదములు
- *Trace it:* ర three times, saying *ra* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ర once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ర? What sound does it carry? (*ra*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.
One more, from much earlier: ఱ — what does it do?

3.10 పరవాలేదు (paravālēdu) — “no problem”

When someone thanks you — or apologises — this is the easy, gracious reply, and it is built on a word you met in Chapter 1.

The letters in this word

Two joined words: పరవా (*paravā*, “harm, concern”) + లేదు (*lēdu*, “there is not”) → పరవాలేదు (*paravālēdu*).

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

పరవాలేదు literally means “**there is no harm**” — *paravā* (“harm, concern”) + *లేదు* (*lēdu*, “is-not / there-is-not”), the Chapter-1 negative. It serves as “it’s okay / no worries / never mind / you’re welcome.” The key atom, *లేదు* (*lēdu*), is where Telugu goes its own way: Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam all say *illa(i)* for “is-not,” but **Telugu alone** uses *లేదు* (*lēdu*) — so Tamil’s “no problem” is *paravāyillai*, and Telugu’s is *paravālēdu*, the same idea built on each language’s own “not.” One phrase shows both the Dravidian bond and the one place Telugu breaks from its sisters.

Grammar Lens: లేదు, Telugu’s “is-not”

Lēdu negates existence: *ḍabbu lēdu* (“there’s no money”), *ēmī lēdu* (“it’s nothing”). It is the negative twin of ఉంది (*undi*, “there is”) and

of the *uṇḍu* verb behind “how are you.” Learn *undi* / *lēdu* together — “there is” and “there is not.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “paravālēdu”
- what it literally means (“there is no harm”)
- the Telugu “is-not” that sets it apart from Tamil (*lēdu*, vs. Tamil *illai*)

Before you move on

What does *paravālēdu* literally say, and how does its “not” differ from Tamil’s? (“There is no harm”; Telugu uses *lēdu* where Tamil/Kannada/Malayalam use *illa(i)*.)

3.11 ఌ — the Telugu numeral for 5

Before the new one: ఌ — what does it do? And one from further back: 3?

One numeral this time, and it is read the way every numeral is read: as an amount.

Script you’ll notice: ఌ

ఌ is five.

Half the set. Everything the book has shown you so far is on the row below, in no order at all.

Writing: ఌ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ఌ 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 row and say the value of each numeral in it, left to right
౫ · ౩ · ౧ · ౪ · ౨
- *Trace it:* ౫ three times, saying “5” as you finish each one
- *Look:* for ౫ on any page of a Telugu book, calendar or doorplate you can find

Before you move on

Which numeral is this — ౫? What amount does it stand for? (౫ is 5.)
One more, from much earlier: ౫ — what does it do?

3.12 Chapter 3 — The how-are-you exchange

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

The exchange

Read the whole cycle off the page first — Telugu, then the sound, then the sense:

Telugu		English
మీరు ఎలా ఉన్నారు?	<i>mīru elā unnāru</i>	How are you?
నేను బాగున్నాను, ధన్యవాదములు.	<i>nēnu bāgunnānu, dhanyavādamulu</i>	I’m well, thank you.
పరవాలేదు.	<i>paravālēdu</i>	No problem / you’re welcome.

A few of these characters have not had their own lesson yet. They are here to be **recognised**, not decoded — the romanization beside each line is what you read from. The letters catch up in the chapters ahead.

Say these aloud:

- “How are you?” (respectful) — *mīru elā unnāru?*
- “I’m well, thank you.” — *nēnu bāgunnānu, dhanyavādamulu.*
- “No problem / you’re welcome.” — *paravālēdu.*
- the familiar version of the question — *nuvvu elā unnāvu?*

What you’ve built — the atoms

Say these aloud:

- the *e-* question-word for “how” (*elā*)
- “I” and the verb “to be” (*nēnu, uṇḍu*)
- the “there is / there is not” pair (*undi / lēdu*)

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Roots you now carry:

- *elā* ← the interrogative *e-* (native Dravidian, like Tamil *eppaḍi*)
- *nēnu* ← Proto-Dravidian (unrelated to English *me*); possessive *nā*
- *bāgā* ← *bāgu* “goodness”; *nēnu bāgunnānu* “I’m well”
- *lēdu* — Telugu’s “is-not,” where its sisters use *illa(i)*

Before you move on

A stranger asks *mīru elā unnāru?* — give a full, polite reply, and answer their thanks. (*Nēnu bāgunnānu, dhanyavādamulu* — and to thanks, *paravālēdu.*)

Chapter 4

Farewells

Modes: ⇐ voice (1) 👁 eyes (4) ✍ pen (4) ⇐ Hands-free start: none of the 9 lessons.

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

Telugu, like every Dravidian language, does not say a plain “goodbye.” It promises to return: వెళ్ళి వస్తాను — “having gone, I come back.”

4.1 డ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ఌ — what amount does it stand for? And one from further back: ఉ?

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

Script you’ll notice: డ

డ — *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**.

You met it on an earlier page, in the middle of a word you already say:

- మీరు ఎలా ఉన్నారు? — how are you? (respectful)

Writing: డ — copy what you see

Put your pen on డ 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 these words, and find డ in the ones that have it
మీరు ఎలా ఉన్నారు? · నమస్కారం
- *Trace it:* డ three times, saying *da* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find డ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — డ? What sound does it carry? (*da*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.
One more, from much earlier: న — what does it do?

4.2 వెళ్ళు (vellu) — “go,” and వచ్చు (come)

Two everyday verbs — and together they make the Telugu goodbye.

The letters in this word

వె (*ve*) + ౖ (*llu*, a doubled retroflex శ *l*) → వెళ్ళు (*vellu*). Its partner: వచ్చు (*vaccu*, “come”) with the doubled చ్చ (*cc*).

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

వెళ్ళు (*vellu*, “to go”) and వచ్చు (*vaccu*, “to come”) are native Dravidian verbs. As commands they are whole words: *vellu!* (“go!”), *rā!*

(“come!”). You need both, because Telugu — like every Dravidian language — does not say a plain “goodbye.” It says “I go, and I **come back**.”

The letters in this word

వె (ve) + శ్చు (llu, doubled retroflex శ్ !) → వెశ్చు. Its partner వచ్చు (vaccu, “come”).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “వెల్లు” (go) and “వచ్చు” (come)
- why you need both to say goodbye (Telugu’s farewell is “I’ll go and come back”)

Before you move on

What do *veḷḷu* and *vaccu* mean, and why will you need them both to part? (“Go” and “come”; the Telugu goodbye is “I’ll go and come back.”)

4.3 ఓ — the Telugu numeral for 6

Before the new one: డ — what does it do? And one from further back: ఢ?

One numeral this time, and it is read the way every numeral is read: as an amount.

Script you’ll notice: ఓ

ఓ is six.

Six is where the second half begins, and where a warning belongs: **ఓ is not the 6 you write, and it is not an E**. It is its own character, and the only way it becomes readable is by meeting it often enough that the resemblance stops mattering.

Writing: ఓ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ఓ 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 row and say the value of each numeral in it, left to right

ఓ · ౨ · ౩

- *Trace it:* ఓ three times, saying “6” as you finish each one
- *Look:* for ఓ on any page of a Telugu book, calendar or doorplate you can find

Before you move on

Which numeral is this — ఓ? What amount does it stand for? (ఓ is 6.)

One more, from much earlier: ఌ — what does it do?

4.4 వెళ్లి వస్తాను (vellī vastānu) — “I’ll go and come back”

The everyday Telugu goodbye — a promise, not a parting.

The letters in this word

వెళ్లి (vellī, “having gone”) is vellu + the “-i” that means “having ...d.” వస్తాను (vastānu, “I come/will come”) is from vaccu (“come”) + “I.”

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

వెళ్ళి వస్తాను = వెళ్ళి (*velli*, “having gone”) + వస్తాను (*vastānu*, “I come”) — literally “**having gone, I come [back]**,” i.e. “I’ll go and come back.” A Telugu speaker never signs off with a bare “I’m leaving” — that sounds final. Instead they promise return. It is the same “go-and-come-back” farewell you meet across the Dravidian south (Tamil *pōy varugirēn*, Kannada *hōgi baruttēne*, Malayalam *pōyi varām*) and echoing into the Indo-Aryan tracks (Bengali *āshi*). The warm reply is వెళ్ళి రండి (*velli raṇḍi*, “go and come [back]”).

Across the family — the same idea, five ways:

Language	“go and come back” (goodbye)
Telugu	<i>velli vastānu</i>
Tamil	<i>pōy varugirēn</i>
Kannada	<i>hōgi baruttēne</i>
Malayalam	<i>pōyi varām</i>
Bengali (Indo-Aryan)	<i>āshi</i> (“I come”)

The whole south — and, in Bengali, well beyond it — prefers a promise of return to a blunt farewell. The languages are not all related; the habit travelled anyway.

Grammar Lens: the “having ...d” participle

Velli is Telugu’s way of chaining actions: “having gone, (then) I come.” Like its sisters, Telugu strings verbs with one in the participle form and the last one fully conjugated.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the goodbye — *velli vastānu*
- its literal meaning (“having gone, I come” → “I’ll come back”)
- the warm reply — *velli raṇḍi*

Before you move on

What does the Telugu goodbye literally promise, and how do you answer? (“I’ll go and come back”; reply *velli raṇḍi*, “go and come back”).

4.5 రేపు కలుద్దాం (rēpu kaluddām) — “see you tomorrow”

A goodbye with a date on it.

The letters in this word

రే (rē) + పు (pu) → రేపు (rēpu). కలుద్దాం (kaluddām) = kalu (“meet”) + -ddām (“let’s”).

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

రేపు (rēpu, “tomorrow”) is native Dravidian. కలుద్దాం (kaluddām, “let’s meet”) is from కలు (kalu, “to meet, to join”) — so the phrase is “**tomorrow, let’s meet,**” the Telugu “see you tomorrow.” The -దాం (-ddām) ending is Telugu’s “let’s _____” — a first-person-plural invitation: *velliddām* (“let’s go”), *tindām* (“let’s eat”).

The letters in this word

రే (rē) + పు (pu) → రేపు. కలుద్దాం (kaluddām) = kalu (“meet”) + -ddām (“let’s”).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “rēpu kaluddām”
- “tomorrow” and “to meet” (rēpu, kalu)
- the “let’s _____” ending (-ddām)

Before you move on

What are the two pieces of *rēpu kaluddām*, and what does *-ddām* mean? (*Rēpu* “tomorrow” + *kalu* “meet”; *-ddām* = “let’s ____.”)

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

Before the new one: ఁ — what amount does it stand for? And one from further back: ఌ?

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

Script you’ll notice: ప

ప — *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**.

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

- పేరు *pēru* — name
- పరవాలేదు *paravālēdu* — it’s okay / no problem / you’re welcome
- రేపు కలుద్దాం *rēpu kaluddām* — see you tomorrow

Writing: ప — copy what you see

Put your pen on ప 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 these words, and find ప in the ones that have it
పేరు · పరవాలేదు · నమస్కారం
- *Trace it:* ప three times, saying *pa* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ప once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ప? What sound does it carry? (*pa.*)
Name one word you already say that contains it.
One more, from much earlier: ఠ — what amount does it stand for?

4.7 మళ్ళీ కలుద్దాం (maḷḷī kaluddām) — “we’ll meet again”

The open-ended, warm goodbye — no date, just a promise.

The letters in this word

మళ్ళీ (maḷḷī): note the doubled retroflex శ్చ (ḷḷ), the same sound as in *vellu*.
కలుద్దాం (kaluddām, “let’s meet”) you just learned.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

మళ్ళీ కలుద్దాం = మళ్ళీ (maḷḷī, “again”) + కలుద్దాం (kaluddām, “let’s meet”) — “**we’ll meet again.**” Both words are native Dravidian: *maḷḷī* (“again,” from *maral*, “to return”) and *kalu* (“to meet”). Where Tamil’s “we’ll meet again” (*mīṇḍum sandippōm*) reaches for the Sanskrit loan *sandi* to say “meet,” Telugu keeps the native *kalu* — a small reminder that these sisters make the same phrase from different stock.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “maḷḷī kaluddām”
- “again” and “let’s meet” (maḷḷī, kaluddām)

Before you move on

What does the phrase mean, and which Dravidian verb does Telugu use for “meet” here? (“We’ll meet again”; the native *kalu* — where Tamil used the Sanskrit loan *sandi*.)

4.8 ౭ — the Telugu numeral for 7

Before the new one: ౬ — what does it do? And one from further back: ౫?

One numeral this time, and it is read the way every numeral is read: as an amount.

Script you’ll notice: ౭

౭ is **seven**.

౬ and ౭ sit next to each other in value and are easy to swap on a first reading. Look at the pair below until you can say which is which without counting up to it.

Writing: ౭ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ౭ 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 row and say the value of each numeral in it, left to right

౭ · ౬ · ౫

- *Trace it:* ౭ three times, saying “7” as you finish each one

- *Look:* for ౭ on any page of a Telugu book, calendar or doorplate you can find

Before you move on

Which numeral is this — ౭? What amount does it stand for? (౭ is 7, ౬ is 6.)

One more, from much earlier: ౫ — what does it do?

4.9 Chapter 4 — The farewells

No new words. Three ways to part — none of them a blunt “goodbye.”

The exchange — the farewells

All three, side by side — none of them a blunt “goodbye”:

Telugu		English
వెళ్లి వస్తాను.	<i>velli vastānu</i>	I’ll go and come back. (the goodbye)
వెళ్లి రండి.	<i>velli raṇḍi</i>	Go and come back. (the reply)
రేపు కలుద్దాం.	<i>rēpu kaluddām</i>	See you tomorrow.
మళ్ళీ కలుద్దాం.	<i>malli kaluddām</i>	We’ll meet again.

A few of these characters have not had their own lesson yet. They are here to be **recognised**, not decoded — the romanization beside each line is what you read from. The letters catch up in the chapters ahead.

Say these aloud:

- the everyday goodbye — *velli vastānu* (“I’ll go and come back”)
- the warm reply — *velli raṇḍi* (“go and come back”)
- “see you tomorrow” — *rēpu kaluddām*
- “we’ll meet again” — *malli kaluddām*

What you’ve built — the atoms

Say these aloud:

- the two verbs (*vellu* go, *vaccu* come)
- “tomorrow,” “again,” “let’s meet” (*rēpu*, *mallī*, *kaluddām*)
- the “let’s ____” ending (*-ddām*)

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Roots you now carry:

- *vellī vastānu* — “having gone, I come”; the Dravidian promise-of-return goodbye
- *rēpu* “tomorrow” + *kalu* “meet” (native, where Tamil borrowed *sandi*)
- *mallī* ← *maral* “to return”

Before you move on

Why does Telugu never say a plain “I’m leaving,” and what does its everyday goodbye promise instead? (It sounds too final; *vellī vastānu* promises “I’ll go and come back.”)

Chapter 5

The First Verbs

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) 👁 eyes (4) ✍ pen (9) ⇄ **Hands-free start:** none of the 14 lessons.

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

Until now, “to be” and “to be-not.” Now verbs that act, and Telugu’s sentences begin to move: నేను తెలుగు మాట్లాడతాను — stem + tense + person, stacked.

5.1 త — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ౭ — what amount does it stand for? And one from further back: డ?

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

Script you’ll notice: త

త — *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**.

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

- సంతోషం — joy / pleased to meet you
- వెళ్లి వస్తాను *velli vastānu* — goodbye (lit. “I’ll go and come back”)

Writing: త — copy what you see

Put your pen on త 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 these words, and find త in the ones that have it
సంతోషం · వెళ్ళి వస్తాను · నమస్కారం
- *Trace it:* త three times, saying *ta* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find త once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — త? What sound does it carry? (*ta.*)

Name one word you already say that contains it.

One more, from much earlier: ట — what amount does it stand for?

5.2 త — copy it where it lives

Find త inside సంతోషం — *santōṣani* — and put your finger on it.

Writing — guided copy

The model stays on the page. Copy త once on its own, then copy it a second time **with the letter that follows it in the word**, keeping the two the same size and the same distance apart as the printed pair.

That second copy is the whole lesson. A letter traced alone teaches your hand one shape; a letter copied beside its neighbour teaches it where the shape has to stop, and a hand that has only ever drawn letters alone writes them too large and too far apart the first time it writes a word.

Look back at the model as often as you want. Nothing is hidden today.

Before you move on

Hold your two copies next to the printed word. Is the gap you left the same one the book left? That gap is not spacing — it is the difference between two letters and one word.

5.3 𐌲 — write it with the model covered

Look at 𐌲 once and say *ta*. Then cover it, and every other 𐌲 on the page.

Writing — delayed copy

With the model covered, wait ten seconds, then write 𐌲 once from memory.

Ten seconds is not long and is not meant to be. It is long enough that your hand cannot be tracing a shape it can still see, and short enough that a letter you met a minute ago is still there to be found.

Only after the letter is finished, uncover the model and compare. Repair **one** thing — the first that differs — and leave the rest.

Before you move on

The thing to look at is not whether your letter is beautiful. It is whether it is the **same letter**, and in this script that usually comes down to one curve closing where the model's closes, or staying open where the model's stays open. A hand drawing from memory rounds off what it is unsure about.

5.4 𐌲 — the letter from the sound

Cover every 𐌲 on the page. Nothing to copy and nothing to uncover.

Writing — dictation

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

This is a different job from the last lesson even though the letter is the same. A delayed copy asks your hand to remember a shape. Dictation asks it to turn a **sound** into a shape, which is the thing writing is actually for, and the two do not always arrive together.

Before you move on

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

Not *t*. **ta**. The vowel is already inside the letter and nobody wrote it, which is the fact about this script that the first three lessons showed you and this one makes you act on. Hearing *ta* and writing one shape is the whole difference between an alphabet and what you are learning.

5.5 మాట్లాడు (māṭlāḍu) — “to speak,” your first full verb

So far, “to be.” Here is a verb that *does* something — and it shows how Telugu builds “I do X.”

The letters in this word

మా (*mā*) + ట్లా (*ṭlā*) + డు (*ḍu*) → మాట్లాడు (*māṭlāḍu*).

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

మాట్లాడు (*māṭlāḍu*, “to speak, to talk”) is native Dravidian, built on మాట (*māṭa*, “word, speech”). To say “**I speak**,” Telugu adds a two-part ending to the stem — tense + person:

māṭlāḍ- (speak) + *-t-* (present/future) + *-ānu* (“I”) →
మాట్లాడతాను (*māṭlāḍatānu*), “I speak / I will speak.”

The *-ాను* (*-ānu*) ending *is* “I,” so *nēnu* is rarely needed. Change the ending, change the person: *māṭlāḍtāḍu* (he), *māṭlāḍtūndi* (she/it), *māṭlāḍtāru* (they / you-respectful).

Grammar Lens: stem + tense + person

Every Telugu verb is built this way — a stem, a tense-marker, a person-ending, stacked and glued. Learn the pattern once and every verb follows it. (Telugu, like Tamil, marks no gender in the first person: *māṭlāḍatānu* is the same for a man or a woman.)

The letters in this word

మా (*mā*) + ట్లా (*ṭlā*) + డు (*ḍu*) → మాట్లాడు.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “māṭṭlāḍu” (speak)
- “I speak” — *māṭṭlāḍatānu*
- the word “speech” inside it (*māṭa*)

Before you move on

Build “I speak” from *māṭṭlāḍu*, and name the noun it’s built on.
(*Māṭṭlāḍatānu*; *māṭa*, “word / speech.”)

5.6 ఓ — the Telugu numeral for 8

Before the new one: ఆ — what does it do? And one from further back: ఆ?

One numeral this time, and it is read the way every numeral is read: as an amount.

Script you’ll notice: ఓ

ఓ is **eight**.

Eight of ten. Read the row below and say each value aloud before moving on — the pause matters more than the speed.

Writing: ఓ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ఓ 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 row and say the value of each numeral in it, left to right

౮ · ౩ · ౭ · ౧

- *Trace it:* ౮ three times, saying “8” as you finish each one
- *Look:* for ౮ on any page of a Telugu book, calendar or doorplate you can find

Before you move on

Which numeral is this — ౮? What amount does it stand for? (౮ is 8.)

One more, from much earlier: ౧ — what does it do?

5.7 నేను తెలుగు మాట్లాడతాను (nēnu telugu māṭlāḍatānu) — “I speak Telugu”

Your first full, moving sentence — and it names one of India’s most musical languages.

The letters in this word

తెలుగు (*telugu*): తె (*te*) + లు (*lu*) + గు (*gu*).

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

నేను తెలుగు మాట్లాడతాను = నేను (*nēnu*, “I”) + తెలుగు (*telugu*, “Telugu,” the object) + మాట్లాడతాను (*māṭlāḍatānu*, “speak”) — “**I Telugu speak**,” the verb last as always. The name తెలుగు (*telugu*) is native, of debated origin (often linked to *tenugu*, and to the land *Trilinga*); its vowel-rich sound and habit of ending most words in a vowel earned it the old nickname “the Italian of the East.” It is the language of the *Kāvya* poets and, today, of some eighty million speakers.

Grammar Lens: no gender on “I speak”

Māṭlāḍatānu is the same whether a man or a woman says it — Telugu, like Tamil, marks **no gender in the first or second person** (only the third: *-āḍu* he, *-undi* she/it). This is unlike Hindi, where even “I

“speak” changes for the speaker’s gender (*boltā/boltī*).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “nēnu telugu māṭlāḍatānu”
- the old nickname for Telugu and why (“the Italian of the East” — vowel-rich, most words end in a vowel)
- does “I speak” change for a man vs. a woman? (No — no 1st-person gender)

Before you move on

Say “I speak Telugu,” and give Telugu’s old nickname. (*Nēnu telugu māṭlāḍatānu*; “the Italian of the East.”)

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

Before the new one: ఊ — what amount does it stand for? And one from further back: ప?

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

Script you’ll notice: స

స — *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**.

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

- నమస్కారం *namaskāram* — hello / greetings (namaskāram — “a making of a bow”)
- సరే *sarē* — okay / alright (sarē)
- వెళ్లి వస్తాను *velli vastānu* — goodbye (lit. “I’ll go and come back”)

Writing: స — copy what you see

Put your pen on స 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 these words, and find స in the ones that have it

సమస్కారం · సరే · ధన్యవాదములు

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

Before you move on

Which character is this — స? What sound does it carry? (*sa*)
Name one word you already say that contains it.
One more, from much earlier: ం — what does it do?

5.9 ష — the second of the s letters

Before the new one: స — what sound does it carry, and which word from chapter two opens with it?

That word carries a second s-shape as well, further along. Today's character is the second one.

Script you'll notice: ష

ష — *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**.

- సంతోషం *santōṣam* — joy; and the way you say you are pleased to meet somebody (santōṣam — “gladness”)

Look at that word end to end. It opens on స and closes on ష, with the *o* sign between them. **Two different s-shapes inside one short word**, and until now you could read the first and not the second.

Your tongue makes them in two different places. For స the tip touches the ridge behind your teeth. For ష it curls back along the roof of your mouth, the same backward curl you already make for ట. The romanization marks the difference with one dot under the letter — *s* against *ṣ* — which is easy to miss in print and impossible to miss on the page, where they are two unlike shapes.

Writing: ష — copy what you see

Put your pen on ష and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed. Then write స beside it and look at the two.

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 the word below and put a finger on each of its two s-shapes in turn

సంతోషం

- *Trace it:* ష three times, saying *ṣa* as you finish each one
- *Say it:* which of the two has your tongue curled back

Before you move on

Which character is this — ష? What sound does it carry? (*ṣa*.) Which end of సంతోషం does it sit at? (**The far end** — స opens the word, ష closes it.) Which other letter puts your tongue in the same

curled place? (ట.)

5.10 ఉండు (uṇḍu) — “to be, to stay, to live”

You have already used this verb — in “how are you.” Now meet it in its own right, and use it to say where you live.

The letters in this word

ఉ (independent *u*) + ండు (*ṇḍu*, with the retroflex cluster ండు) → ఉండు (*uṇḍu*).

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

ఉండు (*uṇḍu*, “to be, to exist, to stay, to live”) is native Dravidian and does an enormous amount of work. It is the verb behind Chapter 3’s *unnāru* (“you are”) and *bāgunnānu* (“I’m well”) — and it also means “to reside”: నేను హైదరాబాద్లో ఉంటాను (*nēnu Hyderābādhlō uṇṭānu*, “I live in Hyderabad”). One verb covers “be,” “stay,” and “live.”

Grammar Lens: “in” comes after the noun

హైదరాబాద్లో (*Hyderābādhlō*) = *Hyderabad* + -లో (*-lō*, “in”). The little word for “in” is glued to the **end** of the noun — Telugu uses **postpositions** (really, case-suffixes) where English uses prepositions. “Hyderabad-in I stay,” the verb last.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “uṇḍu”
- “I live in Hyderabad” — *nēnu Hyderābādhlō uṇṭānu*
- where “in” (*-lō*) sits — glued to the end of the noun

Before you move on

Name three things the one verb *uṇḍu* can mean, and say where “in” goes. (“To be / to stay / to live”; *-lō* “in” attaches to the **end** of the

noun.)

5.11 హ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: స — what does it do? And one from further back: ఔ?

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

Script you'll notice: హ

హ — *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**.

You met it on the page before this one, at the front of a place name:

- హైదరాబాద్ *Hyderābād* — the city from the sentence about where you live

Look at where that word came from. *Hyderābād* reached Telugu through Persian and Urdu, and that is the pattern: in the words this book has given you so far, హ sits almost entirely on borrowings — from Persian, from Urdu, from Sanskrit. It is a letter you will meet again on the very next page, in a word for help that came in from Sanskrit.

Writing: హ — copy what you see

Put your pen on హ 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 these words, and find హా in the ones that have it

హైదరాబాద్ · నమస్కారం

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

Before you move on

Which character is this — హా? What sound does it carry? (*ha*.)

Name one word you already say that contains it.

One more, from much earlier: ౩ — what amount does it stand for?

5.12 పని చేయు (pani cēyu) — “to work”

The last verb of the chapter — and, like Hindi’s *karnā* and Tamil’s *sey*, it is a “do” verb that builds a hundred others.

The letters in this word

పని (*pani*, “work”): ప (*pa*) + ని (*ni*). చేయు (*cēyu*, “do”): చే (*cē*) + యు (*yu*).

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

చేయు (*cēyu*, “to do, to make”) is a core native Dravidian verb, and Telugu — like Hindi with *karnā* and Tamil with *sey* — builds compound verbs by putting a noun in front of it:

- పని చేయు (*pani cēyu*) = “work-do” = “**to work**” (*pani*, “work”)
- వంట చేయు (*vaṇṭa cēyu*) = “to cook”
- సహాయం చేయు (*sahāyaṁ cēyu*) = “to help” (*sahāyaṁ* ← Sanskrit)

So “I work” is నేను పని చేస్తాను (*nēnu pani cēstānu*) — *cēy-* + tense + “I.” Master *cēyu* and a whole grammar of “do-verbs” opens up — and notice *sahāyaṁ cēyu* (“to help”) pairs a **Sanskrit** noun with the **native** *cēyu*: Telugu’s two vocabularies working together in a single verb.

Grammar Lens: noun + చేయ = a new verb

This “noun + *cēyu*” pattern is the exact twin of Hindi’s “noun + *karnā*” and Tamil’s “noun + *sey*.” Three languages — two of them from unrelated families — all hit on the same trick: an all-purpose “do” verb with nouns bolted on.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “pani *cēyu*” (to work)
- “I work” — *nēnu pani cēstānu*
- the Hindi and Tamil twins of this trick (*karnā*, *sey*)

Before you move on

How does Telugu turn “work” into “to work,” and what verbs work the same way in Hindi and Tamil? (*Pani* + *cēyu* = “work-do”; Hindi *karnā*, Tamil *sey*.)

5.13 ట — the Telugu numeral for 9

Before the new one: ష — what does it do? And one from further back: త?

One numeral this time, and it is read the way every numeral is read: as an amount.

Script you’ll notice: ట

ట is **nine**.

That is nine of the ten, and the last one is the one that makes the rest useful.

Writing: ట — copy what you see

Put your pen on ట 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 row and say the value of each numeral in it, left to right

౯ · ౮ · ౬ · ౭ · ౫

- *Trace it:* ౯ three times, saying “9” as you finish each one
- *Look:* for ౯ on any page of a Telugu book, calendar or doorplate you can find

Before you move on

Which numeral is this — ౯? What amount does it stand for? (౯ is 9.)

One more, from much earlier: ౬ — what does it do?

5.14 Chapter 5 — The first verbs

No new words. Three verbs, one engine — build real sentences about yourself.

Your turn: build the sentences

Three sentences about yourself, read off the page before you say them:

Telugu		English
నేను తెలుగు మాట్లాడతాను.	<i>nēnu telugu māṭṭlāḍatānu</i>	I speak Telugu.
నేను హైదరాబాద్లో ఉంటాను.	<i>nēnu Hyderābādlo uṇṭānu</i>	I live in Hyderabad.
నేను పని చేస్తాను.	<i>nēnu pani cēstānu</i>	I work.

A few of these characters have not had their own lesson yet. They are here to be **recognised**, not decoded — the romanization beside each line is what you read from. The letters catch up in the chapters ahead.

Say these aloud:

- “I speak Telugu” — *nēnu telugu māṭlāḍatānu*
- “I live in Hyderabad” — *nēnu Hyderābādlo uṇṭānu*
- “I work” — *nēnu pani cēstānu*
- “he speaks” vs. “she speaks” — *māṭlāḍtāḍu / māṭlāḍtundi*

What you’ve built — the engine

Say these aloud:

- the three stacked pieces of every Telugu verb (stem + tense + person)
- the ending that means “I” (*-ānu*)
- where Telugu marks gender — and where it doesn’t (3rd person only)

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Roots you now carry:

- *māṭlāḍu* “to speak” ← *māṭa* “word”
- *uṇḍu* “to be / stay / live”; *-lō* “in” attaches to the noun’s end
- *cēyu* “to do” → *pani cēyu* “to work” (the twin of Hindi’s *karnā*, Tamil’s *sey*)
- *telugu* — “the Italian of the East,” vowel-rich

Before you move on

In one breath, say your language, your city, and your work in Telugu. (*Nēnu telugu māṭlāḍatānu. Nēnu ... lō uṇṭānu. Nēnu pani cēstānu.*)

Chapter 6

Case Endings and Dative Subjects

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

By the end of this chapter: I can say that I know Telugu the way Telugu itself says it — “to me Telugu comes,” with no subject and the dative -ku.

Say నాకు తెలుగు వచ్చు *against నేను తెలుగు మాట్లాడతాను*, then line up the four Dravidian datives -ku · -ukku · -ge · -ikku.

6.1 ౦ — the Telugu numeral for 0

Before the new one: ౯ — what amount does it stand for? And one from further back: ౮?

One numeral this time, and it is read the way every numeral is read: as an amount.

Script you’ll notice: ౦

౦ is **zero**, and it closes the set.

It is a ring, and you have seen that ring before: ౦, the sunna, is drawn the same way. On the page the difference is where it sits — the sunna rides after a letter inside a word, the zero stands in a row of numerals. Context, not shape, tells you which one you are looking at.

With ౦ in hand the other nine become worth something, because Telugu numerals use **place value exactly the way your own digits do**. ౧ then ౦ is ten. ౨ then ౦ is twenty. Three digits make hundreds. Nothing new

has to be learned for that — the system is one you already own, wearing different characters.

Writing: O — copy what you see

Put your pen on O 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 row and say the value of each numeral in it, left to right

౦౦ · ౨౦ · ౯౯ · ౧౦౦

- *Trace it:* O three times, saying “0” as you finish each one
- *Look:* for O on any page of a Telugu book, calendar or doorplate you can find

Before you move on

Which numeral is this — O? What amount does it stand for? (O is 0, and ౦౦ is ten.)

One more, from much earlier: ఁ — what amount does it stand for?

6.2 -కు (-ku) — “to, for”

Your first **case ending**. English puts “to” in **front** as its own word. Telugu sticks it on the **back** — and that difference is the biggest structural fact about the language.

You'll want to know: Adding it on

word	+ -ku	meaning
పేరు <i>pēru</i> — name	పేరుకు <i>pēruku</i>	to/for the name
పని <i>pani</i> — work	పనికి <i>paniki</i>	for work

Notice the suffix appears as -కు *-ku* or -కి *-ki* depending on the vowel before it. Same suffix, adjusted to fit — the seam still shows.

And with “I”, which changes its body first:

నేను *nēnu* (“I”) → నాకు *nāku* (“to me”)

Nēnu becomes *nā-* before the ending. Nouns don’t do this; they just take the suffix.

Grammar Lens: Why this matters

	Telugu -ku	a Latin ending like -īs
pins down the case?	yes — dative, always	no — <i>-īs</i> is dative or ablative
carries number?	no — a separate suffix does	yes — plural, baked in
carries declension class?	no	yes — 1st/2nd only
can you see the seam?	yes: <i>pēru + ku</i>	no — one fused lump

Telugu **stacks**: each suffix means one thing and sits in a fixed order, so you can point at every piece of a long word. Latin **fuses** — *-īs* is case *and* plural *and* declension, indivisible, and it doesn’t even settle *which* case. Telugu’s *-ku* is never ambiguous.

That’s what “**agglutinative**” means, and it’s why Telugu words grow long without growing hard: they are **built**, not memorised.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*pēru ... pēruku*”
- “*nēnu ... nāku*” — “I” ... “to me”
- “*paniki*” — “for work,” from Ch. 5’s పని

- the principle — “one suffix, one meaning, visible seam”

Before you move on

What does **-కు** mean? (“**To**” or “**for**.”) Where does it go? (**On the end** of the noun.) What is “to me”? (**నాకు** *nāku* — *nēnu* shrinks to *nā*- first.) Why does it sometimes appear as **-కి**? (It **adjusts to the preceding vowel** — same suffix.) How does that differ from Latin? (Latin **fuses** case+number+declension into one ending — and *-is* doesn’t even fix *which* case; Telugu’s carries **one** meaning, unambiguously, with the **seam visible**.) Next: the sentence where Telugu leaves out the subject entirely.

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

Before the new one: **౦** — what amount does it stand for? And one from further back: **స**?

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

Script you’ll notice: య

య — *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**.

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

- ధన్యవాదములు *dhanyavādamulu* — thank you (dhanyavādamulu — “utterances of ‘worthy’”)
- పని చేయు *pani cēyu* — to work (lit. “work-do”)

Writing: య — copy what you see

Put your pen on య 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 these words, and find య in the ones that have it

ధన్యవాదములు · సమస్కారం

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

Before you move on

Which character is this — య? What sound does it carry? (*ya*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.
One more, from much earlier: ఓ — what does it do?

6.4 నాకు తెలుగు వచ్చు — “I know Telugu”

Chapter 5 taught you how to say “I speak Telugu.” Now say “I **know** Telugu.” Telugu won’t let you use *nēnu* — and the verb it uses instead will surprise you.

You’ll want to know: The sentence

నాకు తెలుగు వచ్చు. *nāku telugu vaccu*. literally: “**to-me** Telugu comes.”

piece

నాకు *nāku*

“to me” — the dative from the last lesson

తెలుగు *telugu*

Telugu (Ch. 5)

వచ్చు *vaccu*

“**comes**” — the very verb you learned in Ch. 4

Two things at once. **You are not the subject** — *nēnu* is gone, moved into the dative, and what’s left unmarked is *telugu*. And the verb is literally “**to come**”: a language you know is a thing that **comes to you**.

Grammar Lens: Why: things that happen *to* you

Telugu sorts experiences from actions. Speaking is something you **do**, so Ch. 5 used *nēnu*. But knowing, liking, wanting, being hungry — these **arrive** at you. Telugu marks that by putting the person in the **dative**.

English frames it as	Telugu frames it as
I know Telugu	Telugu comes to me
I like it	it is pleasing to me
I am cold	cold is to me

English keeps one fossil of exactly this: “**methinks**” — *me* is a dative, “it seems **to me**.” Telugu made it the rule.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

language	“I know [the language]”	the dative
Telugu	<i>nāku telugu vaccu</i>	-ku
Tamil	<i>enakku tamīl teriyum</i>	-ukku
Kannada	<i>nanage kannada gottu</i>	-ge
Malayalam	<i>enikku malayālam ariyām</i>	-ikku

One construction across four languages, with four suffixes that are visibly the **same suffix** — *-ku* / *-ukku* / *-ge* / *-ikku*. The Dravidian family showing its bones, just as *blanc/bianco/branco* did for Romance.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*nāku telugu vaccu*”
- the contrast — “*nēnu telugu māṭlādatānu*” (I speak) ... “*nāku telugu vaccu*” (comes to me)
- the literal — “to-me Telugu comes”

- the four cousins — “-ku · -ukku · -ge · -ikku”

Before you move on

What does నాకు తెలుగు వచ్చు literally say? (“**To-me** Telugu **comes.**”) Which verb is doing the work, and where did you meet it? (వచ్చు “to come” — Chapter 4.) What has English got that Telugu hasn’t? (A nominative “**I**” — *nēnu* is replaced by the dative *nāku*.) Why the dative? (Knowing **happens to** you.) Which English word keeps the same idea? (**Methinks.**)

Chapter 7

Numbers One to Ten

Modes: 👁 eyes (2) ✍ pen (5) 🖐 Hands-free start: none of the 7 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can count from one to ten in Telugu, including the numbers that wander furthest from their Dravidian cousins.

Count ఒకటి through పది, say the two Telugu builds fresh — enimidi and tommidi — and hear seven's three fates in ēlu, ēḷu and ēḍu.

7.1 ఒకటి, రెండు, మూడు, నాలుగు, ఐదు — one to five

Four of these five are old Dravidian friends. The very first one is Telugu going its own way.

You'll want to know: The five

	numeral	word	said
1	౧	ఒకటి	<i>okaṭi</i>
2	౨	రెండు	<i>reṇḍu</i>
3	౩	మూడు	<i>mūḍu</i>
4	౪	నాలుగు	<i>nālugu</i>
5	౫	ఐదు	<i>aidu</i>

The symbols ౧ ౨ ౩ ౪ ౫ are Telugu's own digits.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

One is where Telugu leaves the family. Its cousins agree — Tamil *onru*, Kannada *ondu*, Malayalam *onnu*, all from an old *on-* — but Telugu says **okaṭi**, a different formation altogether. It’s the number to memorise fresh rather than reason across from Tamil.

From two onward, the family closes ranks again:

	Tamil	Telugu
2	<i>iraṇṭu</i>	reṇḍu
3	<i>mūnru</i>	mūḍu
4	<i>nānku</i>	nālugu
5	<i>aintu</i>	aidu

Reṇḍu has simply dropped the opening vowel of *iraṇṭu*; *mūḍu* is *mūnru* with its cluster smoothed to a single **ḍ**. Same numbers, a Telugu polish.

Script you’ll notice: A Telugu shape to notice

Nearly every Telugu word here ends in **-u** (*reṇḍu*, *mūḍu*, *nālugu*) — the language’s strong preference for open, vowel-final syllables. Even where Tamil ends hard, Telugu tends to round the word off with a vowel.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “okaṭi, reṇḍu, mūḍu, nālugu, aidu”
- the maverick — “okaṭi”, NOT the *onru*/ondu/onnu of its cousins
- the family — “iraṇṭu → reṇḍu”, the opening vowel dropped

Before you move on

Count to five in Telugu. (*Okaṭi*, *reṇḍu*, *mūḍu*, *nālugu*, *aidu*.) Which number does Telugu form unlike the rest of the family, and what do the others say? (**One** — Telugu *okaṭi* vs *onru* / *ondu* / *onnu*.) How does *reṇḍu* relate to Tamil *iraṇṭu*? (The opening vowel was dropped.) What vowel do most Telugu words here end in? (**-u**.) Next: six to ten.

7.2 ఐ — one letter for a vowel that moves

Before the new one: ఐ — what sound, and where in a word does Telugu use the letter rather than the sign?

Count to five out loud. The last number opens on today's character.

Script you'll notice: ఐ

ఐ — *ai*.

It is an **independent vowel** — a vowel that is a letter in its own right, not a mark hung on a consonant.

- ఐదు *aidu* — five

Say *aidu* slowly and listen to the opening. Your mouth does not hold one position: it starts low and slides up toward *i*. Two sounds in one movement, which is what the romanization's two letters are trying to show.

Telugu writes that whole movement with one character. English needs a digraph or a silent letter for the same job — *aisle*, *height*, *my* — and picks a different trick each time. Here the slide has a shape of its own, and it looks nothing like the ఐ you met a chapter ago even though the romanizations share a letter.

Writing: ఐ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ఐ and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed. Then write ఐ beside it and look at the two.

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 the number below and find ఐ at its front

ఐదు

- *Trace it:* ఐ three times, saying *ai* as you finish each one
- *Say it:* *ēmiti* and *aidu* one after the other, and say which opening moves

Before you move on

Which character is this — ఐ? What sound does it carry? (*ai*.)
Which number begins with it? (ఐదు.) Does your mouth hold one
position for it or two? (Two — it slides.)

7.3 ు — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: య — what does it do? And one from further back: హ?

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

Script you'll notice: ు

ు — $\bar{u}$.

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.

You already know its short partner. య puts a quick *u* on a consonant; ు puts a **held** one on it — the same vowel, kept twice as long. Telugu counts that length as the difference between two different words, so the two signs are two different characters and not two ways of writing one.

Say *mu*, then say *mū* and let the vowel run on. That extra length is all the second mark is asking for.

You already say this one, and the held vowel is sitting in the middle of it:

- మూడు *mūḍu* — three, from the numbers you counted out

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 these two, and say which one holds its vowel and which one does not

మూడు · రెండు

- *Trace it:* ు three times, saying $\bar{u}$ and holding it 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 how is it different from ు? (**A held $\bar{u}$; ు is the short one.**)

One more, from much earlier: ు — what amount does it stand for?

7.4 ఆరు, ఏడు, ఎనిమిది, తొమ్మిది, పది — six to ten

The top of the count is where Telugu is least like its cousins — two of these you simply learn on their own.

You'll want to know: The five

	numeral	word	said
6	౬	ఆరు	<i>āru</i>
7	౭	ఏడు	<i>ēḍu</i>
8	౮	ఎనిమిది	<i>enimidi</i>
9	౯	తొమ్మిది	<i>tommidi</i>
10	౧౦	పది	<i>padi</i>

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Six is an easy cousin (Tamil *āru* → Telugu *āru*). **Seven** is more interesting: Tamil *ēlu* carries the rare **ḷ** (the *zh* of *Tamiḷ*); Kannada hardened it to **ḷ** (*ēḷu*); **Telugu went further still** and turned it into a plain **ḍ** — *ēḍu*. One inherited sound, three fates across the three scripts.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Here Telugu strays furthest from its cousins —

	Tamil	Malayalam	Telugu
8	<i>eṭṭu</i>	<i>eṭṭu</i>	enimidi
9	<i>onpatu</i>	<i>onpatu</i>	tommidi

You can't reach *enimidi* and *tommidi* from Tamil by regular sound-change the way you can *reṇḍu* from *iraṇṭu*: *tommidi* is a different word entirely, and *enimidi* — though it shares the ancient *eṇ*-root behind *eṭṭu* — has drifted too far to derive. So unlike 2–7, learn these two **fresh**.

Ten comes partly back into the fold — Telugu *padi* is a worn-down relative of the *pat*- in Tamil *pattu* (and the *-patu* hiding inside *tommidi* and Tamil *onpatu*, “one-to-ten”).

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “āru, ēḍu, enimidi, tommidi, padi”
- seven's three fates — “Tamil *ēlu*, Kannada *ēḷu*, Telugu *ēḍu*”
- the two you learn fresh — “enimidi, tommidi”

Before you move on

Count six to ten in Telugu. (*Āru*, *ēḍu*, *enimidi*, *tommidi*, *padi*.) What became of Tamil's **ḷ** (in *ēlu*) by the time it reached Telugu *ēḍu*? (It hardened all the way to **ḍ**.) Which two numbers can't you derive from Tamil by regular correspondence? (**Eight and nine** — learn *enimidi*, *tommidi* fresh.) How does *padi* relate to Tamil *pattu*? (A worn-down relative of the same *pat*- “ten”.)

7.5 ె — the short one of the pair

Before the new one: ె — is it a letter or a sign, and what does it do?

Count from six to ten out loud. One of those numbers needs today's sign.

Script you'll notice: ె

ె — *o*.

It is a **sign**, like the long ె you have already met, and it carries the **short** *o* where that one carries the long *ō*.

- తొమ్మిది *tommidi* — nine (tommidi)

Telugu keeps short and long vowels apart as separate signs, and the difference changes words. English writes one *o* and leaves the length to the ear; here the page tells you, which is one less thing to guess at.

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. Then write it attached to a consonant, the way it actually appears.

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 the number below and find the consonant carrying ె
తొమ్మిది
- *Trace it:* ె three times, saying *o* as you finish each one
- *Say it:* which of ె and ె is the long one
- *Look:* at సంతోషం and find the long one riding its consonant

Before you move on

Is ூ a letter or a sign? (A sign.) Which number from this chapter uses it? (தొమ్மிది, nine.) Which of the two *o* signs is longer? (ஂ)

7.6 ஂ — the sign from a page ago, standing alone

A page ago you met ஂ; the short-*o* sign, inside தొమ్மிதி. Say that number.

Now count from one. The first number opens on the same vowel, and it has no consonant to hang the sign on.

Script you'll notice: ஂ

ஂ — *o*.

It is an **independent vowel** — a vowel that is a letter in its own right, not a mark hung on a consonant.

- ஂகதி *okaṭi* — one

This is the clearest pair you will get. ஂ and ஂ are the same vowel: the first rides on a consonant, the second stands where no consonant does. You met the sign one lesson ago inside *tommidi*; here is the letter, at the front of *okaṭi*, in the same chapter and the same list of numbers.

Hold the two next to each other and the whole system is visible in one line:

the vowel is carried	the vowel starts the word
தொమ్மிதி — the sign ஂ rides on த	ஂகதி — the letter ஂ stands alone

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. Then write ஂ beside it and look at the two.

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 these two numbers and say which one carries the letter ఒ and which the sign ఌ

ఒకటి · తొమ్మిది

- *Trace it:* ఒ three times, saying *o* as you finish each one
- *Say it:* the numbers one to five, and name the one that opens on a vowel letter

Before you move on

Which character is this — ఒ? What sound does it carry? (*o*.) Which number begins with it? (ఒకటి.) And what is the difference between ఒ and ఌ? (**None in the sound** — one stands alone, the other rides on a consonant.)

7.7 ఆ — the long one, beside the short one that needs no sign

Two from the first chapter: అ, and the sign ఌ. Say what each of them does.

Today's character is the missing corner of that square.

Script you'll notice: ఆ

ఆ — *ā*.

It is an **independent vowel** — a vowel that is a letter in its own right, not a mark hung on a consonant.

- ఆరు *āru* — six

With this one the *a* vowels are complete, and they make a square worth drawing:

	short	long
carried by a consonant	nothing at all	ఌ
starting a word	అ	ఆ

Three of those four cells you have had since chapter one. **The top-left cell is the one that surprises people:** short *a* on a consonant is written with no mark, which is why క is *ka* and not *k*. Every other cell gets a shape.

Look at the two letters side by side — అ and ఆ. The long one is the short one with a stroke added on the right, and that stroke has the same shape as the sign ా. Length shows up on the page as *more ink*, in both columns of the square.

Writing: అ — copy what you see

Put your pen on అ and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed. Then write అ beside it and find the difference.

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 these two words and say which opens on అ and which on ఆ

అవును · ఆరు

- *Trace it:* ఆ three times, saying ā as you finish each one
- *Say it:* avunu and āru, holding the opening vowel of the second one longer

Before you move on

Which character is this — అ? What sound does it carry? (ā.)

Which number begins with it? (ఆరు.) Which cell of the square has no shape in it at all? (**Short a carried by a consonant** — the consonant alone says it.)

Chapter 8

Please

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

By the end of this chapter: I can say please in Telugu, and use the polite -aṇḍi verb ending speakers actually reach for.

Build దయచేసి out of daya (“compassion”) + cēsi (“having done”), then make the everyday polite request instead: కూర్చోండి, “please sit.”

8.1 దయచేసి (dayacēsi) — please (having done compassion)

Telugu’s “please” carries a whole small sentence inside it: “having **done** (me) a compassion.”

You’ll want to know: The word

దయచేసి = **please**, literally “**having done kindness / compassion.**” Two pieces:

- దయ (*daya*) = **compassion, kindness, grace** — from Sanskrit **daya**.
- చేసి (*cēsi*) = “**having done,**” from the verb చేయు (*cēyu*) “to do.”

So *dayacēsi* is *having done (a) kindness* — you ask by crediting the listener with the grace you hope they’ll show.

It is the twin of **Tamil** *tayavu seytu* (“do the kindness”) — both use a “do” verb — and cousins with **Kannada** *dayaviṭṭu* (“having placed compassion”). Further off, **Arabic** *min faḍlik* (“from your grace”) and **Hindi** *kṛpayā* (from *kṛpā*, “compassion”) ask in the very same spirit.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

daya + a light verb, four ways:

- Telugu దయచేసి *dayacēsi* — compassion + **having done**
- Tamil தயவுசெய்து *tayavu seytu* — kindness + **do**
- Kannada ದಯವಿಟ್ಟು *dayaviṭṭu* — compassion + **having placed**
- Malayalam ദയവായി *dayavāyi* — compassion + **as / having become**

Why it’s said this way

Honestly: the standalone word is somewhat **formal / emphatic**. Day-to-day, Telugu politeness rides on the **respectful command** ending -ండ్డి (-*aṇḍi*): కూర్చోండ్డి (*kūrcōṇḍi*) “please sit,” చెప్పండ్డి (*ceppaṇḍi*) “please tell me.” That -*aṇḍi* is already “please.” Put దయచేసి in front to warm it further.

Script you’ll notice: Sound & structure point

The middle syllable చే is *ca* wearing the **long-ē** sign -ే (the counterpart of the short-e sign -ె), giving *cē*; then సి is *sa* + the *i* sign (-ి). Telugu marks a vowel’s length and quality by the little sign riding on the consonant — the consonant stays put, the vowel-sign changes the tune.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “daya” — compassion — then “cēsi,” having done
- the whole word — “dayacēsi” = please
- the everyday way — the verb ending: “kūrcōṇḍi” = please sit

Before you move on

What is the Telugu word for please? (దయచేసి *dayacēsi*.) What do its pieces mean? (“**Compassion**” *daya* + “**having done**” *cēsi*.) Which cousins ask the same way? (**Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam** with *daya* — plus **Arabic** *faḍl*, **Hindi** *kṛpā*.) What carries “please” in ordinary speech? (**The respectful verb ending** -ఁడి *-aṇḍi*.)

8.2 చ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ఁ — what does it do? And one from further back: ఌ?

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

Script you’ll notice: చ

చ — *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**.

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

- పని చేయు *pani cēyu* — to work (lit. “work-do”)
- నాకు తెలుగు వచ్చు *nāku telugu vaccu* — ‘I know Telugu’
- దయచేసి *dayacēsi* — please (*dayacēsi*)

Writing: చ — copy what you see

Put your pen on చ 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 these words, and find చ in the ones that have it

దయచేసి · నమస్కారం

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

Before you move on

Which character is this — చ? What sound does it carry? (*ca*.)

Name one word you already say that contains it.

One more, from much earlier: డ — what does it do?

Chapter 9

Sorry

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

By the end of this chapter: I can apologise in Telugu and ask someone to forgive me, using the same respectful ending.

Say క్షమించండి, unpack it as kṣamiṅcu plus the respectful -aṇḍi already met in kūrcoṇḍi, and trace it to Sanskrit kṣamā.

9.1 క్షమించండి — sorry

You already know దయచేసి and its respectful -ండి ending (*kūrcoṇḍi*, “please sit”). Telugu’s “sorry” hands you that very ending again, riding a brand-new verb.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

- క్షమా (*kṣamā*) = “**forgiveness, patience**” — the Sanskrit noun, borrowed whole.
- -ఇంచు (*-iṅcu*) = a **verb-making suffix**: *kṣamā* + *-iṅcu* → క్షమించు (*kṣamiṅcu*), “**to forgive**.” (The same pattern gives ప్రారంభించు *prārambhīṅcu*, “to begin,” from Sanskrit *prārambha*.)
- -ండి (*-aṇḍi*) = the **respectful imperative** ending — exactly the one you already met on *kūrcoṇḍi* “please sit” and *ceppaṇḍi* “please tell me.”

So క్షమించండి is “**please forgive**” — the same polite mold you already know, filled with a new verb.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

- Telugu క్షమించండి *kṣamiṇcaṇḍi* — Sanskrit *kṣamā* + **-iṇcu** (verb) + **-aṇḍi** (imperative)
- Kannada ಕ್ಷಮಿಸಿ *kṣamisi* — Sanskrit *kṣamā* + **-isu** (verb) + **-i** (imperative)
- Malayalam ക്ഷമിക്കണം *kṣamikkanaṁ* — Sanskrit *kṣama* + **-ikkuka** (verb) + **-aṇaṁ** (necessitative)
- Tamil மன்னிக்கவும் *mannikkavum* — its **own** native root *manni*, not Sanskrit at all

Why it's said this way

క్షమించండి is a real, everyday “sorry / please forgive me” — not stiffly formal — though in quick, casual exchanges Telugu speakers just as often reach for the borrowed English “**sorry.**”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*kṣamā*” — the Sanskrit noun, forgiveness
- the verb — “*kṣamiṇcu*,” to forgive — then “*kṣamiṇcaṇḍi*,” please forgive
- the ending you already know — “*-aṇḍi*,” same as *kūrcōṇḍi*

Before you move on

What is క్షమించండి built from? (**Sanskrit** *kṣamā* + the verb-making suffix **-iṇcu** + the respectful ending **-aṇḍi**, which you already met on *kūrcōṇḍi*.) Which cousins also verb-ify *kṣamā*, and which doesn't? (**Kannada and Malayalam** do too; **Tamil** uses its own root *manni*.) What's the casual alternative? (**Borrowed English** “**sorry.**”)

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

Before the new one: ష — what does it do? And one from further back: ఓ?

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

Script you'll notice: ఇ

ఇ — *i*.

It is an **independent vowel** — a vowel that is a letter in its own right, not a mark hung on a consonant.

This is the pair that makes Telugu writing click. You already read ి, the *i* sign: it rides on a consonant and needs one to exist. ఇ is the same vowel with nothing in front of it, and that is exactly when Telugu reaches for it — at the front of a word, or on a piece of a word quoted on its own.

Every vowel in this script has both forms. Meeting the pair once is worth more than meeting either alone, because from here on you can predict the rule: **sign after a consonant, letter when the vowel starts.**

You met it on the page before this one, on a suffix quoted by itself:

- -ఇంచు *-iñcu* — the ending that turns a borrowed noun into a Telugu verb

Writing: ఇ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ఇ 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 these two, and say which one carries the letter ఇ and which carries the sign ి

-ఇంచు · ఏమిటి

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

Before you move on

Which character is this — ఇ? When does Telugu write the letter ఇ rather than the sign ి? (**When the vowel has no consonant in front of it.**)

One more, from much earlier: ఓ — what amount does it stand for?

Chapter 10

Days of the Week

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

By the end of this chapter: I can name any day of the week in Telugu, including the Sunday that is counted rather than named for a planet.

Run Somavāram through Śanivāram, then name Sunday ఆదివారం, “the first day” — positional like Arabic’s numbered days, not planetary.

10.1 సోమవారం to ఆదివారం — Telugu’s week, with a twist on Sunday

Like Kannada, Telugu’s week runs on Sanskrit deity-names — but its Sunday breaks the “planet” pattern entirely, in a way even Kannada’s doesn’t.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Telugu	deity/planet	day
సోమవారం (<i>Somavāram</i>)	Moon (Soma)	Monday
మంగళవారం (<i>Maṅgaḷavāram</i>)	Mars (Maṅgala)	Tuesday
బుధవారం (<i>Budhavāram</i>)	Mercury (Budha)	Wednesday
గురువారం (<i>Guruvāram</i>)	Jupiter (Guru/ Bṛhaspati)	Thursday
శుక్రవారం (<i>Śukravāram</i>)	Venus (Śukra)	Friday
శనివారం (<i>Śanivāram</i>)	Saturn (Śani)	Saturday
ఆదివారం (<i>Ādivāram</i>)	— not a planet at all	Sunday

Why it's said this way

Five days match the familiar planet-deity pattern — but ఆదివారం (*Ādivāram*) doesn't name the Sun at all. ఆది (*ādi*) is Sanskrit for “**the beginning, the first**.” So Telugu's Sunday literally means “**the first day**” — a **positional** name, like Arabic's numbered weekdays, sitting right next to six planet-names that don't work that way. Even within one single week, a language can mix completely different naming strategies.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “Somavāram, Maṅgaḷavāram, Budhavāram, Guruvāram, Śukravāram, Śanivāram” — Monday through Saturday
- the odd one — “Ādivāram” — not a planet, “the first day”
- the parallel — like Arabic's numbered days, one Telugu day is positional too

Before you move on

What does ఆదివారం literally mean, and is it a planet-name? (“**The first day**” — *ādi* “beginning” — **not** a planet-name, unlike the other six.) What ending do the other six Telugu weekdays share? (-వారం *-vāram*, Sanskrit “day,” each paired with a planet-deity.)

10.2 శ — the third s, and the last one

You have two s-shapes already: స, and the curled one you met beside it. Say which of the two puts your tongue further back.

Two of the day names from this chapter carry a third one.

Script you’ll notice: శ

శ — *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*.

- శుక్రవారం *śukravāram* — Friday
- శనివారం *śanivāram* — Saturday

Both open on today’s character. **The two ends of the week you have been reciting begin with a letter you could not yet read.**

Now you have the whole set:

letter	romanized	where the tongue goes
స	<i>sa</i>	tip behind the teeth
ష	<i>ṣa</i>	curled back along the roof
శ	<i>śa</i>	flat against the front of the roof

Telugu, Kannada and Hindi keep all three apart on the page. Tamil’s own alphabet has none of them and adds borrowed shapes for Sanskrit words — same family, opposite decision.

Writing: శ — copy what you see

Put your pen on శ and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed. Then write స and ష beside it.

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 the two day names below and find శ at the front of each

శుక్రవారం · శనివారం

- *Trace it:* శ three times, saying *śa* as you finish each one
- *Look:* at సంతోషం and say which two of the three s letters are in it

Before you move on

Which character is this — శ? What sound does it carry? (*śa*.)
Which two days of the week begin with it? (శుక్రవారం and శనివారం.)
How many separate s letters does Telugu print? (**Three** — స, ష, శ.)

10.3 ల — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ఇ — what does it do? And one from further back: య?

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

Script you'll notice: ల

ల — *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**.

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

- ధన్యవాదములు *dhanyavādamulu* — thank you (dhanyavādamulu — “utterances of ‘worthy’”)
- లేదు *lēdu* — no / there isn’t (lēdu)
- పరవాలేదు *paravālēdu* — it’s okay / no problem / you’re welcome
- రేపు కలుద్దాం *rēpu kaluddām* — see you tomorrow

Writing: ల — copy what you see

Put your pen on **ల** 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 these words, and find **ల** in the ones that have it
ధన్యవాదములు · లేదు · నమస్కారం
- *Trace it:* ల three times, saying *la* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find **ల** once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — **ల**? What sound does it carry? (*la*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.
One more, from much earlier: ప — what does it do?

10.4 ఐదు అచ్చులు — five vowel letters, from cold

Close the lessons before this one. Say the word for yes and the number six, and name the character each of them opens on.

Script: the five, and the one question behind them

అ · ఆ · ఏ · ఐ · ఒ

Five letters, and **every one of them is on the page for the same reason**: a vowel turned up at the front of a word with no consonant to sit inside.

letter	sound	the word it opens
అ	<i>a</i>	అవును — yes
ఆ	<i>ā</i>	ఆరు — six
ఏ	<i>ē</i>	ఏమిటి — what?
ఐ	<i>ai</i>	ఐదు — five
ఒ	<i>o</i>	ఒకటి — one

Look down the right-hand column. **Three of the five open a number you can already count with, and the other two open two of the commonest words in the book.** None of these is an exotic letter kept for later; they were on your pages from chapter one, and only now do you have the shapes for them.

The question to ask of any vowel in Telugu is the same each time: *is a consonant carrying it?* If yes, a sign. If no, a letter.

Your turn

- *Look*: at these words and name the vowel letter each one begins with

ఒకటి · ఆరు · అవును · ఏమిటి

- *Say it*: which two of the five are the short and long pair
- *Say it*: which one of the five is a vowel your mouth has to move through
- *Trace it*: each of the five once, saying its sound

Before you move on

Which of the five opens the number one? (ఒ.) Which opens the number five? (ఐ.) Which pair differs only in length? (అ and ఆ.) And what has to be true of a vowel before Telugu writes it as a letter? (**Nothing is carrying it** — no consonant in front.)

Chapter 11

Four Core Colours

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

By the end of this chapter: I can name four basic colours in Telugu — black, white, red, and blue.

Say నలుపు, తెలుపు, ఎరుపు — Telugu’s own three — then నీలం, blue, which Telugu borrowed rather than inherited.

11.1 నలుపు, తెలుపు, ఎరుపు, నీలం — the pattern completes itself

By now the shape should feel familiar: native colors for black, white, and red — and one shared Sanskrit word for blue. Telugu confirms it a fourth time.

You’ll want to know: Three native colors

- నలుపు (*nalupu*) = “**black**” — native Dravidian.
- తెలుపు (*telupu*) = “**white**” — native Dravidian.
- ఎరుపు (*erupu*) = “**red**” — native Dravidian.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

నీలం (*nīlam*) = “**blue**” — the identical Sanskrit नील (*nīla*) loan that also sits in Tamil (*nīlam*), Malayalam (*nīla*), Kannada (*nīli*), and Hindi (*nīlā*). Four Dravidian languages plus Hindi, all independently

keeping their own native black/white/red, and all reaching for the **exact same** borrowed word the moment it comes to blue.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “nalupu, telupu, erupu” — black, white, red
- “nīlam” — blue, the word the four Dravidian languages and Hindi all share
- the whole pattern, one more time — native, native, native, **borrowed**

Before you move on

What’s the pattern across Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, and Telugu’s basic colors? (**Black, white, and red are native Dravidian words in every one of them; blue is a shared Sanskrit loan (nīla) in every one of them.**)

11.2 ె — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ె — what does it do? And one from further back: ె?

One character this time — 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 with *e*. Replaces, not adds — the *a* is gone.

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

- వెళ్ళు *vellu* — to go (and వచ్చు, to come)

- వెళ్లి వస్తాను *velli vastānu* — goodbye (lit. “I’ll go and come back”)
- నాకు తెలుగు వచ్చు *nāku telugu vaccu* — ‘I know Telugu’
- ఒకటి రెండు మూడు నాలుగు ఐదు *okaṭi reṇḍu mūḍu nālugu aidu* — one to five

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 these words, and find ె in the ones that have it

వెళ్ళు · నమస్కారం

- *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.

One more, from much earlier: ూ — what amount does it stand for?

Chapter 12

Family

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

By the end of this chapter: I can name my parents and my brothers and sisters in Telugu, choosing the right word for older or younger.

Name నాన్న and అమ్మ, then the four age-graded siblings అన్న · తమ్ముడు · అక్క · చెల్లి, with చెల్లి being Telugu’s own.

12.1 నాన్న, అమ్మ, and four sibling words — Telugu’s own twist

Telugu also sorts siblings by relative age. Its words for “father” and “younger sister,” though, go their own way.

You’ll want to know: Parents — one matches, one is Telugu’s own

- నాన్న (*nānna*) = “**father**” — **Telugu’s own word**, unlike Tamil/Kannada’s *appā/appa*.
- అమ్మ (*amma*) = “**mother**” — matches Tamil/Kannada’s *ammā/amma* closely.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Telugu	meaning	compare Tamil/ Kannada
అన్న (anna)	older brother	<i>aṇṇan/aṇṇa</i> — near match
తమ్ముడు (tammudu)	younger brother	<i>tambi/tamma</i> — near match
అక్క (akka)	older sister	<i>akkā/akka</i> — near match
చెల్లి (celli)	younger sister	<i>tangai/tangi</i> — Telugu's own word here

So the *system* — four words, split by relative age rather than just gender — is shared across Tamil, Kannada, and Telugu. But the exact words aren't identical everywhere: Telugu keeps its own నాన్న for father and చెల్లి for “younger sister,” even while three of the six words line up closely with its cousins.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “nānna, amma” — father, mother
- “anna, tammudu” — older/younger brother
- “akka, celli” — older/younger sister — celli is Telugu's own

Before you move on

Which two Telugu family words are its own, rather than matching Tamil/Kannada? (నాన్న *nānna*, “father,” and చెల్లి *celli*, “younger sister.”) Does Telugu still split siblings by age the same way? (**Yes** — the four-way age-before-gender system is shared across the whole Dravidian family, even where the exact words differ.)

12.2 డ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ె — what does it do? And one from further back: డ?

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

Script you’ll notice: డ

డ — *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**.

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

- ధన్యవాదములు *dhanyavādamulu* — thank you (dhanyavādamulu — “utterances of ‘worthy’”)
- లేదు *lēdu* — no / there isn’t (lēdu)
- పరవాలేదు *paravālēdu* — it’s okay / no problem / you’re welcome
- రేపు కలుద్దాం *rēpu kaluddām* — see you tomorrow

Writing: డ — copy what you see

Put your pen on డ 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 these words, and find డ in the ones that have it

ధన్యవాదములు · లేదు · నమస్కారం

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

Before you move on

Which character is this — **ǃ**? What sound does it carry? (*da.*)

Name one word you already say that contains it.

One more, from much earlier: **ǂ** — what does it do?

Chapter 13

Head and Hand

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) ✍ pen (1) ⇄ **Hands-free start:** first 1 of 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name the head and the hand in Telugu.

Say తల, plainly matching its cousins, and చెయ్యి — the same Dravidian root as kai, reshaped by sound change past easy recognition.

13.1 తల, చెయ్యి — head and hand

Head matches its cousins plainly. Hand looks, at first glance, like Telugu went its own way — but look closer, and it’s the same word after all, just heavily reshaped.

You’ll want to know: The words

- తల (*tala*) = “**head**” — native Dravidian, matching Tamil *talai*, Malayalam *thala*, and Kannada *tale* closely and plainly.
- చెయ్యి (*ceyyi*) = “**hand**” — also native Dravidian, and **the very same root** as Tamil/Malayalam/Kannada’s *kai*: Proto-Dravidian *kay-*. Telugu’s own regular sound change turned that ancient **k-** into **c-**, and reshaped the rest of the word alongside it — so *ceyyi* only *looks* unrelated to *kai*. It’s a cognate in disguise, not a different word.

So all four Dravidian languages actually **agree** on both “head” and “hand” at the root level — Telugu’s hand-word has simply drifted further in sound than its cousins have, thanks to a sound change that reshaped many Telugu words the same way.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “tala” — head, matching its cousins plainly
- “ceyyi” — hand, the SAME root as kai, reshaped by sound change
- the lesson — looks different, is actually the same word

Before you move on

Does Telugu’s word for “head” match its cousins? (**Yes** — *tala*, like Tamil/Malayalam/Kannada.) Is its word for “hand,” *ceyyi*, truly a different word from *kai*? (**No** — it’s the **same Proto-Dravidian root** *kay-*, reshaped by Telugu’s own regular *k*→*c* sound change — a cognate in disguise, not an unrelated word.)

13.2 వ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ద — what does it do? And one from further back: ఇ?

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

Script you’ll notice: వ

వ — *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**.

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

- ధన్యవాదములు *dhanyavādamulu* — thank you (dhanyavādamulu — “utterances of ‘worthy’”)
- అవును *avunu* — yes (avunu)
- నువ్వు / మీరు *nuvvu / mīru* — you (familiar / respectful)
- పరవాలేదు *paravālēdu* — it’s okay / no problem / you’re welcome

Writing: వ — copy what you see

Put your pen on వ 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 these words, and find వ in the ones that have it

ధన్యవాదములు · అవును · నమస్కారం

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

Before you move on

Which character is this — వ? What sound does it carry? (*va*.)

Name one word you already say that contains it.

One more, from much earlier: ు — what amount does it stand for?

Chapter 14

Seasons

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

By the end of this chapter: I can name the four seasons in Telugu, including the rains that anchor the year.

Say వేసవి (*cousin of Kannada's bēṣige*), వానాకాలం and శీతాకాలం from native roots, then the doubly-Sanskrit వసంత ఋతువు.

14.1 వసంత ఋతువు, వేసవి, వానాకాలం, శీతాకాలం — the pattern completes itself

Telugu closes out the Dravidian season words the same way Kannada did: native words for summer/rain/cold, and a spring-word borrowed twice over from Sanskrit.

You'll want to know: The words

Telugu	meaning	source
వసంత ఋతువు (<i>vasanta ṛtuvu</i>)	“spring”	both <i>vasanta</i> and ఋతువు <i>ṛtuvu</i> (“season”) are Sanskrit, like Kannada’s pair
వేసవి (<i>vēsavi</i>)	“summer”	native Dravidian — cousin of Kannada’s <i>bēsige</i>
వానాకాలం (<i>vānākālam</i>)	“rainy season”	వాన <i>vāna</i> (“rain,” native) + <i>kālam</i> (“time,” itself Sanskrit-derived but long assimilated)
శీతాకాలం (<i>śītākālam</i>)	“winter/cold season”	<i>śīta</i> (“cold”) leans Sanskrit-flavored here, unlike Tamil/ Kannada’s fully native cold-words

Why it’s said this way

Telugu’s *vēsavi* and Kannada’s *bēsige* are close enough in shape to be genuine cousins — the same native Dravidian summer-word wearing two languages’ sound changes. And once again, it’s వానాకాలం (*vānākālam*, the rains) that actually organizes Andhra/Telangana’s agricultural year, not a clean four-way Western split — the same honest point its neighbours make.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “vēsavi” — summer, cousin of Kannada’s *bēsige*
- “vānākālam” — the rains, the real central season
- “śītākālam” — the cold season
- the double Sanskrit loan — “vasanta ṛtuvu,” like Kannada

Before you move on

What's the relationship between Telugu's *vēsavi* and Kannada's *bēsige*? (**Cousins** — the same native Dravidian summer-word.) Which Dravidian languages borrow BOTH halves of their spring-word from Sanskrit (the season-name AND the word for “season” itself)? (**Kannada and Telugu** — *vasanta ṛtu(vu)* — unlike Tamil/Malayalam's single *vasantham* loan plus the long-assimilated *kaalam*.)

14.2 గ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: వ — what does it do? And one from further back: ల?

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

Script you'll notice: గ

గ — *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**.

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

- బాగా *bāgā* — well, fine — and the reply “నేను బాగున్నాను
- నేను తెలుగు మాట్లాడతాను — I speak Telugu
- నాకు తెలుగు వచ్చు *nāku telugu vaccu* — ‘I know Telugu’
- ఒకటి రెండు మూడు నాలుగు ఐదు *okaṭi reṇḍu mūḍu nālugu aidu* — one to five

Writing: గ — copy what you see

Put your pen on గ 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 these words, and find గ in the ones that have it

బాగా · సమస్కారం

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

Before you move on

Which character is this — గ? What sound does it carry? (*ga*.)
Name one word you already say that contains it.
One more, from much earlier: స — what does it do?

Chapter 15

Water and Rice

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

By the end of this chapter: I can ask for water in Telugu and tell raw rice apart from cooked rice.

Say నీళ్లు — matching Tamil and Kannada — then separate బియ్యం, Telugu’s own word for raw rice, from అన్నం, the cooked rice on the plate.

15.1 నీళ్లు, బియ్యం, అన్నం — water and rice

Water closes out 3-against-1 against Malayalam. Rice, though, turns out to have its own twist here.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

నీళ్లు (*nīḷḷu*) = “**water**” — matching Tamil’s *nīr* and Kannada’s *nīru*. Malayalam’s *vellam* is the odd one out among all four Dravidian languages for water, not Telugu.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

- బియ్యం (*biyyam*) = “**rice**” (raw grain) — **Telugu’s own word**, unlike the shared *ari/arisi/akki* found in Malayalam, Tamil, and Kannada.
- అన్నం (*annam*) = “**cooked rice**” (the meal) — matching Kannada’s *anna* closely, both likely Sanskrit-influenced.

So the pattern flips between water and rice: for **water**, Telugu joins the majority (Tamil/Kannada) against Malayalam; for **raw rice**, Telugu is itself the odd one out against the other three.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “nīllu” — water, matching Tamil/Kannada
- “biyyam” — raw rice, Telugu’s own word
- “annam” — cooked rice, matching Kannada’s anna

Before you move on

Which language is the odd one out for water, and which for raw rice? (**Malayalam** is the odd one out for water (*vellam*); **Telugu** is the odd one out for raw rice (*biyyam*, unlike the shared *ari/arisi/akki* elsewhere).)

15.2 ీ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ు — what does it do? And one from further back: ృ?

One character this time — 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 with *ī*. Replaces, not adds — the *a* is gone.

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

- నువ్వు / మీరు *nuvvu* / *mīru* — you (familiar / respectful)
- మీ పేరు ఏమిటి? — what’s your name?

- మీరు ఎలా ఉన్నారు? — how are you? (respectful)
- మళ్ళీ కలుద్దాం *maḷḷi kaluddām* — we'll meet again

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 these words, and find ీ in the ones that have it

నమస్కారం

- *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.

One more, from much earlier: హ — what does it do?

Chapter 16

The Traditional Months

Modes:  voice (1)  pen (2)  Hands-free start: first 1 of 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name the twelve traditional Telugu months and say when Ugadi, the new year, falls.

Recite Caitrami through Phālgunāmi, place Ugadi at Chaitra Śuddha Pādyaṃi, and note the family split: Telugu and Kannada share Hindi's calendar, Tamil and Malayalam do not.

16.1 చైత్రం to ఫాల్గుణం — completing the split

The pattern across all four Dravidian languages is now complete: Telugu, like Kannada, shares its calendar with Hindi rather than building its own.

You'll want to know: The twelve months

The year runs in three four-month groups:

- చైత్రం, వైశాఖం, జ్యేష్ఠం, ఆషాఢం — *Caitrami, Vaiśākhami, Jyēṣṭhami, Āṣāḍhami*.
- శ్రావణం, భాద్రపదం, ఆశ్వయుజం, కార్తీకం — *Śrāvaṇami, Bhādrapadamī, Āśvayujami, Kārtikamī*.
- మార్గశిరం, పుష్యం, మాఘం, ఫాల్గుణం — *Mārgaśīrami, Puṣyamī, Māghamī, Phālgunāmi*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

This closes out a genuine, clean split across the four Dravidian languages: **Tamil** and **Malayalam** each built their **own** solar calendar (nakshatra-named and zodiac-named, respectively) — while **Kannada** and **Telugu** instead share the **same pan-Indian Sanskritic lunisolar calendar** as Hindi’s Vikram Samvat. Telugu’s New Year, **Ugadi**, falls on the very same day as Kannada’s — *Chaitra Śuddha Pādyami*, the first day of Chaitra’s bright fortnight.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the twelve — “Caitraṁ, Vaiśākhaṁ, Jyēṣṭhaṁ, Āṣāḍhaṁ, Śrāvaṇaṁ, Bhādrapadaṁ, Āśvayujaṁ, Kārtikaṁ, Mārgaśiraṁ, Puṣyaṁ, Māghaṁ, Phālgunaṁ”
- “Ugadi — Chaitra Śuddha Pādyami”
- the whole family split — Tamil/Malayalam their own; Kannada/Telugu shared with Hindi

Before you move on

How does the four-language Dravidian calendar picture split? (**Tamil and Malayalam** each have their **own** solar calendar; **Kannada and Telugu** share the **same pan-Indian lunisolar calendar** as Hindi.) What is Telugu’s New Year, and when does it fall? (**Ugadi**, on *Chaitra Śuddha Pādyami* — the same day as Kannada’s Ugadi.)

16.2 ీ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ీ — what does it do? And one from further back: ు?

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

Script you'll notice: ை

ை — *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.

This one is a **diphthong** — two vowels run together into one sound, *a* gliding into *i*. Say *ai* as in English *aisle* and you have it.

Look at what it is made of. You already read ே, the short *e* sign; ை is that mark with a second stroke added above it. The month names you just learned carry it twice.

You already say these, and both have ை inside them:

- ைத்ரம் *Caitram* — the first of the twelve months
- ைசாఖம் *Vaiśākham* — the second

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 these three, and find the two that carry ை

ைத்ரம் · ைசாఖம் · வெళ్று

- *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 — ఙ? What vowel does it put on the consonant it attaches to? (*ai*, **two vowels glided into one.**)
One more, from much earlier: ఋ — what amount does it stand for?

16.3 ఙ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ఙ — what does it do? And one from further back: ష?

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

Script you'll notice: ఙ

ఙ — *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**.

The very first character this book asked you to trace was క, *ka*. This is that letter with a **puff of breath after it**. The mouth does not move: the back of the tongue lands in the same place. What changes is that the breath is let out before the vowel starts.

Say *ka*, then say it again and push a small hiss of air out behind it. Telugu writes those as two different letters because it hears them as two different letters — and once you know this pair you can expect the others, because most of the consonants in this alphabet come with a breathed partner.

You already say this one, and the breathed letter is inside it:

- వైశాఖం *Vaiśākhami* — the second of the twelve months

Writing: ఙ — **copy what you see**

Put your pen on ఙ 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 these two, and say which one has ఖ and which has క

వైశాఖం · నమస్కారం

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

Before you move on

Which character is this — ఖ? What sound does it carry, and how is it different from క? (*kha* — the same mouth, with a puff of breath let out after it.)

One more, from much earlier: ఌ — what amount does it stand for?

Chapter 17

Noon and Midnight

Modes:  voice (1)  eyes (2)  pen (3)  Hands-free start: first 1 of 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say noon and midnight in Telugu and explain why one is “middle” and the other “half.”

Say మధ్యాహ్నం and అర్ధరాత్రి, then separate madhya (“middle”) from ardha (“half”) — two different Sanskrit roots where Kannada uses one.

17.1 మధ్యాహ్నం, అర్ధరాత్రి — the same noon word, a different midnight word

Telugu and Kannada share the exact same Sanskrit word for noon — but then quietly part ways on midnight.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

మధ్యాహ్నం (*madhyāhnam*) = “**noon, midday**” — the same Sanskrit *tatsama* compound as Kannada’s *madhyāhna*: మధ్య (*madhya*, “**middle**”) + అహ్న (*ahna*, “**day**”), plus Telugu’s own -ం (*anusvāra*) ending. Same root, same meaning, same everyday register in both languages.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

అర్ధరాత్రి (*ardharātri*) = “**midnight**” — but here Telugu reaches for a **different** Sanskrit root: అర్ధ (*ardha*, “**half**”), not *madhya* (“middle”).

Paired with ರಾತ್ರಿ (*rātri*, “**night**”), it literally means “**half-night**” — structurally the same shape as Hindi’s colloquial *ādhī rāt* (“half night”) and Latin’s transparent *media nox* pattern, but built from Sanskrit’s own dedicated “half” word rather than “middle.”

Grammar Lens: Be honest: two different “middle-ish” ideas, side by side

Don’t assume *madhya* and *ardha* are the same word wearing different clothes — they’re genuinely **separate Sanskrit roots** (“middle” vs. “half”) that happen to land on the same meaning here, the way English “midday” and “half the day gone” would both point at noon without sharing a root. Telugu’s noon word keeps Kannada’s “middle” logic; its midnight word switches to “half” logic instead.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “madhyāhnam” — noon, same root as Kannada
- “ardharātri” — midnight, literally “half-night”
- the contrast — “madhya” (middle) for noon, “ardha” (half) for midnight — two different Sanskrit roots

Before you move on

Does Telugu’s noon word match Kannada’s? (**Yes** — both *madhyāhna(m)*, from *madhya*, “middle.”) Does Telugu’s midnight word use the same root? (**No** — *ardharātri* uses **ardha**, “half,” a different Sanskrit root.) What does *ardharātri* literally mean? (“**Half-night**” — the same shape as Hindi’s *ādhī rāt*.)

17.2 ఖ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ఖ — what does it do? And one from further back: గ?

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

Script you'll notice: ఘ

ఘ — *gha*.

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 *gh*, it is **gha**.

The same trick as last time, one row down. గ is *ga*; ఘ is *ga* with the breath let out behind it.

That is now two breathed pairs — క/ఖ and గ/ఘ — and they behave identically. When you meet a Telugu letter you do not know, it is worth asking first whether it is a letter you *do* know wearing extra breath.

You already say this one, and the breathed letter is inside it:

- మాఘం *Māgham* — the eleventh of the twelve months

Writing: ఘ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ఘ 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 these two, and say which one has ఘ and which has గ
మాఘం · బాగా
- *Trace it:* ఘ three times, saying *gha* and letting the breath out as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ఘ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ఘ? What sound does it carry, and which plain letter is it built on? (*gha*, built on గ.)

One more, from much earlier: య — what does it do?

17.3 త — the curled t, with the breath let out

Before the new one: త — what sound does it carry, and where does your tongue go for it?

Today’s character is that one with a puff of air after it.

Script you’ll notice: త

త — *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**.

- జ్యేష్ఠం *jyēṣṭham* — Jyeshtha, the third month of the year (jyēṣṭham — “the eldest”)

త and త are the same tongue position with and without the **breath**, the pair this script marks and English does not. The romanization writes them *ṭ* and *ṭha*, which is a difference of two letters for a difference you can hear; on the page they are two separate shapes, and that is the more reliable signal.

This one is rare. It is worth a page because a month name needs it, and a reader who meets an unfamiliar shape in a familiar list has no way to tell whether the word or the printing is at fault.

Writing: త — copy what you see

Put your pen on త and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed. Then write త beside it and look at the two.

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 the month name below and find త near its end

జ్యేష్ఠం

- *Trace it:* త three times, saying *tha* as you finish each one
- *Say it:* which of ట and త has the breath after it

Before you move on

Which character is this — త? What sound does it carry? (*tha*.)
What is the only difference between it and ట? (The breath after it.)

17.4 ఆరు అక్షరాలు — six characters, from cold

Close the lessons before this one. Say the greeting and the thank-you word, and name the character each of them carries that you met most recently.

Script: the six, side by side

మ · ధ · ట · తో · టో · త

Four are letters and two are signs. **A letter can stand where a word begins; a sign has to hang on a letter**, and telling which is which is the first question to ask of an unfamiliar shape.

letters	signs
మ ధ ట త	తో టో

Your turn

- *Look:* at these words and name every character in them you have been taught

నమస్కారం · ధన్యవాదములు · ఏమిటి · తొమ్మిది

- *Say it:* which of the six is the one you have seen most often
- *Say it:* which two of the six cannot start a word
- *Trace it:* each of the four letters once, saying its sound

Before you move on

Which two of the six are signs rather than letters? (ఱ and ఱి)
Which pair is one tongue position with and without the breath? (ఱ and ఱి.) Which of the two *o* signs is the long one? (ఱి)

17.5 ష — ష, with the breath let out

A page ago you met ఱ and ఱ — one tongue position, with and without a puff of air after it. Say both.

Now say ష. Today's character does to ష what ఱ did to ఱ.

Script you'll notice: ష

ష — *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**.

- ఫాల్గుణం *phālgunam* — Phalguna, the twelfth month of the year

Hold a hand in front of your mouth. Say ష: the air stays put. Say ష: the air comes out. That puff is the whole difference, and Telugu gives it a shape of its own rather than leaving you to guess from the neighbours.

no breath	breath
ఱ	ఱ
ష	ష

Read the romanization carefully here: *ph* is one sound with air behind it, not the *f* that the same two English letters make in *phone*. Two letters on the romanized line, one character on the Telugu line, one puff in the mouth.

This character is rare on these pages. It earns a lesson because the last of the twelve months needs it, and an unfamiliar shape inside a list you already know by heart leaves a reader unable to tell whether the word or the printing is at fault.

Writing: ష — copy what you see

Put your pen on ష and follow its line. Copy the shape you can see — slowly, and larger than it is printed. Then write ష beside it and look at the two.

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 the month name below and find ఫ at its front

ఫాల్గుణం

- *Trace it:* ఫ three times, saying *pha* as you finish each one
- *Say it:* ఫ and ఫ one after the other with a hand in front of your mouth

Before you move on

Which character is this — ఫ? What sound does it carry? (*pha*.)
Which month begins with it? (ఫాల్గుణం.) Name the other pair in this book that differs only by the breath. (ఘ and ఞ.)

17.6 నాలుగు అక్షరాలు — four characters, from cold

Close the lessons before this one. Say how you are, and say the two days at the end of the week. Name the character each of those answers starts on.

Script: the four, and what each one stands next to

బ · ప · శ · ఫ

Not one of these four arrived on its own. Each stands beside a character you had already been reading for chapters, and what it adds is a single change you can hear:

already yours	new	what changed
ప <i>pa</i>	బ <i>ba</i>	the voice switched on
ప <i>pa</i>	ఫ <i>pha</i>	a puff of air came after it
స <i>sa</i>	ష <i>ṣa</i>	the tongue curled back
స <i>sa</i>	శ <i>śa</i>	the tongue went flat against the front of the roof

Two of the four hang off ప and two off స. A reader who holds those two anchors in mind has four fewer shapes to memorise cold, because each of the four is one adjustment away from something already known.

Your turn

- *Look:* at these words and name every character in them you have been taught

బాగా · సంతోషం · శనివారం · ఫాల్గుణం

- *Say it:* which of the four you have seen most often on these pages
- *Say it:* which two of the four are s-sounds
- *Trace it:* each of the four once, saying its sound

Before you move on

Which of the four differs from ప by a puff of air? (ఫ.) Which differs from ప by the voice alone? (బ.) Which of ష and శ has the tongue curled back? (ష.) And how many s letters does Telugu print in all, counting the one you had before these two? (**Three.**)

Chapter 18

Telling Time

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

By the end of this chapter: I can tell someone the time on the hour in Telugu, in the singular and the plural.

Say గంట — *hour*, and also “bell” — then ఒక గంట for one o’clock and రెండు గంటలు for two, taking the plural -lu.

18.1 గంట — matching Kannada and Hindi’s “bell” word exactly

Telugu completes a clean three-way match: Hindi, Kannada, and now Telugu all use the same Sanskrit “bell” word for “hour.”

You’ll want to know: గంట — bell AND hour, a third time

గంట (*ganṭa*) = “hour” — and, exactly like Hindi’s *ghaṇṭā* and Kannada’s *gaṇṭe*, it means “bell, clapper” just as commonly, from the same Sanskrit घण्टा (*ghaṇṭā*). Same word, same bell-strikes-the-hour logic, three languages in a row.

Why it’s said this way

So on this concept, the split isn’t “Hindi vs. all four Dravidian languages” — **Hindi, Kannada, and Telugu** all share the Sanskrit *ghaṇṭā* (“bell”) root. **Tamil** most likely goes its own way with a native Dravidian word instead (though even specialists don’t call this fully settled). **Malayalam** is the genuinely surprising one: its cognate word,

mani, is ALSO Sanskrit-derived per its own dictionaries — just from a **different** Sanskrit word, *maṇi* (“gem”), not *ghaṇṭā*. So three of these four languages likely trace their hour-word to Sanskrit, just not all to the *same* Sanskrit word — worth remembering that a Sanskrit/native split isn’t fixed per language, and isn’t always a clean binary either.

Grammar Lens: telling the time

ఒక గంట. — “One o’clock.” (*oka gaṇṭa*, “one hour/bell”)
 రెండు గంటలు. — “Two o’clock.” (*reṇḍu gaṇṭalu* — *gaṇṭa* takes its plural form, *gaṇṭalu*, once the count passes one)

Notice Telugu’s *gaṇṭa* pluralizes to *gaṇṭalu* for “two o’clock” onward — a small grammatical wrinkle Kannada’s *gaṇṭe* didn’t show you.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “gaṇṭa” — hour, also “bell”
- “oka gaṇṭa” — one o’clock
- “reṇḍu gaṇṭalu” — two o’clock, plural *gaṇṭalu*

Before you move on

What Sanskrit word do గంట, Kannada’s *gaṇṭe*, and Hindi’s *ghaṇṭā* all share? (घण्टा, *ghaṇṭā*, “bell.”) Which Dravidian language most likely does NOT use this Sanskrit word for “hour”? (**Tamil** — most likely a native Dravidian word instead.) Does Malayalam’s cognate word skip Sanskrit entirely too? (**No** — it’s Sanskrit-derived too, per its own dictionaries, just from a *different* Sanskrit word, *maṇi*, “gem.”) What happens to *gaṇṭa* for “two o’clock”? (It **pluralizes** to *gaṇṭalu*.)

18.2 ళ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ఘ — what does it do? And one from further back: ఌ?

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

Script you’ll notice: శ

శ — *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**.

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

- వెళ్ళు *vellu* — to go (and వచ్చు, to come)
- వెళ్ళి వస్తాను *velli vastānu* — goodbye (lit. “I’ll go and come back”)
- మళ్ళీ కలుద్దాం *malli kaluddām* — we’ll meet again
- సోమవారం మంగళవారం బుధవారం గురువారం శుక్రవారం శనివారం ఆదివారం
— the seven weekdays

Writing: శ — copy what you see

Put your pen on శ 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 these words, and find శ in the ones that have it

వెళ్ళు · నమస్కారం

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

Before you move on

Which character is this — ? What sound does it carry? (*la*.)
 Name one word you already say that contains it.
 One more, from much earlier:  — what does it do?

18.3 డ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one:  — what does it do? And one from further back: ?

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

Script you'll notice: డ

డ — *ḍha*.

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 *ḍh*, it is **ḍha**.

The third breathed pair, and this one asks for two things at once. డ is *ḍa*, the *ḍ* made with the tongue curled back to the roof of the mouth. డ is that letter with the breath let out after it.

So the curl stays and the breath is added. The dot under the romanized *ḍ* marks the curl; the *h* beside it marks the breath. Both marks, both jobs.

You already say this one, and the breathed letter is inside it:

- ఆషాఢం *Āṣāḍhami* — the fourth of the twelve months

Writing: డ — copy what you see

Put your pen on డ 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 these two, and say which one has ఢ and which has డ

అపొఢం · ఉండు

- *Trace it:* ఢ three times, saying *ḍha* with the tongue curled back as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ఢ once more

Before you move on

Which character is this — ఢ? What sound does it carry, and which plain letter is it built on? (*ḍha*, built on డ — the curled-back *d*, with breath added.)

One more, from much earlier: చ — what does it do?

Chapter 19

Asking Someone's Age

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can ask someone how old they are in Telugu and give my own age in return.

Ask నీ వయసెంత? and answer నా వయసు ఇరవై — a complete verbless exchange about age.

19.1 నీ వయసెంత? — matching Kannada's simple possessive exactly

Telugu matches Kannada closely here — same Sanskrit word, same verbless grammar, just fused together by ordinary Telugu vowel sandhi.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

వయస్సు (*vayasu*) = “age” — the exact same Sanskrit वयस् (*vayas*, “age, vigor, strength,” PIE cousin of Latin *vīs*) that Kannada also carries.

Grammar Lens: fused by sandhi, still verbless

నీ వయసెంత? — “How old are you?” — literally “**your age how-much?**” (*nī vayas-enta?* — from *nī vayasu* + *enta*, “how much,” fused by regular vowel sandhi into *vayasenta*.)
నా వయస్సు ఇరవై. — “I am twenty years old.” — literally “**my age [is] twenty.**” (*nā vayasu iravai.*)

Same shape as Kannada: a plain possessive (“your/my age”) sitting next to the number, **no verb at all**. The only wrinkle is surface-level: everyday spoken Telugu often **fuses** *vayasu* + *enta* into one word, *vayasenta*, the same kind of vowel sandhi you’d see fusing any two Telugu words in fast speech — the underlying grammar is identical to Kannada’s, just written closer together.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “vayasu” — age
- “nī vayasenta?” — how old are you?
- “nā vayasu iravai” — I am twenty, “my age [is] twenty”

Before you move on

Is Telugu’s వయస్సు the same Sanskrit word as Kannada’s *vayassu*? (**Yes** — both from *vayas*, PIE cousin of Latin *vīs*.) What happens to *vayasu* + *enta* in “nī vayasenta?”? (They **fuse** by ordinary vowel sandhi.) Does Telugu use a verb to state age, like Kannada? (**No** — same verbless possessive shape.)

Chapter 20

Numbers 11–20 and Weather

Modes: ⇌ voice (2) ⇌ Hands-free start: all 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say what the weather is doing in Telugu and count past ten up to twenty.

Say వాతావరణం — a pure Sanskrit *vāta* + *āvaraṇa*, “the covering of air” — and report the weather with వర్షం పడుతోంది, “rain is falling.”

20.1 పదకొండు, ఇరవై — the same pattern, worn down one step further

You just watched Kannada’s twenty split cleanly into “two” + “ten.” Telugu most likely comes from the exact same pattern — but centuries of extra erosion have worn it past the point of being visible today.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Telugu’s teens echo పది (*padi*, “ten”) plus each digit — పదకొండు (*padakonḍu*, 11), పన్నెండు (*pannenḍu*, 12), and onward through పందొమ్మిది (*paṇḍommidi*, 19) — the same “digit + ten-echo” compounding Kannada builds.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

ఇరవై (*iravai*, “twenty”) most likely continues the **same** pan-Dravidian pattern as Kannada’s *ippattu* — an old ***iru-/*renḍu** (“two”) root fused with an old “ten” root — but here’s the honest difference:

centuries of sound change have worn *iravai* down far enough that it no longer visibly splits into “two” and “ten” on the surface, the way Kannada’s *ippattu* still does today. Telugu’s own word for “two,” రెండు (*renḍu*), doesn’t obviously show up inside *iravai* anymore — treat this as the most likely comparative-Dravidian account rather than a transparent, easily re-derivable compound.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “padakoṇḍu, pannoṇḍu” — 11, 12
- “padi” — ten
- “iravai” — twenty, most likely the same “two-tens” idea as Kannada, just worn down further

Before you move on

How are Telugu’s teens built? (పది (ten) + a digit, compounded.) Does ఇరవై visibly split into “two” + “ten” today, the way Kannada’s *ippattu* does? (No — it most likely continues the same pan-Dravidian pattern, but erosion has worn away the visible split.) What’s Telugu’s word for “two”? (రెండు, *renḍu*.)

20.2 వాతావరణం — “the covering of air,” pure Sanskrit this time

Kannada’s weather word mixed a Persian loan with a Sanskrit one. Telugu’s is different again — a single, unmixed Sanskrit compound.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

వాతావరణం (*vātāvaraṇam*) = “weather, atmosphere” — built entirely from Sanskrit:

- వాత (*vāta*, “wind, air”) — the same Sanskrit root behind వాయువు (*vāyuvu*, “wind,” and the wind-god Vāyu).

- ఆవరణ (*āvaraṇa*, “covering, layer, enclosure”).

So *vātāvaraṇam* literally means “**the covering of air**” — the layer of air surrounding everything, i.e., the atmosphere/weather. Unlike Kannada’s *havāmāna* (Persian *hava* + Sanskrit *māna*), **both** pieces here are Sanskrit — no Perso-Arabic loan involved at all.

Grammar Lens: వర్షం పడుతోంది — “rain is falling”

వర్షం పడుతోంది. — “It’s raining.” — literally “**rain is falling**.” (*varṣaṇi paḍutōndi*.) — వర్షం (*varṣaṇi*, “rain”) is the same Sanskrit root, *varṣā*, you’ll see again in the Dravidian arc.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “vātāvaraṇam” — weather, “the covering of air”
- “vāta” — wind/air, “āvaraṇa” — covering
- “varṣaṇi paḍutōndi” — it’s raining, “rain is falling”

Before you move on

What are the two Sanskrit pieces of వాతావరణం, and what does the whole word literally mean? (వాత, “air,” + ఆవరణ, “covering” — “**the covering of air**.”) Is either piece a Persian/Arabic loan, like part of Kannada’s word? (**No** — both pieces are Sanskrit.) What word does Telugu use for “rain”? (వర్షం, *varṣaṇi*.)

Chapter 21

Dog and Cat

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

By the end of this chapter: I can name a dog and a cat in Telugu.

Say కుక్క, which genuinely breaks from the family’s shared naayi root, and పిల్లి, most likely the Dravidian source behind Hindi’s billī.

21.1 కుక్క, పిల్లి — the odd one out, and the word that most likely closes the loop

Kannada just gave you a rock-solid native dog-word. Telugu breaks from that pattern — but its cat-word may be the single most important word in this whole arc.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

కుక్క (*kukka*, “dog”) does **not** clearly continue the same నాయి-family root shared by Kannada, Malayalam, and Tamil. Its origin is honestly debated: some linguists propose it’s **onomatopoeic**, imitating the sound of a bark; others propose a borrowing from **Sanskrit** कुक्कुर (*kukkura*, itself a similarly-shaped word for dog). Neither is settled — but either way, Telugu’s everyday dog-word genuinely doesn’t match its closest cousins.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

పిల్లి (*pilli*, “cat”) is a real, documented **Proto-Dravidian** root, ***pillV** — with cognates surviving as **rarer**, **alternate** words for cat

in both Tamil and Kannada. Here’s why this word matters for the **whole** arc: Sanskrit’s word for cat, **बिडाल** (*biḍāla*) — the word behind Hindi’s **बिल्ली** (*billī*), which you met as “most likely” borrowed from Dravidian, without a confirmed specific source — most likely traces back to **this exact root**. So Telugu’s everyday word for “cat” is most likely the closest living relative of the very word Sanskrit borrowed, tying together Latin’s *cattus*/Arabic’s *qitt* story on one side and Hindi’s *billī* story on the other, all in one word.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “kukka” — dog, genuinely different from its Dravidian cousins
- “pilli” — cat, most likely the source behind Hindi’s *billī*

Before you move on

Does కుక్క continue the same root as Kannada’s *nāyī*? (**No** — genuinely different, debated between onomatopoeia and a Sanskrit loan.) What is పిల్లి most likely the source of? (**Sanskrit’s** **बिडाल**, *biḍāla* — and so Hindi’s **बिल्ली**, *billī*.)

21.2 ఎ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: డ — what does it do? And one from further back: ఖ?

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

Script you’ll notice: ఎ

ఎ — *e*.

It is an **independent vowel** — the shape the vowel *e* takes when a word begins with it, rather than the sign it becomes inside a word.

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

- ఎలా — how
- మీరు ఎలా ఉన్నారు? — how are you? (respectful)
- ఆరు ఏడు ఎనిమిది తొమ్మిది పది — six to ten
- నలుపు తెలుపు ఎరుపు నీలం — black, white, red, blue

Writing: ఎ — copy what you see

Use **two pen-down runs**. Start at the central junction. Turn down and left around the compact lower loop, then continue around its base until you return to that junction. Lift once. Restart at the junction and sweep through the broad outer arch, climbing to the high left tip.

That is three numbered movements: **1–2 stay joined; 3 restarts after the lift**. The order follows Sathish Shanmugam’s *Write Telugu Alphabets* tracing guide and is fitted here to the printed Noto Sans Telugu shape. Telugu schools do vary in how they teach the hand, so learn this as one sourced order rather than the only possible way anyone writes ఎ.

Your turn

- *Look:* at these words, and find ఎ in the ones that have it

ఎలా · నమస్కారం

- *Trace it:* ఎ three times — lower loop, lift, broad outer arch — saying *e* as you finish each one
- *Look:* back at any page of this chapter and find ఎ once more

Before you move on

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

One more, from much earlier: ఇ — what does it do?

Chapter 22

Green and Yellow

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can name green and yellow in Telugu, on top of the four colours I already had.

*Say పచ్చ and పసుపు and show they are doublets of one Proto-Dravidian *pac- root — where Kannada’s yellow broke away as a Sanskrit loan.*

22.1 పచ్చ, పసుపు — two colors, one Dravidian root

In Kannada, green stayed native but yellow got borrowed from Sanskrit. Telugu tells a tighter story: its green word and its yellow word turn out to be **doublets of the same root**, wearing two different faces.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

పచ్చ (pacca, “green”) comes from **Proto-Dravidian *pac-** — the same root already behind Tamil’s பச்சை (paccai) and Kannada’s ಹಸಿರು (hasiru, via Old Kannada pasir). No surprise here; this is the same pan-Dravidian green family from the last lesson.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

పసుపు (pasupu, “yellow, turmeric”) is, remarkably, **also** a direct descendant of that **same** Proto-Dravidian ***pac-** root — a true **doublet** of pacca itself, not a separate borrowing the way Kannada’s

haladi was. Tamil even keeps a matching cognate, பசுப்பு (*pacuppu*), sitting alongside its own *paccai*. So where Kannada split green and yellow into two unrelated families (native Dravidian vs. a Sanskrit turmeric-loan), Telugu kept **both** colors inside the same native word-family — *pacca* and *pasupu* are, at root, doublets of the same word, one settling on “green” and the other on “yellow, turmeric-colored.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “పచ్చ” — green, from Proto-Dravidian *pac-*
- “పసుపు” — yellow/turmeric, a true doublet of *pacca*, same root
- the contrast with Kannada — Telugu kept both colors in one native family; Kannada’s yellow broke away as a Sanskrit loan

Before you move on

Are పచ్చ and పసుపు two unrelated words, or doublets of the same root? (**Doublets** — both from Proto-Dravidian **pac-*.) Does Telugu’s yellow word follow the same pattern as Kannada’s *haladi* (a Sanskrit loan)? (**No** — Telugu kept its yellow word native, unlike Kannada.) What Tamil word is *pasupu*’s direct cognate? (பசுப்பு, *pacuppu*.)

Chapter 23

Day

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

By the end of this chapter: I can say “day” in Telugu and choose between the everyday Persian loan and its formal Sanskrit alternate.

Say రోజు, a genuine Persian loan from *rōz*, and set it against the formal దినము — the mirror image of Kannada’s plain *dina*.

23.1 రోజు (rōju) — “day,” a genuine Persian surprise

You might expect Telugu’s word for “day” to be Sanskrit, like Kannada’s *dina*, or native Dravidian. It’s neither — it’s Persian.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

రోజు (rōju) — “day” — is Telugu’s everyday, ordinary word for “a day.” Here’s the real surprise: it’s **borrowed from Classical Persian** روز (rōz) — the same root, ultimately, as the Persian day names hiding in words like “Nowruz” (“new day”). Persian *rōz* itself traces to a Proto-Indo-European root, **lewk-* (“bright”) — a **completely different** PIE root from the **dyew-* family behind Latin’s *diēs*, Hindi’s *din*, and Kannada’s *dina*. Both roots independently mean something like “shining, bright” — but they are **not** cousins; this is convergent meaning, not shared ancestry.

Why it's said this way

Telugu also has దినము (**dinamu**) — the same Sanskrit **tatsama** word as Kannada's *dina*. But here's the honest twist: unlike Kannada, where *dina* is the plain, everyday word, Telugu's దినము is the more **formal, literary** alternate — *rōju* does the everyday work instead. Telugu's formal/everyday split runs the **opposite direction** from Kannada's.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “rōju” — “day,” a genuine Persian loanword
- the honest surprise — from Persian *rōz*, PIE *lew-*, *NOT the same root as diēs/din/dina*
- the reversed pattern — *dinamu* is Telugu's FORMAL word, unlike Kannada's plain *dina*

Before you move on

What language does Telugu's everyday రోజు (*rōju*) come from? (**Persian** — *rōz*.) Is Persian *rōz*'s PIE root the same as Latin *diēs*/Hindi *din*/Kannada *dina*'s root? (**No** — a completely different PIE root, **lew-*, “bright,” vs. **dyew-* — related in meaning, not in ancestry.) Is Telugu's Sanskrit word, దినము (*dinamu*), the everyday word or the formal one? (**The formal one** — the opposite of Kannada, where *dina* is plain and everyday.)

23.2 ణ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ణ — what does it do? And one from further back: ఘ?

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

Script you'll notice: ణ

ణ — *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**.

There is a second *n* in this alphabet, and you met it long ago: **న**, the *na* of *nēnu* and *namaskāram*. For **న** the tongue touches the back of the teeth. For **ణ** it curls back and touches the roof of the mouth. Telugu hears the two as different letters and writes them as different letters — the same split you have already seen between **ల** and **ళ**, and between **ద** and **డ**. The dot under the romanized *ṇ* is how this book marks the curled-back one.

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

- వాతావరణం *vātāvaraṇam* — weather
- శ్రావణం *Śrāvaṇam* — the fifth of the twelve months
- ఫాల్గుణం *Phālgunaṇam* — the twelfth

Writing: ణ — copy what you see

Put your pen on **ణ** 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 these two, and say which one has **ణ** and which has **న**

వాతావరణం · నమస్కారం

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

Before you move on

Which character is this — **ɛə**? What sound does it carry, and where is the tongue for it? (**ɲa**, with the tongue curled back to the roof of the mouth — not **ʂ**, which touches the teeth.) Name one word you already say that contains it.

One more, from much earlier: **ə** — what does it do?

Chapter 24

Night

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

By the end of this chapter: I can say “night” in Telugu and recognise it inside the midnight word I already knew.

Say రాత్రి, find it again inside అర్ధరాత్రి, and note the three native words — రేయి, మాపు, irulu — it pushed aside.

24.1 రాత్రి (rātri) — “night,” this time matching the expected pattern

Last lesson’s *rōju* broke every expectation. This one is more straightforward — but still worth checking honestly, not assuming.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

రాత్రి (rātri) — “night” — is a Sanskrit **tatsama** word, already hiding inside అర్ధరాత్రి (*ardharātri*, “midnight,” Chapter 17). Unlike *rōju*’s Persian surprise, *rātri* really **is** Telugu’s ordinary, everyday word for “night” — matching Kannada’s own pattern this time, not breaking it.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Telugu **does** have native words here — but be honest: it’s a **messier** picture than Kannada’s clean two-word story, not a tidy mirror of it.

- రేయి (rēyi) — attested in older Telugu literature; most sources

treat it as inherited Dravidian, though some grammars instead link it to *rātri* itself, so its native status is less than fully settled.

- మాపు (*māpu*) — its **primary** sense is actually “**evening, dusk**” (as in రేపుమాపు, “morning and evening”), with “night” only a secondary, extended sense — not a clean synonym for *rātri*.
- ఇరులు (*irulu*) — a genuine cognate of Kannada’s ಇರುಳು (*irulu*), but its primary modern sense is “**darkness**,” archaic even in that use.

All three have been effectively pushed aside by the Sanskrit loan — but unlike Kannada’s single native competitor, Telugu’s “native” side is split across three words in three different, overlapping senses.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*rātri*” — “night,” already met inside *ardharātri*
- *rēyi*, *māpu*, *irulu* — three native words, three overlapping senses, all pushed aside
- the contrast with last lesson — day broke the pattern, night matches it

Before you move on

Where have you already met రాత్రి before this lesson? (అర్ధరాత్రి, *ardharātri*, “midnight.”) Does *rātri* follow the same “Sanskrit-as-everyday” pattern as Kannada’s *rātri*, or does it break the pattern the way *rōju* did for “day”? (**It matches** — *rātri* really is Telugu’s everyday word.) Does Telugu’s native-word story cleanly mirror Kannada’s single-word *irulu*? (**No** — it’s messier: three words, రేయి/మాపు/ఇరులు, in three overlapping senses, not one clean replacement.)

24.2 జ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: జ — what does it do? And one from further back: జ?

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

Script you'll notice: జ

జ — *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**.

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

- రోజు *rōju* — day, the word that came in from Persian
- జ్యేష్ఠం *Jyēṣṭham* — the third of the twelve months
- ఆశ్వయుజం *Āśvayujam* — the seventh

Rōju is worth a second look. Its first letter is the ర you traced inside *namaskāram*. Its last is జ — this new letter carrying the *u* sign you met early on. The vowel sign in the middle is one this book has not stopped on yet, so the word is not wholly yours on the page. Two of its three pieces are, and that is new today.

Writing: జ — copy what you see

Put your pen on జ 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 these words, and find జ in the ones that have it

రోజు · నమస్కారం

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

Before you move on

Which character is this — జ? What sound does it carry? (*ja*.)
 Read రోజు aloud, letter by letter, and then as one word.
 One more, from much earlier: ె — what does it do?

Chapter 25

Good Night

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

By the end of this chapter: I can wish someone good night in Telugu.

Say శుభ రాత్రి — “auspicious night” — pairing the రాత్రి already learned with śubha, while knowing many speakers code-switch to English here.

25.1 శుభ రాత్రి (śubha rātri) — the standard translation, honestly checked against real speech

You have both pieces already: *rātri* from last lesson, and one more Sanskrit word. But this lesson’s honest twist is about who actually says the result out loud.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

శుభ రాత్రి (śubha rātri) — “good night” — literally “auspicious night.” Both pieces are Sanskrit **tatsama**: రాత్రి (*rātri*, “night,” already met) plus శుభ (*śubha*, “auspicious,” from root śubh, “to be beautiful,” ultimately PIE **kewb^h-*).

Why it’s said this way

Here’s a genuinely interesting wrinkle, hedged appropriately: some sources describe modern Telugu speakers, especially casually, often **code-switching to English “good night”** rather than saying శుభ

రాత్రి aloud — treating it more as the standard written/dictionary translation than an everyday spoken phrase. Be careful with this claim, though: the evidence for it comes mainly from informal language-learning blogs and forum posts, not rigorous sociolinguistic sources, and the same “code-switch to English for casual farewells” pattern plausibly shows up across other South Asian languages too — it isn’t clearly something unique to Telugu, just something the available sources happened to mention for Telugu specifically. Either way, *śubha rātri* itself is perfectly correct and understood Telugu, whatever its actual spoken frequency turns out to be.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “śubha rātri” — “good night,” literally “auspicious night”
- śubha’s own root — śubh, “to be beautiful” → “auspicious”
- the honest twist — the standard translation, but many speakers code-switch to English instead

Before you move on

What does శుభ రాత్రి literally mean? (“**Auspicious night.**”) Is *śubha rātri* actually the phrase most Telugu speakers say aloud for “good night”? (**Often not** — many code-switch to English “good night” in casual speech; *śubha rātri* is the standard written/ formal translation.) Does this mean *śubha rātri* is wrong or ungrammatical? (**No** — perfectly correct, just less commonly spoken than expected.)

25.2 భ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: జ — what does it do? And one from further back: ఙ?

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

Script you'll notice: భ

భ — *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**.

Say బ (*ba*), then say it again and let a puff of breath out on top of it. That second thing is భ. By now the pattern should arrive before the letter does: you have met క/ఖ, గ/ఘ and డ/ఢ, and this is the fourth pair of the same kind. The *h* in the romanization *bha* is that puff, not a separate sound.

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

- శుభ రాత్రి *śubha rātri* — good night, from the chapter before this one
- భాద్రపదం *Bhādrapadam* — the sixth of the twelve months
- ప్రారంభించు *prārambhiṇcu* — to begin

Writing: భ — copy what you see

Put your pen on భ 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 these words, and find భ in the ones that have it

శుభ రాత్రి · నమస్కారం

- *Say it:* *ba*, then *bha*, and hear the breath arrive
- *Trace it:* భ three times, saying *bha* as you finish each one

Before you move on

Which character is this — **ɸ**? What does it carry that **ɹ** does not? (**bha** — the same *b* with a puff of breath after it.) Name one word you already say that contains it.

One more, from much earlier: **ɹ** — what does it do?

Chapter 26

Morning

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

By the end of this chapter: I can say “morning” in Telugu with the same word that sits inside the morning greeting.

Say ఉదయం, Telugu’s broadest morning word, note the real native competitors poddu and vēkuva, and see that Kannada splits this job across two unrelated words.

26.1 ఉదయం (udayam) — the same Sanskrit root, a different job than in Kannada

Last lesson’s రోజు was a genuine Persian surprise. This lesson’s word for “morning” goes the other way — straight Sanskrit, doing double duty in a way its Kannada cousin doesn’t.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

ఉదయం (udayam) — “**morning**” — is a Sanskrit **tatsama**: from ఉదయ (udaya, “**rise, appearance**”) plus Telugu’s own -ము (-mu) nominal suffix. This is Telugu’s most common, general everyday word for “morning” — but be honest: it doesn’t have the field entirely to itself. పొద్దు/పొద్దున (poddu/podduna) is genuine **Proto-Dravidian** vocabulary — cognate with Tamil **pozhudu** and Kannada **hottu** — and does real everyday work too (“పొద్దున్నే లేచాను,” “I woke up in the morning”). వేకువ (vēkuva, “dawn, early morning”) is labeled **colloquial**, not archaic or purely poetic. ఉదయం is the broadest, most

general word — but not an uncontested one.

Why it's said this way

Here's the honest cross-language twist. Kannada also has this **exact** Sanskrit root, ఉదయ (udaya) — but only inside its **greeting**, ಶುಭೋದಯ (śubhōdaya, “good morning”). Kannada's actual everyday **noun** for “morning” is a completely unrelated **native** word, ಬೆಳಗ್ಗೆ (beḷagge, “the shining”). Telugu doesn't split the job that way: ఉదయం covers both the everyday noun AND, in శుభోదయం, the greeting root — one word, doing what Kannada spreads across two unrelated ones. And unlike రోజు (last lesson's genuine Persian surprise for “day”), Telugu's morning word holds no such twist — straightforwardly Sanskrit, start to finish.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “udayam” — “morning,” Sanskrit tatsama, the broadest word, though poddu/podduna and vēkuva are real native alternatives too
- the cross-language twist — Kannada's ఉదయ root only shows up in ITS greeting; Telugu uses ఉదయం for both the noun and the greeting
- the contrast with రోజు — no Persian surprise here, just straightforward Sanskrit

Before you move on

Is ఉదయం the ONLY word Telugu speakers use for “morning”? (**No** — it's the broadest, most common one, but పొద్దు/పొద్దున and వేకువ, both genuinely native, do real everyday work too.) Does Kannada's everyday morning-noun share ఉదయం's root? (**No** — Kannada's బెళగ్ಗೆ is native; the shared root, udaya, shows up only inside Kannada's GREETING, శుభೋదయ.) Does ఉదయం hold a surprise the way రోజు did? (**No** — straightforwardly Sanskrit throughout.)

26.2 ఋ — one character, met inside a word you already say

Before the new one: భ — what does it do? And one from further back: ఎ?

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

Script you'll notice: ఋ

ఋ — *r*.

It is an **independent vowel** — the shape a vowel takes when a word begins with it, rather than the sign it becomes inside a word. You have met that pairing twice already, at ఉ and at ఎ.

What makes this one worth a page of its own is what the vowel is. It is an *r* doing a vowel's work: a whole syllable with no other vowel in it, the way English lets *l* carry the second half of *bottle*. Telugu took the letter from Sanskrit along with the words that need it, and modern speakers give it the sound *ru*.

You already say this one, and it has ఋ at the front of its second word:

- వసంత ఋతువు *vasanta rtuvu* — the spring season

ఋ is one of the rarest letters in the alphabet: outside Sanskrit borrowings it has almost nowhere to appear. Meeting it once, on a word you can already say, is enough for now.

Writing: ఋ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ఋ 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 these two, and say which one opens with ఋ

ఋతువు · ఉదయం

- *Trace it:* ఋ three times, saying *r* as you finish each one
- *Say it:* *vasanta ṛtuvu*, and name the letter its second word starts with

Before you move on

Which character is this — ఋ? What kind of thing is it — a consonant, a vowel sign, or an independent vowel? (**An independent vowel**, sounded *ru*.) Name the word you already say that contains it.

One more, from much earlier: వ — what does it do?

Chapter 27

Evening

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can say “evening” in Telugu.

Say సాయంత్రం, from sāyam plus a time-suffix, and follow its PIE

**seh₁- root across to Latin sērus, French soir and Italian sera.*

27.1 సాయంత్రం (sāyantram) — a distant cousin of French “soir”

This lesson’s word for “evening” reaches back to a PIE root that also surfaces — in a completely different language, on a completely different continent’s language family.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

సాయంత్రం (sāyantram) — “evening” — is a Sanskrit **tatsama**: from సాయం (sāyam, “in the evening”) plus a Sanskrit **-tana** suffix that turns time-adverbs into adjectives — the same suffix pattern behind Sanskrit **divātana** (“of the day”) and **sanātana** (“eternal, lasting”).

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Here’s the striking part, checked directly against primary sources rather than assumed: సాయం itself traces to **Proto-Indo-European *seh₁-** (“long, lasting”) — and this is **explicitly** documented as “distantly related to **Latin sērus**” (“late”), itself confirmed independently to trace to the very same **seh₁-* root (via Proto-Italic

sēros*). *sērus* is worth a closer look: it's the Latin root well attested as the source of **French soir and **Italian sera** — French and Italian's own everyday “evening” words. That makes సాయంత్రం and **soir/sera** genuine distant cognates — one route through Sanskrit tatsama borrowing into Telugu, one route through centuries of Vulgar Latin erosion into French and Italian, both ultimately the same Proto-Indo-European idea of something “long, lasting” stretching into “late in the day.”

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “sāyantram” — “evening,” sāyam + the -tana time-suffix
- the deep root — PIE *seh₁-*, “long, lasting”
- the cross-family cognate — the same root behind French **soir** and Italian **sera**, via Latin *sērus*

Before you move on

What is సాయంత్రం built from? (సాయం, “in the evening,” + a Sanskrit “-tana” time-adjective suffix.) What PIE root does సాయం trace to? (**seh₁-*, “long, lasting.”) What two Romance words are genuine distant cognates of సాయంత్రం, and through which Latin word? (**French soir** and **Italian sera** — both through Latin *sērus*, “late,” which traces to the same **seh₁-* root.)

Chapter 28

Afternoon

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can use Telugu’s noon word to talk about the afternoon, and reach for the classical term when I need to be precise.

Reuse మధ్యాహ్నం for the stretch between noon and evening, then contrast it with ఆపరాహ్నం, the more formal, more precise later-afternoon word.

28.1 మధ్యాహ్నం — the same “noon” word, now also “afternoon”

You already know మధ్యాహ్నం means “noon” — precisely, “middle of the day.” This lesson’s honest twist: the word doesn’t stay that precise in modern use.

Why it’s said this way

మధ్యాహ్నం (**madhyāhnam**) is the exact word from Chapter 17, still literally “middle” + “day” — but a source fetched directly (not just a search summary) confirms it now covers “**the time between noon and evening**” in modern usage — a genuine widened sense, not just the precise midday instant its etymology points to. This mirrors Hindi’s दोपहर (clearly, well- confirmed widened from “noon” to “afternoon”) and, more thinly Kannada’s own మధ్యాహ్నం (a hedged, single-source impression of the same kind of stretch).

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Telugu also has అపరాహ్నం (*aparāhnam*), from the same classical **five-part Sanskrit day division** already found behind Kannada’s అపరాహ్న — *prāta/udaya* (sunrise), *saṅgava*, *madhyāhna* (noon), *aparāhna* (“later afternoon” specifically), *sāyāhna* (evening). Be honest about the sourcing here, echoing the same hedge already applied to Kannada’s *aparāhna*: thin, informal evidence — a native-speaker forum discussion, general dictionary usage notes — points toward మధ్యాహ్నం **winning colloquially**, with అపరాహ్నం staying the more **formally precise** term. Real, but not corpus-linguistics-grade sourcing — treat it the same cautious way Kannada’s own equivalent finding was treated, not as fully settled.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “madhyāhnam” — the same word from Chapter 17, “middle of the day”
- the confirmed widening — now also covers “the time between noon and evening”
- “aparāhnam” — the more precise classical word for later afternoon, staying the more formal term per thin but real evidence

Before you move on

Is మధ్యాహ్నం a new word, or the same one from Chapter 17? (**The same word** — “middle” + “day.”) Does modern usage confirm మధ్యాహ్నం covers only the exact instant of noon? (**No** — a directly-fetched source confirms it now covers “the time between noon and evening” too.) Is it confirmed whether అపరాహ్నం or widened మధ్యాహ్నం is more common today? (**Thin but real evidence** points to మధ్యాహ్నం winning colloquially, అపరాహ్నం staying formally precise — not fully settled, but not silent either.)

Chapter 29

Good Morning

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can wish someone good morning in Telugu.

Say శుభోదయం — śubha + ఉదయం — and weigh the single low-authority claim that it is out of trend against నమస్కారం, the safer everyday bet.

29.1 శుభోదయం (śubhodayam) — a claim worth real skepticism, not a settled fact

You already have ఉదయం. This lesson’s honest twist is about a dramatic-sounding claim — and about being skeptical of it, even though it came from a source fetched directly.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

శుభోదయం (śubhodayam) — “good morning” — is built from శుభ (“good”) plus ఉదయం (already met, Chapter 26). Grammatically and etymologically, this is the straightforward, traditional Telugu “good morning.”

Why it’s said this way

Here’s the twist, and the honesty this time cuts against the source itself: one directly-fetched page describes శుభోదయం as **out of trend**, displaced by **English** “good morning,” with children taught the

English phrase from **preschool**. That’s a vivid, quotable claim — but “fetched directly” doesn’t make a source authoritative. This is the **same genre** of Telugu/Kannada/Hindi-learning content blog already found **overstated** for Hindi’s सुप्रभात and Kannada’s own ಶುಭೋದಯ (a single uncredentialed listicle, no sociolinguistic methodology, no citations) — treat this claim the same skeptical way, not as settled. Genuinely worth separating from that dramatic claim: సుప్రభాతం (*suprabhātam*) also exists — built on ప్రభాత (*prabhāta*), a **completely different** Sanskrit root from ఉదయ (*udaya*). This is **not** the same root behind Kannada’s ಶుಭೋದయ, which itself uses *udaya* — don’t conflate the two Sanskrit “morning” roots. A third option, ప్రొద్దుటి వందనాలు (“morning greetings,” built on పొద్దు, Chapter 26’s genuine native competitor to ఉదయం), also exists but isn’t confirmed common either. నమస్కారం is the safer bet for everyday use — matching the same నమస్కార/नमस्ते pattern already found doing the real everyday work for both Kannada and Hindi.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “śubhōdayam” — “good morning,” śubha + udayam
- the honest twist — one low-authority source claims it’s out of trend, displaced by English; treat with real skepticism
- నమస్కారం — the safer everyday-greeting bet

Before you move on

What is శుభోదయం built from? (శుభ + ఉదయం.) Is the claim that శుభోదయం has been displaced by English a confirmed, well-sourced fact? (**No** — it comes from one low-authority content-blog source, the same genre already found overstated for Hindi/Kannada; treat it skeptically, not as settled.) Does సుప్రభాతం share ఉదయం’s root, or Kannada’s ಶುಭೋದయ’s root? (**Neither** — its own root, ప్రభాత/*prabhāta*, is a genuinely different Sanskrit word.)

Chapter 30

Good Evening

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can wish someone good evening in Telugu.

Say శుభ సాయంత్రం, backed by two independent sources as genuinely common in both formal and casual speech, with నమస్కారం as an alternative rather than a replacement.

30.1 శుభ సాయంత్రం (śubha sāyantram) — a claim that actually holds up on checking

Last lesson’s morning greeting rested on one dramatic, shaky source. This one is different — and the difference itself is worth noticing.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

శుభ సాయంత్రం (śubha sāyantram) — “good evening” — pairs శుభ (“good”) with సాయంత్రం (already met, Chapter 27 — the word whose PIE root, *seh*₁-, turned out to be a genuine distant cognate of Latin’s *sērus*, and so of French *soir* and Italian *sera*).

Why it’s said this way

Here’s the honest contrast worth drawing explicitly: last lesson’s శుభోదయం rested on **one** dramatic, low-authority source claiming it had been displaced by English entirely. This time, **two** independently

fetches sources — not just search-engine summaries — **agree**: శుభ సాయంత్రం is genuinely, commonly used, in **both** formal and informal contexts, appropriate for greeting people after work or arriving at an evening gathering. Neither source flags it as archaic or displaced. This doesn't mean these sources are beyond question — they're still the same general genre of language-learning content that has needed hedging before — but **being independently cross-corroborated** is a real, meaningful difference in evidence quality from a single dramatic claim, and it's worth being just as honest about a claim holding up as about one that doesn't. నమస్కారం, as before, remains a genuine time-independent alternative — but nothing here suggests it has **displaced** this greeting the way English reportedly displaced శుభోదయం.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “śubha sāyantram” — “good evening,” śubha + sāyantram
- the honest contrast — this claim is cross-corroborated by two sources, unlike last lesson's single dramatic one
- నమస్కారం — a time-independent alternative, not a replacement here

Before you move on

What word does శుభ సాయంత్రం pair with, and what's that word's own striking cross-language story? (సాయంత్రం — a genuine distant PIE cognate of Latin sērus/French soir/Italian sera.) Is the “genuinely commonly used” claim for శుభ సాయంత్రం as thinly sourced as శుభోదయం's “displaced by English” claim was? (**No** — two independent sources agree here, versus one dramatic claim last lesson — a real difference in evidence quality.)

Chapter 31

Good Afternoon

Modes: ⇄ voice (2) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can wish someone good afternoon in Telugu and judge whether it fits the setting I am in.

Say శుభ మధ్యాహ్నం where the setting is formal or workplace-timed, and fall back on నమస్కారం, the time-independent everyday greeting.

31.1 శుభ మధ్యాహ్నం (śubha madhyāhnam) — good afternoon

You already know శుభ from the morning and evening greetings and మధ్యాహ్నం from the parts-of-day lessons. Put them together.

You'll want to know: శుభ + మధ్యాహ్నం

శుభ మధ్యాహ్నం (śubha madhyāhnam) means “good afternoon.” The second word originally centres on “midday” or “noon,” but you learned in Chapter 28 that modern use widens it into the stretch between noon and evening.

Telugu could instead have built the phrase on అపరాహ్నం (aparāhnam), the more classically precise word for later afternoon. It did not. Kannada made the same choice in ಶುభ ಮಧ್ಯಾಹ್ನ (śubha madhyāhna): both languages chose the everyday “noon, widened” word from two available classical terms.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “śubha madhyāhnam” — “good afternoon,” śubha + madhyāhnam
- the word choice — built on మధ్యాహ్నం, not అపరాహ్నం, matching Kannada’s exact same choice
- Kannada ಶುಭ ಮಧ್ಯಾಹ్న — the same word-building choice

Before you move on

Is శుభ మధ్యాహ్నం built on మధ్యాహ్నం or అపరాహ్నం? (మధ్యాహ్నం — the “noon, widened” word.) Which sister language made the same choice? (Kannada, in శుభ మధ్యాహ్న.)

31.2 శుభ మధ్యాహ్నం — register and evidence

You can now build శుభ మధ్యాహ్నం. The next question is when it sounds natural—and how strongly the available evidence answers that question.

Why it’s said this way

Two independently fetched language-learning sources confirm that శుభ మధ్యాహ్నం is a real, correctly formed greeting for **formal or workplace** use around noon and early afternoon.

Keep the claims separate, though. Talkpal explicitly ranks the greeting as **less common** in everyday conversation than morning or evening greetings. Preply independently supports its timing and formal register, but does not make that frequency comparison. So there are two sources for “real and formal,” but only one for “less common.” A second source must not be counted as evidence for a claim it never made.

Why it’s said this way

- శుభోదయం — the morning lesson found one low-authority claim of displacement by English; treat that dramatic claim skeptically.
- శుభ సాయంత్రం — two sources supported common formal and

informal use.

- శుభ మధ్యాహ్నం — real and workplace-timed, with narrower support for its lower everyday frequency.

The three phrases do not need one uniform usage story. For a time-independent everyday greeting, నమస్కారం remains the safer choice.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the two-source claim — real, formal, and workplace-timed
- the one-source claim — less common than morning or evening
- నమస్కారం — the time-independent everyday alternative

Before you move on

Do both sources rank శుభ మధ్యాహ్నం as less common? (No. Both support its formal use; only Talkpal makes the frequency comparison.) What is the safer all-day greeting? (నమస్కారం.)

Chapter 32

The Core Verbs

Modes: ⇄ voice (6) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can build a Telugu verb as stem plus tense plus person, say why one form covers both “I go” and “I will go”, give a polite command with -aṇḍi, and explain why ఉండు has to borrow its negative and తెలుసు has no person at all.

Say నాకు తెలుసు, name the three slots that built uṇṭānu, veḷṭānu and cūstānu, separate it from Chapter 6’s నాకు తెలుగు వచ్చు — fact against skill — and recall that ఉండు switches to lē- to be negated.

32.1 ఉండు (uṇḍu) — “to be,” and the negative that is a different verb

Thirty-one chapters of words. Now the engine room. Telugu glues a verb together one piece at a time, seams showing, and this first verb carries the machine.

You’ll want to know: ఉండు

ఉండు — uṇḍu — to be, to exist, to stay

Chapter 5 met it as “to live somewhere.” Here it is the verb-machine itself: ఉండ్- (the stem) + -త- (tense) + -ను (“I”) → ఉంటాను (uṇṭānu), “I stay, I will be.”

One form is already in your mouth: ఉన్నాను (unnānu), “I am — right now,” the shape hiding inside bāgunnānu and mīru elā unnāru?

Telugu is alone in this word. Tamil says இரு (*iru*), Kannada ಇರು (*iru*), Malayalam ഇരിക്കുക (*irikkuka*) — one verb, three sisters. Telugu went its own way, as it did with *lēdu*.

The letters in this word

ఉ is the standing vowel *u*. ండు is the retroflex cluster *ṇḍ* with the *u* sign — tongue tip curled back, then released. Both shapes are familiar from Chapter 5.

Grammar Lens: Telugu’s “be” cannot be made negative

There is no negative of *uṇḍu*. To say something is **not** there, Telugu drops the verb and picks up a second one, లే- (*lē-*) — the root behind Chapter 1’s *lēdu*. It takes the very same person-endings:

who	is	is not
I	<i>unnānu</i>	<i>lēnu</i>
he	<i>unnāḍu</i>	<i>lēḍu</i>
it	<i>undi</i>	<i>lēdu</i>

So *lēdu* was never a bare word for “no.” It is the **it**-form of a full verb, and you can now run it through its persons.

This is where Telugu parted from its sisters. Tamil negates *iru* with இல்லை (*illai*), Kannada with ಇಲ್ಲ (*illa*), Malayalam with ഇല്ല (*illa*) — one shared root, *il-*. Telugu dropped it and grew *lē-* instead.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “uṇḍu” — be, exist, stay
- the three pieces in order — “uṇḍ ... ta ... ānu” → “uṇṭānu”
- the pair you must switch verbs for — “unnānu ... lēnu”
- the three sisters’ one verb — “iru ... iru ... irikkuka”

Before you move on

What are the three pieces of *uṇṭānu*? (**Stem, tense, person** — *uṇḍ-*, *-ta-*, *-ānu*.) How do you say “I am not there”? (లేను, *lēnu* — a different verb entirely.) So what kind of word is *lēdu*? (**The it-form**

of the negative verb *lē-*.) Which root do the other three sisters use, and does Telugu? (*il-*; Telugu does **not**.) Next: the same machine, tense piece swapped.

32.2 వెళ్లు (*veḷḷu*) — “to go,” and a tense Telugu refuses to split

You have the three pieces — stem, tense, person. Change only the middle one. That is the whole of Telugu tense, and it has one setting fewer than you would expect.

You’ll want to know: వెళ్లు

వెళ్లు — *veḷḷu* — to go

Chapter 4 gave it to you as a bare command, *veḷḷu!*, “go!” Threaded up it is వెళ్తాను (*veḷtānu*), and its past is వెళ్లాను (*veḷḷānu*), “I went.”

Telugu keeps a second go-verb beside it. The family’s inherited word for going is *pō-*, and Telugu has it as పోవు (*pōvu*), పోతాను (*pōtānu*) — the same verb as Tamil போ (pō), Malayalam പോകുക (*pōkuka*) and Kannada ಹೋಗು (*hōgu*). So Telugu did not lose the family’s word; it gave the everyday job to *veḷḷu*, a verb of its own whose deeper history is best left open.

The letters in this word

వె is *va* with the short-*e* sign. ళ్లు is the retroflex శ (*ḷ*) doubled and held — *veḷ-ḷu*, a real catch in the middle. The same doubling is in *nḷḷu*, Chapter 15’s water.

Grammar Lens: one piece for “I go” and “I will go”

when	Telugu	the middle piece
now, or later	<i>veḷtānu</i>	<i>-ta-</i>
already	<i>veḷḷānu</i>	<i>-ā-</i>
this minute	<i>veḷtunnānu</i>	<i>-tunnā-</i>

Be honest about the first row: వెళ్తాను means “I go” **and** “I will go.” Telugu does not separate habit from future — one piece does both, and context decides. Tamil keeps them apart (*pōgīrēn* against *pōvēn*); Telugu merged them.

Having merged them, Telugu needed a way to say “right this minute,” and built one out of last lesson’s verb. వెళ్తున్నాను (*veḷtunnānu*) is *veḷ-* plus ఉన్నా-, the very *unnānu* that means “I am,” welded on: literally “going-am-I.” The be-verb did not stay a word. It became a piece of every other verb.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “veḷḷu” — go — then “veḷtānu”
- the two meanings of one form — “I go” and “I will go”
- the three times — “veḷtānu ... veḷḷānu ... veḷtunnānu”
- the be-verb hiding in the third — “unnānu ... veḷtunnānu”

Before you move on

How many things does *veḷtānu* mean? (**Two** — “I go” and “I will go”; Telugu merges habit and future.) What is glued inside *veḷtunnānu*? (ఉన్నా-, the be-verb — “going-am-I.”) Does Telugu have the family’s old go-root at all? (**Yes** — *pōvu*, cousin of *pō*, *pōkuka*, *hōgu*; *veḷḷu* just took the everyday work.) Next: a verb you call by one shape and build on another.

32.3 రా (rā) — “come!”, and the stem it is not built on

Veḷḷu threads its pieces on without a fuss: the word you call it by is the word you build on. Its partner refuses — and the goodbye you learned in Chapter 4 has been hiding the reason.

You’ll want to know: రా

రా — *rā* — **come!**

One syllable: ఱ (ra) with the long-ā sign. It is a whole command on its own, the plainest thing one Telugu speaker can say to another.

Every sister has this verb, and every sister’s command-shape drifted somewhere different: Tamil **வர** (*vā*), Kannada **ಬಾ** (*bā*), Malayalam **വരുക** (*varuka*), Telugu **రా** (*rā*). A *v*, a *b*, an *r* — one old Dravidian come-word, worn three ways, not three separate verbs.

Grammar Lens: the word you call it by is not the word you build on

Try to thread endings onto *rā*- and you get nothing anyone says. They attach to **వచ్చు** (*vaccu*) instead, which appears as *vast*- once the tense piece arrives:

- **వస్తాను** (*vastānu*) — “I come, I will come”
- **వచ్చాను** (*vaccānu*) — “I came”
- **వస్తున్నాను** (*vastunnānu*) — “I am coming right now”

The third one is last lesson’s trick again: the be-verb *unnā*- welded onto the stem. Learn this verb as a pair, then — **రా**, and **వచ్చు**. Telugu is not odd here; Tamil pairs *vā* with *varu*- and Kannada pairs *bā* with *baru*-, and the building-stems stayed far closer to each other than the commands did.

You have said *vastānu* already. Chapter 4’s farewell **వెళ్లి వస్తాను** (*velli vastānu*) — “I’ll go and come back” — is *velli* and *vaccu* standing side by side, and that second word is exactly the form above. Chapter 6 used the bare stem too, in *nāku telugu vaccu*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the command — “**రా!**”
- the pair to learn together — “**రా ... వచ్చు**”
- “**వస్తాను ... వచ్చాను ... వస్తున్నాను**”
- the farewell you now understand — “**వెళ్లి వస్తాను**”

Before you move on

Which shape do the endings attach to for “come”? (వచ్చు, *vaccu*-, never *rā*-.) Say “I will come.” (*Vastānu*.) Which two verbs are standing in *velli vastānu*? (వెళ్ళు and వచ్చు — go, and come back.) Are Tamil *vā*, Kannada *bā* and Telugu *rā* three different verbs? (No — one old come-word, reshaped three ways.) Next: a verb Telugu kept where Tamil replaced it.

32.4 తిను (tinu) — “to eat,” the root Telugu kept

Three verbs in, and every one has been Telugu’s own choice. This one is the opposite: the oldest eat-word the family has, still doing plain everyday work.

You’ll want to know: తిను

తిను — *tinu* — to eat

తి is the dental *ta* with the *i* sign; ను is *nu*, the same shape that ends *nēnu*. Threaded up: తింటాను (*tiṇṭānu*), “I eat, I will eat,” and తిన్నాను (*tinṇānu*), “I ate.”

The inherited Dravidian root is **tin-**, and the family kept it: Kannada తಿನ್ನು (*tinnu*), Malayalam തിന്നുക (*tinṇuka*), Tamil தின் (*tin*). But Tamil narrowed its own to chewing and snacking and put an assembled compound, சாப்பிடு (*sāppiḍu*), in the everyday slot. Telugu did no such thing. *Tinu* is still simply the word.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Build a noun straight off the root and you get తిండి (*tiṇḍi*) — “food, grub.” Native, transparent, and blunt: it is what you feed people, not what you invite them to.

For the invitation Telugu reaches across to Sanskrit: భోజనం (*bhōjanam*, “a meal”) and ఆహారం (*āhāram*, “food”). Both are **tatsama** loans, taken in whole, and both outrank *tiṇḍi* in politeness without displacing it.

That is Telugu’s Sanskrit habit in miniature, and it is worth naming plainly. The verbs at the centre of living — be, go, come, eat — stayed Dravidian. The formal and ceremonial vocabulary layered on top came

from Sanskrit. You met the same split in Chapter 1, where the greeting *namaskāram* is Sanskrit while *avunu* and *sarē* are native. Telugu borrowed far more of that top layer than Tamil ever did; it did not borrow the floor.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “tinu” — eat — then “tiṇṭānu ... tinnānu”
- the root the whole family kept — “tinu ... tinnu ... tinnuka”
- the native noun and the borrowed one — “tiṇḍi ... bhōjanam”
- the four verbs so far — “uṇṭānu ... veḷṭānu ... vastānu ... tiṇṭānu”

Before you move on

Did Telugu keep the inherited eat-root? (Yes — *tinu*, plain and everyday, where Tamil demoted *tin* and built *sāppiḍu*.) Which word for food is native, and which is borrowed? (తిండి *tiṇḍi* is native and blunt; భోజనం *bhōjanam* is Sanskrit and polite.) What is the pattern? (Native verbs at the core, Sanskrit vocabulary layered on top — as with *avunu* against *namaskāram*.) Next: a verb, and the polite ending that fits every verb in this chapter.

32.5 చూడు (cūḍu) — “to see,” and the polite ending that fits every verb

Four bare commands so far — *uṇḍu*, *vellu*, *rā*, *tinu* — and every one is blunt. This verb brings the ending that makes them polite.

You’ll want to know: చూడు

చూడు — *cūḍu* — to see, to look

Threaded up: చూస్తాను (*cūstānu*), “I see, I will see,” and చూశాను (*cūśānu*), “I saw.”

Here the sisters scatter completely. Tamil says **பார்** (*pār*), Kannada **ನೋಡು** (*nōḍu*), Malayalam **കാണുക** (*kāṇuka*), Telugu **చూడు** (*cūḍu*). Four languages, four unrelated everyday verbs.

And yet the family's oldest seeing-root is right there in all four, sitting in a noun you can point at: **కన్ను** (*kannu*, “eye”) — Tamil **கண்** (*kaṇ*), Kannada **ಕಣ್ಣು** (*kaṇṇu*), Malayalam **കണ്ണ്** (*kaṇṇ*). Telugu still builds on it: **కనిపించు** (*kanipin̄cu*), “to appear, to be visible.” Four everyday verbs, one shared eye.

The letters in this word

చూ is **చ** (*ca*) with the **long-ū** sign — the drawn-out partner of the short *u* ending every verb in this chapter. Hold it: *cū*, not *cu*. **డు** is retroflex *ḍa* with that short *u*.

Grammar Lens: -అండి, the respectful command, on any stem

Chapter 8 gave you **కూర్చండి** (*kūrcōṇḍi*), “please sit.” Chapter 9 gave you **క్షమించండి** (*kṣamin̄caṇḍi*), “forgive me.” That shared **-అండి** (*-aṇḍi*) is not baked into those two words. It is a slot, and every verb in this chapter can fill it:

- **చూడండి** (*cūḍaṇḍi*) — please look
- **రండి** (*raṇḍi*) — please come
- **తినండి** (*tin̄aṇḍi*) — please eat
- **వెళ్ళండి** (*vellaṇḍi*) — please go

Bare stem for a child or a close friend; stem plus *-aṇḍi* for everyone else. The respect is built the way Chapter 2 built it: *mīru* is a plural standing in for one person, and *-aṇḍi* is that plural now sitting on the verb.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “cūḍu” — see, look — then “cūstānu”
- the four sisters’ four verbs — “cūḍu ... pār ... nōḍu ... kāṇuka”
- the eye they all share — “kannu ... kaṇ ... kaṇṇu ... kaṇṇ”

- all four polite commands — “cūḍaṇḍi ... raṇḍi ... tinaṇḍi ... vellāṇḍi”

Before you move on

Do the four sisters share an everyday verb for seeing? (**No** — *cūḍu*, *pār*, *nōḍu*, *kāṇuka*, all different.) What do they share instead? (**The eye** — *kannu*, *kaṇ*, *kaṇṇu*, *kaṇṇ*.) Make “please eat” and “please come.” (*Tinaṇḍi*; *raṇḍi*.) Where have you met that politeness before? (**In మీరు** — a plural used for one person, now on the verb.) Next: a verb with no room for a person at all.

32.6 తెలుసు (telusu) — “to know,” the verb with no room for a person

Five verbs, and every one ended on *-ānu*, the piece that means “I.” The last verb of the chapter has no such piece — and Chapter 6 already handed you the sentence it makes.

You’ll want to know: తెలుసు

తెలుసు — *telusu* — it is known

Not “to know” in the English sense. It comes from తెలియు (*teliyu*), “to become clear, to be apparent” — a thing *telusu*-es to you the way a shape resolves out of fog. Its negative is తెలియదు (*teliyadu*), “it is not known.”

Tamil has the exact cousin, தெரி (*teri*). The other two sisters picked different words — Kannada ಗೊತ್ತು, *gottu*, Malayalam അറിയാം, *ariyām* — but all four build the sentence the same way, which is the point of this lesson.

Grammar Lens: no person on the verb, so the person moves

నాకు తెలుసు. — *nāku telusu* — “I know.”

తెలుసు never changes shape. Only the little dative word in front of it moves:

the knower	the sentence
I	<i>nāku telusu</i>
you	<i>nīku telusu</i>
he	<i>ataniki telusu</i>

Five verbs put the person in the last piece, which is why *nēnu* could be

dropped. Here there is no such piece, so the dative word is the one thing you **cannot** drop. Telugu treats knowing as something that **happens to** you, not something you do — and Tamil builds it identically, *enakkut teriyum*.

Now the distinction Chapter 6 could not yet draw. నాకు తెలుగు వచ్చు uses *vaccu*, “comes” — Telugu **comes to** you, and that is a **skill**, a language you can actually use. నాకు తెలుసు is a **fact** you hold. Two dative sentences, two verbs, two kinds of knowing.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “telusu” — it is known — from “teliyu”, to become clear
- “nāku telusu” — I know
- three knowers, one verb — “nāku ... nīku ... ataniki telusu”
- the five that carried the person — “uṇṭānu, veḷṭānu, vastānu, tiṇṭānu, cūstānu”

Before you move on

What does *telusu* mean underneath “know”? (**It is clear, it is apparent** — from *teliyu*.) Which piece is missing from it? (**The person** — so the knower sits in the dative instead.) Say “I know.” (*Nāku telusu*.) What is the difference from *nāku telugu vaccu*? (***Vaccu* marks a skill, *telusu* marks a fact.**) Name the three slots one last time, with a verb in them. (Stem, tense, person — *veḷ* + *-ta-* + *-ānu*.) And what has no negative of its own? (ఉండు — Telugu switches to *lē-*.)

Chapter 33

Four Verbs of the Mind

Modes: 👁 eyes (4) ✍ pen (1) 🖐 Hands-free start: first 2 of 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say I think, I understand, I read and I write in Telugu with the same three slots, build the -కో ending that hands an action back to its doer, say “I understood” with no నేను in it, and tell this chapter’s native verbs from the Sanskrit words layered beside them.

Say నేను తెలుగు రాస్తాను, run the chapter’s four verbs in the present, count them up from ఆరు to పది, take వ్రాయు back to the Dravidian line-drawing root behind Tamil వ్రా and Kannada ಬರೆ, and name which of the four words came from Sanskrit.

33.1 అనుకో (anukō) — “to think,” which is saying it to yourself

Nāku telusu — “I know” — and that verb had no room for a person. This one takes the person back, and carries a second verb on its end.

You’ll want to know: అనుకో

అనుకో — *anukō* — to think; to suppose

Threaded up: అనుకుంటాను (*anukuntānu*), “I think,” and అనుకున్నాను (*anukunnānu*), “I thought.” That -ంటాను is the ending you already made in తింటాను (*tiṇṭānu*): stem, tense, then the -ānu that means “I.”

The letters in this word

అ is the standing vowel *a*, used when a word begins on that sound. ను is *na* with the *u* sign, the shape that ends *nēnu*. క్ is క (*ka*) with the long-*ō* sign: hold it, *kō*.

Grammar Lens: -క్, the ending that hands the verb back

కొను (*konu*) is a verb of its own — “to take, to get.” Bolted onto the back of another verb it stops being a word and becomes an ending, -కొను, worn down to -క్ in speech. What it adds is small and everywhere: *do the thing, and keep it*. So అను (“say”) plus -క్ is **say it, and keep it** — say it to nobody but yourself.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

అను (*anu*), “to say,” is Proto-Dravidian **aHn-*, and every sister kept it: Tamil என் (*en*), Kannada ಅನ್ನು (*annu*), Malayalam എన్నുക (*ennuka*).

Beside it Telugu keeps a borrowed thinker: ఆలోచించు (*ālōciṇcu*), “to consider” — ఆలోచిస్తాను (*ālōcistānu*). Its Sanskrit noun ఆలోచన (*ālōcana*) is glossed two ways at once: “reflecting” and “seeing.” Sanskrit made thinking a kind of looking, as English did in *reflect*. The split Chapter 32 named over *tiṇḍi* and *bhōjanam* holds: plain verb native, formal word Sanskrit.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the two pieces, then the word — “anu ... kō ... anukō”
- “anukunṭānu”, I think — then “anukunnānu”, I thought
- the ending you already had — “tiṇṭānu ... anukunṭānu”
- the family’s say-verb — “anu ... en ... annu ... ennuka”
- native and borrowed — “anukunṭānu ... ālōcistānu”

Before you move on

What are the two pieces of *anukō*, and what does the second do? (అను “say” plus -కో, which hands the action back to the doer.) Say “I think,” and name the verb ending the same way. (*Anukunṭānu*; తిను.) Which sisters keep the say-verb, and what is *ālōcana* glossed as? (All three; “reflecting” and “seeing”.) Which think-word is borrowed? (అలోచించు — as *bhōjanam* was beside *tiṇḍi*.)

33.2 అర్థం చేసుకో (artham cēsukō) — “to understand,” making the meaning yours

Anukunṭānu — I think — and the -కో on its back meant *and keep it*. That ending now arrives on a verb you have owned since Chapter 5.

You’ll want to know: అర్థం చేసుకో

అర్థం చేసుకో — *artham cēsukō* — to understand

Three pieces, all already yours: అర్థం (*artham*, “meaning”), చేయు (*cēyu*, “to do”), and the -కో of the last lesson. Word for word it says **make the meaning your own**.

నేను అర్థం చేసుకుంటాను. — *nēnu artham cēsukunṭānu* — “I understand.”

The letters in this word

ర్థ is a **conjunct** — ర (*ra*) stacked above థ (*tha*), one block for two consonants with no vowel between. ం is the **anusvāra** that closes *namaskāram*, and చే opens *cēyu*.

Grammar Lens: the other way to say it, with no “I” in it

నాకు అర్థమైంది. — *nāku arthamaīndi* — “I understood.”
Literally: “to me it became meaning.”

Three dative sentences now, and one design:

the sentence	what it says
<i>nāku telugu vaccu</i>	Telugu comes to me
<i>nāku telusu</i>	it is clear to me
<i>nāku arthamaṇḍi</i>	it became meaning to me
No <i>nēnu</i> in any of them: the person sits in the dative because understanding, like knowing, arrives. Both shapes are good Telugu and do not feel alike — <i>nēnu artham cēsukuntānu</i> is work you did, <i>nāku arthamaṇḍi</i> is a thing that landed.	

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

అర్థం is Sanskrit अर्थ (*artha*), and Telugu took the whole of it: అర్థము means “**meaning**” and “**money, wealth**” in one entry — which is why Kauṭilya’s manual of statecraft is the *Arthaśāstra*. Its opposite: అపార్థం (*apārtham*), “a meaning taken wrong.”

Now the seam. Chapter 20’s వాతావరణం was Sanskrit throughout — *vāta* plus *āvaraṇa*. This is not that. Only the noun crossed over; the doing is Telugu’s own *cēyu* wearing Telugu’s own *-kō*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the three pieces — “artham ... cēyu ... kō”
- “nēnu artham cēsukuntānu” — I understand
- the three dative sentences — “nāku telugu vaccu ... nāku telusu ... nāku arthamaṇḍi”
- the two verbs built with *-kō* — “anukuntānu ... artham cēsukuntānu”
- “artham ... apārtham”

Before you move on

Take *artham cēsukō* apart and give the literal sense. (**Meaning + do + for yourself.**) Say “I understood” without *nēnu*, then name the other two sentences built that way. (*Nāku arthamaṇḍi*; *nāku telugu vaccu*, *nāku telusu*.) Why is the person in the dative?

(Understanding arrives at you.) What two things does *artham* mean, and how is this compound unlike *vātāvaraṇam*? (Meaning and wealth; *vātāvaraṇam* is Sanskrit throughout, here only the noun is.)

33.3 థ — one character, met inside words you already say

Before the new one: ఋ — what does it do? And one from further back: ణ?

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

Script you'll notice: థ

థ — *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**.

The *h* in *tha* is a puff of breath — the fifth pair of that kind, after క/ఖ, గ/ఘ, డ/ఢ and బ/భ. The plain letter here is త. Say *ta*, then say it again and let the breath out after it: that is థ.

It is not the *th* of English *this* or *thin*. The tongue stays where it goes for త, against the back of the teeth; only the breath is added.

You already say these, and both have థ inside them:

- అర్థం *artham* — meaning, the word inside *artham* *cēsukō*
- అపార్థం *apārtham* — a misunderstanding, meaning gone wrong

In both, థ carries ఠ stacked on top of it — the ఠ block you met when you learned to understand things.

Writing: థ — copy what you see

Put your pen on థ 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 these two, and say which one has థ and which has త

అర్థం · తెలుగు

- *Say it:* *ta*, then *tha*, and hear the breath arrive
- *Trace it:* థ three times, saying *tha* as you finish each one

Before you move on

Which character is this — థ? What does it carry that త does not? (*tha* — the same *t* with a puff of breath after it, and not the English *th*.)
One more, from much earlier: ధ — what does it do?

33.4 చదువు (caduvu) — “to read,” which is also “an education”

Nāku arthamaindi — it became meaning to me. Say it once.
Now the verb for the work that gets you there.

You’ll want to know: చదువు

చదువు — *caduvu* — to read; to study

నేను తెలుగు చదువుతాను. — *nēnu telugu caduvutānu* — “I read Telugu.”

Telugu does not split reading from studying, and it builds no separate noun either: చదువు unchanged is “**education, studies**” — what a family means when it says a child’s *caduvu* is going well.

The sisters scatter here as completely as they did over seeing: Tamil పடி (*paḍi*), Kannada ಓದು (*ōdu*), Malayalam വായിക്കുക (*vāyikkuka*), Telugu చదువు. Four unrelated everyday verbs for one act.

The letters in this word

చ is *ca*, the letter that opens *cūḍu*. దు is ద (*da*) with the *u* sign, and వు is వ (*va*) with the same sign. Three light syllables, each ending in that short *u*.

Grammar Lens: one stem, three middle vowels

when	Telugu
now, or later	<i>caduvutānu</i>
already	<i>cadivānu</i>
asked politely	<i>cadavaṇḍi</i>

cadu-, *cadī-*, *cada-*. The middle vowel moves, and nothing else does. Chapter 32 gave you the harsh version of this with ఠ: there the word you call the verb by was not the word the endings attach to, and they went to *vaccu-* instead. This is the mild version — one stem, three vowels, plainly the same word. Expect the wobble; do not expect a second verb.

The respectful -అండ్రి arrives exactly as it did on *cūḍaṇḍi*: చదవండి (*cadavaṇḍi*), “please read.” The ending never changes; only the stem in front of it does.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*nēnu telugu caduvutānu*” — I read Telugu
- the three middle vowels — “*caduvutānu ... cadivānu ... cadavaṇḍi*”
- the two polite commands — “*cūḍaṇḍi ... cadavaṇḍi*”
- the four sisters’ four verbs — “*caduvu ... paḍi ... ōdu ... vāyikkuka*”
- the chapter so far — “*anukunṭānu, artham cēsukunṭānu, caduvutānu*”

Before you move on

What two English verbs does *caduvu* cover, and what is its noun? (**Read** and **study**; the **same word** — an education.) Say “I read Telugu,” then “please read.” (*Nēnu telugu caduvutānu; cadavaṇḍi*.) What moves between *caduvutānu*, *cadivānu* and *cadavaṇḍi*, and

which verb warned you about a second stem? (**The middle vowel;** రా, whose endings went to *vaccu-*.) Do the four sisters share a read-verb? (**No** — *caduvu*, *paḍi*, *ōdu*, *vāyikkuka*.)

33.5 రాయ (rāyu) — “to write,” which began as drawing a line

Caduvutānu, *cadivānu*, *cadavaṇḍi* — one stem, three middle vowels. The chapter’s last verb is the other half of that one.

You’ll want to know: రాయ

రాయ — *rāyu* — to write

నేను తెలుగు రాస్తాను. — *nēnu telugu rāstānu* — “I write Telugu.”

The past is రాశాను (*rāśānu*). Dictionaries often print the headword as వ్రాయ (*vrāyu*): not a different verb, just the older spelling, with a *v* gone quiet in speech.

The letters in this word

రా is ర (*ra*) — Chapter 32’s whole command *rā* — with the long-*ā* sign, and య is య (*ya*) with the *u* sign. In వ్రాయ a వ is stacked in front.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

That silent *v* is the evidence. వ్రాయ goes back to a Dravidian **war V-*, “to draw a line,” and the sisters kept the *v* Telugu buried: Tamil வரை (*varai*), Malayalam വരയ്ക്കുക (*varaykkuka*), Kannada ಬರೆ (*bare*) with a *b*. Every one still means **draw** as readily as **write**. Telugu’s noun keeps the shape: రాత (*rāta*), “handwriting” — and, in speech, what is written for you.

One honest note: Tamil’s everyday write-verb is எழுது (*elutu*), not *varai*. The sisters share the root without agreeing which word does the daily work — the picture *caduvu* left you with.

Grammar Lens: ten verbs, and one machine

Chapter 32 handed you ఆరు (*āru*) verbs. Four more makes పది (*padi*), ten — and not one needed a new machine. Stem, tense, person: the three slots were already yours. That is what agglutination buys. What they added is a shape and a habit. The shape is -శ్, which hands the action back to its doer. The habit is Telugu’s oldest: *caduvu*, *rāyu* and *anu* are native, while *ālōcana* and *arthamī*, laid on top, are Sanskrit — *tiṇḍi* beside *bhōjanamī*, one chapter on.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “nēnu telugu rāstānu” — then “rāsānu”
- the spellings and the sisters — “rāyu ... vrāyu ... varai ... bare”
- the chapter’s four — “anukunṭānu, arthamī cēsukunṭānu, caduvutānu, rāstānu”
- the count — “āru”, then “padi”
- two dative sentences — “nāku telusu ... nāku arthamaindi”

Before you move on

Say “I write Telugu,” name the older spelling, and say what the root meant first. (*Nēnu telugu rāstānu*; వ్రాయు; **to draw a line** — Tamil *varai*, Kannada *bare*.) Run this chapter’s four verbs, then count them with Chapter 32’s. (*Anukunṭānu, arthamī cēsukunṭānu, caduvutānu, rāstānu*; **padi** — *āru* plus four.) What does -శ్ do, and which two carry it? (**Hands the action back to the doer**; *anukō, arthamī cēsukō*.) Which words here are Sanskrit? (అర్థం and *ālōcana*, with the plain verbs native — *tiṇḍi* against *bhōjanamī*.)

Chapter 34

Four Verbs Between People

Modes: 👁 eyes (4) ⇌ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say I take, I ask and I help in Telugu, say నాకు తెలుగు ఇష్టం knowing there is no verb in it, place it beside the three other dative sentences I have built, and name the branch of Dravidian Telugu actually belongs to.

Say నాకు తెలుగు ఇష్టం and unpack it as “to me, Telugu, a liking” with no verb at all; line it up against నాకు తెలుగు వచ్చు, నాకు తెలుసు and నాకు అర్థమైంది; choose between the native నచ్చు and ఇష్టపడు, whose పడు is the falling of వర్షం పడుతోంది; and trace ఇష్టం to the Indo-European root behind English ask.

34.1 తీసుకో (tīsukō) — “to take,” the third verb you do for yourself

The last four verbs happened inside your head; these four happen between you and somebody else. Say *caduvutānu* and *rāstānu*, and name what *vrāyu*’s root first meant.

You’ll want to know: తీసుకో

తీసుకో — *tīsukō* — to take

Underneath it is తీయు (*tīyu*), “to pull out,” and then the -కో you have met twice: pull it out, **and keep it**.

తీసుకుంటాను (*tīsukunṭānu*), “I take”; తీసుకున్నాను (*tīsukunnānu*), “I took” — *tiṇṭānu*’s ending on a different stem. Two whole sentences, from Chapter 15:

నేను నీళ్ళు తీసుకుంటాను. — *nēnu nīḷḷu tīsukunṭānu* — “I take water.”

నేను బియ్యం తీసుకుంటాను. — *nēnu biyyam tīsukunṭānu* — “I take rice.”

The letters in this word

తీ is the dental త (ta) with the long-ī sign — *tinu*’s letter, held longer. సు is స (sa) plus u; కో is *anukō*’s *kō*.

Grammar Lens: three verbs, one ending

the verb	what the -కో adds
<i>anukō</i>	say it — to yourself
<i>artham cēsukō</i>	make the meaning — yours
<i>tīsukō</i>	pull it out — for yourself

The respectful -అండి goes on this one too: తీసుకోండి (*tīsukōṇḍi*), “please take” — what a Telugu host says while pushing a dish towards you.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

కొను (*konu*) is still a verb on its own: “to take, to get, to buy.” Its cousins are exact — Tamil கொள் (*koḷ*) and Malayalam കൊള്ളുക (*koḷḷuka*), both “to hold, to take.”

What those two did with it is the good part: they welded it onto the backs of other verbs as an ending, with the very meaning Telugu gives it. So the shape you learned two lessons ago is not a Telugu quirk. It is Dravidian machinery, and *tīsukō* is the verb it started from.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “tīyu ... *kō*” → “tīsukō”
- “nēnu nīḷḷu tīsukunṭānu” — then with “biyyam”, rice
- the three with the ending — “anukō ... artham cēsukō ... tīsukō”
- what a host says — “tīsukōṇḍi”
- the cousins — “konu ... *koḷ* ... *koḷḷuka*”

Before you move on

Take *tīsukō* apart, say “I take water,” and name the other two verbs with that ending. (తీయు plus -కో; *nēnu nīḷḷu tīsukunṭānu*; *anukō* and *arthani cēsukō*.) Which verb did the ending come from, and which sisters have it? (కొను; Tamil *kol*, Malayalam *kolḷuka* — both use it as an ending too.) How do you offer someone food? (తీసుకోండి.)

34.2 అడుగు (*aḍugu*) — “to ask,” and the branch Telugu really sits on

Tīsukunṭānu — and its ending belonged to the whole family.
This next verb belongs to almost nobody.

You’ll want to know: అడుగు

అడుగు — *aḍugu* — to ask; to request

అడుగుతాను (*aḍugutānu*), “I ask”; అడిగాను (*aḍigānu*), “I asked”; అడగండి (*aḍagaṇḍi*), “please ask.” *aḍu-*, *aḍi-*, *aḍa-*: the middle vowel wanders as *caduvu*’s did, and the polite -అండి rides on unbothered.

One warning: Telugu has a **second** అడుగు, “a foot, a step” — same spelling, different root, nothing to do with asking.

The letters in this word

అ is the standing vowel *a*, as in *anukō*; డు is the retroflex డ (*ḍa*) plus *u*, the *ḍu* ending *cūḍu*; గు is గ (*ga*) plus *u*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

The four literary sisters share no ask-verb: Tamil கேள் (*kēḷ*) and Kannada ಕೇಳು (*kēḷu*), which also mean “hear”; Malayalam ചോദിക്കുക (*cōdikkuka*); and Telugu అడుగు, which keeps hearing separate in విను (*vinu*). The Dravidian dictionary’s firmest match for *aḍugu* is in none of them: it is **Parji** *aḍ-*, a small language of central India.

That is the clue to something worth naming outright. **Telugu is not in the same branch as Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam.** Those three are **South Dravidian**; Telugu heads **South-Central**

Dravidian, with Gondi, Konda, Kui, Kuvi, Pengo and Manda. So the pattern was no run of accidents: *lēdu* against the sisters' *il-*, *uṇḍu* against their *iru*, *enimidi* and *tommidi* where *eṭṭu* and *onpatu* will not reach.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

For the noun Telugu reaches for Sanskrit: ప్రశ్న (*praśna*), “a question,” from प्रच्छ (*prach*) — an Indo-European root, and the root of Latin *precārī*, which English took as **pray**. Native verb, borrowed noun: *tiṇḍi* and *bhōjanam*, a third time.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the three vowels — “aḍugutānu ... aḍigānu ... aḍagaṇḍi”
- the same wobble — “caduvutānu ... cadivānu ... cadavaṇḍi”
- four sisters, four verbs — “aḍugu ... kēḷ ... kēḷu ... cōdikkuka”
- Telugu’s own branch — “Gondi, Konda, Kui”
- what it explains — “lēdu ... uṇḍu ... enimidi, tommidi”
- the borrowed noun and its cousin — “praśna ... pray”

Before you move on

Say “I ask,” “I asked,” “please ask,” and name the other verb that wanders its middle vowel. (*Aḍugutānu*, *aḍigānu*, *aḍagaṇḍi*; చదువు.) Do the four literary sisters share an ask-verb? (**No** — *aḍugu*, *kēḷ*, *kēḷu*, *cōdikkuka*.) Which branch is Telugu on, who is on it, and name two things that explains. (**South-Central Dravidian**, with Gondi, Konda and Kui; *lēdu* against *il-*, *uṇḍu* against *iru*, *enimidi* and *tommidi*.) Where is *praśna* from? (**Sanskrit**, from the root behind English **pray**.)

34.3 సహాయం చేయు (sahāyaṃ cēyu) — “to help,” which is a going-together

Aḍagaṇḍi — please ask. Say it, and name where *prāsna* came from. The verb that answers is one Chapter 5 walked past.

You’ll want to know: సహాయం చేయు

సహాయం చేయు — *sahāyaṃ cēyu* — **to help**

Chapter 5 listed it once, as an example of what *cēyu* does with a noun in front. Take it properly now.

నేను మీకు సహాయం చేస్తాను. — *nēnu mīku sahāyaṃ cēstānu* — “I help you.”

The person helped goes in the **dative**: *mīku*, “to you,” Chapter 6’s -కు at ordinary work. Politely: సహాయం చేయండి (*sahāyaṃ cēyaṇḍi*). Speech shortens the noun to సాయం (*sāyaṃ*).

The letters in this word

స is *sa*; హ is హ (*ha*) with the long-ā sign; యం is య (*ya*) closed by the anusvāra.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

సహాయం is Sanskrit सहाय (*sahāya*), and it comes apart cleanly: सह (*saha*), “with,” plus आय (*āya*), “a going.” A helper is **one who goes with you**. Both halves are Indo-European — *saha* is the “one, together” root behind **same** and **similar**, and *āya* is the go-root Latin carries as *ire*, which English took whole in **exit** and **transit**.

The build is Chapter 8’s: a borrowed noun in front of the native చేయు, as దయచేసి was made from *daya*. Kannada and Malayalam borrowed *sahāya* too; **Tamil did not**, keeping its own உதவி (*udavi*) — yet for *please* all four reached for *daya*. Borrowing happens **word by word**.

Why it’s said this way

Dictionaries record సహాయం and సాయం side by side, *sāyaṃ* the shorter and more casual. What no source consulted here states is that *sāyaṃ* is a worn-down *sahāyaṃ*. It seems obvious. Obvious is not a citation.

Chapter 31 drew the same line over a greeting: two sources for “real and formal,” one for “less common,” kept apart.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “nēnu mīku sahāyaṁ cēstānu” — I help you
- shorter, then polite — “sāyaṁ cēstānu ... sahāyaṁ cēyaṇḍi”
- the halves — “saha ... āya” — then “exit ... transit”
- two nouns, one verb — “daya cēsi ... sahāyaṁ cēyu”
- the sister that kept its own — “udavi”
- the chapter — “tīsukunṭānu, aḍugutānu, sahāyaṁ cēstānu”

Before you move on

Say “I help you,” name the case the helped person takes, and take *sahāya* apart. (*Nēnu mīku sahāyaṁ cēstānu*; the **dative** -కు; सह “with” plus आय “a going” — **exit** and **transit** carry the go-half.) Which other word is built on *cēyu* that way, and which sister kept its own? (దయచేసి; **Tamil**, with *udavi*.) What may you *not* say about *sāyaṁ*? (**That it comes from *sahāyaṁ*** — that derivation is not sourced here.)

34.4 నాకు తెలుగు ఇష్టం — “I like Telugu,” with no verb in it

Sahāyaṁ cēstānu — a going with somebody. Say it, then *tī-sukunṭānu*. This last sentence has no verb.

You’ll want to know: The sentence

నాకు తెలుగు ఇష్టం. *nāku telugu iṣṭam*. — “to me — Telugu — a liking.”

ఇష్టం is a **noun**: “a liking, a wish,” and Telugu supplies no *is*, having never needed one. Only the front piece moves — *nāku, nīku, ataniki*. తెలుసు behaved so too: there the verb had no room for a person; here there is no verb.

The letters in this word

ఇ is the standing vowel *i*; ష్ట is the conjunct ష (*ṣa*) over ట (*ṭa*).

Grammar Lens: the fourth dative sentence, and two ways round it

Four sentences, one idea: *nāku telugu vaccu*, a **skill**; *nāku telusu*, a **fact**; *nāku arthamaṇḍi*, a meaning that **landed**; *nāku telugu iṣṭam*, a **taste**. Chapter 6’s dative subject was no curiosity: it is how Telugu files what happens **to** you.

A native verb does it too — నచ్చు (*naccu*), “to be pleasing”: నాకు ఇది నచ్చింది (*nāku idi naccindi*). Tamil நச்ச and Kannada ನಚ್ಚ are the same verb: *iṣṭam* displaced nothing.

One shape takes an ordinary subject: ఇష్టపడు (*iṣṭapaḍu*), నేను ఇష్టపడతాను — *iṣṭam* plus పడు (*paḍu*), “to fall,” Chapter 20’s verb in వర్షం పడుతోంది. Liking is something you **fall into**.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

ఇష్టం is Sanskrit इष्ट (*iṣṭa*), “desired,” from इष् (*iṣ*) — an Indo-European root whose English descendant is **ask**. So this chapter carried two asking-roots, not one: *prach* behind *pray*, *iṣ* behind *ask*. Telugu’s అడుగు is cousin to neither: its relatives are Gondi and Kui.

Spanish *me gusta*, Italian *mi piace*, Hindi *muḥe pasand hai*, Bengali *āmār bhālo lāge*, Tamil *enakkut tamil piḍikkum* — and now *nāku telugu iṣṭam*. **Six languages, three unrelated families, one design**, with Chapter 6’s Dravidian seam showing: **-ku, -ukku, -ge, -ikku**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*nāku telugu iṣṭam*” — “to me, Telugu, a liking”
- three likers — “*nāku ... nīku ... ataniki telugu iṣṭam*”

- the four datives — “vaccu ... telusu ... arthamaindi ... iṣṭam̐”
- native, then falling — “naccindi ... iṣṭapaḍatānu”
- the chapter — “tīsukunṭānu, aḍugutānu, cēstānu, iṣṭam̐”
- the endings — “-ku · -ukku · -ge · -ikku”

Before you move on

Say “I like Telugu,” say how many verbs it holds, and name the four datives. (*Nāku telugu iṣṭam̐*; **none**; *vaccu* a **skill**, *telusu* a **fact**, *arthamaindi* a **landing**, *iṣṭam̐* a **taste**.) Which native verb does the same job, and what hides inside *iṣṭapaḍu*? (నచ్చు; పడు, the falling of *varṣam̐ paḍutōndi*.) Which English word is *iṣṭam̐*’s cousin, and is it *praśna*’s? (**Ask**; **no**, that is **pray** — and **six** languages in **three** families build liking so.)

Chapter 35

Family and Friends

Modes: 🗣️ voice (2) 🗋️ Hands-free start: all 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name my family as a group in Telugu and name a friend, and say which of the two words is a Sanskrit loan and which is Telugu’s own native word.

Say ఇది నా కుటుంబం and ఇతను నా స్నేహితుడు, trace కుటుంబం and స్నేహితుడు back to Sanskrit, and set స్నేహితుడు beside the native, DEDR-attested నేస్తం.

35.1 కుటుంబం (kuṭumbam) — “family,” the word the household words never needed

Nāku telugu iṣṭamī closed the last chapter on a sentence built from nothing but nouns. This chapter opens on the plainest nouns of all: the words for the people you would actually say that sentence to.

You’ll want to know: కుటుంబం

కుటుంబం — *kuṭumbam* — family

ఇది నా కుటుంబం. — *idi nā kuṭumbamī*. — “This is my family.”

నా, “my,” has been yours since one of the very first words you learned.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

కుటుంబం is Sanskrit कुटुम्ब (kuṭumba), “family, household,” carried into Telugu whole — the same kind of tatsama loan as నమస్కారం and సంతోషం.

Your earlier family-words lesson gave you six words: నాన్న, అమ్మ, and the four age-graded siblings అన్న/తమ్ముడు, అక్క/చెల్లి. Every one is native Dravidian, and not one of them means “family” — each names a single specific person. Telugu never inherited a plain word for the group itself, so when it needed one, it reached for Sanskrit. The people came first, and stayed native; the collective came later, and came borrowed — the same split you already met between *tinu* and *bhōjanam*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “idi nā kuṭumbam” — this is my family
- the six named people, then the borrowed group word — “nānna, amma, anna, tammudu, akka, celli ... kuṭumbam”
- “nāku telugu iṣṭam” — once more, no verb in it

Before you move on

Say “this is my family.” (*Idi nā kuṭumbam*.) Is *kuṭumbam* native Dravidian or a loan? (**A Sanskrit loan**, like *namaskāram* and *santōṣam*.) Name the six family words from that earlier lesson. (*Nānna, amma, anna, tammudu, akka, celli*.) Which of those six means “family” as a group? (**None of them** — that’s exactly the gap *kuṭumbam* fills.)

35.2 స్నేహితుడు (snēhituḍu) — “friend,” and the native word beside it

Kuṭumbam named the people you’re related to. This word names the people you choose.

You'll want to know: స్నేహితుడు

స్నేహితుడు — *snēhituḍu* — **friend** (male; స్నేహితురాలు, *snēhiturālu*, for a female friend)

ఇతను నా స్నేహితుడు. — *itanu nā snēhituḍu*. — “This is my friend.”

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

స్నేహితుడు is built on Sanskrit स्नेह (*sneha*), “affection, love” — the same kind of tatsama loan as *kuṭumbam* itself, plus a Telugu agentive ending. Telugu also has a **native** word for friendship: నేస్తం (*nēstam*), catalogued in the Dravidian Etymological Dictionary alongside the related forms *neyyamu*, *neyyami*, and *neyyari* — all clustered around friendship, love, and tenderness. *Nēstam* is real and still heard, but the everyday choice for “friend” is the borrowed one, *snēhituḍu* — the same pattern already found with *sahāyami cēyu*, where the everyday verb is built on a Sanskrit noun too.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “itanu nā snēhituḍu” — this is my friend
- the borrowed word and the native one — “snēhituḍu ... nēstam”
- family, then friend — “kuṭumbam ... snēhituḍu”

Before you move on

Say “this is my friend.” (*Itanu nā snēhituḍu*.) Is *snēhituḍu* native or borrowed? (**A Sanskrit loan**, from *sneha*, “affection.”) What is Telugu’s own native word for friendship, and is it the everyday choice? (నేస్తం, *nēstam* — real, but **not** the everyday choice; that’s the borrowed word.)

Chapter 36

Son and Daughter, Two Different Roots

Modes: ⇄ voice (2) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say son and daughter in Telugu, and show that they trace to two different Proto-Dravidian roots rather than one shared root.

Line up కొడుకు and కూతురు against their two separate Proto-Dravidian roots, trace కొడుకు's own root sideways to కోడలు (“daughter-in-law”), and trace కూతురు's root across the family to Kannada's word for infant.

36.1 కొడుకు (koḍuku) — “son,” and the unexpected word it shares a root with

Kuṭumbani, family; *snēhituḍu*, friend. Now the two words for your own children — and Telugu does not build them the tidy way you might expect.

You'll want to know: కొడుకు

కొడుకు — *koḍuku* — son

వాడి కొడుకు వయసెంత? — *vāḍi koḍuku vayasenta?* — “How old is his son?” — the verbless age question you already know, asked about someone else's child.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

కొడుకు is inherited from Proto-Dravidian ***kōz-**, “young, tender.” You might expect “daughter,” Telugu’s other child-word, to share that same root with a different ending — that is exactly the shape Kannada’s *magu/maga/ magalu* takes. Telugu does not do that. The very same ***kōz-** root instead gives Telugu కొడలు (*kōḍalu*), “daughter-in-law” — the woman a son marries, not the daughter a parent has. So *koḍuku* and *kōḍalu* are true cognates, one root apart; *koḍuku* and *kūturu* — son and daughter — are not related to each other at all. The next lesson takes up *kūturu*’s own, separate root.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “koḍuku” — son
- “vāḍi koḍuku vayasenta?” — how old is his son?
- the unexpected cognate — “koḍuku ... kōḍalu” — son, daughter-in-law
- three words for people — “kuṭumbam ... snēhituḍu ... koḍuku”

Before you move on

Say “son.” (*Koḍuku.*) What Proto-Dravidian root does it come from, and what other Telugu word shares that exact root? (***kōz-**, “young, tender” — shared with కొడలు, “daughter-in-law,” not with “daughter” itself.) Ask “how old is his son?” (*Vāḍi koḍuku vayasenta?*)

36.2 కూతురు (*kūturu*) — “daughter,” on a root all its own

Koḍuku’s root turned up again inside a completely different Telugu word. This word’s root does something even less expected: it turns up inside a different **language**.

You'll want to know: కూతురు

కూతురు — *kūturu* — daughter

నా కూతురు. — *nā kūturu.* — “My daughter.”

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

కూతురు is inherited from Proto-Dravidian ***kūnttu** — a root with **no connection** to *koḍuku*'s ***kōḷ-**. Telugu's two child-words are not a matched pair; they are two separate inheritances that happen to sit side by side in the same sentence.

Kūturu's cousin is not in Telugu at all. Kannada ಕೂಸು (*kūsu*), “**infant, maiden**,” answers to the very same root. So the word a Telugu speaker uses for “my daughter” and the word a Kannada speaker uses for “the baby” are, underneath, one and the same — a reminder that a cognate does not have to keep the same *sense* as it crosses a language boundary, only the same root.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*nā kūturu*” — my daughter
- son, then daughter — “*koḍuku ... kūturu*” — two unrelated roots
- the cross-language cousin — “*kūturu ... kūsu*” — daughter, infant
- friend, son, daughter — “*snēhituḍu ... koḍuku ... kūturu*”

Before you move on

Say “my daughter.” (*Nā kūturu.*) Does *kūturu* share a root with *koḍuku*? (**No** — two separate Proto-Dravidian roots.) What word in another Dravidian language answers to *kūturu*'s own root, and what does it mean there? (**Kannada ಕೂಸು *kūsu*, “infant, maiden.”**)

Chapter 37

Four Words on the Face

Modes: ⇄ voice (4) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name my eye, ear, nose and mouth in Telugu, and say which three the family agrees on and which one Telugu's word does not obviously match.

Name కన్ను, చెవి, ముక్కు and నోరు; close the loop Chapter 32 left open on కన్ను; and say why నోరు, unlike the other three, shows no visible trace of the shared vāy root Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada all carry.

37.1 కన్ను (kannu) — “eye,” a word you’ve already met once

Head and hand, taught earlier, gave you your first two body words. This chapter gives you four more — starting with one this book has secretly used before.

You’ll want to know: కన్ను

కన్ను — *kannu* — eye

నా కన్ను. — *nā kannu.* — “My eye.”

Three body words now, with two from that earlier lesson: *tala*, *ceyyi*, *kannu* — and *koḍuku*, “son,” still fresh, one lesson back.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

కన్ను already appeared earlier, inside the *cūḍu* lesson’s own etymology note for చూడు — as proof that Tamil *pār*, Kannada *nōḍu*, Malayalam *kāṇuka*, and Telugu *cūḍu*, four completely unrelated everyday see-verbs, all sit beside the very same ancient eye-word: Telugu *kannu*, Tamil *kaṇ*, Kannada *kaṇṇu*, Malayalam *kaṇṇ*. That chapter named the word without ever teaching it. This lesson closes the loop. Like *tala* (“head”) and *ceyyi* (“hand,” a cognate reshaped almost past recognition) before it, *kannu* is native Dravidian, and here the whole family agrees on it plainly — no reshaping required.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “nā kannu” — my eye
- the four sisters’ shared eye — “kannu ... kaṇ ... kaṇṇu ... kaṇṇ”
- three body words — “tala ... ceyyi ... kannu”
- son, daughter, eye — “koḍuku ... kūturu ... kannu”

Before you move on

Say “my eye.” (*Nā kannu*.) Which earlier lesson already used this exact word, and what did it prove? (**The *cūḍu* lesson’s** etymology note — that all four Dravidian sisters share one eye-root behind four unrelated see-verbs.) Name the two body words from that earlier lesson. (తల, *tala*, and చెయ్యి, *ceyyi*.)

37.2 చెవి (cevi) — “ear,” matching Tamil almost letter for letter

Kannu matched its cousins closely but not exactly. This word matches even more closely.

You'll want to know: చెవి

చెవి — *cevi* — ear

నా చెవి. — *nā cevi.* — “My ear.”

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

చెవి is native Dravidian, and it answers Tamil செவி (*cevi*) almost syllable for syllable — a plainer, closer match than *kannu* found with Tamil *kaṇ* just one lesson ago. Two body words in a row, both native, both recognizably the same family — but “close cousin” is not “identical twin”: each word drifts by its own amount, and *cevi* simply happened to drift less.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “*nā cevi*” — my ear
- the near-match — “*cevi ... cevi*”
- eye, then ear — “*kannu ... cevi*”
- daughter, then ear — “*kūturu ... cevi*”

Before you move on

Say “my ear.” (*Nā cevi.*) Which Dravidian cousin’s word for ear matches *cevi* most closely? (**Tamil** *cevi* — almost syllable for syllable.) Did *kannu* match its cousins that closely? (**Not quite** — one vowel apart from Tamil’s *kaṇ*.)

37.3 ముక్కు (mukku) — “nose,” an inherited word with a second word’s fingerprints on it

Eye and ear both descend cleanly from their Proto-Dravidian roots. This word descends too — but not quite cleanly.

You'll want to know: ముక్కు

ముక్కు — *mukku* — nose

నా ముక్కు. — *nā mukku.* — “My nose.”

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

ముక్కు descends from Proto-Dravidian ***mūnk(k)u**, and it is a real cognate of Kannada *mūgu*, Malayalam *mūkkū*, and Tamil *mūkku*. But comparative Dravidian scholarship flags Telugu's own reflex as **irregular**: the consonant in the middle of the word is probably not a clean, regular descendant of **mūnk(k)u* alone. It looks contaminated by a separate Dravidian root, ***mok-**, “face” — as if two related words leaned on each other and left a mark. *Cevi* showed a word that drifted very little; *mukku* shows one that drifted in a specific, traceable way, nudged by its neighbour.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “nā mukku” — my nose
- the cousins — “mukku ... mūgu ... mūkkū ... mūkku”
- three body words so far — “kannu ... cevi ... mukku”

Before you move on

Say “my nose.” (*Nā mukku.*) Is *mukku* a regular or an irregular reflex of its Proto-Dravidian root? (**Irregular** — likely contaminated by the separate root **mok-*, “face.”) Which two body words so far were plain, regular matches with their cousins? (కన్ను and చెవి.)

37.4 నోరు (nōru) — “mouth,” the word that breaks the chapter's pattern

Eye, ear, nose — three native words, three visible matches with the family, one plainer than the next. The fourth face word does not keep that streak going.

You'll want to know: నోరు

నోరు — *nōru* — **mouth**

నా నోరు. — *nā nōru.* — “My mouth.”

Four body words done: *kannu*, *cevi*, *mukku*, *nōru*.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

Tamil and Malayalam both say **வாய்/vāyi** (*vāy*), “mouth,” and Kannada’s **ಬಾಯಿ** (*bāyi*) answers it through a regular sound law that turns a Tamil word-initial *v-* into Kannada *b-*. Three sisters, one shared root, one visible law.

నోరు does not obviously belong to that set. It shows no trace of *vāy*, and no source consulted here states what its own deeper Proto-Dravidian root actually is — so nothing is invented for it, the same discipline applied earlier to *vellu*’s own unresolved history. After three straight matches — *kannu* plain, *cevi* nearly exact, *mukku* traceably contaminated but still clearly related — *nōru* is the one face word where this book cannot show you the family resemblance, only note honestly that it is not there to show.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “nā nōru” — my mouth
- the shared root Telugu sits outside of — “vāy ... bāyi ... nōru”
- all four face words — “kannu ... cevi ... mukku ... nōru”

Before you move on

Name all four face words. (కన్ను, చెవి, ముక్కు, నోరు.) Which three Dravidian sisters share one root and one sound law for “mouth,” and does Telugu’s word visibly belong with them? (**Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada**, on *vāy*; **no** — *nōru* shows no trace of it, and its own root is not confirmed by any source consulted here.)

Chapter 38

The Heart, Two Ways

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) 👁 eyes (1) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 2 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name my heart in Telugu two ways, the everyday native word and the literary Sanskrit loan, and trace the Sanskrit one to the same Proto-Indo-European root as the English word heart.

Say నా గుండె and నా హృదయం నీది, set the everyday native word beside the literary Sanskrit loan, and trace హృదయం to the same PIE root as English heart, Latin cor and Greek kardía.

38.1 గుండె (guṇḍe) — “heart,” the everyday native word

Four face words done, one of them an honest gap. This chapter gives you a fifth body word — and then, unusually, a second word for the very same thing.

You’ll want to know: గుండె

గుండె — *guṇḍe* — heart

నా గుండె. — *nā guṇḍe*. — “My heart.”

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

గుండె is inherited from Proto-Dravidian ***kuṇṭV**, and it is cognate with Kannada’s own native heart-word, గుಂಡిగి (*guṇḍige*) — plainly

the same root, wearing a different Telugu and Kannada shape. *Guṇḍe* is the plain, physical, everyday word: the organ beating in your chest. The next lesson gives Telugu's *other* word for heart — not a synonym so much as a different register entirely.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “nā guṇḍe” — my heart
- the Kannada cognate — “guṇḍe ... guṇḍige”
- five body words — “kannu ... cevi ... mukku ... nōru ... guṇḍe”

Before you move on

Say “my heart.” (*Nā guṇḍe*.) Is *guṇḍe* native or borrowed? (**Native Dravidian**, from Proto-Dravidian **kuṇṭV*.) Which language carries a matching native heart-word? (**Kannada**, *guṇḍige*.)

38.2 హృదయం (hṛdayam) — “heart,” and a genuine cousin of the English word

Guṇḍe is the heart beating in your chest. This word is the heart Telugu reaches for in a poem, a speech, or a love letter.

You’ll want to know: హృదయం

హృదయం — *hṛdayam* — **heart** (literary, emotional register)

నా హృదయం నీది. — *nā hṛdayam nīdi*. — “My heart is yours.”

The letters in this word

హృ is హ (*ha*) carrying the **vocalic-r vowel sign** ృ — the *dependent* form of the same vowel taught earlier as the *independent* letter ఋ, standing alone at the front of ఋతువు. Same vowel, two shapes: one when it opens a word, another when it rides on a consonant. దయం closes with the familiar అనుస్వారం.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

హృదయం is Sanskrit हृदय, built on हृद् (*hṛd*), “heart.” That Sanskrit root and the English word **heart** are not a coincidence of sound — both descend from the same reconstructed Proto-Indo-European root, ***kērd-**. Latin’s **cor** (genitive *cordis*, the source of English *cordial* and *courage*) and Greek’s **kardía** (behind *cardiac*) come from that exact same root. Four languages, one ancient word.

Telugu keeps *hṛdayam* beside native *guṇḍe* the same way it keeps Sanskrit *bhōjanam* beside native *tiṇḍi*: the plain, physical word stays Dravidian; the word for ceremony, poetry, and feeling is layered on top from Sanskrit.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “nā hṛdayam nīdi” — my heart is yours
- the four cousins — “hṛd ... heart ... cor ... kardía”
- native, then literary — “guṇḍe ... hṛdayam”
- all six body words now — “kannu ... cevi ... mukku ... nōru ... guṇḍe ... hṛdayam”

Before you move on

Say “my heart is yours.” (*Nā hṛdayam nīdi.*) Is *hṛdayam* a real Indo-European cousin of English “heart,” or just a coincidence of sound? (**A real cousin** — both from PIE **kērd-*, alongside Latin *cor* and Greek *kardía*.) Which is the everyday, physical word for heart, and which is literary? (గుండె everyday; హృదయం literary.)

Chapter 39

Tea and Milk, Two Roads

Modes: ☞ voice (2) ✍ pen (1) ☞ Hands-free start: first 2 of 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can politely ask for tea or milk in Telugu, and say which word travelled by sea and which one three Dravidian cousins share under one regular sound law.

Ask దయచేసి టీ and దయచేసి పాలు, follow టీ along its sea route through Hokkien and Malay against the overland chai route, then place పాలు beside Tamil and Malayalam’s matching pāl against Kannada’s own p-to-h shift.

39.1 దయచేసి టీ (dayacēsi ṭī) — “tea, please,” a word that sailed rather than walked

Two ways to say heart, done. దయచేసి — please, taught earlier — is about to earn its keep again, in front of the drink you’d politely ask for first.

You’ll want to know: టీ

టీ — ṭī — tea

దయచేసి టీ. — dayacēsi ṭī. — “Tea, please.”

Day to day, Telugu politeness usually rides on the -అండి verb ending already named as the everyday carrier — but a bare request for a drink, with no verb at all, is exactly where దయచేసి itself does the work instead.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

తీ is a direct loan from English **tea**. English’s own word traces to **Hokkien** (Southern Min Chinese) **tê**, carried west by Dutch and English sea trade through **Malay** *teh* and into Europe — the **sea** route.

That is the opposite road from the word most of Telugu’s neighbours use. Hindi, Kannada, and Marathi all say some form of **chai**, which travelled **overland**: Mandarin **chá**, into Persian چای (*chāy*), and from Persian into North and South India alike. One drink, two Chinese dialects, two trade routes, two families of words — and Telugu’s coastal contact with English trade left it holding the sea-word, **తి**, where its landlocked neighbours picked up the land-word instead.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “dayacēsi **తి**” — tea, please
- the sea route — “tê ... teh ... tea ... **తి**”
- the land route it is not — “chá ... chāy ... chai”

Before you move on

Say “tea, please.” (*Dayacēsi **తి***.) Did **తి** travel by land or by sea, and through which languages? (**By sea** — Hokkien *tê*, Malay *teh*, English *tea*.) Which word, common in Hindi, Kannada, and Marathi, took the overland road instead, and through which languages? (**Chai** — Mandarin *chá*, Persian *chāy*.)

39.2 పాలు (pālu) — “milk,” where Kannada is the odd one out, not Telugu

తి showed Telugu going its own way against most of its neighbours. This word shows the opposite: Telugu sits with the majority, and one cousin stands alone.

You’ll want to know: ಪಾಲು

ಪಾಲು — *pālu* — milk

ದಯವೇಸಿ ಪಾಲು. — *dayacēsi pālu*. — “Milk, please.”

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

ಪಾಲು descends, unchanged, from Proto-Dravidian ***pāl** — matching Tamil பால் (*pāl*) and Malayalam പാൽ (*pāl*) exactly. Kannada alone says ಹಾಲು (*hālu*), because Kannada carries a **regular sound law** that turns a word-initial Dravidian *p*- into *h*-: the same law that turns Tamil பத்து (*pattu*, “ten”) into Kannada ಹತ್ತು (*hattu*). Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam all keep the original *p*-; only Kannada shifted it. So the pattern this chapter has been building — Telugu sometimes matching its neighbours, sometimes standing apart — flips one more time: here it is **Kannada** standing apart, not Telugu.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “dayacēsi pālu” — milk, please
- the three that match — “pālu ... pāl ... pāl”
- the one that shifted — “pālu ... hālu”
- tea, then milk — “ತೆ ... ಪಾಲು”

Before you move on

Say “milk, please.” (*Dayacēsi pālu*.) Which three Dravidian languages keep the original *p*- in “milk,” and which one shifts it to *h*-? (**Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam** keep *p*-; **Kannada** alone shifts to *h*-, *hālu*.) Name one other word pair that shows the same Kannada sound law. (**Tamil pattu, Kannada hattu** — “ten.”)

39.3 ್ಯ — one character, met inside a word you already say

Before the new one: ಢ — what does it do? And one from further back: ಜ?

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

Script you'll notice: ృ

ృ — *r*.

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 with *r*. Replaces, not adds — the *a* is gone.

This is the second shape of a vowel you already traced whole. Back at the seasons you met ఋ, the independent letter that opens ఋతువు. When the same vowel has to ride on a consonant instead of opening a word, it sheds that standing shape and becomes this mark. One vowel, two shapes, chosen by where in the word it falls — exactly the arrangement you know from ఉ and ఁ, and from ఎ and ఌ.

You already say this one:

- హృదయం *hṛdayam* — heart, the word for poems rather than for chests

Take it apart: హ, the letter from the borrowings, carrying ృ. Not *ha* any more, and not *hru* with a vowel added — the built-in *a* has been swapped out, and what is left is **hr**.

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 these two, and say which one carries the sign and which carries the standing letter

హృదయం · ఋతువు

- *Trace it:* ృ three times, saying *r* as you finish each one
- *Look:* at హృ, and name its two pieces

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 *r* on; takes the built-in *a* off.**) Which standing letter is its partner? (ఋ.)

One more, from much earlier: ీ — what does it do?

Chapter 40

A Meal

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can say I am having a meal in Telugu, using the word an earlier chapter already used and never explained.

Say భోజనం చేద్దాం, explain భోజనం against everyday తిండి the way Chapter 32 first set them side by side, and apologise for a late meal with Chapter 9's క్షమించండి.

40.1 భోజనం (bhōjanam) — “a meal,” a word this book named before it ever taught it

Tea, then milk. This chapter’s last word is not a drink — it is the meal you would sit down to with both.

You’ll want to know: భోజనం

భోజనం — *bhōjanam* — a meal

భోజనం చేద్దాం. — *bhōjanam cēddāmi*. — “Let’s eat” (literally, “let’s do a meal”).

The *tinu* lesson already used this exact word, in passing, as the polite counterpart of native తిండి — without ever teaching it properly. This lesson finally does.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

భోజనం is Sanskrit भोजन, built on भुज् (*bhuj*), “to enjoy, to partake of, to eat.” It sits above native తిండి the same way దయచేసి sits above the everyday -అండి ending: a formal Sanskrit layer over a plain Dravidian floor. కన్ను, “eye,” was a word this book had already used once, unglossed, inside an etymology note — this lesson does the very same thing for భోజనం, which was named earlier without ever being taught. If a meal runs late, Telugu reaches for the apology word taught earlier: భోజనం ఆలస్యం అయింది, క్షమించండి — “the meal is late, sorry” — the same respectful -అండి ending that first met you on దయచేసి’s own everyday alternative.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- “bhōjanam cēddām” — let’s eat
- native, then borrowed — “tiṇḍi ... bhōjanam”
- the apology — “bhōjanam ālasyam ayindi, kṣamiṇcaṇḍi”
- the chapter — “tī ... pālu ... bhōjanam”

Before you move on

Say “let’s eat.” (*Bhōjanam cēddām.*) Which earlier lesson already used *bhōjanam*, without teaching it as its own word? (**The *tīnu* lesson.**) Apologise for a late meal, using the word you learned earlier. (*Bhōjanam ālasyam ayindi, kṣamiṇcaṇḍi.*)

Chapter 41

Pointing, and Asking

Modes: 🗣️ voice (7) 🖐️ Hands-free start: all 7 lessons.

***By the end of this chapter:** I can point at something in Telugu 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.

41.1 ఇది (idi) — this one — the thing near me

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You’ll want to know: ఇది

ఇది — *idi* — 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 అది *adi*, which you will meet in a moment. The two of them differ by one sound at the front — **i-** 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:

- “ఇది” three times, pointing at something different each time

- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *idi*? (this one — the thing near me.) What sound does it start with, and does that sound mean near, far, or a question? (**i-** — near.)

41.2 అది (adi) — that one — the thing over there

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You'll want to know: అది

అది — *adi* — 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 ఇది *idi*, which you will meet just now. The two of them differ by one sound at the front — **a-** 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:

- “అది” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *adi*? (that one — the thing over there.) What sound does it start with, and does that sound mean near, far, or a question? (**a-** — far.)

41.3 ఇక్కడ (ikkada) — here — where I am

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You'll want to know: ಇಕ್ಕಡ

ಇಕ್ಕಡ — *ikkada* — 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 ಅಕ್ಕಡ *akkaḍa*, which you will meet in a moment. The two of them differ by one sound at the front — **i-** 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:

- “ಇಕ್ಕಡ” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *ikkada*? (here — where I am.) What sound does it start with, and does that sound mean near, far, or a question? (**i-** — near.)

41.4 ಅಕ್ಕಡ (akkaḍa) — there — where I am not

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You'll want to know: ಅಕ್ಕಡ

ಅಕ್ಕಡ — *akkaḍa* — 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 ಇಕ್ಕಡ *ikkada*, which you will meet just now. The two of them differ by one sound at the front — **a-** 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:

- “అక్కడ” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *akkada*? (there — where I am not.) What sound does it start with, and does that sound mean near, far, or a question? (a- — far.)

41.5 ఎవరు (evaru) — who? — asking about a person

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You’ll want to know: ఎవరు

ఎవరు — *evaru* — 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 ఎక్కడ *ekkada*, which you will meet in a moment. The two of them differ by one sound at the front — e- 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:

- “ఎవరు” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *evaru*? (who? — asking about a person.) What sound does it start with, and does that sound mean near, far, or a question? (e-

— ask.)

41.6 ఎక్కడ (ekkaḍa) — where? — asking about a place

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You'll want to know: ఎక్కడ

ఎక్కడ — *ekkaḍa* — 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 ఎవరు *evuru*, which you will meet just now. The two of them differ by one sound at the front — **e-** 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:

- “ఎక్కడ” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *ekkaḍa*? (where? — asking about a place.) What sound does it start with, and does that sound mean near, far, or a question? (**e-** — ask.)

41.7 i- / a- / e- — 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	ఇక్కడ <i>ikkaḍa</i>
far	అక్కడ <i>akkaḍa</i>
question	ఎక్కడ <i>ekkaḍa</i>

Telugu keeps the whole tail identical: ఇక్కడ, అక్కడ, ఎక్కడ — only the first vowel moves.

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: ఇది *idi* and అది *adi* 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? (**i-**) Far? (**a-**) And which one turns the word into a question? (**e-**)

Chapter 42

Describing Things

Modes: 🗣️ voice (6) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can point at something in Telugu 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.

42.1 పెద్ద (pedda) — big

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You'll want to know: పెద్ద

పెద్ద — *pedda* — 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:

- “పెద్ద” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *pedda*? (**big.**) Where does it go — before the word it describes, or after? (**Before.**)

42.2 చిన్న (cinna) — small

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You'll want to know: చిన్న

చిన్న — *cinna* — 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 పెద్ద *pedda* 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:

- “చిన్న” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *cinna*? (**small.**) Where does it go — before the word it describes, or after? (**Before.**)

42.3 మంచి (manci) — good

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You'll want to know: మంచి

మంచి — *manci* — 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 చిన్న *cinna* 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:

- “మంచి” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *manci*? (**good.**) Where does it go — before the word it describes, or after? (**Before.**)

42.4 కొత్త (kotta) — new

You can already name things. This is how you POINT at them.

You'll want to know: కొత్త

కొత్త — *kotta* — 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 మంచి *manci* 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:

- “కొత్త” three times, pointing at something different each time

- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *kotta*? (**new.**) Where does it go — before the word it describes, or after? (**Before.**)

42.5 పాత (pāta) — 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: పాత

పాత — *pāta* — 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 కొత్త *kotta* 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:

- “పాత” three times, pointing at something different each time
- it once with a word you already know after it

Before you move on

What is *pāta*? (**old — of a thing, not of a person.**) Where does it go — before the word it describes, or after? (**Before.**)

42.6 before the noun, unchanged — 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	పెద్ద <i>pedda</i>
small	చిన్న <i>cinna</i>
good	మంచి <i>manci</i>

They sit in front of the noun and stay exactly as they are.

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? (unchanged.)

Chapter 43

More Everyday Verbs

Modes: ⇄ voice (4) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can tell someone to come, sit, stand and give in Telugu.

Complete TE-C43-give and say all four verbs in order.

43.1 ర (rā) — come

A short run of everyday verbs, one at a time.

You'll want to know: ర

ర (rā) — “come”.

The bare command, and one of the shortest words in the language: a single syllable that is a complete sentence.

What you've built

One more everyday action. Three more follow, and each reuses the ones before it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- rā
- it again, to someone standing in a doorway

Before you move on

What does ൠ mean? (“come”.) Say it once more.

43.2 ൠ (kūrcō) — sit

Before the new one: what did *rā* mean?

You’ll want to know: ൠ

ൠ (*kūrcō*) — “sit”.

A command you will hear on entering any home, usually before anything else is said.

What you’ve built

One more everyday action. Three more follow, and each reuses the ones before it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *kūrcō*
- it again, to someone standing in a doorway
- it after *rā*, so the two sit together

Before you move on

What does ൠ mean? (“sit”.) Say it once more.

43.3 ൠ (nilcō) — stand

Before the new one: what did *kūrcō* mean?

You'll want to know: నిల్చో

నిల్చో (*nilcō*) — “stand”.

Its pair. Telugu, like the other Dravidian languages, makes the bare stem do the work of a command with nothing added.

What you've built

One more everyday action. Three more follow, and each reuses the ones before it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *nilcō*
- it again, to someone standing in a doorway
- it after *kūrcō*, so the two sit together

Before you move on

What does నిల్చో mean? (“stand”.) Say it once more.

43.4 ఇవ్వు (*ivvu*) — give

Before the new one: what did *nilcō* mean?

You'll want to know: ఇవ్వు

ఇవ్వు (*ivvu*) — “give”.

The everyday ‘give’. Softening it is done with a separate politeness word rather than by changing the verb.

What you've built

One more everyday action. That closes the run: four everyday actions, each met on its own.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *ivvu*
- it again, to someone standing in a doorway
- it after *nilcō*, so the two sit together

Before you move on

What does ఇవ్వు mean? (“give”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 44

Verbs of Seeing and Saying

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can tell someone to look, listen, speak and write in Telugu.

Complete TE-C44-write and say all four verbs in order.

44.1 చూడు (cūḍu) — look

Four verbs for taking things in and putting them out, one at a time.

You'll want to know: చూడు

చూడు (cūḍu) — “look”.

Also 'to see' and 'to look after', the same three-way stem as its Kannada cousin *nōḍu* — the languages are close enough that the pattern travels.

What you've built

One more. Three follow, and each reuses the ones before.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- cūḍu
- it once more, slowly

Before you move on

What does చూడు mean? (“look”). Say it once more.

44.2 ఆలకించు (ālakiñcu) — listen

Before the new one: what did *cūḍu* mean?

You’ll want to know: ఆలకించు

ఆలకించు (*ālakiñcu*) — “listen”.

‘Listen attentively’ — a step above simply hearing. Telugu keeps listening and asking separate, where Kannada merges them into one stem.

What you’ve built

One more. Three follow, and each reuses the ones before.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *ālakiñcu*
- it once more, slowly
- it after *cūḍu*, so the two sit together

Before you move on

What does ఆలకించు mean? (“listen”). Say it once more.

44.3 మాట్లాడు (māṭlāḍu) — speak

Before the new one: what did *ālakiñcu* mean?

You’ll want to know: మాట్లాడు

మాట్లాడు (*māṭlāḍu*) — “speak”.

From *māṭa*, ‘word’, plus *āḍu*, ‘to play’ — the same construction as Kannada’s *māṭāḍu*, built from the same two pieces.

What you've built

One more. Three follow, and each reuses the ones before.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *māṭlāḍu*
- it once more, slowly
- it after *ālakin̄cu*, so the two sit together

Before you move on

What does మాట్లాడు mean? (“speak”.) Say it once more.

44.4 రాయి (rāyi) — write

Before the new one: what did *māṭlāḍu* mean?

You'll want to know: రాయి

రాయి (*rāyi*) — “write”.

The everyday ‘write’. Telugu and Kannada each kept their own Dravidian stem here rather than borrowing a shared one.

What you've built

That closes the run: look, listen, speak, write.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *rāyi*
- it once more, slowly
- it after *māṭlāḍu*, so the two sit together

Before you move on

What does བོད་ཡིག་ mean? (“write”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 45

Grandparents, and the Married Pair

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name four more family and people words in this language.

Complete TE-C45-wife and say all four words in order.

45.1 తాత (tāta) — grandfather

Before the new one: what did *rāyi* mean?

You'll want to know: తాత

తాత (tāta) — “grandfather”.

It has the same small, repeatable shape as the *nānna* and *amma* you met in the family lesson. Sanskrit carries a *tāta* too, meaning ‘father’ or simply ‘dear one’; Telugu moved the word up a generation. Children use it for any kindly old man, not only their own grandfather.

What you’ve built

The first of four family words. Three follow, and each reuses the ones before.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *tāta*
- it once more, slowly
- it after *rāyi*, so the two sit together

Before you move on

What does తాత mean? (“grandfather”.) Say it once more.

45.2 అమ్మమ్మ (ammamma) — grandmother, the mother’s mother

Before the new one: what did *tāta* mean?

You’ll want to know: అమ్మమ్మ

అమ్మమ్మ (*ammamma*) — “grandmother”, and specifically your mother’s mother.

Say it slowly and you can hear what it is made of: *amma* twice over, mother of mother. Telugu keeps the two grandmothers apart, and the father’s mother is *nāyanamma*, assembled the same way on *nāyana*, ‘father’. Nothing here is borrowed; every piece came from the family lesson.

What you’ve built

Two of four, and a word you could have decoded before you were taught it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *ammamma*
- it once more, slowly, hearing the two halves
- it after *tāta*, so the two sit together

Before you move on

What does అమ్మమ్మ mean? (“grandmother”, the mother’s mother.)
Say it once more.

45.3 భర్త (bharta) — husband

Before the new one: what did *ammamma* mean?

You’ll want to know: భర్త

భర్త (bharta) — “husband”.

Sanskrit, and it opens cleanly: the root *bhr̥*, ‘to bear, to carry, to support’, plus the ending that names the one who does it. So the word says ‘the one who supports’. That root is old enough to have relatives far outside India — Latin *fero*, ‘I carry’, and English *bear* both continue it.

What you’ve built

Three of four. The last word comes from the very same root.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *bharta*
- it once more, slowly
- it after *ammamma*, so the two sit together

Before you move on

What does భర్త mean? (“husband”.) Say it once more.

45.4 భార్య (bhārya) — wife

Before the new one: what did *bharta* mean?

You'll want to know: భార్య

భార్య (*bhārya*) — “wife”.

The same root *bhr̥* as the last word, with a different ending: ‘she who is to be supported’. Two words, one root, and between them a picture of the household as Sanskrit’s grammarians framed it rather than as anyone lives in it now. That is worth hearing plainly, because the shape of the pair is the reason it is easy to remember.

What you’ve built

That closes the run: grandfather, grandmother, husband, wife.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *bhārya*
- it once more, slowly
- it after *bharta*, and name the root they share

Before you move on

What does భార్య mean? (“wife”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 46

Things You Ask For

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name five everyday things I might ask someone for in Telugu, and say which of them Telugu has always had and which arrived from elsewhere.

Complete TE-C46-book and demonstrate the chapter promise.

46.1 పండు (paṇḍu) — a fruit

Before the new run of words: what did *bhārya* mean?

You'll want to know: పండు

పండు (*paṇḍu*) — “a fruit”.

పండు is also a verb: *to ripen*. The fruit is named for what happened to it — the ripened thing — and Telugu never troubled to invent a second noun. Say *paṇḍu* of a mango on the table and you mean the fruit; say it of the tree's crop and you mean it is coming ripe.

Kannada writes the same inherited word ಹಣ್ಣು (*haṇṇu*). That *p-* at the front turning into *h-* is a regular Kannada sound law, and it has already turned up once, on పాలు beside ಹాలు. Watch for it again.

What you've built

The first of five things you might ask someone for.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *paṇḍu*
- it once more, slowly
- *paṇḍu*, then *dayacēsi paṇḍu ivvaṇḍi* — “please give a fruit”

Before you move on

What does పండు mean? (“a fruit”.) Say it once more.

46.2 బట్ట (baṭṭa) — cloth

Before the new one: what did *paṇḍu* mean?

You’ll want to know: బట్ట

బట్ట (*baṭṭa*) — “cloth”.

బట్ట is the plain word for cloth: the bolt on the shelf, the washing on the line, the rag in your hand.

Sanskrit has *paṭṭa*, “a strip of cloth, a bandage”, and here the borrowing most likely ran the unusual way — out of Dravidian and into Sanskrit, rather than the other direction this book has shown so often. The same strip reached English by a different road: Hindi *paṭṭī*, a wrapping, is the soldier’s *puttee*.

What you’ve built

Two: a fruit and a cloth.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *baṭṭa*
- it once more, slowly
- *paṇḍu*, then *baṭṭa*, and ask for each one with *dayacēsi*

Before you move on

What does బట్ట mean? (“cloth”.) Say it once more.

46.3 దీపం (dīpaṁ) — a lamp

Before the new one: what did *baṭṭa* mean?

You’ll want to know: దీపం

దీపం (*dīpaṁ*) — “a lamp”.

దీపం is the small clay lamp with oil and a wick. Its Sanskrit root *dīp* means “to blaze”, so the word names the burning rather than the vessel.

Put దీప together with a word meaning “a row” and you get *dīpāvali*, “a row of lamps” — the festival English spells Diwali. The ending is the tatsama neuter -ం, the same shape already carried by హృదయం and భోజనం.

What you’ve built

Three: a fruit, a cloth, a lamp.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *dīpaṁ*
- it once more, slowly
- all three, then name the one that came in from Sanskrit

Before you move on

What does దీపం mean? (“a lamp”.) Say it once more.

46.4 ఉప్పు (uppu) — salt

Before the new one: what did *dīpaṁ* mean?

You'll want to know: ఉప్పు

ఉప్పు (*uppu*) — “salt”.

Proto-Dravidian had ***uppu**, and the whole family kept it almost untouched: Tamil உப்பு, Kannada ಉಪ್ಪು, Malayalam ഉപ്പ്. A word this ordinary gives nobody a reason to replace it.

Notice the doubled **ప్ప** in the middle. Telugu likes a consonant twice inside a short word — కుక్క, పిల్లి, కన్ను all do it — and the doubling is not decoration: it is the difference between one word and another.

What you've built

Four. Three of them inherited, one borrowed.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *uppu*
- it once more, slowly
- all four in order, then say which one has not changed in three thousand years

Before you move on

What does ఉప్పు mean? (“salt”.) Say it once more.

46.5 పుస్తకం (pustakam) — a book

Before the new one: what did *uppu* mean?

You'll want to know: పుస్తకం

పుస్తకం (*pustakam*) — “a book”.

Sanskrit *pustaka* is the source, but the trail behind it leaves India altogether. Middle Persian *post* meant “hide, skin” — the thing written on before paper.

So the Telugu word for a book carries an animal skin folded up inside it, and it arrived by the same north-western road as రోజు, which turned out to

be Persian too. Two of these five walked in from outside; three were always here.

What you've built

Five things you might ask for: a fruit, a cloth, a lamp, salt, a book.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *pustakam*
- it once more, slowly
- all five in order, then sort them into the inherited and the borrowed

Before you move on

What does పుస్తకం mean? (“a book”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 47

The Leg and the Tooth

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 Telugu, and say which of them held their old shape and which wore down past recognition.

Complete TE-C47-stomach and demonstrate the chapter promise.

47.1 కాలు (kālu) — leg, foot

Before the new run: what did *pustakam* mean, and what did *uppu* mean?

You’ll want to know: కాలు

కాలు (kālu) — “leg, foot”.

Proto-Dravidian *kāl, and every sister kept it nearly whole: Tamil கால், Kannada ಕಾಲು, Malayalam കാൽ.

Set that beside చెయ్యి, the hand-word, which wore down so far that its family resemblance is hard to see at all. Two body-words of the same age; one held its shape and one did not, and nothing about the meaning predicts which.

కాలు covers the whole limb, foot and leg together. When precision is wanted, Sanskrit’s పాదం names the foot alone.

What you’ve built

The first of five more body words.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *kālu*
- it once more, slowly
- *kālu*, then *tala*, so the top and the bottom sit together

Before you move on

What does కాలు mean? (“leg, foot”.) Say it once more.

47.2 పన్ను (pannu) — a tooth

Before the new one: what did *kālu* mean?

You’ll want to know: పన్ను

పన్ను (*pannu*) — “a tooth”.

Proto-Dravidian ***pal**. Tamil kept பல்; Kannada has ಹಲ್ಲು, with that *p-* to *h-* law working again exactly where the last chapter said to watch for it. Telugu took a third road, the *-l-* coming out as *-n-* and doubling.

An honest warning: పన్ను is also the word for a tax. Nothing joins the tooth to the tax but an accident of sound. Telugu has a fair number of these pairs, and context is the only fix — which is what context is for.

What you’ve built

Two: a leg and a tooth.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *pannu*
- it once more, slowly
- *kālu*, then *pannu*, and say which of the two also names something you pay

Before you move on

What does పన్ను mean? (“a tooth”.) Say it once more.

47.3 జుట్టు (juṭṭu) — hair (of the head)

Before the new one: what did *pannu* mean?

You’ll want to know: జుట్టు

జుట్టు (*juṭṭu*) — “hair (of the head)”.

జుట్టు is the hair on a head taken as one thing — the mass, not the strand. For a single hair Telugu reaches for a different noun, వెంట్రుక.

English leans on number for the same distinction — “a hair” against “hair” — while Telugu simply reaches for a different noun. జుట్టు also names the knot or tuft tied at the back of the head, which is most likely where the word started.

What you’ve built

Three: a leg, a tooth, hair.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *juṭṭu*
- it once more, slowly
- *juṭṭu*, then *tala*, and say which one sits on the other

Before you move on

What does జుట్టు mean? (“hair (of the head)”.) Say it once more.

47.4 వేలు (vēlu) — a finger

Before the new one: what did *juṭṭu* mean?

You'll want to know: వేలు

వేలు (*vēlu*) — “a finger”.

Proto-Dravidian ***viral**. Tamil kept **விரல்** entire; Kannada has **ಬೆರಳು**; Telugu dropped the *-r-* and came out with **వేలు**. On the page the three look barely related, and they are the same word.

It is still working inside compounds: **బొటనవేలు**, the thumb, is the stubby one of the set.

What you've built

Four. Note that **చెయ్యి** and **వేలు** are separate roots — Telugu does not build the finger out of the hand.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *vēlu*
- it once more, slowly
- *vēlu*, then *ceyyi*, and say which one has five of the other

Before you move on

What does **వేలు** mean? (“a finger”.) Say it once more.

47.5 కడుపు (kaḍupu) — the stomach, the belly

Before the new one: what did *vēlu* mean?

You'll want to know: కడుపు

కడుపు (*kaḍupu*) — “the stomach, the belly”.

కడుపు is the unfussy everyday word, and it carries the commonest way of saying you have eaten enough: *kaḍupu niṇḍindi*, “the stomach has filled”.

It also says, gently and without ever being explicit, that a woman is expecting. Sanskrit's **ఉదరం** exists in Telugu and stays where the clinical register lives.

What you've built

Five more body words: a leg, a tooth, hair, a finger, a belly. With తల, చెయ్యి, కన్ను, ముక్కు, నోరు and చెవి behind them, you can point at most of a person.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *kaḍupu*
- it once more, slowly
- all five in order, then add *tala* and *ceyyi* and say the seven as one list

Before you move on

What does కడుపు mean? (“the stomach, the belly”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 48

Naming Who Someone Is

Modes: ⇐ voice (4) 👁 eyes (1) ⇐ Hands-free start: first 2 of 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say what someone’s role is in Telugu — teacher, student, doctor, farmer, guest — and name the root that two of those words share.

Complete TE-C48-guest and demonstrate the chapter promise.

48.1 గురువు (guruvu) — a teacher

Before the new run: what did *kaḍupu* mean, and what did *vēlu* mean?

You’ll want to know: గురువు

గురువు (*guruvu*) — “a teacher”.

Sanskrit *guru* means “heavy”. The teacher is the weighty one — the one whose word carries weight — and Telugu added its own -వు to make గురువు.

You have already said the word without being told. గురువారం, Thursday, is Guru’s day: the guru there is Jupiter, the heaviest wanderer the naked eye can find and the teacher of the gods. Latin named the same weekday for Jove, which is the same planet under another name.

What you’ve built

The first of five roles.

Your turn

- *Say it: guruvu*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: guruvu, then guruvāram, and say what the two have in common*
- *Recall: say paṇḍu, then read పాండు and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does గురువు mean? (“a teacher”.) Say it once more.

48.2 విద్యార్థి (vidyārthi) — a student

Before the new one: what did *guruvu* mean?

You’ll want to know: విద్యార్థి

విద్యార్థి (*vidyārthi*) — “a student”.

Two Sanskrit pieces welded: *vidyā*, knowledge, and *arthin*, one who seeks. A student is a knowledge-seeker, and the word says so on its face.

vidyā grows from the root *vid*, “to know” — the same ancient root behind English *wit* and *wisdom*, and behind Latin *vidēre*, “to see”. Knowing and seeing were one word long before either language existed.

What you’ve built

Two: a teacher and a student.

Your turn

- *Say it: vidyārthi*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: guruvu, then vidyārthi, and say which one seeks and which one weighs*
- *Recall: read పండ్లు, then say pannu*

Before you move on

What does విద్యార్థి mean? (“a student”.) Say it once more.

48.3 వైద్యుడు (vaidyudu) — a doctor, a physician

Before the new one: what did *vidyārthi* mean?

You’ll want to know: వైద్యుడు

వైద్యుడు (*vaidyudu*) — “a doctor, a physician”.

Look at the middle of it. *vaidya* is built on the very *vid* sitting inside విద్యార్థి: a physician is one versed in the knowledge, the knowledge in question being ఆయుర్వేద, the science of long life.

The ending -ుడు is not Sanskrit’s but Telugu’s own, marking a masculine person — the same -ుడు already carried by స్నేహితుడు.

What you’ve built

Three roles, and two of them share a root.

Your turn

- Say it: *vaidyudu*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *vidyārthi*, then *vaidyudu*, and name the syllable they share
- Recall: say *dīpamī*, then read జాట్టు and say what it means

Before you move on

What does వైద్యుడు mean? (“a doctor, a physician”.) Say it once more.

48.4 రైతు (raitu) — a farmer

Before the new one: what did *vaidyudu* mean?

You'll want to know: రైతు

రైతు (*raitu*) — “a farmer”.

రైతు came the long way round. Arabic *ra^ciyyah* meant a flock, then the people a ruler answers for. Persian and Urdu carried it into India as *ra^ciyat*, the subject, the tenant; the revenue clerks of the Deccan wrote it on their rolls; and Telugu kept it for the person who works the land.

That is a second arrival from the north-west, after రోజు (*rōju*) and పుస్తకం. The words that travel are the words that follow paperwork and trade.

What you've built

Four.

Your turn

- *Say it: raitu*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: raitu, then rōju, and say what road the two have in common*
- *Recall: read ఉప్పు, then say vēlu*

Before you move on

What does రైతు mean? (“a farmer”.) Say it once more.

48.5 అతిథి (atithi) — a guest

Before the new one: what did *raitu* mean?

You'll want to know: అతిథి

అతిథి (*atithi*) — “a guest”.

a-tithi — “one without a *tithi*”, without a date on the calendar. The guest is defined by not being expected.

The old formula అతిథి దేవో భవ, “let the guest be a god to you”, is built on exactly that: you cannot prepare for a god who arrives unannounced, so you keep the house ready instead. What a Telugu house actually does when the అతిథి arrives has a chapter of its own, at the end of this book.

What you've built

Five roles: a teacher, a student, a doctor, a farmer, a guest.

Your turn

- *Say it: atithi*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: all five, then say *nā pēru* and your own name, and ask *mīru evaru?**
- *Recall: say *pustakam*, then read కడుపు and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does అతిథి mean? (“a guest”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 49

Answering With More Than Yes

Modes: 🗣️ voice (3) 👁️ eyes (2) 🖐️ Hands-free start: first 3 of 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can answer in Telugu with more than yes and no — true, enough, certainly, perhaps, just so — and see the three-vowel grid running under అది, ఇక్కడ and ఎలా.

Complete TE-C49-alright and demonstrate the chapter promise.

49.1 నిజం (nijam) — true; the truth

Before the new run: what did *atithi* mean?

You’ll want to know: నిజం

నిజం (*nijam*) — “true; the truth”.

Sanskrit *nija* meant “one’s own, innate” — what belongs to a thing by its nature. Telugu moved it one step: what belongs to a thing by nature is what is really so, and నిజం became the truth.

Alone it answers a doubt: *nijam*, “true”. With a question on the end it becomes perhaps the commonest interjection in the language: *nijamā?*, “really?”

What you’ve built

The first of five answers that are neither అవును nor లేదు.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *nijamī*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *nijamī*, then *nijamā?*, and say which one asks
- *Recall:* say *kālu*, then read గురువు and say what it means

Before you move on

What does నిజం mean? (“true; the truth”.) Say it once more.

49.2 చాలు (cālu) — enough, that will do

Before the new one: what did *nijamī* mean?

You’ll want to know: చాలు

చాలు (*cālu*) — “enough, that will do”.

చాలు is a verb — “it suffices” — used as a complete answer. Held over a glass being filled it stops the pouring; said of an argument it ends it.

చాలా, the everyday word for “very” and “a lot”, is the same root wearing a different ending. Sufficiency and abundance sit one letter apart, which is a fair account of how the two ideas are related anywhere.

What you’ve built

Two.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *cālu*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *cālu*, then *nijamī*, and say which one you would use to stop someone pouring
- *Recall:* read పన్ను, then say *vidyārthi*

Before you move on

What does చాలు mean? (“enough, that will do”.) Say it once more.

49.3 తప్పకుండా (tappakuṇḍā) — certainly, without fail

Before the new one: what did *cālu* mean?

You’ll want to know: తప్పకుండా

తప్పకుండా (*tappakuṇḍā*) — “certainly, without fail”.

Take it apart: తప్పు, “to miss, to slip, to go wrong”, plus -కుండా, the ending meaning “without doing”. తప్పకుండా is *without missing*.

The ending is worth having on its own, because it attaches to any verb stem: *ceppakuṇḍā*, without telling; *tinakuṇḍā*, without eating. One suffix, and every verb you own gains a negative.

What you’ve built

Three.

Your turn

- Say it: *tappakuṇḍā*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *tappakuṇḍā*, then *cālu*, and say which one is a promise
- Recall: say *juttu*, then read వైద్యుడు and say what it means

Before you move on

What does తప్పకుండా mean? (“certainly, without fail”.) Say it once more.

49.4 ఏమో (ēmō) — perhaps, who knows

Before the new one: what did *tappakuṇḍā* mean?

You'll want to know: ఏమో

ఏమో (*ēmō*) — “perhaps, who knows”.

ఏమో is a shrug made into a word: perhaps, it may be so, who knows.

Look at the front of it and you will find the questioning ఏ- that already stands in ఏమిటి, “what”. ఏమో is that question with the asking taken out and only the uncertainty left behind.

It also hangs on the end of a whole sentence, where English would need a separate clause: *vastāḍēmō*, “he may come”. A language with a settled, unembarrassed word for not knowing is telling you something about its manners.

What you've built

Four.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *ēmō*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *ēmō*, then *tappakuṇḍā*, and say which one commits you
- *Recall:* read వేలు, then say *raitu*

Before you move on

What does ఏమో mean? (“perhaps, who knows”.) Say it once more.

49.5 అలాగే (*alāgē*) — just so, alright then

Before the new one: what did *ēmō* mean?

You'll want to know: అలాగే

అలాగే (*alāgē*) — “just so, alright then”.

అలా means “in that way”; -గే is the small emphatic tail that makes it “just so”. అలాగే is the yes you give to an instruction — not “that is correct” but “it shall be as you said”.

Now look at the front of it. అ- points far, and already carries అది, “that one”, and అక్కడ, “there”. ఇ- points near: ఇది, ఇక్కడ, and so ఇలా, “in this

way”. ఎ- asks: ఎక్కడ, ఎలా. Three vowels, one grid, and అలాగే is simply the far corner of it with an ending stuck on.

What you’ve built

Five answers, and a three-way grid you can now see running under అది, ఇక్కడ and ఎలా.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *alāgē*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then say *alāgē* as a reply to *dayacēsi kūrco*
- *Recall:* say *kaḍupu*, then read అతిథి and say what it means

Before you move on

What does అలాగే mean? (“just so, alright then”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 50

Taking Your Leave

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can take my leave in Telugu the way a Telugu speaker actually does, and say why the flat “I am going” is the one thing never said at a door.

Complete TE-C50-farewell and demonstrate the chapter promise.

50.1 ఇప్పుడు (ippuḍu) — now

Before the new run: what did *alāgē* mean?

You’ll want to know: ఇప్పుడు

ఇప్పుడు (*ippuḍu*) — “now”.

The grid from the last chapter has a time row, and this is its near corner. -ప్పుడు is the time-piece; put a pointing vowel in front of it and the word makes itself.

ఇప్పుడు is “this time” — now. అప్పుడు is “that time” — then. ఎప్పుడు is “which time” — when? You already owned the vowels; the row costs you one word.

What you’ve built

Now — and a shape that gives you two more words for free.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *ippudu*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *ippudu*, then *ippudu vellu* — “go now”
- *Recall:* say *guruvu*, then read నిజం and say what it means

Before you move on

What does ఇప్పుడు mean? (“now”.) Say it once more.

50.2 ఎల్లుండి (ellundi) — the day after tomorrow

Before the new one: what did *ippudu* mean?

You’ll want to know: ఎల్లుండి

ఎల్లుండి (*ellundi*) — “the day after tomorrow”.

One settled noun for the day after tomorrow. English needs four words and still sounds unsure of itself; Telugu, like its sisters, simply has the word.

There is an older tomorrow hiding at the front of it. ఎల్లి once meant tomorrow, and though రేపు took that job in everyday speech, ఎల్లి is still in service inside ఎల్లుండి, doing its old work one day further out.

What you’ve built

Two: now, and the day after tomorrow.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *ellundi*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *ippudu*, then *ellundi*, and say which one is further off
- *Recall:* read విద్యార్థి, then say *cālu*

Before you move on

What does ఎల్లుండి mean? (“the day after tomorrow”.) Say it once more.

50.3 ప్రయాణం (prayāṇam) — a journey

Before the new one: what did *elluṇḍi* mean?

You’ll want to know: ప్రయాణం

ప్రయాణం (*prayāṇam*) — “a journey”.

Sanskrit *pra-yāṇa*: the root *yā*, “to go”, with *pra-*, “forth”. A journey is a going-forth, and the word is transparent to anyone holding the pieces.

The ending is the -ం you have now sorted three times: the tatsama neuter, as on దీపం, హృదయం and భోజనం. When a Telugu noun ends in -ం and names an abstraction, Sanskrit is usually behind it.

What you’ve built

Three.

Your turn

- Say it: *prayāṇam*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *prayāṇam*, then *dīpam*, and name the ending they share
- Recall: say *vaidyudu*, then read తప్పకుండా and say what it means

Before you move on

What does ప్రయాణం mean? (“a journey”.) Say it once more.

50.4 బయలుదేరు (bayaludēru) — to set out, to start off

Before the new one: what did *prayāṇam* mean?

You'll want to know: బయలుదేరు

బయలుదేరు (*bayaludēru*) — “to set out, to start off”.

Native, and a picture rather than an abstraction. బయలు is open ground, the outside; దేరు is to rise, to come forth. To set out is to come out into the open.

Set it beside ప్రయాణం (*prayāṇam*) and you have two languages building the same idea from opposite ends: Sanskrit from the going, Telugu from the doorstep.

What you've built

Four.

Your turn

- *Say it:* bayaludēru
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* bayaludēru, then prayāṇam, and say which of the two is inherited
- *Recall:* read రైతు, then say *ēmō*

Before you move on

What does బయలుదేరు mean? (“to set out, to start off”.) Say it once more.

50.5 వెళ్ళొస్తాను (*vellostānu*) — I'll go and come back — the everyday goodbye

Before the new one: what did *bayaludēru* mean?

You'll want to know: వెళ్ళొస్తాను

వెళ్ళొస్తాను (*vellostānu*) — “I'll go and come back — the everyday goodbye”.

Two verbs you already have, welded at the seam: వెళ్ళి, “having gone”, and వస్తాను, “I will come”. వెళ్ళొస్తాను is *I'll go and come back*, and it is what is said at the door.

What is not said is the flat “I am going”. Leaving without the returning half is what is said of the dead, and the rule holds right across the South. The politeness here is not decoration laid over the grammar; it is the grammar. The reply comes back in the same shape: వెళ్ళి రండి — “go, and come”.

What you’ve built

Five: ఇప్పుడు, ఎల్లండి, ప్రయాణం, బయలుదేరు, and a goodbye that refuses to be one.

Your turn

- *Say it: vellōstānu*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: vellōstānu*, then the reply *velli raṇḍi*, and say why neither half stands alone
- *Recall: say atithi*, then read అలాగే and say what it means

Before you move on

What does వెళ్ళొస్తాను mean? (“I’ll go and come back — the everyday goodbye”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 51

Courtesy Words

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) ✍️ pen (2) 🗣️ Hands-free start: first 1 of 7 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can be polite in Telugu beyond thank you — gratitude, a good turn, respect, a blessing, a salutation — and name the piece that two of those words share.

Complete TE-C51-salutation and demonstrate the chapter promise.

51.1 కృతజ్ఞత (kṛtajñata) — gratitude

Before the new run: what did *vellōstānu* mean?

You’ll want to know: కృతజ్ఞత

కృతజ్ఞత (*kṛtajñata*) — “gratitude”.

kṛta, “done”, plus *jñā*, “knowing”: knowing what was done for you. That is the whole of gratitude in two Sanskrit syllables, and Telugu took it entire.

Set it beside ధన్యవాదములు, the thank-you from the first pages of this book, which is “utterances of ’worthy’”. One word thanks by calling the giver worthy. The other thanks by admitting the debt is remembered. They are not the same gesture, and Telugu keeps both.

What you’ve built

A second word for thanks, with a different picture inside it.

Your turn

- *Say it: kṛtajñata*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: kṛtajñata, then dhanyavādamulu, and say which one remembers a debt*
- *Recall: say nijami, then read ఇప్పుడు and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does కృతజ్ఞత mean? (“gratitude”.) Say it once more.

51.2 ఇ — one character, met inside a word you already say

Before the new one: య — what does it do? And one from further back: భ?

One character this time — and you have been saying it since the page before this one, without knowing which mark on the page it was.

Script you’ll notice: ఇ

ఇ — ña.

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 **ña**.

It is a nasal, made where య is made — the middle of the tongue against the roof of the mouth, the sound in the middle of Spanish *señor*. In modern Telugu you will almost never meet it standing on its own. Where it lives is inside one stacked block, and you met that block a moment ago:

- కృతజ్ఞత kṛtajñata — gratitude

The block is జ్ఞ: జ with ఇ stacked under it, joined by the virama. Telugu does not say that block the way its two letters would suggest. Spelled *jña*, it comes out of the mouth closer to **gnya** — so *kṛtajñata* is heard as *kṛtagnyata*. Both facts are true at once, and this is one of the places where Telugu’s spelling remembers Sanskrit while Telugu’s mouth has moved on.

Writing: ఇ — copy what you see

Put your pen on ఇ 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 కృతజ్ఞత, and find the block that has ఇ under it
కృతజ్ఞత · ధన్యవాదములు
- *Trace it:* ఇ three times, saying *ñā* as you finish each one
- *Say it:* *kṛtajñata* the way it is said — *kṛtagnyata*

Before you move on

Which character is this — ఇ? Which letter does it usually sit under, and what does that pair sound like? (**Under జ, in the block జ్ఞ, said *gnya*.**)

One more, from much earlier: ీ — what does it do?

51.3 మేలు (mēlu) — a good turn, a benefit

Before the new one: what did *kṛtajñata* mean?

You'll want to know: మేలు

మేలు (*mēlu*) — “a good turn, a benefit”.

Inherited, and short. మేల్ meant “above”; the good is what is above. From it Telugu draws మేలు, a benefit or a good turn done to someone, and also the plain comparative sense of “better”.

So *idi mēlu* says “this one is higher” and lets the height do the judging — which is what English does too, in *superior*, without anyone noticing any more.

What you've built

Two.

Your turn

- *Say it: mēlu*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: mēlu, then manci, and say which one is a thing done and which is a quality*
- *Recall: read చాలు, then say ellundi*

Before you move on

What does మేలు mean? (“a good turn, a benefit”.) Say it once more.

51.4 గౌరవం (gauravam) — respectBefore the new one: what did *mēlu* mean?**You'll want to know: గౌరవం**గౌరవం (*gauravam*) — “respect”.

gaurava is the abstract noun of *guru* — the very word met one chapter ago as the teacher. Respect is weightiness: to hold someone in గౌరవం is to grant that what they say has mass.

Telugu marks the same idea in its grammar as well as its vocabulary. మీరు rather than నువ్వు, and the -అండి hung on the end of a verb, are గౌరవం turned into endings. A language can be polite in its words or in its shapes, and this one does both.

What you've built

Three, and one of them is a word you already knew wearing a different suit.

Your turn

- *Say it: gauravani*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: gauravani, then guruvu, and name the syllable they share*
- *Recall: say tappakuṇḍā, then read ప్రయాణం and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does గౌరవం mean? (“respect”.) Say it once more.

51.5 ీ — one character, met inside a word you already say

Before the new one: ఇ — what does it do? And one from further back: ఋ?

One character this time — and you have been saying it since the page before this one, 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 with *au*. Replaces, not adds — the *a* is gone.

Au is one vowel that moves while you hold it: it starts where *a* starts and slides toward *u*, the way the middle of English *now* does. Say it as one sound, not as two.

You already say this one:

- గౌరవం *gauravani* — respect

Take it apart: గ, the letter you traced long before this, carrying ీ. Not *ga* any more — **gau**. Then ఓ, వ, and the anusvāra ం that has been closing words since *namaskāram*. Every piece of *gauravani* now has a name, and this mark was the last one missing.

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 these two, and say which one carries ூ

గౌరవం · గురువు

- *Say it:* *ga*, then *gau*, and hear the vowel move
- *Trace it:* ூ three times, saying *au* as you finish each one

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 the word you already say that contains it.

One more, from much earlier: ఖ — what does it do?

51.6 ఆశీర్వాదం (āśīrvādam) — a blessing

Before the new one: what did *gauravam* mean?

You'll want to know: ఆశీర్వాదం

ఆశీర్వాదం (*āśīrvādam*) — “a blessing”.

āśis, a wish or a prayer, plus *vāda*, an utterance: a blessing is a wish said out loud.

The ceremony behind it is still in daily use. You bend and touch an elder's feet, and what comes back is ఆశీర్వాదం — a hand on the head — at a birthday, before an examination, at a wedding, and at every departure.

Notice *vāda* sitting there. It is the same piece inside ధన్యవాదములు, “utterances of ‘worthy’”. Twice now this language has counted a thing said as a thing given.

What you’ve built

Four courtesy words, and two of them are utterances by name.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *āśīrvādam*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *āśīrvādam*, then *dhanyavādamulu*, and name the piece they share
- *Recall:* read ఏమో, then say *bayaludēru*

Before you move on

What does ఆశీర్వాదం mean? (“a blessing”.) Say it once more.

51.7 దండం (daṇḍam) — a salutation, “my respects”

Before the new one: what did *āśīrvādam* mean?

You’ll want to know: దండం

దండం (*daṇḍam*) — “a salutation, “my respects””.

దండం is what you say with the palms together — my respects — offered to an elder, a temple, a photograph on the wall. Children are taught to say it long before anyone explains it.

Sanskrit *daṇḍa* is a staff, a stick. The full form of the gesture, *daṇḍa-praṇāma*, is the prostration where the body lies down straight as a staff. Telugu kept the word and let the body straighten most of the way up.

Hold on to దండ; it comes back in the next chapter carrying flowers.

What you've built

Five courtesy words: కృతజ్ఞత, మేలు, గౌరవం, ఆశీర్వాదం, దండం. Thanks, a good turn, respect, a blessing, and the greeting you make with your hands.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *daṇḍam*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *daṇḍam*, then *namaskāram*, and say which one you would give a grandparent
- *Recall:* say *alāgē*, then read వెళ్ళొస్తాను and say what it means

Before you move on

What does దండం mean? (“a salutation, “my respects””) Say it once more.

Chapter 52

Welcoming a Guest

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name the five things a Telugu welcome puts between the street and the guest, from the mark on the ground to the garland.

Complete TE-C52-garland and demonstrate the chapter promise.

52.1 తలుపు (talupu) — a door

Before the last run: what did *daṇḍam* mean, and what did *gauravam* mean?

You'll want to know: తలుపు

తలుపు (*talupu*) — “a door”.

తలుపు is the leaf: the panel that swings and shuts. The opening it fills is a different word — వాకిలి in everyday speech, ద్వారం in the formal Sanskrit register. Telugu keeps the hole and the thing that fills it apart, which English manages only when it is being careful.

తలుపు is inherited. That ద్వారం sits beside it doing no daily work is the usual arrangement here: the old word carries the load, the borrowed one keeps the ceremony.

What you've built

The first of five things standing between the street and a guest.

Your turn

- *Say it: talupu*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: talupu, then ikkada talupu undi* — “there is a door here”
- *Recall: say ippudu, then read కృతజ్ఞత and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does తలుపు mean? (“a door”.) Say it once more.

52.2 కుర్చీ (kurcī) — a chair

Before the new one: what did *talupu* mean?

You’ll want to know: కుర్చీ

కుర్చీ (*kurcī*) — “a chair”.

Arabic *kursī* is a seat, a throne — the word standing in the Qur’ān’s Throne Verse. Persian took it, Urdu carried it across the Deccan, and Telugu has కుర్చీ.

The word came because the thing came. A house welcoming a guest before the chair arrived offered a పీట, a low wooden plank set on the floor, and many still do. Borrowed furniture brings borrowed nouns with it.

One trap: కుర్చీ and కూర్చో, “sit”, look like a pair and are not. The verb is inherited, the noun is Arabic, and the resemblance is an accident. Sound alone never proves a relation.

What you’ve built

Two: a door and a chair.

Your turn

- *Say it: kurcī*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: kurcī, then kūrcō, and say why the two are not related*

- *Recall:* read ఎల్లుండి, then say *mēlu*

Before you move on

What does కుర్చీ mean? (“a chair”.) Say it once more.

52.3 ముగ్గు (muggu) — the rice-flour design drawn at the doorstep

Before the new one: what did *kurcī* mean?

You’ll want to know: ముగ్గు

ముగ్గు (*muggu*) — “the rice-flour design drawn at the doorstep”.

ముగ్గు is the design put on the ground outside the door, in rice flour, before the sun is up. It is walked over all day and drawn again the next morning.

The flour is the point. It is laid where ants and birds will find it, so the welcome begins by feeding something smaller than a guest. Tamil calls the same act కோலம், Kannada ರಂಗೋಲಿ. The word is local; the practice is not.

What you’ve built

Three: the door, the chair, and the mark on the ground in front of both.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *muggu*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *muggu*, then *talupu*, and say which one is outside the other
- *Recall:* say *prayāṇam*, then read గౌరవం and say what it means

Before you move on

What does ముగ్గు mean? (“the rice-flour design drawn at the doorstep”.) Say it once more.

52.4 పువ్వు (puvvu) — a flower

Before the new one: what did *muggu* mean?

You'll want to know: పువ్వు

పువ్వు (*puvvu*) — “a flower”.

Proto-Dravidian ***pū**, and the family kept it: Tamil பூ, Malayalam പൂ, Kannada ಹೂವು.

There is that *p-* to *h-* once more on the Kannada side — the third time in this book, after పాలు beside హాలు and పండు beside ಹಣ್ಣು. A sound law you have watched work three times has stopped being a claim; it is a pattern you can predict with, and predicting is the only test a sound law ever gets.

The plural stem is పూల-, which is about to matter.

What you've built

Four.

Your turn

- *Say it: puvvu*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: puvvu, then paṇḍu, and say what the two share at the front*
- *Recall: read బయలుదేరు, then say āśīrvādaṁ*

Before you move on

What does పువ్వు mean? (“a flower”.) Say it once more.

52.5 పూలదండ (pūladaṇḍa) — a flower garland

Before the new one: what did *puvvu* mean?

You'll want to know: పూలదండ

పూలదండ (*pūladaṇḍa*) — “a flower garland”.

పూల, flowers, and దండ — the same దండ that gave you దండం, the salutation, one chapter back. Sanskrit *danḍa* is a staff, and by extension a row. A పూలదండ is a row of flowers, strung.

So the greeting and the garland are one word used twice. You say దండం with your hands; you put పూలదండ round a neck. Both of them come from a straight line.

And that closes the welcome: the ముగ్గు on the ground, the తలుపు opened, the కుర్చీ offered, and a పూలదండ of పువ్వులు for the అతిథి who sent no word ahead.

What you've built

Five: తలుపు, కుర్చీ, ముగ్గు, పువ్వు, పూలదండ. A guest can now be met at the door and seated.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *pūladanḍa*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then say *namaskāraṁ* as you would at the door to an *atithi*
- *Recall:* say *veḷlostānu*, then read దండం and say what it means

Before you move on

What does పూలదండ mean? (“a flower garland”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 53

The Sky

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name five things overhead in Telugu, and say which of them Telugu borrowed and which it has always had.

Complete TE-C53-cloud and demonstrate the chapter promise.

53.1 ఆకాశం (ākāśam) — the sky

Before the new one: what did *pūladaṇḍa* mean?

You’ll want to know: ఆకాశం

ఆకాశం (*ākāśam*) — “the sky”.

ఆకాశం came from Sanskrit *ākāśa*, built on a piece meaning “to shine, to be seen”. So the sky is named for being the open, lit place where a thing can be visible at all, rather than for being a lid over the world.

Telugu also holds an inherited word for the same overhead space, నింరి, which owes Sanskrit nothing. The two sit side by side: ఆకాశం does the ordinary work and turns up in newspapers and weather talk, while నింరి keeps to songs and poetry. A borrowed word taking the daily shift and leaving the old one the ceremony is an arrangement you have watched before, with the door.

ākāśa travelled, too. Traders carried it east, and Malay and Indonesian still say *angkasa* for the sky.

What you've built

The space that the rest of this chapter hangs in.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *ākāśam*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *ākāśam*, then *namaskāram*, as you would greet somebody outdoors
- *Recall:* say *kṛtajñata*, then read తలుపు and say what it means

Before you move on

What does ఆకాశం mean? (“the sky”.) Say it once more.

53.2 సూర్యుడు (sūryuḍu) — the sun

Before the new one: what did *ākāśam* mean?

You'll want to know: సూర్యుడు

సూర్యుడు (*sūryuḍu*) — “the sun”.

Sanskrit *sūrya* is the sun. Telugu took the word and hung -డు on the end, the ending it puts on a man's name and on the words for men doing work — the same -డు that stands at the end of రైతు's formal cousin and of వైద్యుడు.

That ending is doing something real here. సూర్యుడు is the sun as a person: the one who drives, who is greeted, who is asked for things. Telugu has a plainer inherited word for the thing in the sky, పొద్దు, which you already have, and పొద్దు is what you use to say the sun came up.

So one language keeps two suns: పొద్దు for the light, సూర్యుడు for the god.

What you've built

Two: the sky, and the brightest thing in it.

Your turn

- *Say it: sūryudu*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: sūryudu, then poddu, and say which one of them can be prayed to*
- *Recall: read మేలు, then say kurcī*

Before you move on

What does సూర్యుడు mean? (“the sun”.) Say it once more.

53.3 చంద్రుడు (candruḍu) — the moon

Before the new one: what did *sūryudu* mean?

You’ll want to know: చంద్రుడు

చంద్రుడు (*candruḍu*) — “the moon”.

Sanskrit *candra* means “shining, bright”, and it carries the same -డు that సూర్యుడు carries. Two borrowed lights, and Telugu made people of both.

The inherited word here is నెల, which you already have as the word for a month. One shape for the moon and for the stretch of time it measures — the moon is the oldest calendar there is, and Telugu keeps that fact inside a single word.

candra went a long way west as well. It shares an ancestor with the Latin piece that gives English *candle* and *incandescent*: a very old root for burning white.

What you’ve built

Three, and two of them named as people.

Your turn

- *Say it: candruḍu*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*

- *Say it:* *candruḍu*, then *sūryuḍu*, and say what the two share at the end
- *Recall:* say *gauravamī*, then read ముగ్గు and say what it means

Before you move on

What does చంద్రుడు mean? (“the moon”.) Say it once more.

53.4 చుక్క (cukka) — a star; a dot

Before the new one: what did *candruḍu* mean?

You’ll want to know: చుక్క

చుక్క (*cukka*) — “a star; a dot”.

చుక్క is inherited, and it means a star and a dot and a drop of liquid, all with one shape. Anything small and round and separate is a చుక్క.

That is why it matters for the ముగ్గు. The design at the doorstep is laid out first as a grid of చుక్కలు, dots of rice flour set at even spacing, and the lines are then drawn around and between them. A woman who says she is putting down చుక్కలు in the morning is not talking about the sky.

The borrowed word for a star is నక్షత్రం, and it is what an astrologer uses. చుక్క is what a child points at.

What you’ve built

Four.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *cukka*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *cukka*, then *muggu*, and say how the two are connected on the ground
- *Recall:* read ఆశీర్వాదం, then say *puvvu*

Before you move on

What does చుక్క mean? (“a star; a dot”.) Say it once more.

53.5 మబ్బు (mabbu) — a cloud

Before the new one: what did *cukka* mean?

You’ll want to know: మబ్బు

మబ్బు (*mabbu*) — “a cloud”.

మబ్బు is inherited and quite plain: the grey thing between you and the సూర్యుడు.

It stretched, the way weather words do. మబ్బు also describes a dull, heavy, half-asleep feeling, and a person who is slow to catch on. English went the same way with *cloudy* and *foggy*, from opposite ends of the earth and with no contact at all. When two unrelated languages reach for the same picture, the picture is doing the work rather than the borrowing.

With that, the sky is furnished.

What you’ve built

Five: ఆకాశం, సూర్యుడు, చంద్రుడు, చుక్క, మబ్బు. You can now say what is overhead.

Your turn

- *Say it: mabbu*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: all five in order, then say which two of them end the same way*
- *Recall: say danḍam, then read హులదండ and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does మబ్బు mean? (“a cloud”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 54

The Tree

Modes: 🗣 voice (5) 🗋 Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a tree and its parts in Telugu, from the seed it started as to the branch at the top.

Complete TE-C54-seedling and demonstrate the chapter promise.

54.1 చెట్టు (ceṭṭu) — a tree

Before the new one: what did *mabbu* mean?

You'll want to know: చెట్టు

చెట్టు (ceṭṭu) — “a tree”.

చెట్టు is inherited and old. The Dravidian family kept the shape but shuffled the meaning: Tamil's *ceṭi* is a bush or a shrub, a small woody thing, while Telugu raised the same word to the full-grown tree and left the bush to other words.

A meaning that moves up or down the scale like that is the commonest kind of drift there is. The word holds its place in the family; what it points at slides.

వూసు is another Telugu word for a tree, older-sounding and now mostly literary. చెట్టు is what anybody says.

What you've built

The thing the rest of this chapter is made of.

Your turn

- *Say it: ceṭṭu*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: ceṭṭu, then puvvu, and say which one grows on the other*
- *Recall: say talupu, then read ఆకాశం and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does చెట్టు mean? (“a tree”.) Say it once more.

54.2 కొమ్మ (komma) — a branch

Before the new one: what did *ceṭṭu* mean?

You’ll want to know: కొమ్మ

కొమ్మ (*komma*) — “a branch”.

కొమ్మ is the branch, the arm the చెట్టు puts out sideways.

It stands very close to కొమ్ము, the horn of an animal, and the closeness is not an accident: both are the thing that grows out and forks. A tree wearing horns is a fair description of a tree in winter.

కొమ్మ turns up in old poetry meaning a young woman, by way of the slenderness of a branch. That sense has gone quiet, but it is why the word looks odd inside a love poem.

What you’ve built

Two: the tree and what it puts out.

Your turn

- *Say it: komma*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: komma, then ceṭṭu, and say which is part of which*
- *Recall: read కుర్చీ, then say sūryudu*

Before you move on

What does కొమ్మ mean? (“a branch”.) Say it once more.

54.3 వేరు (vēru) — a root

Before the new one: what did *komma* mean?

You’ll want to know: వేరు

వేరు (*vēru*) — “a root”.

వేరు is the root under the చెట్టు. It also means “separate, apart, other” — వేరు as an answer means “that is a different thing”.

One shape, two jobs, and they are not far apart when you think about what a root does: it is the part that is set aside, buried, kept out of the daylight and out of the reckoning.

Telugu is comfortable letting a word carry a solid thing and an abstract idea at once. You had one working two jobs a moment ago, with చుక్క.

What you’ve built

Three: what is up, what is out, and what is under.

Your turn

- *Say it: vēru*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: vēru, then komma, and say which end of the చెట్టు each one is at*
- *Recall: say muggu, then read చంద్రుడు and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does వేరు mean? (“a root”.) Say it once more.

54.4 విత్తనం (vittanani) — a seed

Before the new one: what did *vēru* mean?

You'll want to know: విత్తనం

విత్తనం (*vittanani*) — “a seed”.

విత్తనం is the seed, and it is built on విత్తు, “to sow”. The word for the thing comes out of the word for the act, which is the ordinary direction of travel: people had been sowing for a long time before anybody needed a name for what they held.

Sanskrit's *bīja* was borrowed in as *bījamī*, and it does the abstract work — the seed of an idea, the germ of a quarrel. విత్తనం stays in the sack.

The whole chapter is inside this word. A విత్తనం becomes a చెట్టు with a వేరు below and a కొమ్మ above.

What you've built

Four.

Your turn

- Say it: *vittanani*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *vittanani*, then *ceṭṭu*, and say which one comes first
- Recall: read పువ్వు, then say *cukka*

Before you move on

What does విత్తనం mean? (“a seed”.) Say it once more.

54.5 మొక్క (mokka) — a young plant

Before the new one: what did *vittanani* mean?

You'll want to know: మొక్క

మొక్క (*mokka*) — “a young plant”.

మొక్క is what the విత్తనం becomes before it earns the name చెట్టు: a seedling, a sapling, anything small and green and rooted.

The line between మొక్క and చెట్టు is about woodiness rather than height. A tomato plant stays a మొక్క at any size, because it stays soft. A చెట్టు has bark.

Do not tie it to మొక్క, “to bow, to make a vow”, which sounds close. Telugu has a good many pairs like that, and a resemblance on its own settles nothing.

What you’ve built

Five: చెట్టు, కొమ్మ, వేరు, విత్తనం, మొక్క. A tree, its parts, and its beginning.

Your turn

- *Say it: mokka*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: all five in order, then say them again as a life story, starting with the seed*
- *Recall: say pūladanḍa, then read మబ్బు and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does మొక్క mean? (“a young plant”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 55

River and Road

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name the water, the ground and the road around a Telugu village, and ask my way with them.

Complete TE-C55-path and demonstrate the chapter promise.

55.1 నది (nadi) — a river

Before the new one: what did *mokka* mean?

You'll want to know: నది

నది (*nadi*) — “a river”.

Sanskrit *nadī* is the river, and it is built on a piece meaning “to sound, to roar”. A river is named for the noise it makes, which tells you the people who named it were listening for water before they could see it.

Telugu clipped the long final vowel and says నది. The inherited Telugu word is ఏరు, a stream, and it survives in place names up and down the country long after it stopped being said on its own.

నది is the word you want when asking a stranger which way the water is.

What you've built

The first thing you would ask the way to.

Your turn

- *Say it: nadi*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: nadi, then dayacēsi, and put the two together as a question*
- *Recall: say ākāśani, then read చెట్టు and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does నది mean? (“a river”.) Say it once more.

55.2 చెరువు (ceruvu) — a village tank, a reservoir

Before the new one: what did *nadi* mean?

You’ll want to know: చెరువు

చెరువు (*ceruvu*) — “a village tank, a reservoir”.

A చెరువు is not a natural lake. It is a dug and banked tank that catches the rain and holds it through the dry months, and a great many Telugu villages were laid out around one before they were laid out around anything else.

So the word carries an argument about how the country was settled: the నది is where the water goes, the చెరువు is where it was made to stay. Kings had them dug and put their names on the bunds, and the names are still there.

Indian English calls this a “tank”, which is why the translation can sound strange until you have stood on the bund of one.

What you’ve built

Two waters: one that moves, one that was kept.

Your turn

- *Say it: ceruvu*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: ceruvu, then nadi, and say which one people made*

- *Recall:* read సూర్యుడు, then say *komma*

Before you move on

What does చెరువు mean? (“a village tank, a reservoir”.) Say it once more.

55.3 గుట్ట (guṭṭa) — a low hill

Before the new one: what did *ceruvu* mean?

You’ll want to know: గుట్ట

గుట్ట (*guṭṭa*) — “a low hill”.

గుట్ట is inherited, and it means the small rocky rise that the Deccan is covered in — a heap of boulders rather than a peak. It also means a heap of anything: a గుట్ట of grain, a గుట్ట of clothes.

That double sense is honest about the landscape. These hills look piled rather than pushed up, and a speaker naming one is naming a pile.

The borrowed పర్వతం is the big mountain, the one in a poem. Nobody calls the rise behind their village a పర్వతం.

What you’ve built

Three: water that moves, water that stays, and ground that stands up.

Your turn

- *Say it:* guṭṭa
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* guṭṭa, then ceruvu, and say which of the two you would climb
- *Recall:* say candruḍu, then read వేరు and say what it means

Before you move on

What does గుట్ట mean? (“a low hill”.) Say it once more.

55.4 గ్రామం (grāmam) — a village

Before the new one: what did *guṭṭa* mean?

You'll want to know: గ్రామం

గ్రామం (*grāmam*) — “a village”.

Sanskrit *grāma* began as the word for a moving band of people, a travelling group, and settled into meaning the place they settled in. The word sat down when the people did.

Telugu's own word is *ūru*, and it is the one used in speech: it is in half the place names on the map and it is what you say to a neighbour. గ్రామం is the official register — the word on a form, in a land record, on a signboard.

So a Telugu speaker holds two villages, one for the revenue office and one for home.

What you've built

Four.

Your turn

- *Say it: grāmam*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: grāmam, then ceruvu, and say which one a village is built around*
- *Recall: read చుక్క, then say vittanam*

Before you move on

What does గ్రామం mean? (“a village”.) Say it once more.

55.5 బాట (bāṭa) — a path, a way

Before the new one: what did *grāmam* mean?

You'll want to know: బాట

బాట (*bāṭa*) — “a path, a way”.

బాట is the inherited word for a way, a track, the line worn by feet going the same way twice. దారి does much the same work; బాట is the more physical of the two, the ground itself.

It goes abstract as easily as English “path” does. బాట పట్టు is to take up a way of living, and a person can be on somebody else's బాట.

You can now ask your way properly: దయచేసి, which గ్రామం, which బాట, which side the నది is on.

What you've built

Five: నది, చెరువు, గుట్ట, గ్రామం, బాట. Enough to be given directions with.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *bāṭa*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then ask a stranger the way to the నది using *dayacēsi*
- *Recall:* say *mabbu*, then read మొక్క and say what it means

Before you move on

What does బాట mean? (“a path, a way”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 56

In the House

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name five ordinary things inside a Telugu house and thank somebody for handing me one.

Complete TE-C56-box and demonstrate the chapter promise.

56.1 చాప (cāpa) — a mat

Before the new one: what did *bāṭa* mean?

You'll want to know: చాప

చాప (cāpa) — “a mat”.

A చాప is woven from palm leaf or reed, rolled up against a wall by day and unrolled to sit or sleep on.

It belongs beside the కుర్చీ you already have. Where the chair is a borrowed thing with a borrowed name, the చాప is old and the word is inherited, and a house that has both will often put the చాప down for the people who are comfortable on the floor and keep the కుర్చీ for the guest who is not.

Offering somebody a చాప is an invitation to stay a while. It is a slower gesture than pointing at a chair.

What you've built

The first thing a floor gets.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *cāpa*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *cāpa*, then *kurcī*, and say which of the two gets rolled up
- *Recall:* say *ceṭṭu*, then read నది and say what it means

Before you move on

What does చాప mean? (“a mat”.) Say it once more.

56.2 బుట్ట (buṭṭa) — a basket

Before the new one: what did *cāpa* mean?

You’ll want to know: బుట్ట

బుట్ట (*buṭṭa*) — “a basket”.

బుట్ట is inherited: the woven basket that carries vegetables home, holds flowers for the morning, and sits on a head on the way to market.

Weaving words tend to be old, and they tend to stay put while the trade words move around them. A బుట్ట and a చాప come off the same hands and the same palm leaf, which is why the two words feel like family even though they are not.

పూల బుట్ట is the flower basket — పువ్వు’s పూల- shape doing its work again.

What you’ve built

Two: something to sit on, something to carry with.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *buṭṭa*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *buṭṭa*, then *cāpa*, and say what the two are made of
- *Recall:* read కొమ్మ, then say *ceruvu*

Before you move on

What does బుట్ట mean? (“a basket”.) Say it once more.

56.3 కత్తి (katti) — a knife

Before the new one: what did *buṭṭa* mean?

You’ll want to know: కత్తి

కత్తి (*katti*) — “a knife”.

కత్తి is the knife and, in older use, the sword. Size did not divide them; the blade did.

It is inherited, and it is spread right across the family — Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam all have a word of the same shape for a cutting blade. Tools that a household could make for itself keep their names for a very long time.

కత్తి also does the work English gives to “sharp” when talking about people: కత్తిలాంటి is knife-like, said of somebody quick.

What you’ve built

Three.

Your turn

- *Say it: katti*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: katti, then buṭṭa, and say which one you would cut a పండు with*
- *Recall: say vēru, then read గుట్ట and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does కత్తి mean? (“a knife”.) Say it once more.

56.4 గిన్నె (ginne) — a cooking vessel, a bowl

Before the new one: what did *katti* mean?

You'll want to know: గిన్నె

గిన్నె (*ginne*) — “a cooking vessel, a bowl”.

గిన్నె is the round metal vessel that food is cooked and served in — the everyday one, brass or steel, with no lid worth mentioning.

Telugu splits its containers finely. A గిన్నె is not a కుండ, the fired clay pot, and it is not a పళ్ళెం, the flat plate. English pushes all three towards “pot” and “dish” and loses the difference between what holds heat, what holds water and what holds a meal.

When a kitchen has a name for each shape, the names are telling you which shapes the kitchen actually uses.

What you've built

Four.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *ginne*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *ginne*, then *katti*, and say which one goes on the fire
- *Recall:* read విత్తనం, then say *grāmami*

Before you move on

What does గిన్నె mean? (“a cooking vessel, a bowl”.) Say it once more.

56.5 పెట్టె (petṭe) — a box

Before the new one: what did *ginne* mean?

You'll want to know: పెట్టె

పెట్టె (*petṭe*) — “a box”.

పెట్టె comes straight out of పెట్టు, “to put”: the box is the put-place. Telugu builds a good many of its household words this way, from the thing you do to the thing you do it in.

Then the railways arrived and పెట్టె picked up a second job — a railway carriage is a పెట్టె, a box that people are put in. A word for putting things away ended up on the side of a train.

The house is furnished now: a చాప on the floor, a బుట్ట by the door, a కత్తి and a గిన్నె in the kitchen, and a పెట్టె for what is not needed today.

What you've built

Five: చాప, బుట్ట, కత్తి, గిన్నె, పెట్టె. You can name what a room holds, and say ధన్యవాదాలు when one is handed to you.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *pette*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then take one from somebody and say *dhanyavādālu*
- *Recall:* say *mokka*, then read బాట and say what it means

Before you move on

What does పెట్టె mean? (“a box”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 57

More of the Body

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 Telugu and say which one hurts.

Complete TE-C57-bone and demonstrate the chapter promise.

57.1 మెడ (meḍa) — the neck

Before the new one: what did *peṭṭe* mean?

You'll want to know: మెడ

మెడ (*meḍa*) — “the neck”.

మెడ is inherited and short, which is what you expect of a body word: the parts people point at got their names early and kept them.

It is where a పూలదండ goes, so you already had the place before you had the word.

మెడ వంచు, to bend the neck, is to give in. The gesture and the phrase mean the same thing in a great many languages, because the gesture came first.

What you've built

The place a garland already went.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *meḍa*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *meḍa*, then *pūladanḍa*, and put one on the other
- *Recall:* say *nadi*, then read చాప and say what it means

Before you move on

What does మెడ mean? (“the neck”.) Say it once more.

57.2 వీపు (vīpu) — the back

Before the new one: what did *meḍa* mean?

You’ll want to know: వీపు

వీపు (*vīpu*) — “the back”.

వీపు is the back — the flat of it, the part you carry a load on and a child rides on.

It sits with the other inherited body words you have: కాలు, పన్ను, వేలు, and now మెడ above it. The head is a different matter, since Telugu leans on borrowed words in the higher registers there, but the trunk and the limbs are almost entirely old stock.

That pattern is worth noticing. The words a language borrows tend to be for things it acquired; the body was not acquired.

What you’ve built

Two more, both of them old.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *vīpu*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *vīpu*, then *meḍa*, and say which is above the other
- *Recall:* read చెరువు, then say *buṭṭa*

Before you move on

What does వీపు mean? (“the back”.) Say it once more.

57.3 పెదవి (pedavi) — a lip

Before the new one: what did *vīpu* mean?

You’ll want to know: పెదవి

పెదవి (*pedavi*) — “a lip”.

పెదవి is the lip. Telugu keeps it separate from నోరు, the mouth as an opening, which you already have: the పెదవి is the rim, the నోరు is the hole.

పెదవి విరుచు — to twist the lip — is the Telugu way of saying somebody sneered. The face does the talking, and the language just reports it.

It is the part that shapes the sounds you have been making all along. Every ప in this book has been made with two పెదవులు.

What you’ve built

Three.

Your turn

- *Say it: pedavi*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: pedavi*, then say *puvva* slowly and notice what your పెదవులు do at the start
- *Recall: say gutṭa*, then read కత్తి and say what it means

Before you move on

What does పెదవి mean? (“a lip”.) Say it once more.

57.4 గోరు (gōru) — a fingernail, a claw

Before the new one: what did *pedavi* mean?

You'll want to know: గోరు

గోరు (*gōru*) — “a fingernail, a claw”.

గోరు is the nail on a finger and the claw on an animal, with no line drawn between them. One word for the hard thing at the end of the digit, whoever it belongs to.

It goes on the end of వేలు, which you already have. వేలి గోరు is the fingernail said in full, when the plain word would be unclear.

గోరువెచ్చని, “nail-warm”, is the Telugu word for lukewarm water — the temperature you test by dipping a fingertip. A measurement made with the body, before there were thermometers.

What you've built

Four.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *gōru*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *gōru*, then *vēlu*, and say which one grows out of the other
- *Recall:* read గ్రామం, then say *ginne*

Before you move on

What does గోరు mean? (“a fingernail, a claw”.) Say it once more.

57.5 ఎముక (emuka) — a bone

Before the new one: what did *gōru* mean?

You'll want to know: ఎముక

ఎముక (*emuka*) — “a bone”.

ఎముక is the bone, inherited, and it covers the whole family of them.

It carries the same weight English gives it: ఎముకలు విరిగేలా, “until the bones break”, is how you describe work that took everything a body had. The bone stands for the last thing left when the rest is gone.

That closes the body words. మెడ, వీపు, పెదవి, గోరు and ఎముక join కాలు, పన్ను, వేలు and the rest, and between them you can tell a doctor where it hurts.

What you've built

Five: మెడ, వీపు, పెదవి, గోరు, ఎముక. Enough to answer a వైద్యుడు with.

Your turn

- *Say it: emuka*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: all five in order, then point at your మెడ and say *nāku noppi**
- *Recall: say *bāṭa*, then read పెట్టె and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does ఎముక mean? (“a bone”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 58

More Short Replies

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say how much I want, refuse politely, and close a conversation in Telugu.

Complete TE-C58-thats-all and demonstrate the chapter promise.

58.1 కొంచెం (koñcem) — a little, a bit

Before the new one: what did *emuka* mean?

You’ll want to know: కొంచెం

కొంచెం (*koñcem*) — “a little, a bit”.

కొంచెం is “a little”, and it does far more work in Telugu than its size suggests. It softens whatever comes after it.

Ask for something plainly and you are demanding; put కొంచెం in front and you are asking. కొంచెం నీళ్లు is a request for water that leaves the other person room. The word is a quantity in the dictionary and a manner in the mouth.

Telugu shares this habit with a good many languages. English does it with “just” and “a bit”, and both of those have stopped measuring anything too.

What you’ve built

A word that makes the next one polite.

Your turn

- *Say it: koñcem*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: koñcem, then koñcem pālu, and hear how much softer it is than pālu alone*
- *Recall: say cāpa, then read మెడ and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does కొంచెం mean? (“a little, a bit”.) Say it once more.

58.2 ఎక్కువ (ekkuva) — more, a great deal

Before the new one: what did *koñcem* mean?

You’ll want to know: ఎక్కువ

ఎక్కువ (*ekkuva*) — “more, a great deal”.

ఎక్కువ is built on ఎక్కు, “to climb, to go up”. The quantity is a movement: more is what has gone up.

Set it against కొంచెం, which you had a moment ago, and you have the two ends of a plate of food. కొంచెం is what you say when you would like the serving to stop; ఎక్కువ is what you say when it was too much.

It doubles as “too much” without changing shape, so tone and face carry the difference. ఎక్కువ మాట్లాడు can be praise or a complaint depending on how it is said.

What you’ve built

Two: a little, and a lot.

Your turn

- *Say it: ekkuva*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: ekkuva, then koñcem, and say them as a pair*

- *Recall:* read బుట్ట, then say *vīpu*

Before you move on

What does ఎక్కువ mean? (“more, a great deal”.) Say it once more.

58.3 తక్కువ (takkuva) — less, too little

Before the new one: what did *ekkuva* mean?

You’ll want to know: తక్కువ

తక్కువ (*takkuva*) — “less, too little”.

తక్కువ is built on తక్కు, “to fall short”, exactly the way ఎక్కువ is built on climbing. Two words, one shape of construction, opposite directions.

A matched pair like this is worth holding on to, because it lets you guess. Once the -కువ ending on both has registered, you can meet a Telugu word for the first time and have some idea what it is doing.

తక్కువ చేసి మాట్లాడు, to speak somebody less, is to belittle them. The arithmetic goes straight into the manners.

What you’ve built

Three, and two of them are a pair.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *takkuva*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *takkuva*, then *ekkuva*, and say which one climbs
- *Recall:* say *katti*, then read పెదవి and say what it means

Before you move on

What does తక్కువ mean? (“less, too little”.) Say it once more.

58.4 వద్దు (vaddu) — no, I don't want it

Before the new one: what did *takkuva* mean?

You'll want to know: వద్దు

వద్దు (*vaddu*) — “no, I don't want it”.

వద్దు is the refusal of a thing offered. It is not the same as కాదు, which denies that something is so; వద్దు turns down an offer.

It answers కావాలి, “I want it”, and the two of them run every meal in a Telugu house. A hand over the plate and వద్దు is a complete sentence.

It softens the moment you put కొంచెం's cousin in front of it, or the -అండి ending on the end: వద్దండి is the same refusal with the door left open.

What you've built

Four.

Your turn

- *Say it: vaddu*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: vaddu, then vaddaṇḍi, and say which one you would use with a stranger*
- *Recall: read గిన్నె, then say gōru*

Before you move on

What does వద్దు mean? (“no, I don't want it”.) Say it once more.

58.5 అంతే (antē) — that's all; that's just it

Before the new one: what did *vaddu* mean?

You'll want to know: అంతే

అంతే (*antē*) — “that's all; that's just it”.

అంతే is అంత, “that much”, with a small -వీ on the end that means “just, exactly”. So the word says “exactly that much” — and it ends a list, a story or an argument.

It has a second life as agreement. Somebody explains why a thing went wrong and you say అంతే: that is precisely it, nothing further to add. The same word closes a sale and closes a discussion.

It is a good word to leave a chapter on. కొంచెం, ఎక్కువ, తక్కువ, వద్దు — and then అంతే.

What you’ve built

Five: కొంచెం, ఎక్కువ, తక్కువ, వద్దు, అంతే. You can now say how much, and when to stop.

Your turn

- *Say it: antē*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: all five in order, then refuse a second helping with vaddu, antē*
- *Recall: say peṭṭe, then read ఎముక and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does అంతే mean? (“that’s all; that’s just it”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 59

Weather and Ground

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name the weather and what is underfoot in Telugu, and use it as a reason to go home.

Complete TE-C59-fire and demonstrate the chapter promise.

59.1 గాలి (gāli) — wind, air

Before the new one: what did *antē* mean?

You'll want to know: గాలి

గాలి (*gāli*) — “wind, air”.

గాలి is inherited, and it covers both the wind that blows and the air that is simply there. Telugu does not split them.

It reaches further than weather. గాలి is breath, and it is rumour — గాలి వార్త is a story with nothing holding it up, blown in from somewhere. Air, breath and hearsay under one word is a chain a great many languages make, and it usually starts with breathing.

A గాలి getting up in the evening is the ordinary reason given for cutting a visit short.

What you've built

The first reason to start saying goodbye.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *gāli*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *gāli*, then *vellōstānu*, and use the one as a reason for the other
- *Recall:* say *meḍa*, then read కొంచెం and say what it means

Before you move on

What does గాలి mean? (“wind, air”.) Say it once more.

59.2 మంచు (mañcu) — mist, dew, snow

Before the new one: what did *gāli* mean?

You’ll want to know: మంచు

మంచు (*mañcu*) — “mist, dew, snow”.

మంచు is the cold wet thing in the air: mist on a winter morning, dew on the ground, and snow where there is any. One word for all three states, which suits a country that meets the third of them rarely.

This is worth sitting with. A language draws its lines where its speakers need them. Telugu splits its cooking vessels three ways and lumps mist, dew and snow together; a language spoken where snow falls would do the opposite.

మంచు కురుస్తోంది is “it is misting” on the coast and “it is snowing” in the hills, with no change to the word.

What you’ve built

Two: what moves, and what settles.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *mañcu*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *mañcu*, then *gāli*, and say which of the two you can see
- *Recall:* read వీపు, then say *ekkuva*

Before you move on

What does మంచు mean? (“mist, dew, snow”.) Say it once more.

59.3 ఇసుక (isuka) — sand

Before the new one: what did *mañcu* mean?

You’ll want to know: ఇసుక

ఇసుక (*isuka*) — “sand”.

ఇసుక is inherited and unremarkable, and that is the point: it is the ground beside every నది in the Telugu country.

The sand of a riverbed is where cattle are watered, where lorries come at night to dig, and where a village argument about who owns the river tends to start. A plain word can carry a lot of local weather.

ఇసుకలో నీళ్ళు, water in sand, is what you say about effort that soaks away.

What you’ve built

Three.

Your turn

- *Say it: isuka*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: isuka, then nadi, and say where you would find one beside the other*
- *Recall: say pedavi, then read తక్కువ and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does ఇసుక mean? (“sand”.) Say it once more.

59.4 బురద (burada) — mud

Before the new one: what did *isuka* mean?

You'll want to know: బురద

బురద (*burada*) — “mud”.

బురద is mud — what ఇసుక becomes when the rain has been at it.

It does the same second job that mud does in English. బురద చల్లు, to throw mud, is to slander somebody, and the picture is exact enough that you can guess the phrase before you are told it.

బురద is also the honest reason a visit ends early in the wet months. The బాట between the గ్రామం and the నది turns to it.

What you've built

Four.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *burada*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *burada*, then *isuka*, and say what turns one into the other
- *Recall:* read గోరు, then say *vaddu*

Before you move on

What does బురద mean? (“mud”.) Say it once more.

59.5 నిప్పు (nippu) — fire, a live coal

Before the new one: what did *burada* mean?

You'll want to know: నిప్పు

నిప్పు (*nippu*) — “fire, a live coal”.

నిప్పు is inherited, and it is the fire you can point at: the live coal, the burning thing in the hearth. అగ్ని, borrowed from Sanskrit, is fire as an idea and as a god, the one that carries offerings.

So Telugu keeps a working fire and a ceremonial one, in the same way it keeps a పొద్దు and a సూర్యుడు. That split has turned up so often in these chapters that you can start expecting it: the old word does the work, the borrowed one does the ceremony.

నిప్పు is what a house is banked down around at night, and putting it out is the last thing done before sleep. A good place to say వెళ్ళొస్తాను.

What you've built

Five: గాలి, మంచు, ఇసుక, బురద, నిప్పు. Weather enough to take your leave on.

Your turn

- *Say it: nippu*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: all five in order, then say gāli ekkuva, and take your leave with vellōstānu*
- *Recall: say emuka, then read అంతే and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does నిప్పు mean? (“fire, a live coal”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 60

Animals

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name five common animals in Telugu, and greet the house that keeps them.

Complete TE-C60-bird and demonstrate the chapter promise.

60.1 గేదె (gēde) — a buffalo

Before the new one: what did *nippu* mean?

You’ll want to know: గేదె

గేదె (*gēde*) — “a buffalo”.

గేదె is the water buffalo — black, unhurried, and the animal most of the పాలు in a Telugu household actually come from. The cow gets the songs; the గేదె fills the pot.

The word is inherited, and the animal is so ordinary that arriving at a village house often means being met by one before anybody comes out to say నమస్కారం.

A గేదె standing in a చెరువు with only its nose above the water is the picture the word carries. That is where it spends the hottest part of the day.

What you’ve built

The first animal.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *gēde*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *gēde*, then *pālu*, and say which one gives the other
- *Recall:* say *koñcem*, then read గాలి and say what it means

Before you move on

What does గేదె mean? (“a buffalo”.) Say it once more.

60.2 మేక (mēka) — a goat

Before the new one: what did *gēde* mean?

You’ll want to know: మేక

మేక (*mēka*) — “a goat”.

మేక is the goat: small, loud, and kept by households that cannot keep a గేదె. Where the buffalo wants water and grazing, the మేక wants almost nothing and will eat what is left.

The word is inherited and it is old. Its shape sits close to the Tamil and Kannada words for the same animal, which is what happens to the names of animals people have kept for a very long time.

A మేక will strip a bush bare and move on, which is why a గ్రామం keeps them at its edge rather than in its lanes.

What you’ve built

Two: one for milk, one for anything.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *mēka*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *mēka*, then *gēde*, and say which one wants the చెరువు
- *Recall:* read ఎక్కువ, then say *mañcu*

Before you move on

What does మేక mean? (“a goat”.) Say it once more.

60.3 కోడి (kōḍi) — a hen

Before the new one: what did *mēka* mean?

You’ll want to know: కోడి

కోడి (*kōḍi*) — “a hen”.

కోడి is the domestic fowl, hen or cock alike; the word does not divide them, and when the difference matters a second word goes in front.

It is inherited and it is everywhere in the family, close in shape to the Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam words for the same bird — one of those words that travelled with the animal and has not moved since.

The కోడి is also the village clock. It wakes a house before ఉదయం is properly under way, which is why nobody there has ever needed a గంట.

What you’ve built

Three.

Your turn

- *Say it: kōḍi*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: kōḍi, then mēka, and say which one wakes you*
- *Recall: say takkuva, then read ఇసుక and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does కోడి mean? (“a hen”.) Say it once more.

60.4 చీమ (cīma) — an ant

Before the new one: what did *kōḍi* mean?

You'll want to know: చీమ

చీమ (*cīma*) — “an ant”.

చీమ is the ant. After a గేదె and a కోడి it is a jump in scale worth making, because the same plain word-making covers whatever lives in a house, however small it is.

The word is inherited. Telugu has a stock comparison about a చీమ carrying many times its own weight, and it is the ordinary way to praise somebody small who works hard.

A line of చీమలు across a floor usually ends at a పండు somebody left out.

What you've built

Four: the biggest and the smallest so far.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *cīma*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *cīma*, then *gēde*, and say which one is easier to miss
- *Recall:* read వద్దు, then say *burada*

Before you move on

What does చీమ mean? (“an ant”.) Say it once more.

60.5 పక్షి (pakṣi) — a bird

Before the new one: what did *cīma* mean?

You'll want to know: పక్షి

పక్షి (*pakṣi*) — “a bird”.

పక్షి is the general one: any bird at all, the కోడి included. It came in from Sanskrit, and beside it Telugu keeps its own పిట్ట for the small ones about a garden.

That is a split this book has met before — an inherited word doing the everyday work and a borrowed one carrying the wider idea, the same shape

as నిప్పు beside అగ్ని. Once you start expecting it, half the vocabulary sorts itself.

Five animals now, from the గేదె at the gate to the చీమ under it, and a నమస్కారం for whoever keeps them.

What you've built

Five: గేదె, మేక, కోడి, చీమ, పక్షి. Enough to greet a house and name what lives in it.

Your turn

- *Say it: pakṣi*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: all five in order, then say namaskāram to whoever keeps them*
- *Recall: say antē, then read నిప్పు and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does పక్షి mean? (“a bird”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 61

In the Kitchen

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name five everyday things in a Telugu kitchen, and swap names with the person cooking.

Complete TE-C61-chilli and demonstrate the chapter promise.

61.1 పెరుగు (perugu) — curd

Before the new one: what did *pakṣi* mean?

You'll want to know: పెరుగు

పెరుగు (*perugu*) — “curd”.

పెరుగు is set curd: పాలు left overnight with a spoonful of yesterday's పెరుగు stirred in. It closes almost every meal in a Telugu house, and a *bhōjanam* without it is thought unfinished.

The word is inherited, and Telugu uses the same shape for what curd does and for what anything does when it grows. Curd is milk that grew.

A గేదె's పాలు set thicker than a cow's, which is one reason a village that keeps buffaloes is in no hurry to change.

What you've built

The first thing in the kitchen.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *perugu*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *perugu*, then *pālu*, and say which one comes first
- *Recall:* say *gāli*, then read గీదె and say what it means

Before you move on

What does పెరుగు mean? (“curd”.) Say it once more.

61.2 నెయ్యి (neyyi) — ghee

Before the new one: what did *perugu* mean?

You’ll want to know: నెయ్యి

నెయ్యి (*neyyi*) — “ghee”.

నెయ్యి is clarified butter, and it is what పెరుగు becomes after churning and heating. Three things out of one: పాలు, పెరుగు, నెయ్యి.

The word is inherited and very old. Its root runs across the whole family for the same fat, which suits a food that has been made the same way for longer than any of these languages have been separate.

A spoonful of నెయ్యి over rice is both a taste and a courtesy. It is what a house puts in front of an *atithi* first.

What you’ve built

Two, and the second is made out of the first.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *neyyi*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *neyyi*, then *perugu*, and say which one is poured
- *Recall:* read మంచు, then say *mēka*

Before you move on

What does నెయ్యి mean? (“ghee”.) Say it once more.

61.3 నూనె (nūne) — oil

Before the new one: what did *neyyi* mean?

You’ll want to know: నూనె

నూనె (*nūne*) — “oil”.

నూనె is oil pressed from seeds — groundnut, sesame, sunflower — and it is what a kitchen cooks with on the days it is not cooking with నెయ్యి.

The word is inherited, and Telugu keeps it firmly apart from నెయ్యి. One comes from an animal and one comes from a విత్తనం, and no cook mixes the two up.

నూనె also works outside the kitchen. It is what goes into a దీపం, and a house that has run out of it sits in the dark.

What you’ve built

Three.

Your turn

- *Say it: nūne*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: nūne, then neyyi, and say which one a దీపం takes*
- *Recall: say isuka, then read కోడి and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does నూనె mean? (“oil”.) Say it once more.

61.4 చక్కెర (cakkera) — sugar

Before the new one: what did *nūne* mean?

You'll want to know: చక్కెర

చక్కెర (*cakkerā*) — “sugar”.

చక్కెర is sugar, and the word is a traveller. Sanskrit *śarkarā* meant “grit, gravel” — the stuff arrived in grains — and the same word went west through Persian and Arabic and Latin until English got “sugar” out of it. The Telugu shape and the English one are cousins with a very long road between them.

Telugu also keeps బెల్లం, the unrefined block of palm or cane sugar, for everything traditional. చక్కెర is the white refined thing that came later.

A pinch of చక్కెర goes into dishes an English kitchen would leave savoury, and it goes in to round off the salt rather than to make anything sweet.

What you've built

Four.

Your turn

- *Say it: cakkerā*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: cakkerā, then perugu, and say which one is stirred into the other*
- *Recall: read బురద, then say cīma*

Before you move on

What does చక్కెర mean? (“sugar”.) Say it once more.

61.5 మిరప (mirapa) — a chilli

Before the new one: what did *cakkerā* mean?

You'll want to know: మిరప

మిరప (*mirapa*) — “a chilli”.

మిరప is the chilli, and it is the newest thing in this kitchen by several thousand years. The plant crossed from the Americas on Portuguese ships and reached the coast about four hundred years ago.

The word is older than the plant it names. It belonged to black pepper first, and when the new pod arrived and took over the job of making food hot, the name went with the job rather than staying with the plant.

Andhra cooking is built on it now, and a kitchen there measures itself by how much మిరప it can carry. Five things, and the person at the stove will ask your పేరు before the meal is over.

What you've built

Five: పెరుగు, నెయ్యి, నూనె, చక్కెర, మిరప. Enough to name what a kitchen holds while somebody asks you your పేరు.

Your turn

- *Say it:* mirapa
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then say *nā pēru* and your own name
- *Recall:* say *nippu*, then read పక్షి and say what it means

Before you move on

What does మిరప mean? (“a chilli”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 62

Things People Make

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name five things a Telugu household makes or keeps, and ask politely for one of them.

Complete TE-C62-mirror and demonstrate the chapter promise.

62.1 దారం (dāraṁ) — thread

Before the new one: what did *mirapa* mean?

You’ll want to know: దారం

దారం (*dāraṁ*) — “thread”.

దారం is thread — spun cotton, fine enough to sew with and strong enough to tie a knot that holds. It is the first thing in this chapter and the smallest.

The word came in from Sanskrit, where it belongs to a family about tearing and drawing out. Thread is what you draw out of a mass of cotton.

దారం does ceremonial work too. The thread tied round a wrist at a festival is a దారం, and once it is on it stays there until it falls off by itself.

What you’ve built

The first thing a house makes for itself.

Your turn

- Say it: *dāraṁ*

- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *dārami*, then *dayacēsi*, and ask for it politely
- *Recall:* say *gēde*, then read పెరుగు and say what it means

Before you move on

What does దారం mean? (“thread”.) Say it once more.

62.2 సూది (sūdi) — a needle

Before the new one: what did *dārami* mean?

You’ll want to know: సూది

సూది (*sūdi*) — “a needle”.

సూది is a needle. It arrived from Sanskrit *sūcī*, and Telugu wore the middle sound down to a *d* — a change the language makes often enough that the two shapes line up easily once you know to expect it.

A సూది is useless without a దారం, and a దారం is only a tangle without a సూది. That is about as neat a pair as this book has come across.

The same word does the వైద్యుడు’s work: an injection is a సూది, and somebody at a clinic who uses the word is not talking about mending a బట్ట.

What you’ve built

Two, and neither is much use without the other.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *sūdi*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *sūdi*, then *dārami*, and say which one goes through the other
- *Recall:* read మేక, then say *neyyi*

Before you move on

What does సూది mean? (“a needle”.) Say it once more.

62.3 చీపురు (cīpuru) — a broom

Before the new one: what did *sūdi* mean?

You’ll want to know: చీపురు

చీపురు (*cīpuru*) — “a broom”.

చీపురు is the broom: a bundle of coconut-leaf ribs bound tight at one end, used bent at the waist rather than standing upright.

The word is inherited. Sweeping is the first work of the morning in a Telugu house, done before the ముగ్గు goes down at the doorstep.

A చీపురు is treated with a little care because of that. It is not stood on its bristles, it is not stepped over, and it is not lent out lightly.

What you’ve built

Three, and this one starts the day.

Your turn

- *Say it: cīpuru*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: cīpuru, then muggu, and say which one comes first*
- *Recall: say kōḍi, then read నూనె and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does చీపురు mean? (“a broom”.) Say it once more.

62.4 గొడుగు (goḍugu) — an umbrella

Before the new one: what did *cīpuru* mean?

You’ll want to know: గొడుగు

గొడుగు (*goḍugu*) — “an umbrella”.

గొడుగు is an umbrella, and in Telugu it answers the sun as much as the rain — which is the commoner use of it on a hot morning.

The word is inherited. Long before cloth and wire there was a గొడుగు of palm leaf, and the ceremonial one held over a deity or over a bride is still made and named the same way.

It settles two things already met: గాలి will turn it inside out and మంచు will not, so a గొడుగు goes out in one kind of weather and stays at home in the other.

What you've built

Four.

Your turn

- Say it: *goḍugu*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *goḍugu*, then *gāli*, and say what one does to the other
- Recall: read చీమ, then say *cakkerā*

Before you move on

What does గొడుగు mean? (“an umbrella”.) Say it once more.

62.5 అద్దం (addam) — a mirror

Before the new one: what did *goḍugu* mean?

You'll want to know: అద్దం

అద్దం (*addam*) — “a mirror”.

అద్దం is a mirror. Of the five things here it is the only one a household buys rather than makes, and the only one wearing a borrowed name — from Sanskrit *ādarśa*, “what shows back”.

The other four come out of whatever grows nearby: a దారం out of cotton, a చీపురు out of leaf ribs, a గొడుగు out of palm and cane, and a సూది out of a scrap of metal from the smith at the edge of the గ్రామం. An అద్దం needs a factory.

Asking for one is where దయచేసి earns its keep. అద్దం ఇవ్వండి on its own lands like an instruction; with దయచేసి in front it lands like a request.

What you've built

Five: దారం, సూది, చీపురు, గొడుగు, అద్దం. Enough to ask for what you need with దయచేసి in front of it.

Your turn

- *Say it: addamī*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: all five in order, then say dayacēsi addamī ivvaṇḍi*
- *Recall: say pakṣi, then read మిరప and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does అద్దం mean? (“a mirror”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 63

Hunger, Sleep and Health

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say in Telugu that I am hungry, sleepy or unwell, and ask after somebody else’s health.

Complete TE-C63-health and demonstrate the chapter promise.

63.1 ఆకలి (ākali) — hunger

Before the new one: what did *addamī* mean?

You’ll want to know: ఆకలి

ఆకలి (*ākali*) — “hunger”.

ఆకలి is hunger. Telugu does not say “I am hungry” — it says నాకు ఆకలి, “to me, hunger”, the same shape as నాకు తెలుసు and నాకు తెలుగు వచ్చు. Hunger is something that happens to you.

The word is inherited, and it is among the first a child in a Telugu house learns to say — usually loudly, and usually before *bhōjanam* is anywhere near ready.

ఆకలిగా ఉందా? is a real greeting in a house you are close to. It gets asked before మీరు ఎలా ఉన్నారు? has a chance.

What you’ve built

The first thing to say about yourself.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *ākali*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *nāku ākali*, then ask *mīru elā unnāru?*
- *Recall:* say *perugu*, then read దారం and say what it means

Before you move on

What does ఆకలి mean? (“hunger.”) Say it once more.

63.2 నిద్ర (nidra) — sleep

Before the new one: what did *ākali* mean?

You’ll want to know: నిద్ర

నిద్ర (*nidra*) — “sleep”.

నిద్ర is sleep, and it takes the same shape as ఆకలి: నాకు నిద్ర వస్తోంది, “sleep is coming to me”. You do not do it; it arrives.

The word came from Sanskrit *nidrā* and settled without changing. Beside it Telugu keeps నిదుర, the softer everyday form, and the two are one word wearing different clothes.

నిద్ర also makes a polite reason for leaving late in the evening, and it works the way గాలి worked earlier. Nobody argues with it.

What you’ve built

Two, and both of them come to you.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *nidra*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *nidra*, then *ākali*, and say which one you have now
- *Recall:* read నెయ్యి, then say *sūdi*

Before you move on

What does నిద్ర mean? (“sleep”.) Say it once more.

63.3 దగ్గు (daggu) — a cough

Before the new one: what did *nidra* mean?

You’ll want to know: దగ్గు

దగ్గు (*daggu*) — “a cough”.

దగ్గు is a cough. It is inherited, and it is a sound turned into a word, which is how a good many of these words start out.

Like ఆకలి and నిద్ర it comes to you rather than from you: నాకు దగ్గు, and nobody needs telling any more than that.

Telugu keeps దగ్గు for the whole thing at once — the single cough, the fit of coughing, and the illness sitting behind both — where English reaches for three phrases. A మంచు morning in the hills fills a house with it.

What you’ve built

Three.

Your turn

- *Say it: daggu*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: daggu, then nidra, and say which one keeps you from the other*
- *Recall: say nūne, then read చీపురు and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does దగ్గు mean? (“a cough”.) Say it once more.

63.4 రోగం (rōgam) — a disease

Before the new one: what did *daggu* mean?

You'll want to know: రోగం

రోగం (*rōgani*) — “a disease”.

రోగం is illness in general: not the దగ్గు you have this week, but the thing a వైద్యుడు puts a name to.

It is Sanskrit, from a root about breaking — an illness is something breaking in you — and Telugu took the word whole, the way it took *hṛdayani*.

రోగి is the person who has one. A వైద్యుడు's whole working day is spent between those two words, and so is a good deal of ordinary conversation about relatives.

What you've built

Four.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *rōgani*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *rōgani*, then *daggu*, and say which one is the smaller trouble
- *Recall:* read చక్కెర, then say *godugu*

Before you move on

What does రోగం mean? (“a disease”.) Say it once more.

63.5 ఆరోగ్యం (*ārōgyani*) — health

Before the new one: what did *rōgani* mean?

You'll want to know: ఆరోగ్యం

ఆరోగ్యం (*ārōgyani*) — “health”.

ఆరోగ్యం is health, and it is the word before it with a small piece stuck on the front. The piece means “not”, and రోగ is the illness: health here is what is left when the illness is gone.

That is a real difference in outlook and worth a moment. English health is something to be built up. ఆరోగ్యం is a subtraction.

మీ ఆరోగ్యం ఎలా ఉంది? is what a house asks an *atithi* who has been ill. It is more particular than మీరు ఎలా ఉన్నారు?, and it expects a real answer.

What you've built

Five: ఆకలి, నిద్ర, దగ్గు, రోగం, ఆరోగ్యం. Enough to say what is wrong and to ask after somebody else.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *ārōgyam*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then ask *mī ārōgyam elā undi?*
- *Recall:* say *mirapa*, then read అర్థం and say what it means

Before you move on

What does ఆరోగ్యం mean? (“health”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 64

Words That Join an Answer

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗋️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can add to a Telugu answer, limit it, put it in order, or say it is not finished.

Complete TE-C64-still and demonstrate the chapter promise.

64.1 కూడా (kūdā) — also

Before the new one: what did *ārōgyam* mean?

You’ll want to know: కూడా

కూడా (*kūdā*) — “also”.

కూడా goes after the thing it is adding, not before it. నేను కూడా is “me too”; పెరుగు కూడా is “the curd as well”.

English can drop “also” almost anywhere in a sentence and let the stress carry the meaning. Telugu puts కూడా straight after whatever it includes, and that placement does the work the stress would have done.

It is a small word that softens a great deal. Adding కూడా to an answer turns a flat అవును into agreement with the person who asked.

What you’ve built

The first joining word.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *kūḍā*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *nēnu kūḍā*, then *perugu kūḍā*, and say what each one adds
- *Recall:* say *dāraṁ*, then read అకలి and say what it means

Before you move on

What does కూడా mean? (“also”.) Say it once more.

64.2 మాత్రమే (mātramē) — only

Before the new one: what did *kūḍā* mean?

You’ll want to know: మాత్రమే

మాత్రమే (*mātramē*) — “only”.

మాత్రమే is the other half of కూడా. Where కూడా opens an answer out, మాత్రమే shuts it: పెరుగు మాత్రమే is “curd and nothing else”. It stands in the same place, straight after the thing it is about.

It is built on Sanskrit *mātra*, “a measure” — the same piece English carries in metre and in diameter. Saying మాత్రమే is saying “this much and no further”.

With a small quantity in front it does polite work. కొంచెం మాత్రమే, “only a little”, accepts what is offered without taking much of it.

What you’ve built

Two, and they pull opposite ways.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *mātramē*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *perugu kūḍā*, then *perugu mātramē*, and say which one takes more

- *Recall:* read సూది, then say *nidra*

Before you move on

What does మాత్రమే mean? (“only”.) Say it once more.

64.3 అయితే (ayitē) — in that case

Before the new one: what did *mātramē* mean?

You’ll want to know: అయితే

అయితే (*ayitē*) — “in that case”.

అయితే picks up what the other person has just said and turns on it: సరే, అయితే వెళ్ళిస్తాను — “alright, in that case I’ll be off”.

It is put together out of the piece Telugu uses for “it happened” plus the little ending that means “if”, so what it literally says is “if it is so”. English “well then” and “in that case” both land in the same spot.

At the head of an answer, on its own, అయితే is one of the most useful things a learner can carry. It buys a moment, and it shows the other person you were listening.

What you’ve built

Three.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *ayitē*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *sarē*, then *ayitē*, and put the two together
- *Recall:* say *cīpuru*, then read చిప్పు and say what it means

Before you move on

What does అయితే mean? (“in that case”.) Say it once more.

64.4 తరువాత (taruvāta) — after that, later

Before the new one: what did *ayitē* mean?

You'll want to know: తరువాత

తరువాత (*taruvāta*) — “after that, later”.

తరువాత puts two things in order: *bhōjanam taruvāta*, “after the meal”. It goes after the thing it follows, exactly like కూడా and మాత్రమే before it — a habit worth noticing, because it holds for a great many of these small words.

The word is inherited. Standing alone at the front of a sentence it means “later”, and it is the gentle way to put something off: తరువాత, not now, and no reason offered.

తరువాత is also how a story gets kept moving. A listener who says it is asking you to go on.

What you've built

Four, and this one is about order.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *taruvāta*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *bhōjanam taruvāta*, then just *taruvāta*, and say how the two differ
- *Recall:* read గొడుగు, then say *rōgam*

Before you move on

What does తరువాత mean? (“after that, later”.) Say it once more.

64.5 ఇంకా (inkā) — still, yet

Before the new one: what did *taruvāta* mean?

You'll want to know: ఇంకా

ఇంకా (*inkā*) — “still, yet”.

ఇంకా says the thing is not finished. ఇంకా ఉంది is “there is still some”; ఇంకా రాలేదు is “she hasn’t come yet”.

It is the natural answer to అంతే. Where అంతే closes a list off, ఇంకా says there is more of it coming, and the two make a pair the way కూడా and మాత్రమే do.

Five small words, and not one of them names a thing. కూడా, మాత్రమే, అయితే, తరువాత, ఇంకా are what turn a set of separate answers into a conversation.

What you’ve built

Five: కూడా, మాత్రమే, అయితే, తరువాత, ఇంకా. Enough to add to an answer, limit it, order it, or keep it open.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *inkā*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then answer *antē?* with *inkā undi*
- *Recall:* say *addani*, then read ఆరోగ్యం and say what it means

Before you move on

What does ఇంకా mean? (“still, yet”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 65

More Good Manners

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can welcome somebody in Telugu, make a request, ask their leave, and thank them.

Complete TE-C65-trust and demonstrate the chapter promise.

65.1 స్వాగతం (svāgatam) — a welcome

Before the new one: what did *inkā* mean?

You'll want to know: స్వాగతం

స్వాగతం (*svāgatam*) — “a welcome”.

Keep this well apart from పరవాలేదు. పరవాలేదు is what you say after somebody thanks you. స్వాగతం is what you say when they walk in. English hands the one word “welcome” both jobs; Telugu does not.

It is Sanskrit, and it comes apart neatly: *su-* “well” and *āgata* “come” — “well come”, which is what the English word is too, arrived by an entirely separate road.

A house says it with the door open and a *gauravani* behind it. The ముగ్గు at the step is the same sentence without any words in it.

What you've built

The first thing said at a door.

Your turn

- *Say it: svāgatam*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: svāgatam*, then *paravālēdu*, and say which one answers a thank-you
- *Recall: say ākali*, then read కూడా and say what it means

Before you move on

What does స్వాగతం mean? (“a welcome”.) Say it once more.

65.2 మర్యాద (maryāda) — good manners

Before the new one: what did *svāgatam* mean?

You’ll want to know: మర్యాద

మర్యాద (*maryāda*) — “good manners”.

మర్యాద is the doing half of *gauravam*. Respect is what you feel for somebody; మర్యాద is what you do about it — standing up, offering the కుర్చీ, serving the *atithi* before yourself.

The word is Sanskrit and its first sense was a boundary line. Manners as a line you do not step over is a picture worth keeping hold of.

మర్యాదగా is how it usually reaches a person: మర్యాదగా మాట్లాడు, “speak with manners”, which sounds sterner in English than it does in Telugu. It is closer to “be decent about it”.

What you’ve built

Two: what you feel and what you do.

Your turn

- *Say it: maryāda*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: maryāda*, then *gauravam*, and say which one somebody can watch you doing

- *Recall:* read నిద్ర, then say *mātramē*

Before you move on

What does మర్యాద mean? (“good manners”.) Say it once more.

65.3 మనవి (manavi) — a polite request

Before the new one: what did *maryāda* mean?

You’ll want to know: మనవి

మనవి (*manavi*) — “a polite request”.

మనవి is a request made from below — not దయచేసి set in front of an instruction, but the whole thing framed as a submission. ఒక మనవి, “one request”, is said before the request itself arrives.

Where the word came from is not something any source consulted here settles, so nothing is invented for it. What is certain is the register it sits in, and that is the part a learner needs.

A మనవి goes to somebody who can say no: an official, an elder, a host. The word does half the softening before you have said what you want.

What you’ve built

Three.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *manavi*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *manavi*, then *dayacēsi*, and say which one is the whole request
- *Recall:* say *daggu*, then read అయితే and say what it means

Before you move on

What does మనవి mean? (“a polite request”.) Say it once more.

65.4 అనుమతి (anumati) — permission

Before the new one: what did *manavi* mean?

You'll want to know: అనుమతి

అనుమతి (*anumati*) — “permission”.

అనుమతి is permission — what a మనవి is hoping to be given. అనుమతి ఇవ్వండి, “give permission”, is the formal shape of it; in a house it usually comes out as a nod.

It is Sanskrit: *anu-* “along with” and *mati* “a mind”. Permission is somebody’s mind going along with yours, which is a kinder picture than the English word offers.

Asking leave before you go is where it is most used, and it sits naturally in front of వెళ్ళొస్తాను. With అనుమతి first, leaving stops being something you announce and becomes something you are given.

What you’ve built

Four.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *anumati*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *anumati*, then *vellōstānu*, and take your leave properly
- *Recall:* read రోగం, then say *taruvāta*

Before you move on

What does అనుమతి mean? (“permission”.) Say it once more.

65.5 నమ్మకం (nammakam) — trust

Before the new one: what did *anumati* mean?

You'll want to know: నమ్మకం

నమ్మకం (*nammakam*) — “trust”.

నమ్మకం is trust, and it is the one word here that is Telugu's own. It is built on నమ్మ, “to believe”, with the ending that turns an action into the thing itself.

The four before it are Sanskrit and they are all about form: a welcome, manners, a request, permission. నమ్మకం is what the form is for. A house that does all four and is still not trusted has been doing something else.

The word also carries “belief” in the religious sense, and Telugu is content to let one word hold both. Trusting a person and believing a thing are the same act pointed in two directions.

What you've built

Five: స్వాగతం, మర్యాద, మనవి, అనుమతి, నమ్మకం. Enough to bring somebody in, ask something of them, and say ధన్యవాదములు when they agree.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *nammakam*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then say *dhanyavādamulu* to whoever gave you the last one
- *Recall:* say *ārōgyam*, then read ఇంకా and say what it means

Before you move on

What does నమ్మకం mean? (“trust”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 66

The Field

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a Telugu field and what comes off it, and take my leave when the work is done.

Complete TE-C66-harvest and demonstrate the chapter promise.

66.1 పొలం (polam) — a field

Before the new one: what did *nammakam* mean?

You'll want to know: పొలం

పొలం (*polam*) — “a field”.

పొలం is a field under cultivation — not open ground, but somebody's, with a boundary and a name and a రైతు who walks it every morning.

The word is inherited. A గ్రామం is measured by its పొలం far more than by its houses, and directions in the country are given by whose పొలం you pass rather than by any బాట.

Going out to the పొలం before ఉదయం and coming back after సాయంత్రం is the shape of the day the rest of this chapter describes.

What you've built

The ground everything else here stands on.

Your turn

- *Say it: polam*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: polam, then grāmam, and say which one feeds the other*
- *Recall: say kūḍā, then read స్వాగతం and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does పొలం mean? (“a field”.) Say it once more.

66.2 పరి (vari) — paddy, rice still in the field

Before the new one: what did *polam* mean?

You’ll want to know: పరి

పరి (*vari*) — “paddy”, rice while it is still standing.

Telugu counts rice three times over and this is the first of them: పరి in the పొలం, బియ్యం once it is husked, అన్నం once it is cooked. Three words, three states, and none of them will stand in for another.

The word is inherited and it names the plant. English has one word for the lot and has to borrow “paddy” from Malay to get the same distinction; Telugu had it from the start.

A పరి పొలం under water with the seedlings just pushed in is the picture the coast is built on, and what is being pushed in is the మొక్క from earlier in this book.

What you’ve built

Two: the ground and what is standing in it.

Your turn

- *Say it: vari*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: vari, then say which of బియ్యం and అన్నం comes next*

- *Recall:* read మాత్రమే, then say *maryāda*

Before you move on

What does వరి mean? (“paddy, rice still in the field”.) Say it once more.

66.3 గడ్డి (gaḍḍi) — grass

Before the new one: what did *vari* mean?

You’ll want to know: గడ్డి

గడ్డి (*gaḍḍi*) — “grass”.

గడ్డి is grass, and in a village it mostly means fodder — what gets cut at the edge of the పొలం and carried back for the గేదె and the మేక.

The word is inherited. It covers straw as well, meaning what is left of the వరి once the grain is off, so one word runs all the way from the living plant to the dry stalk stacked beside the house.

గడ్డి does insulting work too. Calling something గడ్డి is calling it worthless, which is what tends to happen to a word that means “the part nobody eats”.

What you’ve built

Three, and this is what the animals get.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *gaḍḍi*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *gaḍḍi*, then *gēde*, and say which one is carried to the other
- *Recall:* say *ayitē*, then read మనవి and say what it means

Before you move on

What does గడ్డి mean? (“grass”.) Say it once more.

66.4 కల్లం (kallam) — a threshing floor

Before the new one: what did *gaḍḍi* mean?

You'll want to know: కల్లం

కల్లం (*kallam*) — “a threshing floor”.

కల్లం is the threshing floor: a flat patch of ground beaten hard and swept clean, where the cut *వరి* is separated from its *గడ్డి*.

The word is inherited. A కల్లం belongs to the గ్రామం rather than to one house, and the order in which families take their turn on it is settled by custom rather than by asking — the kind of arrangement a village is full of.

It gets swept with a చీపురు before anything is laid down on it, and that sweeping is taken about as seriously as the ముగ్గు at a doorstep.

What you've built

Four: where the year's work gets finished.

Your turn

- *Say it: kallam*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: kallam, then cīpuru, and say which one is used on the other*
- *Recall: read తరువాత, then say anumati*

Before you move on

What does కల్లం mean? (“a threshing floor”.) Say it once more.

66.5 పంట (paṇṭa) — a harvest

Before the new one: what did *kallam* mean?

You'll want to know: పంట

పంట (*paṇṭa*) — “a harvest”.

పంట is the harvest — the crop standing and the crop taken in, both at once. It is inherited, and it is what this whole chapter has been walking towards: పొలం, వరి, గడ్డి, కల్లం, and then పంట.

Telugu uses it well outside the field. A good year at anything is a మంచి పంట, and somebody talking about how their children turned out will reach for the word without meaning anything about rice at all.

When the పంట is in and the కల్లం is swept, the day and the season finish together, and there is nothing left to do but say వెళ్ళొస్తాను.

What you've built

Five: పొలం, వరి, గడ్డి, కల్లం, పంట. A year's work in five words, and a good place to take your leave.

Your turn

- *Say it:* paṇṭa
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then take your leave with vellōstānu
- *Recall:* say inkā, then read నమ్మకం and say what it means

Before you move on

What does పంట mean? (“a harvest”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 67

The House Itself

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name the parts a Telugu house is built from, and greet the people inside it.

Complete TE-C67-window and demonstrate the chapter promise.

67.1 గోడ (gōḍa) — a wall

Before the new one: what did *paṇṭa* mean?

You'll want to know: గోడ

గోడ (*gōḍa*) — “a wall”.

గోడ is a wall: the built side of a room. A village house puts up four of them in mud or in brick, and everything after that — the తలుపు, the కుర్చీ pushed back against one of them — is placed by where they stand.

The word is inherited, and it does the same figurative work English asks of a wall. Somebody who will not listen is a గోడ, and a family with nothing hidden has no గోడ inside it.

Whitewashing the గోడ before a festival is its own small season in a Telugu house. A guest who arrives to a fresh one has been told they were expected, and the right thing to say at that moment is నమస్కారం.

What you've built

One. What a house is measured by before anything is put inside it.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *gōḍa*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *gōḍa*, then *namaskāram*, as though greeting somebody at a freshly painted one
- *Recall:* say *svāgatam*, then read పొలం and say what it means

Before you move on

What does గోడ mean? (“a wall”.) Say it once more.

67.2 కప్పు (kappu) — a roof

Before the new one: what did *gōḍa* mean?

You’ll want to know: కప్పు

కప్పు (*kappu*) — “a roof”.

కప్పు is the roof — the thing that covers. It comes from the same stem as the everyday word for covering something over, so a lid on a గిన్నె and the roof over a room are one idea in Telugu.

Village roofs were గడ్డి over beams for centuries and are tile or concrete now. The material changed and the word did not, which is usually a sign of a very old one.

To be under somebody’s కప్పు is to be their guest, and it binds the person underneath as much as the person above. నమస్కారం comes first, and everything else follows it.

What you’ve built

Two: గోడ and కప్పు. Sides, and a lid.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *kappu*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly

- *Say it:* *gōḍa*, then *kappu*, and say which one holds up the other
- *Recall:* read మర్యాద, then say *vari*

Before you move on

What does కప్పు mean? (“a roof”.) Say it once more.

67.3 గడప (gaḍapa) — a threshold

Before the new one: what did *kappu* mean?

You’ll want to know: గడప

గడప (*gaḍapa*) — “a threshold”.

గడప is the threshold: the raised strip of stone or wood under the తలుపు that you step over on the way in.

It is the most watched piece of a Telugu house. The ముగ్గు is drawn just outside it, water is thrown across it at ఉదయం, and nobody steps on it if they can help it.

Because it marks in from out, గడప also does the work of the word household. Asking whose గడప somebody comes from is asking about their family, not about their doorstep.

What you’ve built

Three. The line you cross to be inside.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *gaḍapa*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *gaḍapa*, then *muggu*, and say which one is drawn beside the other
- *Recall:* say *manavi*, then read గడ్డి and say what it means

Before you move on

What does గడప mean? (“a threshold”.) Say it once more.

67.4 మెట్టు (metṭu) — a step

Before the new one: what did *gaḍapa* mean?

You’ll want to know: మెట్టు

మెట్టు (*metṭu*) — “a step”.

మెట్టు is a step — one of a flight, cut in stone or built up in mud.

Telugu counts them and remembers them. The steps down to a చెరువు are named in some villages, and a house with a మెట్టు at its గడప is a house standing a little above the street.

The word carries rank as well. A person who has risen has climbed a మెట్టు, which is how a stair turns into a career with nobody explaining it.

What you’ve built

Four. Something to climb before you cross.

Your turn

- *Say it: metṭu*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: metṭu, then gaḍapa, in the order your feet meet them*
- *Recall: read అనుమతి, then say kallam*

Before you move on

What does మెట్టు mean? (“a step”.) Say it once more.

67.5 కిటికీ (kiṭikī) — a window

Before the new one: what did *metṭu* mean?

You'll want to know: కిటికీ

కిటికీ (*kitikī*) — “a window”.

కిటికీ is a window. It is a borrowing, ultimately from Portuguese, and it arrived carrying the shape of window it names: a framed opening in a గోడ, rather than the small unglazed gap older houses left for గాలి.

Telugu kept the borrowed word and the older habit side by side. A కిటికీ is opened at ఉదయం, shut against the sun in the middle of the day, and opened again by సాయంత్రం.

A house with a గోడ, a కప్పు, a గడప, a మెట్టు and a కిటికీ is a whole house. Whoever is standing at any one of them is somebody you can greet.

What you've built

Five: గోడ, కప్పు, గడప, మెట్టు, కిటికీ. A house you could walk up to and greet.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *kitikī*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *namaskāram* at the last one
- *Recall:* say *nammakami*, then read పంట and say what it means

Before you move on

What does కిటికీ mean? (“a window”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 68

Sound and Voice

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name the sounds a Telugu house makes, and give my name aloud in a message.

Complete TE-C68-message and demonstrate the chapter promise.

68.1 శబ్దం (śabdāṁ) — a sound

Before the new one: what did *kiṭikiṭi* mean?

You'll want to know: శబ్దం

శబ్దం (*śabdāṁ*) — “a sound”.

శబ్దం is a sound — any sound at all, from a తలుపు closing to thunder over a పొలం.

It is Sanskrit, borrowed early and borrowed whole. It covers the smallest noise and the largest with no change: a చుక్క of water landing, or the crack that comes before rain.

A room with no శబ్దం in it is not called quiet in Telugu so much as empty, and people say exactly that about a house whose children have grown up and gone.

What you've built

One. The most general thing an ear can take in.

Your turn

- *Say it: śabdami*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: śabdami, then kiṭikī, and say which one comes in through the other*
- *Recall: say polami, then read గోడ and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does శబ్దం mean? (“a sound”.) Say it once more.

68.2 గొంతు (gontu) — a voice

Before the new one: what did *śabdami* mean?

You’ll want to know: గొంతు

గొంతు (*gontu*) — “a voice”.

గొంతు is a voice, and it is also the throat that makes one — the front of the మెడ you already know. Telugu lets the two meanings sit in the single word.

Somebody loud has a big గొంతు and somebody who sings well has a sweet one. A person who speaks up for people who cannot is said to have lent them their గొంతు.

Losing it is ordinary. After a night of దగ్గు a villager will say the గొంతు has gone, and mean the throat and the sound at once.

What you’ve built

Two: శబ్దం and గొంతు. Sound in general, and the sound a person makes.

Your turn

- *Say it: gontu*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: gontu, then śabdami, and say which one is the wider word*

- *Recall:* read పరి, then say *kappu*

Before you move on

What does గొంతు mean? (“a voice”.) Say it once more.

68.3 పాట (pāṭa) — a song

Before the new one: what did *gontu* mean?

You’ll want to know: పాట

పాట (*pāṭa*) — “a song”.

పాట is a song. Watch the middle letter. పాత, with a plain letter, is the word for old that you already have; పాట is a song. One has the tongue behind the teeth and the other has it curled back.

The word is inherited and it is everywhere: work songs at the కల్లం, lullabies, film songs a whole state can hum. A Telugu speaker will name a పాట faster than a book.

Anything repeated past patience becomes a పాట as an insult, in the way English reaches for the same old song.

What you’ve built

Three. And a పాత పాట is an old song, which is a phrase you have now earned.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *pāṭa*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *pāta*, then *pāṭa*, and hear the one letter between them
- *Recall:* say *gaḍḍi*, then read గడప and say what it means

Before you move on

What does పాట mean? (“a song”.) Say it once more.

68.4 అరుపు (arupu) — a shout

Before the new one: what did *pāṭa* mean?

You'll want to know: అరుపు

అరుపు (*arupu*) — “a shout”.

అరుపు is a shout: a cry raised on purpose, loud enough to carry the width of a పొలం.

It is inherited, built on the everyday word for shouting, and it is not rude in itself. Calling somebody in from work is an అరుపు, and so is the cry that warns a గ్రామం.

It turns rude only when there is a person on the far end of it. Somebody who was shouted at will say they got an అరుపు, and everybody hears the difference without being told.

What you've built

Four. Sound, voice, song, and now sound sent a distance.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *arupu*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *arupu*, then *gontu*, and say which one is louder
- *Recall:* read కల్లం, then say *meṭṭu*

Before you move on

What does అరుపు mean? (“a shout”.) Say it once more.

68.5 కబురు (kaburu) — a message, news

Before the new one: what did *arupu* mean?

You'll want to know: కబురు

కబురు (*kaburu*) — “a message, news”.

కబురు is a message: word sent, or news arriving.

It came into Telugu from Arabic by way of Persian, and it was worn in so long ago that it stopped feeling borrowed. It is the word for what an అరుపు is for — getting something to somebody who is not there.

Sending కబురు is a fixed pair of words in the countryside, and the greeting at the head of a message is part of the message. Names travel this way too: a కబురు usually opens by saying whose it is.

What you've built

Five: శబ్దం, గొంతు, పాట, అరుపు, కబురు. Sound, and the whole way it gets from one person to another.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *kaburu*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then your own name, as the opening line of a కబురు
- *Recall:* say *paṇṭa*, then read కిటికీ and say what it means

Before you move on

What does కబురు mean? (“a message, news”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 69

Tools

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name five Telugu tools and ask politely to borrow one.

Complete TE-C69-stick and demonstrate the chapter promise.

69.1 గొడ్డలి (godḍali) — an axe

Before the new one: what did *kaburu* mean?

You'll want to know: గొడ్డలి

గొడ్డలి (*godḍali*) — “an axe”.

గొడ్డలి is an axe — an iron head on a wooden handle, for cutting a చెట్టు down or splitting firewood at the గడప.

The word is inherited and old. Its first piece turns up in other Telugu words about striking, so the name says plainly what the thing does.

Asking for one is the ordinary polite request: దయచేసి, and then the word. The person hands it over handle first, and nobody throws a గొడ్డలి.

What you've built

One. Heavy, and handed over rather than thrown.

Your turn

- Say it: *godḍali*

- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *dayacēsi*, then *godḍali*, in that order
- *Recall:* say *gōḍa*, then read శబ్దం and say what it means

Before you move on

What does గొడ్డలి mean? (“an axe”.) Say it once more.

69.2 రంపం (rampam) — a saw

Before the new one: what did *godḍali* mean?

You’ll want to know: రంపం

రంపం (*rampam*) — “a saw”.

రంపం is a saw. Where the గొడ్డలి breaks wood apart, the రంపం takes it apart along a line.

It is a borrowing, and it came in with the trade rather than ahead of it: the long two-man saw and its name reached the carpenter’s shed together.

The noise is half the word. Telugu calls a rasping sound a రంపం sound, and somebody who repeats a complaint until you give way is running a రంపం over your చెవి.

What you’ve built

Two. Both of them cut; only one cuts straight.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *rampam*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *godḍali*, then *rampam*, and say which one leaves a straight edge
- *Recall:* read కప్పు, then say *gontu*

Before you move on

What does రంపం mean? (“a saw”.) Say it once more.

69.3 పార (pāra) — a spade

Before the new one: what did *rampamī* mean?

You’ll want to know: పార

పార (*pāra*) — “a spade”.

పార is a spade — a broad iron blade on a handle, for digging and for shifting బురద or ఇసుక.

It is the tool of the రైతు out of season: clearing a channel, banking up the edge of a పొలం, cutting a way for water to run.

The word is inherited and it stays narrow. It does not stretch into anything figurative at all, which by itself says how firmly it belongs to the ground.

What you’ve built

Three. The first one here you push rather than swing.

Your turn

- *Say it: pāra*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: pāra, then rampamī, and say which one you push*
- *Recall: say gaḍapa, then read పాట and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does పార mean? (“a spade”.) Say it once more.

69.4 సుత్తి (sutti) — a hammer

Before the new one: what did *pāra* mean?

You'll want to know: సుత్తి

సుత్తి (*sutti*) — “a hammer”.

సుత్తి is a hammer: an iron head on a short handle, for driving things in and for beating things straight.

Telugu turned it into a word about people. Somebody who makes the same point until you give in is doing సుత్తి, and telling them to stop the సుత్తి is telling them to stop going on.

In a city that second sense is now the commoner one, which is worth knowing before somebody uses it about you.

What you've built

Four. The one whose second meaning you are likelier to hear.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *sutti*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *sutti*, then *godḍali*, and say which one has a short handle
- *Recall:* read మెట్టు, then say *arupu*

Before you move on

What does సుత్తి mean? (“a hammer”.) Say it once more.

69.5 కర్త (karra) — a stick

Before the new one: what did *sutti* mean?

You'll want to know: కర్త

కర్త (*karra*) — “a stick”.

కర్త is a stick — a length of wood, cut or picked up, for everything the other four are too particular for.

It is inherited and completely ordinary: a walking stick for a తాత, a herding stick behind a మేక, the handle still waiting for a గొడ్డలి head.

It is also the right thing to ask for first. దయచేసి and a కర్త costs nobody anything, and by the time you want the సుత్తి you already know how to ask.

What you've built

Five: గొడ్డలి, రంపం, పాఠ, సుత్తి, కర్ర. Enough to ask for anything in a shed.

Your turn

- *Say it:* karra
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *dayacēsi* and the one you would borrow first
- *Recall:* say *kit̪ik̪i̪*, then read కబురు and say what it means

Before you move on

What does కర్ర mean? (“a stick”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 70

Small Creatures

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name five small Telugu creatures and answer yes or no about them.

Complete TE-C70-spider and demonstrate the chapter promise.

70.1 ఎలుక (eluka) — a mouse, a rat

Before the new one: what did *karra* mean?

You'll want to know: ఎలుక

ఎలుక (*eluka*) — “a mouse, a rat”.

ఎలుక is a mouse, and the same word does for a rat. Telugu does not split them the way English does; when the size matters, a word for size is added.

It is inherited. Any house with బియ్యం in it has an ఎలుక story, and the పిల్లి you already know earns its keep here.

Asked whether there is one about, most people say అవును before they have thought about it, and లేదు only after going to look.

What you've built

One. And the first thing anybody asks about a house.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *eluka*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *eluka*, then *avunu*, then *lēdu*
- *Recall:* say *śabdami*, then read గొడ్డలి and say what it means

Before you move on

What does ఎలుక mean? (“a mouse, a rat”.) Say it once more.

70.2 కప్ప (kappa) — a frog

Before the new one: what did *eluka* mean?

You’ll want to know: కప్ప

కప్ప (*kappa*) — “a frog”.

కప్ప is a frog. Set it beside కప్పు, the roof, and you have a pair worth saying twice: one small vowel at the end is the whole difference.

It is inherited and it belongs to the rains. The first కప్ప heard after dark is how a గ్రామం knows the season turned, before anybody looks at a calendar.

Telugu uses it for somebody whose world is small — a కప్ప in a well, which is a picture a dozen unrelated languages reached for on their own.

What you’ve built

Two. And the roof is still కప్పు.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *kappa*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *kappu*, then *kappa*, and say which one is the roof
- *Recall:* read గొంతు, then say *rampam*

Before you move on

What does కప్ప mean? (“a frog”.) Say it once more.

70.3 దోమ (dōma) — a mosquito

Before the new one: what did *kappa* mean?

You’ll want to know: దోమ

దోమ (*dōma*) — “a mosquito”.

దోమ is a mosquito. The word is inherited, and it is said with feeling.

A దోమ is the reason for the net over a bed, for smoke at dusk, and for half the complaints of a hot సాయంత్రం.

It is also the standard small annoyance. Somebody waving away a threat calls it a దోమ, and somebody who could not sleep blames one.

What you’ve built

Three. The smallest of them and the loudest complaint.

Your turn

- *Say it: dōma*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: dōma, then kappa, and say which one you hear at night*
- *Recall: say pāṭa, then read పాఠ and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does దోమ mean? (“a mosquito”.) Say it once more.

70.4 ఉడుత (uduta) — a squirrel

Before the new one: what did *dōma* mean?

You’ll want to know: ఉడుత

ఉడుత (*uduta*) — “a squirrel”.

ఉడుత is a squirrel — the striped palm squirrel that runs along the top of a గోడ and out onto any కొమ్మ it can reach.

It is inherited. The three stripes down its back carry a story that every Telugu household can tell, and the animal is let alone because of it.

An ఉడుత’s help is a set phrase for a small contribution offered honestly. Whoever says it is calling their own share tiny and means to give it anyway.

What you’ve built

Four. The one nobody chases off.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *uduta*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *uduta*, then *eluka*, and say which one is welcome
- *Recall:* read అరుపు, then say *sutti*

Before you move on

What does ఉడుత mean? (“a squirrel”.) Say it once more.

70.5 సాలీడు (sālīḍu) — a spider

Before the new one: what did *uduta* mean?

You’ll want to know: సాలీడు

సాలీడు (*sālīḍu*) — “a spider”.

సాలీడు is a spider — the one in the corner where the గోడ meets the కప్పు.

It is inherited, and it is built on the old Telugu word for a weaver, so the name says what the creature does. The thread a person works with is దారం, which you already have.

Ask whether one has been swept out and the answer is a plain అవును or లేదు, which is where five small creatures have got you.

What you've built

Five: ఎలుక, కప్ప, దోమ, ఉడుత, సాలీడు. Everything small enough to share a house with.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *sālīdu*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *avunu* for the ones in your house and *lēdu* for the rest
- *Recall:* say *kaburu*, then read కర్మ and say what it means

Before you move on

What does సాలీడు mean? (“a spider”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 71

The Wider Family

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name the family a Telugu marriage adds, and ask after each of them.

Complete TE-C71-son-in-law and demonstrate the chapter promise.

71.1 మామ (māma) — an uncle; a father-in-law

Before the new one: what did *sālīḍu* mean?

You'll want to know: మామ

మామ (*māma*) — “an uncle; a father-in-law”.

మామ is a mother's brother, and it is also a father-in-law. Telugu keeps one word for both because for a very long time they were often the same man.

That is the whole of it: a man's sister's daughter was the expected match for his son, so the uncle a child grew up with became the father-in-law they married into.

Asking after a మామ's ఆరోగ్యం is the first thing said after నమస్కారం in a house you have married into.

What you've built

One. And the reason Telugu needs fewer family words than you expect.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *māma*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *māma*, then *ārōgyam*, as one question
- *Recall:* say *godḍali*, then read ఎలుక and say what it means

Before you move on

What does మామ mean? (“an uncle; a father-in-law”.) Say it once more.

71.2 అత్త (atta) — an aunt; a mother-in-law

Before the new one: what did *māma* mean?

You’ll want to know: అత్త

అత్త (*atta*) — “an aunt; a mother-in-law”.

అత్త is the మామ’s counterpart: a father’s sister, and a mother-in-law.

The same reasoning folds them together. She is the woman a child calls అత్త while growing up and the woman they answer to after marrying, and one word covers both lives.

It is inherited and it is among the oldest words in the family. The neighbouring languages all keep something very close to it.

What you’ve built

Two: మామ and అత్త, and they usually arrive as a pair.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *atta*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *māma*, then *atta*, and say which one is the mother-in-law
- *Recall:* read రంపం, then say *kappa*

Before you move on

What does అత్త mean? (“an aunt; a mother-in-law”.) Say it once more.

71.3 బావ (bāva) — a brother-in-law; a male cousin

Before the new one: what did *atta* mean?

You’ll want to know: బావ

బావ (bāva) — “a brother-in-law; a male cousin”.

బావ is a sister’s husband, a wife’s brother, and the మామ’s son — the cousin you might have married.

So the word covers a bond that is close, level and a little teasing. Two men who call each other బావ can joke in a way an అన్న and a తమ్ముడు cannot.

City Telugu now uses it for a friend, roughly where English says mate. That irritates some people and has stopped nobody.

What you’ve built

Three. The first one standing on level ground with you.

Your turn

- Say it: bāva
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: bāva, then māmā, and say which one is older
- Recall: say pāra, then read దోమ and say what it means

Before you move on

What does బావ mean? (“a brother-in-law; a male cousin”.) Say it once more.

71.4 మరదలు (maradalu) — a sister-in-law; a female cousin

Before the new one: what did *bāva* mean?

You'll want to know: మరదలు

మరదలు (*maradalu*) — “a sister-in-law; a female cousin”.

మరదలు is the బావ's counterpart on the other side: a wife's younger sister, a younger brother's wife, and the మామ's daughter — the cousin you might have married.

So it carries the same easy, teasing register that బావ does. A బావ and a మరదలు can joke across a room in a way an అన్న and a చెల్లి cannot, and Telugu films have lived off that for eighty years.

It is inherited, and it belongs to the same reckoning as the rest of this chapter: the person a marriage hands you was very often somebody the family already had a word for.

What you've built

Four. The one who matches బావ.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *maradalu*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *bāva*, then *maradalu*, and say which of the two is the woman
- *Recall:* read సుత్తి, then say *uḍuta*

Before you move on

What does మరదలు mean? (“a sister-in-law; a female cousin”.) Say it once more.

71.5 అల్లుడు (alluḍu) — a son-in-law

Before the new one: what did *maradalu* mean?

You'll want to know: అల్లుడు

అల్లుడు (*alludu*) — “a son-in-law”.

అల్లుడు is a daughter's husband — the మామ's word for the young man on the far side of the match.

He is treated as a guest for life. An అల్లుడు on a visit is fed first, seated first and asked after first, and the household's own people wait their turn.

Which is what the chapter has been building to: మామ, అత్త, బావ, మరదలు, అల్లుడు. Ask each of them how they are and you have done the whole visit properly.

What you've built

Five: మామ, అత్త, బావ, మరదలు, అల్లుడు. A marriage's worth of new people to ask after.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *alludu*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then *ārōgyam*, asking after the last of them
- *Recall:* say *karra*, then read సాలీడు and say what it means

Before you move on

What does అల్లుడు mean? (“a son-in-law”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 72

The Market

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can buy something in a Telugu shop, ask the price, and thank the seller.

Complete TE-C72-bargain and demonstrate the chapter promise.

72.1 అంగడి (aṅgaḍi) — a shop

Before the new one: what did *alluḍu* mean?

You'll want to know: అంగడి

అంగడి (*aṅgaḍi*) — “a shop”.

అంగడి is a shop — one counter, one family behind it, and everything a గ్రామం needs on the shelves.

It is inherited, and it is the older and homelier of the two words available. City Telugu will as often reach for a borrowed word for a store, but the అంగడి is the one at the end of the బాట.

You are known in an అంగడి. Nobody there opens with a price; they open by asking whether your household is well.

What you've built

One. The place the rest of this chapter happens in.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *aṅgaḍi*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *aṅgaḍi*, then *grāmami*, and say which one sits inside the other
- *Recall:* say *eluka*, then read మామ and say what it means

Before you move on

What does అంగడి mean? (“a shop”.) Say it once more.

72.2 డబ్బు (ḍabbu) — money

Before the new one: what did *aṅgaḍi* mean?

You’ll want to know: డబ్బు

డబ్బు (*ḍabbu*) — “money”.

డబ్బు is money. You have said it once already without being told what it was: డబ్బు లేదు, there is no money, turned up early as an example of how లేదు denies that a thing exists. Here is the word itself.

It is a borrowing, from the name of a small copper coin, and it travelled across the region on the coin’s back.

It is blunt and it is not rude. Asking whether somebody has డబ్బు today is an ordinary question in an అంగడి where the account is settled by the month.

What you’ve built

Two. And one of them you had already used once.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *ḍabbu*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *ḍabbu*, then *lēdu*, as the phrase you already knew
- *Recall:* read కప్ప, then say *atta*

Before you move on

What does డబ్బు mean? (“money”.) Say it once more.

72.3 ధర (dhara) — a price

Before the new one: what did *ḍabbu* mean?

You’ll want to know: ధర

ధర (*dhara*) — “a price”.

ధర is a price — what a thing costs, said out loud.

It is Sanskrit, from a sense of what holds a thing up, which is a fair picture of value. Telugu uses it for one thing’s price and for prices in general: when people say the ధర has gone up, they mean everything has.

Asking is direct and expected. Nobody in an అంగడి minds the question, and asking before you pick a thing up is politer than asking after.

What you’ve built

Three. The question you are allowed to ask first.

Your turn

- *Say it: dhara*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: dhara, then ḍabbu, in the order they come up*
- *Recall: say dōma, then read బావ and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does ధర mean? (“a price”.) Say it once more.

72.4 తూకం (tūkam) — weight

Before the new one: what did *dhara* mean?

You'll want to know: తూకం

తూకం (*tūkani*) — “weight”.

తూకం is weight — what the scales say, and also the act of weighing.

Almost everything in an అంగడి is sold by it: బియ్యం, ఉప్పు, చక్కెర, మిరప. The ధర you are quoted is a ధర for a తూకం, so the two words travel together.

It carries fairness as well. Somebody who speaks with తూకం is somebody whose words are measured, and short తూకం is a serious accusation.

What you've built

Four. What the ధర is attached to.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *tūkani*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *tūkani*, then *dhara*, as one question in a shop
- *Recall:* read ఉడుత, then say *maradalu*

Before you move on

What does తూకం mean? (“weight”.) Say it once more.

72.5 బేరం (*bērami*) — a bargain, haggling

Before the new one: what did *tūkani* mean?

You'll want to know: బేరం

బేరం (*bērami*) — “a bargain, haggling”.

బేరం is the haggle — the back and forth between the ధర asked and the ధర paid, and also the deal that comes out of it.

It is expected in an open market crowd and out of place in a fixed-price అంగడి, and telling those two apart is most of what a newcomer gets wrong.

However the బేరం ends, it ends with ధన్యవాదములు, and in a small అంగడి it ends with both sides fairly sure they did well out of it.

What you've built

Five: అంగడి, డబ్బు, ధర, తూకం, బేరం. Enough to buy something and thank the person who sold it.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *bēram*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* all five in order, then close with *dhanyavādamulu*
- *Recall:* say *sālīdu*, then read అల్లుడు and say what it means

Before you move on

What does బేరం mean? (“a bargain, haggling”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 73

Tastes

Modes: ⇐ voice (5) ⇐ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name the tastes of a Telugu meal and take my leave when it is finished.

Complete TE-C73-astringent and demonstrate the chapter promise.

73.1 తీపి (tīpi) — sweet, sweetness

Before the new one: what did *bērami* mean?

You'll want to know: తీపి

తీపి (*tīpi*) — “sweet, sweetness”.

తీపి is sweetness — the taste, and the quality of anything that has it.

It is inherited. చక్కెర gives it in a kitchen and a పండు gives it on a చెట్టు, and a person described as తీపి is being called good company.

Telugu counts its tastes rather than gesturing at them, and తీపి is the one every count opens with.

What you've built

One. The taste every count opens with.

Your turn

- Say it: *tīpi*
- Say it: it once more, slowly

- *Say it:* *tīpi*, then *cakkerā*, and say which one is the taste
- *Recall:* say *māma*, then read అంగడి and say what it means

Before you move on

What does తీపి mean? (“sweet, sweetness”.) Say it once more.

73.2 పులుపు (pulupu) — sour, sourness

Before the new one: what did *tīpi* mean?

You’ll want to know: పులుపు

పులుపు (*pulupu*) — “sour, sourness”.

పులుపు is sourness — tamarind, lime, పెరుగు left a day too long.

It is inherited and it is not a complaint. A Telugu meal wants పులుపు in it on purpose; the everyday tamarind stew is built around exactly this taste.

Said of a face it means what it means in English, and it is said most often of children who have just been told no.

What you’ve built

Two: తీపి and పులుపు, and a meal wants both of them.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *pulupu*
- *Say it:* it once more, slowly
- *Say it:* *tīpi*, then *pulupu*, and say which one is in curd
- *Recall:* read అత్త, then say *ḍabbu*

Before you move on

What does పులుపు mean? (“sour, sourness”.) Say it once more.

73.3 చేదు (cēdu) — bitter, bitterness

Before the new one: what did *pulupu* mean?

You'll want to know: చేదు

చేదు (*cēdu*) — “bitter, bitterness”.

చేదు is bitterness — neem leaf, some greens, most medicine.

It is inherited, and Telugu does not treat it as a fault. Bitter is eaten deliberately at the opening of the year and at the opening of a meal, on the understanding that it does you good.

It carries over into speech unchanged. చేదు news is bad news, and a చేదు truth is one you are told anyway.

What you've built

Three. The one eaten on purpose.

Your turn

- *Say it: cēdu*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: cēdu, then tīpi, and say which one is eaten first*
- *Recall: say bāva, then read ధర and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does చేదు mean? (“bitter, bitterness”.) Say it once more.

73.4 కారం (kāraṁ) — pungency, heat

Before the new one: what did *cēdu* mean?

You'll want to know: కారం

కారం (*kāraṁ*) — “pungency, heat”.

కారం is heat — the bite of మిరప, and by an easy extension the chilli powder itself.

Ask for something with తక్కువ కారం and you will be understood anywhere, though in one or two households you will be heard as having said something mildly insulting.

It is inherited. Do not read it into the end of నమస్కారం, which is a different word altogether, Sanskrit, and means a making.

What you've built

Four. And the one you may want తక్కువ of.

Your turn

- Say it: *kārami*
- Say it: it once more, slowly
- Say it: *kārami*, then *takkuva* and *kārami* together
- Recall: read మరదలు, then say *tūkami*

Before you move on

What does కారం mean? (“pungency, heat”.) Say it once more.

73.5 వగరు (vagaru) — astringent

Before the new one: what did *kārami* mean?

You'll want to know: వగరు

వగరు (*vagaru*) — “astringent”.

వగరు is astringency — the dry, puckering taste of an unripe పండు, of raw banana, of తీపి left to stand.

English has no everyday word for it and Telugu has had one for as long as it has been written down. Once you can name it you begin noticing it, which is most of what a word is for.

With ఉప్పు, which you already have, that is the full set a Telugu cook thinks in: తీపి, పులుపు, చేదు, కారం, వగరు and salt. A meal carrying all of them is finished, and so is the visit — వెళ్ళొస్తాను.

What you've built

Five: తీపి, పులుపు, చేదు, కారం, వగరు. The tastes a Telugu meal is built from, and the last of them names what nothing else does.

Your turn

- *Say it: vagaru*
- *Say it: it once more, slowly*
- *Say it: all five in order, then take your leave with vellōstānu*
- *Recall: say alluḍu, then read బేరం and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does వగరు mean? (“astringent”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 74

And, But, Or

Modes: ⇐ voice (4) 👁 eyes (1) ⇐ Hands-free start: first 4 of 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can join two Telugu words or two Telugu clauses, and I can ask why and answer it.

Complete TE-C74-because and demonstrate the chapter promise.

74.1 మరియు (mariyu) — and

Before the new one: what did *vagaru* mean?

You'll want to know: మరియు

మరియు (*mariyu*) — “and”.

Telugu's everyday speech often joins two things by simply saying them one after the other, or by hanging a small -ఉ on the end of each. మరియు is the written, spoken-carefully form, and it is the one a list on a page will use.

Put it between two nouns you already have: నీళ్ళు మరియు పాలు — “water and milk”.

What you've built

The first way you have had to put two things in one sentence.

Your turn

- Say it: mariyu

- *Say it: mariyu*, once more
- *Say it: join two words you know with mariyu*
- *Recall: say dayacēsi*, then say *mariyu*
- *Recall: say aṅgaḍi*, then read తీపి and say what it means

Before you move on

What does మరియు mean? (“and”.) Say it once more.

74.2 కానీ (kānī) — but

Before the new one: what did *mariyu* mean?

You’ll want to know: కానీ

కానీ (kānī) — “but”.

కానీ turns a sentence around. Where మరియు adds, కానీ takes back: it warns the listener that what comes next does not match what came before.

నాకు టీ ఇష్టం, కానీ పాలు వద్దు — “I like tea, but no milk.” This one word is what lets you disagree politely instead of only saying లేదు.

What you’ve built

Two clauses, and a way to set the second against the first.

Your turn

- *Say it: kānī*
- *Say it: kānī*, once more
- *Say it: say something you like, then kānī, then something about it you do not*
- *Recall: say kṣamin̄caṇḍi*, then say *kānī*
- *Recall: read డబ్బు*, then say *pulupu*

Before you move on

What does కానీ mean? (“but.”) Say it once more.

74.3 లేదా (lēdā) — or

Before the new one: what did *kānī* mean?

You’ll want to know: లేదా

లేదా (*lēdā*) — “or”.

You have met its first half already: లే- is the same root behind లేదు, “there isn’t”. లేదా is literally the *or-else* of that root — “failing that”.

టీ లేదా పాలు? — “tea or milk?” That is the whole of an offered choice, and you can now make one.

What you’ve built

A choice you can put to somebody.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *lēdā*
- *Say it:* *lēdā*, once more
- *Say it:* offer a choice between two drinks you know, using *lēdā*
- *Recall:* say *anukō*, then say *lēdā*
- *Recall:* say *dhara*, then read చేదు and say what it means

Before you move on

What does లేదా mean? (“or.”) Say it once more.

74.4 ఎందుకు (enduku) — why?

Before the new one: what did *lēdā* mean?

You'll want to know: ఎందుకు

ఎందుకు (*enduku*) — “why?”.

Another word off the ఎ- question row you already know: ఎక్కడ “where”, ఎవరు “who”, and now ఎందుకు “why”. The row keeps its shape and you keep getting the words free.

It goes where its answer goes, not at the front: మీరు ఎందుకు వెళ్ళారు? — “why do you go?”

What you've built

The question the next word answers.

Your turn

- *Say it: enduku*
- *Say it: enduku, once more*
- *Say it: ask enduku about something somebody just told you*
- *Recall: say aḍugu, then say enduku*
- *Recall: read తూకం, then say kārami*

Before you move on

What does ఎందుకు mean? (“why?”.) Say it once more.

74.5 ఎందుకంటే (*endukaṇṭē*) — because

Before the new one: what did *enduku* mean?

You'll want to know: ఎందుకంటే

ఎందుకంటే (*endukaṇṭē*) — “because”.

Look at it: it *is* ఎందుకు with అంటే glued on — “if you ask why”. Telugu answers the question by repeating it and then continuing, which is the gluing habit of your very first lesson doing real work.

నేను వెళ్ళాను, ఎందుకంటే పని ఉంది — “I’ll go, because there is work.”

Grammar Lens: the reason clause comes second

Telugu can put the reason first, as పని ఉంది కాబట్టి నేను వెళ్తాను. With ఎందుకంటే it goes second, after the thing being explained, exactly where English puts it. Use ఎందుకంటే while that ordering is still the one you think in.

What you've built

A reason, attached to the thing it explains.

Your turn

- *Say it: endukaṇṭē*
- *Say it: endukaṇṭē*, once more
- *Say it:* answer an *enduku* question with *endukaṇṭē* and one word you know
- *Recall:* say *ganṭa*, then say *endukaṇṭē*
- *Recall:* say *bērami*, then read వగరు and say what it means

Before you move on

What does ఎందుకంటే mean? (“because”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 75

Today, Yesterday, When

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say today, yesterday and before in Telugu, ask when something happens, and name a year.

Complete TE-C75-year and demonstrate the chapter promise.

75.1 ఇవాళ (ivāḷa) — today

Before the new one: what did *endukaṇṭē* mean?

You'll want to know: ఇవాళ

ఇవాళ (*ivāḷa*) — “today”.

The farewells gave you రేపు, “tomorrow”, inside రేపు కలుద్దాం. The day you are actually standing in had no name until now.

It begins with the same ఇ- as ఇక్కడ and ఇది: the near one, the one right here. ఇవాళ is the near day.

What you've built

The day you are in.

Your turn

- Say it: *ivāḷa*
- Say it: *ivāḷa*, once more

- *Say it:* say *ivāḷa*, then *rēpu*, and say which is nearer
- *Recall:* say *bhōjanam*, then say *ivāḷa*
- *Recall:* say *tīpi*, then read మరియు and say what it means

Before you move on

What does ఇవాళ mean? (“today”.) Say it once more.

75.2 నిన్న (ninna) — yesterday

Before the new one: what did *ivāḷa* mean?

You’ll want to know: నిన్న

నిన్న (*ninna*) — “yesterday”.

With ఇవాళ and రేపు you now have the three days every conversation stands on, and నిన్న is the only one that looks backward.

It is native Dravidian and short, with the doubled న్న you have seen in ఉన్నాను.

What you’ve built

Three days: నిన్న, ఇవాళ, రేపు.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *ninna*
- *Say it:* *ninna*, once more
- *Say it:* say the three days in order: *ninna*, *ivāḷa*, *rēpu*
- *Recall:* say *vātāvaraṇam*, then say *ninna*
- *Recall:* read పులుపు, then say *kānī*

Before you move on

What does నిన్న mean? (“yesterday”.) Say it once more.

75.3 ఎప్పుడు వస్తారు? (eppuḍu vastāru?) — when will you come?

Before the new one: what did *ninna* mean?

You'll want to know: ఎప్పుడు వస్తారు?

ఎప్పుడు వస్తారు? (eppuḍu vastāru?) — “when will you come?”. The new word in it is ఎప్పుడు, “when?”.

The last gap in the ఎ- question row: ఎక్కడ where, ఎవరు who, ఎందుకు why, and now ఎప్పుడు when. The row is complete.

The three days you just learned are its answers, and మీరు in front of it makes the question respectful.

What you've built

The question the three days answer.

Your turn

- Say it: eppuḍu
- Say it: eppuḍu, once more
- Say it: ask eppuḍu, then answer it with ivāḷa
- Recall: say rātri, then say eppuḍu vastāru?
- Recall: say cēdu, then read లేదా and say what it means

Before you move on

What does ఎప్పుడు వస్తారు? mean? (“when will you come?.”) Say it once more.

75.4 ముందు (mundu) — before, in front

Before the new one: what did eppuḍu mean?

You'll want to know: ముందు

ముందు (*mundu*) — “before”.

You already have తరువాత, “after that”. ముందు is its other half, and until now you could only order events one way.

Like most Telugu relation words it follows its noun: భోజనం ముందు — “before the meal”. It also means “in front” in space, which is the same idea pointed at a room instead of a day.

What you've built

Both ends of an order: ముందు and తరువాత.

Your turn

- Say it: *mundu*
- Say it: *mundu*, once more
- Say it: say *mundu*, then *taruvāta*, and put a meal between them
- Recall: say *mariyu*, then *udayam*, then say *mundu*
- Recall: read కారం, then say *enduku*

Before you move on

What does ముందు mean? (“before, in front”.) Say it once more.

75.5 సంవత్సరం (sanivatsaram) — a year

Before the new one: what did *mundu* mean?

You'll want to know: సంవత్సరం

సంవత్సరం (*sanivatsaram*) — “a year”.

A Sanskrit tatsama, wearing the same -ం ending you have seen on ఉదయం and భోజనం. Telugu also says ఏడు for a year of age, but సంవత్సరం is the plain calendar word.

You now have the hour (గంట), the day (రోజు), the month (నెల) and the year — the whole ladder of Telugu time.

What you've built

The largest unit of time you can name.

Your turn

- *Say it: samivatsarami*
- *Say it: samivatsarami, once more*
- *Say it: say gaṇṭa, then rōju, then samivatsarami, smallest to largest*
- *Recall: say kānī, then sāyantram, then say samivatsarami*
- *Recall: say vagaru, then read ఎందుకంటే and say what it means*

Before you move on

What does సంవత్సరం mean? (“a year”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 76

Very Good, Very Bad

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say that something is very good, bad, easy or difficult in Telugu, and make an adjective the whole comment.

Complete TE-C76-difficult and demonstrate the chapter promise.

76.1 చాలా మంచి (cālā manci) — very good

Before the new one: what did *saṁvatsarami* mean?

You'll want to know: చాలా మంచి

చాలా మంచి (cālā manci) — “very good”. The new word in it is చాలా, “very, a lot”.

Until now every adjective you had was flat: పెద్ద was big and there was no bigger. చాలా is the dial.

It stands in front of what it strengthens: చాలా పెద్ద “very big”, చాలా కొత్త “very new”. It also works on its own for “a lot”, where కొంచెం was “a little”.

What you've built

A degree, on any adjective you have.

Your turn

- Say it: cālā

- *Say it:* *cālā*, once more
- *Say it:* put *cālā* in front of *manci*, then in front of *pedda*
- *Recall:* say *lēdā*, then *madhyāhnam*, then say *cālā manci*

Before you move on

What does చాలా మంచి mean? (“very good”.) Say it once more.

76.2 చెడ్డ (ceḍḍa) — bad

Before the new one: what did *cālā* mean?

You’ll want to know: చెడ్డ

చెడ్డ (*ceḍḍa*) — “bad”.

మంచి, “good”, has stood without an opposite ever since the adjectives chapter. చెడ్డ is the opposite.

It sits in front of its noun and does not change, exactly as మంచి does. Do not reach for చేదు from the last chapter: that is *bitter*, a taste, and it does not judge anything.

What you’ve built

Both ends of the judgement: మంచి and చెడ్డ.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *ceḍḍa*
- *Say it:* *ceḍḍa*, once more
- *Say it:* say *manci*, then *ceḍḍa*, then *cālā ceḍḍa*
- *Recall:* say *enduku*, then *śubhodayam*, then say *ceḍḍa*

Before you move on

What does చెడ్డ mean? (“bad”.) Say it once more.

76.3 మంచిది (mancidi) — it is a good one

Before the new one: what did *cedḍa* mean?

You'll want to know: మంచిది

మంచిది (*mancidi*) — “it is a good one”.

You could already say మంచి పుస్తకం, “a good book”. You could not yet say that the book *is* good, because a Telugu adjective cannot end a sentence by itself.

Add -ది and it becomes a thing: మంచి + ది = “a good one”. పుస్తకం మంచిది — “the book is a good one”, which is how Telugu says “the book is good”.

Grammar Lens: -ది turns a describing word into a naming word

Telugu will not let a bare adjective be the predicate. -ది makes it one — a pronoun-like ending meaning “the one that is”. మంచిది “a good one”, చెడ్డది “a bad one”, కొత్తది “a new one”. For a person the ending is -వాడు or -ఆమె instead. Learn -ది now and every adjective you already have can finish a sentence.

What you've built

An adjective that can be the whole comment.

Your turn

- Say it: *mancidi*
- Say it: *mancidi*, once more
- Say it: say *manci pustakam*, then *pustakam mancidi*
- Recall: say *endukaṇṭē*, then *rāyu*, then say *mancidi*

Before you move on

What does మంచిది mean? (“it is a good one”.) Say it once more.

76.4 సులభం (sulabham) — easy

Before the new one: what did *mancidi* mean?

You'll want to know: సులభం

సులభం (*sulabham*) — “easy”.

Sanskrit సు- (“well”) plus లభ (“got”): what is easily got. The same సు- is the శు- of శుభోదయం, softened.

తెలుగు సులభం — “Telugu is easy.” A -ం noun like this needs no -ది; it is already a naming word.

What you've built

A verdict you can pass on a task.

Your turn

- Say it: *sulabham*
- Say it: *sulabham*, once more
- Say it: say *telugu sulabham*, then add *cālā* in front of *sulabham*
- Recall: say *ivāḷa*, then *tīśukō*, then say *sulabham*

Before you move on

What does సులభం mean? (“easy.”) Say it once more.

76.5 కష్టం (kaṣṭam) — difficult; trouble

Before the new one: what did *sulabham* mean?

You'll want to know: కష్టం

కష్టం (*kaṣṭam*) — “difficult”, and also “trouble, hardship”.

The pair to సులభం, and a Sanskrit tatsama shared right across India.

It carries more weight than English “difficult”: కష్టం said alone about someone's situation means real hardship, not an awkward crossword.

What you've built

Both ends of a task: సులభం and కష్టం.

Your turn

- *Say it: kaṣṭam*
- *Say it: kaṣṭam*, once more
- *Say it: say sulabham, then kaṣṭam, then cālā kaṣṭam*
- *Recall: say ninna, then kuṭumbam, then say kaṣṭam*

Before you move on

What does కష్టం mean? (“difficult; trouble”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 77

Where You Are From

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say which town and country I am from in Telugu, count past twenty, and give my age.

Complete TE-C77-thirty and demonstrate the chapter promise.

77.1 నుంచి (nunci) — from

Before the new one: what did *kaṣṭam* mean?

You'll want to know: నుంచి

నుంచి (*nunci*) — “from”.

You already have -కు, “to”, and -లో, “in”. నుంచి is the third of the set and the one an introduction needs.

Like them it follows its noun: గ్రామం నుంచి — “from the village”.

Grammar Lens: the third relation word

Three now sit behind a noun and do three different jobs: -లో puts you inside, -కు sends you toward, నుంచి takes you out of. Telugu has no words in front of nouns at all; everything a preposition would do in English is done by a piece glued to the back.

What you've built

The direction you came out of.

Your turn

- *Say it: nunci*
- *Say it: nunci*, once more
- *Say it: say grāmamī nunci*, then *grāmānīki* — out of, and into
- *Recall: say eppuḍu vastāru?*, then *snēhituḍu*, then say *nunci*

Before you move on

What does నుంచి mean? (“from”.) Say it once more.

77.2 పట్టణం (paṭṭaṇam) — a town

Before the new one: what did *nunci* mean?

You’ll want to know: పట్టణం

పట్టణం (*paṭṭaṇam*) — “a town”.

You already have గ్రామం, the village. పట్టణం is the larger settlement, the one with the shops and the bargaining in it.

నేను పట్టణం నుంచి — “I am from a town.” That sentence needs no verb, exactly like నా పేరు.

What you’ve built

Somewhere to be from.

Your turn

- *Say it: paṭṭaṇam*
- *Say it: paṭṭaṇam*, once more
- *Say it: say grāmamī*, then *paṭṭaṇamī*, and say which is bigger
- *Recall: say mundu*, then *koḍuku*, then say *paṭṭaṇamī*

Before you move on

What does పట్టణం mean? (“a town”.) Say it once more.

77.3 దేశం (dēśam) — a country

Before the new one: what did *paṭṭaṇam* mean?

You'll want to know: దేశం

దేశం (*dēśam*) — “a country”.

Sanskrit tatsama, and the same word behind Hindi *desh*. It scales the ladder up once more: గ్రామం, పట్టణం, దేశం.

ఏ దేశం? — “which country?” is a question you will be asked in the first minute of any exam interview.

What you've built

The largest place you can be from.

Your turn

- Say it: *dēśam*
- Say it: *dēśam*, once more
- Say it: say *grāmaṁ*, *paṭṭaṇam*, *dēśam*, smallest to largest
- Recall: say *saṁvatsaram*, then *kūturu*, then say *dēśam*

Before you move on

What does దేశం mean? (“a country”.) Say it once more.

77.4 భారతదేశం (Bhāratadēśam) — India

Before the new one: what did *dēśam* mean?

You'll want to know: భారతదేశం

భారతదేశం (*Bhāratadēśam*) — “India”.

Your first Telugu proper name, and you can already read half of it: భారత plus the దేశం you learned a moment ago.

నేను భారతదేశం నుంచి — “I am from India.” Swap in the name of wherever you are actually from and the sentence still works.

What you've built

A place with a name, in a sentence that says you came from it.

Your turn

- Say it: *Bhāratadēśam*
- Say it: *Bhāratadēśam*, once more
- Say it: say *nēnu Bhāratadēśam nunci*, then say it with your own country instead
- Recall: say *cālā manci*, then *cevi*, then say *Bhāratadēśam*

Before you move on

What does భారతదేశం mean? (“India”.) Say it once more.

77.5 ముప్పై (muppai) — thirty (and the tens above it)

Before the new one: what did *Bhāratadēśam* mean?

You'll want to know: ముప్పై

ముప్పై (*muppai*) — “thirty”.

Your counting stopped at ఇరవై, twenty. The tens above it are built the same way, from the units you already know:

ముప్పై 30, నలభై 40, యాభై 50, అరవై 60, డెబ్బై 70, ఎనభై 80, తొమ్మిది 90, వంద 100. Every one but వంద ends in the same -వై twenty does.

Grammar Lens: an age, at last

You have long been able to ask నీ వయసెంత? and unable to answer it, because the numbers stopped at twenty and no word for a year existed. With the tens and with సంవత్సరం, the answer is now sayable: నాకు ముప్పై సంవత్సరాలు — “I am thirty”, literally “to me, thirty years”. Note the dative నాకు: an age is something that has arrived at you, like every other Telugu experience.

What you've built

Numbers past twenty: an age, a price, a year.

Your turn

- *Say it: muppai*
- *Say it: muppai*, once more
- *Say it*: count the tens aloud: *iravai*, *muppai*, *nalabhai*
- *Recall*: say *cedda*, then *kannu*, then say *muppai*

Before you move on

What does ముప్పై mean? (“thirty (and the tens above it).”) Say it once more.

Chapter 78

Yes or No, and I Do Not Know

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can ask a Telugu yes-or-no question, say I do not know, say I did not understand, and ask whether somebody is there.

Complete TE-C78-isthere and demonstrate the chapter promise.

78.1 అవునా (avunā) — is it so?

Before the new one: what did *muppai* mean?

You'll want to know: అవునా

అవునా (*avunā*) — “is it so?”.

Every question you have asked so far needed a question *word*. This one needs none: take అవును, “yes”, and add -అ.

That -అ is the whole yes-or-no machine. Hang it on the end of any statement and it becomes a question.

Grammar Lens: -అ makes any statement a question

మీరు వెళ్తారు “you go” becomes మీరు వెళ్తారా? “do you go?”. తెలుగు కష్టం becomes తెలుగు కష్టమా?. Nothing moves and no word is added: the last vowel lengthens into అ and the sentence is a question. This is the commonest question type in any listening paper, and it is one ending.

What you've built

A question with no question word in it.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *avunā*
- *Say it:* *avunā*, once more
- *Say it:* say *avunu*, then *avunā*, and hear the difference
- *Recall:* say *mancidi*, then *mukku*, then say *avunā*

Before you move on

What does అవునా mean? (“is it so?”.) Say it once more.

78.2 తెలుసా (telusā) — do you know?

Before the new one: what did *avunā* mean?

You'll want to know: తెలుసా

తెలుసా (*telusā*) — “do you know?”

The first thing you will do with the new ending. You already have తెలుసు, “it is known”; add -అ and you are asking.

మీకు తెలుగు తెలుసా? — “do you know Telugu?” The knower sits in the dative మీకు, the way it did when you first met తెలుసు.

What you've built

A real question, built from a word you already had.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *telusā*
- *Say it:* *telusā*, once more
- *Say it:* ask *mīku telugu telusā?*
- *Recall:* say *sulabhami*, then *nōru*, then say *telusā*

Before you move on

What does తెలుసా mean? (“do you know?”.) Say it once more.

78.3 నాకు తెలియదు (nāku teliyadu) — I do not know

Before the new one: what did *telusā* mean?

You’ll want to know: నాకు తెలియదు

తెలియదు (*teliyadu*) — “it is not known”, which is Telugu for “I don’t know”.

This is the answer to the last word, and it is probably the sentence you will need most often of anything in this book.

It is not తెలుసు with లేదు after it. Telugu negates an ordinary verb from the inside, with -అదు on the stem: తెలియ- + -దు.

Grammar Lens: how Telugu says a verb did not happen

The two negatives of your first lesson, లేదు and కాదు, deny **existence** and **identity**. An ordinary action is denied differently — with an ending on the verb itself: వెళ్ళాను “I go” becomes వెళ్ళును “I don’t go”; వస్తాను becomes రాను. The ending carries the negative and no separate word is used. తెలియదు is that pattern on తెలియ-.

What you’ve built

The most useful sentence in the chapter.

Your turn

- Say it: *teliyadu*
- Say it: *teliyadu*, once more
- Say it: answer *māku telugu telusā?* with *teliyadu*
- Recall: say *kaṣṭam*, then *guṇḍe*, then say *nāku teliyadu*

Before you move on

What does నాకు తెలియదు mean? (“I do not know”.) Say it once more.

78.4 అర్థం కాలేదు (artham̐ kālēdu) — I did not understand

Before the new one: what did *teliyadu* mean?

You’ll want to know: అర్థం కాలేదు

అర్థం కాలేదు (*artham̐ kālēdu*) — “I did not understand”.

You already have నాకు అర్థమైంది, “I understood” — literally “to me it became meaning”. This is the same sentence with the becoming denied: కా- “become” plus లేదు.

Say it, and the person you are talking to will slow down. That is the whole point of a repair phrase.

What you’ve built

A way out of the moment you lose the thread.

Your turn

- Say it: *artham̐ kālēdu*
- Say it: *artham̐ kālēdu*, once more
- Say it: say *nāku arthamaindi*, then *artham̐ kālēdu*
- Recall: say *nunci*, then *hṛdayam̐*, then say *artham̐ kālēdu*

Before you move on

What does అర్థం కాలేదు mean? (“I did not understand”.) Say it once more.

78.5 ఉన్నారా (unnārā) — is he or she there?

Before the new one: what did *artham̐ kālēdu* mean?

You'll want to know: ఉన్నారా

ఉన్నారా (*unnārā*) — “is he or she there?”.

ఉండు in its respectful -ఆరు form, with the new -ఆ on the end. Three pieces you already had.

It is what you say at a door or into a telephone: గురువు ఉన్నారా? — “is the teacher there?”

What you've built

A question you can ask at somebody's door.

Your turn

- *Say it:* *unnārā*
- *Say it:* *unnārā*, once more
- *Say it:* ask whether the teacher is there
- *Recall:* say *paṭṭaṇam*, then *pālu*, then say *unnārā*

Before you move on

What does ఉన్నారా mean? (“is he or she there?.”) Say it once more.

Chapter 79

He, She, and Whose

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can talk about a third person in Telugu, mark a noun as an owner or an object, and address somebody respectfully.

Complete TE-C79-garu and demonstrate the chapter promise.

79.1 స్నేహితుడి (snēhituḍi) — the friend’s

Before the new one: what did *unnārā* mean?

You’ll want to know: స్నేహితుడి

స్నేహితుడి (*snēhituḍi*) — “the friend’s”.

నా and నీ let you own things as *I* and *you*. Nothing let a named person own anything.

A Telugu noun becomes an owner by changing its own ending: స్నేహితుడు → స్నేహితుడి. స్నేహితుడి పేరు — “the friend’s name”.

Grammar Lens: the noun changes shape before it does a job

Watch the shape of the noun, not just the ending. స్నేహితుడు stands on its own; స్నేహితుడి is the form that owns something. The ending does not land on the dictionary form — the noun leans toward it first, and you have already seen the same lean in నేను becoming నాకు. Look for it in front of -కు and -లో as well.

What you've built

Possession by somebody other than you or me.

Your turn

- *Say it: snēhituḍi*
- *Say it: snēhituḍi*, once more
- *Say it: say nā pēru*, then *snēhituḍi pēru*
- *Recall: say dēśam*, then *mariyu*, then *cūḍu*, then say *snēhituḍi*

Before you move on

What does స్నేహితుడి mean? (“the friend’s”.) Say it once more.

79.2 మా (mā) — our (not including you)

Before the new one: what did *snēhituḍi* mean?

You'll want to know: మా

మా (*mā*) — “our”, and మన (*mana*) — “our” as well.

Telugu splits a word English does not. మా leaves the listener out: my family, not yours. మన takes the listener in: our country, yours and mine.

మా ఇల్లు is my household. మన దేశం is the country we share. Choosing wrong is the mistake an examiner hears first.

What you've built

Two kinds of *our*, and the difference between them.

Your turn

- *Say it: mā*
- *Say it: mana*
- *Say it: say mā kuṭumbam*, then *mana dēśam*
- *Recall: say Bhāratadēśam*, then *kānī*, then *rā*, then say *mā*

Before you move on

What does మా mean? (“our (not including you)”). Say it once more.

79.3 అతను (atanu) — he (and ఆమె, she)

Before the new one: what did *mā* and *mana* mean?

You’ll want to know: అతను

అతను (*atanu*) — “he”, ఆమె (*āme*) — “she”, వాళ్ళు (*vāḷḷu*) — “they”.

Until now you could speak about yourself and to one other person. You could not speak *about* anybody, which is half of what an exam asks you to do.

All three start on the అ- of అది and అక్కడ: the far one, the one not here. అతను is literally “that man”.

Grammar Lens: the third person is where Telugu marks gender

You were told Telugu marks no gender on **I** or **you**, and that is still true. The third person is the exception: అతను వెళ్తాడు “he goes” ends in -అడు, ఆమె వెళ్తుంది “she goes” ends in -ఉంది, and వాళ్ళు వెళ్తారు “they go” takes the same -అరు you already use for మీరు. Three endings, and the verb tells you who without the pronoun.

What you’ve built

Somebody to talk about.

Your turn

- Say it: *atanu*
- Say it: *āme*
- Say it: say *atanu*, *āme*, *vāḷḷu*
- Recall: say *muppai*, then *lēdā*, then *caduvu*, then say *atanu*

Before you move on

What does అతను mean? (“he (and ఆమె, she)”). Say it once more.

79.4 నన్ను (nannu) — me (as the object)

Before the new one: what did *atanu* mean?

You'll want to know: నన్ను

నన్ను (*nannu*) — “me”, when I am the one something is done to.

నేను is the *I* that does. నన్ను is the *me* that is done to: అతను నన్ను అడిగాడు — “he asked me”.

The ending is -ను, and its partner -ని does the same on other nouns: స్నేహితుడిని అడిగాను, “I asked the friend”.

Grammar Lens: people get marked, things usually do not

స్నేహితుడిని చూశాను — “I saw the friend”, with -ని on the person.
పుస్తకం చూశాను — “I saw the book”, with nothing on the thing. Telugu marks a human object and leaves an inanimate one bare, which is very close to what Spanish does with its personal *a*. Mark people; leave objects alone.

What you've built

A pronoun on the receiving end.

Your turn

- Say it: *nannu*
- Say it: *nannu*, once more
- Say it: say *nēnu*, then *nannu*, and say which one is asked
- Recall: say *avunā*, then *enduku*, then *vellu*, then say *nannu*

Before you move on

What does నన్ను mean? (“me (as the object)”). Say it once more.

79.5 గారు (gāru) — the respectful suffix on a name

Before the new one: what did *nannu* mean?

You'll want to know: గారు

గారు (*gāru*) — the respect you attach to a name.

It is not a word you say alone. It rides on the end of a name or a role: రాము గారు, గురువు గారు, అమ్మ గారు.

You have had మీరు from your first introduction for respect in the pronoun. గారు is respect in the *address*, and leaving it off where it belongs is heard as rudeness, not neutrality.

What you've built

A way to say somebody's name that does not sound blunt.

Your turn

- *Say it: gāru*
- *Say it: gāru, once more*
- *Say it: say guruvu gāru, then ammagāru*
- *Recall: say telusā, then endukaṇṭē, then rōju, then say gāru*

Before you move on

What does గారు mean? (“the respectful suffix on a name”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 80

Wanting, Allowing, Wishing

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🖱️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say what I want in Telugu, report what I think, give or refuse permission, invite somebody in, and offer congratulations.

Complete TE-C80-congratulations and demonstrate the chapter promise.

80.1 నాకు కావాలి (nāku kāvāli) — I want it

Before the new one: what did *gāru* mean?

You'll want to know: నాకు కావాలి

నాకు కావాలి (*nāku kāvāli*) — “I want it”. The new word in it is కావాలి, “is wanted”.

You already have వద్దు, “no, I don’t want it”, which left you able to refuse a thing and unable to ask for one. కావాలి is the missing half.

నాకు టీ కావాలి — “I want tea.” The wanter sits in the dative నాకు, exactly like the knower of తెలుసు and the liker of ఇష్టం. It is the same Telugu design a fourth time.

What you’ve built

A request, and the opposite of వద్దు.

Your turn

- *Say it: kāvāli*
- *Say it: kāvāli*, once more
- *Say it: say nāku tī kāvāli*, then refuse it with *vaddu*
- *Recall: say nāku teliyadu*, then *ivāḷa*, then *telusu*, then say *nāku kāvāli*

Before you move on

What does నాకు కావాలి mean? (“I want it”.) Say it once more.

80.2 అని (ani) — that (reporting what was said or thought)

Before the new one: what did *kāvāli* mean?

You’ll want to know: అని

అని (*ani*) — the little word that closes a quotation.

You already have అనుకో, “to think”, with nothing it could think *about*. అని is what attaches a thought or a sentence to the verb.

It comes **after** what is being reported, not before it: తెలుగు సులభం అని అనుకుంటాను — “I think that Telugu is easy”, literally “Telugu-is-easy *that* I-think”.

Grammar Lens: Telugu quotes forwards, not backwards

English opens with *that* and then reports. Telugu reports and then closes with అని. The quoted sentence keeps its own shape completely — nothing inside it changes — and అని is the seam. Every reported thought, every reported question and every reported instruction in Telugu is built this way, so this one syllable opens the whole of indirect speech.

What you’ve built

A second clause, hanging off a verb of thinking or saying.

Your turn

- *Say it: ani*
- *Say it: ani*, once more
- *Say it: say telugu sulabham ani anukuntānu*
- *Recall: say artham kalēdu*, then *ninna*, then *uṇḍu*, then say *ani*

Before you move on

What does అని mean? (“that (reporting what was said or thought).”) Say it once more.

80.3 వెళ్ళవచ్చు (vellavaccu) — you may go

Before the new one: what did *ani* mean?

You’ll want to know: వెళ్ళవచ్చు

వచ్చు (*vaccu*) — “may”, “is allowed to”, and also “can”.

It is the same వచ్చు you met as “to come”, doing a second job: what *comes* to you is what you may do.

వెళ్ళవచ్చు — “you may go”. వెళ్ళవచ్చా? — “may I go?”, with the -ఆ of the last chapter. To refuse, the answer is వద్దు.

What you’ve built

Permission: asking for it, giving it, refusing it.

Your turn

- *Say it: vaccu*
- *Say it: vaccu*, once more
- *Say it: ask vellavaccā?*, then allow it, then refuse it
- *Recall: say unnārā*, then *eppuḍu vastāru?*, then *tinu*, then say *vellavaccu*

Before you move on

What does వెళ్ళవచ్చు mean? (“you may go”.) Say it once more.

80.4 లోపలికి రండి (lōpaliki raṇḍi) — please come in

Before the new one: what did *vaccu* mean?

You’ll want to know: లోపలికి రండి

రండి (*raṇḍi*) — “please come”.

రా was the blunt “come” you say to a friend. Add the respectful -అండి and it becomes what you say at your own door to anybody.

With స్వాగతం it is the whole of a Telugu welcome: రండి, స్వాగతం.

What you’ve built

An invitation, in the register you would actually use it in.

Your turn

- Say it: *raṇḍi*
- Say it: *raṇḍi*, once more
- Say it: say *raṇḍi*, then *svāgatani*, then *kūrcōṇḍi*
- Recall: say *snēhituḍi*, then *mundu*, then *ivvu*, then say *lōpaliki raṇḍi*

Before you move on

What does లోపలికి రండి mean? (“please come in”.) Say it once more.

80.5 శుభాకాంక్షలు (śubhākāṅkṣalu) — congratulations, good wishes

Before the new one: what did *raṇḍi* mean?

You'll want to know: శుభాకాంక్షలు

శుభాకాంక్షలు (*śubhākāṅkṣalu*) — “good wishes”, which is Telugu for “congratulations”.

You have been building it for six chapters without knowing. శుభ is the *auspicious* of శుభోదయం and శుభ రాత్రి; ఆకాంక్ష is a wish; -లు is the plural ending you met in your very first lesson.

జన్మదిన శుభాకాంక్షలు is “happy birthday”. Said alone it covers a wedding, an examination passed, a new house — anything worth marking.

What you've built

The last thing this book teaches you to say, and the kindest.

Your turn

- *Say it: śubhākāṅkṣalu*
- *Say it: śubhākāṅkṣalu*, once more
- *Say it: say śubhōdayam, then śubhākāṅkṣalu, and hear the śubha in both*
- *Recall: say mā, then samivatsaram, then ikkaḍa, then say śubhākāṅkṣalu*

Before you move on

What does శుభాకాంక్షలు mean? (“congratulations, good wishes”.) Say it once more.

Chapter 81

Counting in Order

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say first to fifth in Telugu, and make an ordinal from any number by dropping its final vowel and adding -va.

The five said in order, with only modati learned as a word and the other four made by the ending.

81.1 మొదటి (modaṭi) — first

A new kind of counting starts here, so the recalls come first, at the four growing distances this book measures.

- *Recall:* say *śubhākāṅkṣalu* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall:* say *atanu* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall:* say *goḍḍali* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall:* say *atta* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall:* say *padakoṇḍu* and *iravai* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall:* say *kukka* and *pilli* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: మొదటి

మొదటి (*modaṭi*) — “first”.

ఒకటి, రెండు, మూడు answer **how many**. This word answers **which one in the line**, and Telugu keeps a second set of words for that job.

It goes straight in front of what it counts: మొదటి రోజు (*modaṭi rōju*), the first day; మొదటి పుస్తకం (*modaṭi pustakam*), the first book. Nothing changes on the noun.

The word, taken apart — its roots and family

There is no ఒకటి in మొదటి, and there was never going to be. It is built on మొదలు (*modalu*), “**a beginning**” — so *modaṭi* means “of the beginning”, not “one-th”. You will also meet the bare మొదట (*modaṭa*), “at first”.

That is worth noticing because ఒకటి was already the maverick of the cardinals: Tamil says *onru*, Kannada *ondu*, Malayalam *onnu*, and Telugu alone says *okaṭi*. Now the number **one** turns out to be doubly on its own — the sisters do not share its cardinal, and Telugu does not build its ordinal on it either.

From two upward it is a different story, and the next lesson is where the rule starts.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *modaṭi*
- *modaṭi rōju* — the first day
- *okaṭi* is how many, *modaṭi* is which one

Before you move on

What does మొదటి mean? (**First** — which one in the line.) What word is it built on? (మొదలు, a beginning — **not** ఒకటి.) Say “the first day”. (మొదటి రోజు.)

81.2 రెండవ (reṇḍava) — second, and the swap behind all the rest

Recalls before the second ordinal, at the four measured distances.

- *Recall: say modaṭi* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall: say nannu* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall: say rampaṇi* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall: say bāva* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall: say the letter e* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall: say pacca and pasupu* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: రెండవ

రెండవ (reṇḍava) — “second”.

రెండవ రోజు (reṇḍava rōju) — the second day.

Grammar Lens: cardinal, minus its last vowel, plus -వ

Say them together and you can hear the join: రెండు → రెండవ.

Take the number you already have, take its final vowel off, and put -వ (-va) on the end. That is the whole of it, and it holds for every number from two upward. Nine ordinals for the price of one ending.

Telugu is doing here what the last lesson said it would not do for **one**: *modaṭi* had no number to build on, and every ordinal from here does.

In speech you will also hear రెండో (reṇḍō), the same word ending in a long *ō* instead of -వ. It is the everyday spoken form; -వ is what you will see written.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *reṇḍava*

- the swap — *reṇḍu* → *reṇḍava*
- *reṇḍava rōju* — the second day

Before you move on

How is an ordinal made from two upward? (**Take the number, drop its final vowel, add -వ.**) Say the second day. (రెండవ రోజు.) And what will you hear instead in speech? (రెండో.)

81.3 మూడవ (mūdava) — third

Recalls first, then the third.

- *Recall*: say *reṇḍava* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *gāru* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *pāra* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *maradalu* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say the letter *ṇa* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say the letter *ja* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: మూడవ

మూడవ (*mūdava*) — “third”.

మూడు → మూడవ. The long *ū* stays long; only the ending changes.

మూడవ వారం (*mūdava vāram*) — the third week.

Two numbers in a row have now taken the same ending, which is what a rule looks like from inside: not a statement, but the second time you were not surprised. The spoken form is మూడో (*mūdō*), exactly as *reṇḍō* was.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *mūdava*
- the swap — *mūdu* → *mūdava*
- *mūdava vāram* — the third week

Before you move on

Say the third. (మూడవ.) What happened to the long *ū*? (**Nothing** — only the ending changed.) And the spoken form? (మూడో.)

81.4 నాలుగవ (nālugaṇa) — fourth

Recalls first, then the fourth.

- *Recall*: say *mūdava* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *nāku kāvāli* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *sutti* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *alluḍu* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *śubha rātri* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *śubha sāyantram* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: నాలుగవ

నాలుగవ (nālugaṇa) — “fourth”.

నాలుగు → నాలుగవ. Four syllables, and the swap is the same one: the final *u* goes, -వ arrives.

నాలుగవ సంవత్సరం (nālugaṇa sanivatsaram) — the fourth year.

This is the longest of the ten and it is no harder than the shortest, which is the practical point of a regular ending. Once you can count, you can order.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *nālugaṇa*
- the swap — *nālugu* → *nālugaṇa*
- *nālugaṇa samivatsaram* — the fourth year

Before you move on

Say the fourth. (నాలుగవ.) What is the ending? (-వ, after the final vowel goes.) And say “the fourth year”. (నాలుగవ సంవత్సరం.)

81.5 ఐదవ (aidava) — fifth

Recalls first, then the fifth, which closes the chapter.

- *Recall*: say *nālugaṇa* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *ani* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *karra* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *aṅgaḍi* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *śubha madhyāhnam* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *when to use śubha madhyāhnam* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You’ll want to know: ఐదవ

ఐదవ (*aidava*) — “fifth”.

ఐదు → ఐదవ. The opening ఐ is untouched — it is a single letter in Telugu, not two — and only the final **u** is traded for -వ.

ఐదవ రోజు (*aidava rōju*) — the fifth day.

That is one to five in order. Say *modaṭi*, *reṇḍava*, *mūḍava*, *nālugaṇa*, *aidava*, and notice that only the first one had to be learned as a word.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *aidava*
- the five in order — *modaṭi, reṇḍava, mūdava, nālugaṇa, aidava*
- *aidava rōju* — the fifth day

Before you move on

Say the five in order. (***Modaṭi, reṇḍava, mūdava, nālugaṇa, aidava.***) How many of them had to be learned as separate words? (**One** — *modaṭi.*) And what did the other four need? (**The number, and -ṣ.**)

Chapter 82

Sixth to Eleventh

Modes: ⇄ voice (6) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can count in order all the way to tenth in Telugu and beyond it, because the ending that makes an ordinal does not stop at ten.

The ending taken past ten, which shows it was never a fact about the numbers one to ten but about numbers.

82.1 ఆరవ (ārava) — sixth

Recalls open the chapter, at the four measured distances.

- *Recall:* say *aidava* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall:* say *modaṭi* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall:* say *vellavaccu* — **R2**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall:* say *eluka* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall:* say *ḍabbu* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall:* say *arthamī cēsukō* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall:* say *the letter tha* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: ఆరవ

ఆరవ (*ārava*) — “sixth”.

ఆరు → ఆరవ, and this is the shortest ordinal in the ten: three syllables, two of them the number itself.

ఆరవ రోజు (*ārava rōju*) — the sixth day.

The numbers six to ten were the ones the first numbers lesson called Telugu's wandering half, the place where it drifts furthest from Tamil and Kannada. The ordinal ending does not care. Whatever shape the cardinal arrived in, -వ goes on it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *ārava*
- the swap — *āru* → *ārava*
- *ārava rōju* — the sixth day

Before you move on

Say the sixth. (ఆరవ.) What was traded for the ending? (**The final u of ఆరు.**) And does the ending change for the wandering half of the numbers? (**No** — it is the same -వ.)

82.2 ఏడవ (*ēḍava*) — seventh

Recalls first, then the seventh.

- *Recall*: say *ārava* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *reṇḍava* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *lōpaliki raṇḍi* — **R2**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *kappa* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *dhara* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance

- *Recall*: say *sahāyamī cēyu* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *nāku telugu iṣṭamī* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: ఏడవ

ఏడవ (*ēḍava*) — “seventh”.

ఏడు → ఏడవ. Hold the *ē* long — the letter ఏ is the long one, and its short partner ఎ is a different letter and a different word.

ఏడవ వారం (*ēḍava vāramī*) — the seventh week.

Seven weeks is a useful thing to be able to say and a good place to hear that the ordinal is doing work no cardinal can do: ఏడు వారం would be seven weeks, a quantity. ఏడవ వారం is the seventh one, a position.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *ēḍava*
- the swap — *ēḍu* → *ēḍava*
- *ēḍu vāramī* is seven weeks; *ēḍava vāramī* is the seventh

Before you move on

Say the seventh. (ఏడవ.) Which vowel opens it, the long or the short one? (**The long ఏ.**) And what is the difference between ఏడు వారం and ఏడవ వారం? (**Seven weeks against the seventh week.**)

82.3 ఎనిమిదవ (enimidava) — eighth

Recalls first, then the eighth.

- *Recall*: say *ēḍava* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *mūḍava* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *śubhākāṅkṣalu* — **R2**, a second word from the same distance

- *Recall*: say *dōma* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *tūkani* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *dayacēsi tī* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *the vowel sign r* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: ఎనిమిదవ

ఎనిమిదవ (*enimidava*) — “eighth”.

ఎనిమిది → ఎనిమిదవ, and here the vowel that goes is an **i**, not a **u**. Every ordinal so far has traded a final *u*; this one and the next trade a final *i*, because that is what their cardinals happen to end in.

Which is the useful way to hold the rule: it is not “drop the *u*”, it is **drop whatever vowel is at the end**. The ending does not know which vowel it replaced.

Note the short ఎ at the front, against the long ఏ of the last lesson.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *enimidava*
- the swap — *enimidi* → *enimidava*, an *i* this time
- short ఎ here, long ఏ in *ēḍava*

Before you move on

Say the eighth. (ఎనిమిదవ.) Which vowel came off this time? (**An i**, not a *u*.) And how is the rule best held? (**Drop whatever final vowel is there.**)

82.4 తొమ్మిదవ (tommidava) — ninth

Recalls first, then the ninth.

- *Recall*: say *enimidava* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *nāluga* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *uḍuta* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *bērami* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *idi* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say *adi* — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: తొమ్మిదవ

తొమ్మిదవ (*tommidava*) — “**ninth**”.

తొమ్మిది → తొమ్మిదవ. The doubled *mm* in the middle is held, exactly as it is in the cardinal — the ending is added at the far end of the word and touches nothing on its way.

తొమ్మిదవ రోజు (*tommidava rōju*) — the ninth day.

Second *i*-ending in a row, and the same trade. One more and the ten are closed.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *tommidava* — hold the *mm*
- the swap — *tommidi* → *tommidava*
- *tommidava rōju* — the ninth day

Before you move on

Say the ninth. (తొమ్మిదవ.) What happens to the doubled *mm*? (**Nothing** — it is held, as in the cardinal.) And which vowel came off? (**The final i.**)

82.5 పదవ (padava) — tenth

Recalls first, then the tenth, which closes the series.

- *Recall: say tommidava — R1*, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall: say aidava — R2*, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall: say sālīḍu — R3*, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall: say tīpi — R3*, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall: say akkaḍa — R4*, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall: say evaru — R4*, a second word from the same distance

You'll want to know: పదవ

పదవ (*padava*) — “tenth”.

పది → పదవ. Two syllables become three, and the trade is the same one you have now made nine times.

పదవ సంవత్సరం (*padava samivatsarami*) — the tenth year.

That is the ten. Say them in order — *modaṭi*, *reṇḍava*, *mūḍava*, *nālu-gava*, *aidava*, *ārava*, *ēḍava*, *enimidava*, *tommidava*, *padava* — and count what you actually had to learn: **one word and one ending**. Latin needed ten separate words for the same stretch, and English still does.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *padava*
- the ten in order, *modaṭi* to *padava*
- *padava samivatsarami* — the tenth year

Before you move on

Say the ten in order. (*Modaṭi* through *padava*.) How much had to be learned as separate words? (**One** — *modaṭi*.) And say “the tenth year”. (పదవ సంవత్సరం.)

82.6 పదకొండవ (padakoṇḍava) — the ending does not stop at ten

Recalls first, and then the last thing the chapter has to give.

- *Recall*: say *padava* — **R1**, one lesson back, before it decays
- *Recall*: say *āraṇa* — **R2**, the first real retrieval, five to fifteen lessons back
- *Recall*: say *māma* — **R3**, durable, twenty to sixty lessons back
- *Recall*: say *pulupu* — **R3**, a second word from the same distance
- *Recall*: say *ekkaḍa* — **R4**, recognition at distance, eighty lessons back or more
- *Recall*: say the *i-* / *a-* / *e-* pattern — **R4**, a second word from the same distance

Grammar Lens: every number you have, and every one you meet

పదకొండవ (*padakoṇḍava*) — “eleventh”.

పదకొండు → పదకొండవ. Nothing new: the same final vowel goes, the same -వ arrives.

That is the point of this last lesson. The ending was never a fact about the numbers one to ten; it is a fact about **numbers**. Take any Telugu number you know and it works:

number	ordinal
పదకొండు (11)	పదకొండవ
ఇరవై (20)	ఇరవయ్యవ

So there is no second list to learn above ten, and no list to learn below it either except the single word మొదటి. One irregular word, one

ending, and every position on the number line is sayable.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *padakoṇḍava*
- the swap on a bigger number — *padakoṇḍu* → *padakoṇḍava*
- *modaṭi* is the only word; *-va* is the rest

Before you move on

Say the eleventh. (పదకొండవ.) How many separate ordinal words does Telugu have to be learned? (**One** — *modaṭi*.) And what makes all the others? (**The number, minus its final vowel, plus -వ.**)

Chapter 83

Reading — Words, Lines, and a First Passage

Modes:  voice (2)  eyes (1)  Hands-free start: none of the 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can read a Telugu word downwards as well as along, read a sentence with no word for is, and hold a whole passage about one room without translating it word by word.

Twenty-five words about one room, carried by ఉంది and లేదు, with respect marked in the verb where the teacher gets ఉన్నారా and the farmer does not.

83.1 (reading) — six words, read down as well as along

Every word below you have written. Not one is new.

What is new is that nobody says them first.

Read this

పుస్తకం తలుపు కుర్చీ నది గాలి దీపం

Read down the list once, without stopping.

Again — and look at పుస్తకం and కుర్చీ. Something in each of them sits below the line rather than on it.

What to know first

Telugu stacks a consonant underneath its neighbour instead of putting it alongside. So a word can be two syllables wide and three levels deep.

A reader has to look down a word as well as along it, and that is the habit this list is for. నది and గాలి have nothing below; పుస్తకం has two things.

Six words, and the tall ones are not longer — they are deeper.

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.**)

Which way does a Telugu word grow when it gets complicated?
(**Downwards.**)

83.2 (reading) — six lines, and no word for *is*

The last lesson gave you words. These put them into sentences.

Nothing here is new.

Read this

ఇది పుస్తకం. ఇది తలుపు. కుర్చీ ఇక్కడ. పుస్తకం సులభం. నిజం.
ఇవాళ.

Read down once, without stopping.

Again — and look for the verb in the first four lines.

What to know first

There is none. ఇది పుస్తకం is *this book* with nothing between them, and it is a complete sentence: *this is a book*.

Telugu does not say *is*. Two words placed together are already a statement, and a reader has to stop waiting for the word that joins them.

The last two lines are one word each and still complete. That is the same rule taken as far as it goes.

Your turn

- *Say it:* the six lines, once, in order, without stopping

Twice through:

Before you move on

How many of the six were new? (**None.**)

What joins ఇది and పుస్తకం? (**Nothing** — and that is the sentence.)

83.3 (reading) — the first passage

Six words, then six lines. Now nine of them together, all about one room.

Twenty-five words, and not one of them is new.

Read this

ఇది పుస్తకం. పుస్తకం సులభం. ఇది తలుపు. కుర్చీ ఇక్కడ ఉంది.
దీపం ఇక్కడ ఉంది. గురువు ఇక్కడ ఉన్నారా? రైతు ఇక్కడ లేడు.
రెండవ పుస్తకం ఇక్కడ ఉంది. ఇవాళ చాలా సులభం.

Read it once without stopping. Do not translate as you go — let the sentences arrive.

Now read it again, and notice that every line is about the same place.

What to know first

That is not a stylistic choice. A language that has not yet taught you a word for *is* can still say ఉంది — *it exists here* — and లేదు — *it does not*. So the first passage a Telugu reader can hold is a room described from one spot: everything is here, or it is not.

ఉన్నారా? is the same word made into a question and made respectful at once, which is why the teacher gets it and the farmer does not. Telugu marks respect in the verb, and you have now read it doing so.

This is the first whole passage the book has asked you to hold at once, and it works because everything in it was paid for.

Your turn

- *Say it:* the passage aloud, once, without stopping

Twice through:

Before you move on

What two words carry the whole passage? (ఉంది and లేదు — here, and not here.)

Why does the teacher get ఉన్నారా? (Respect lives in the verb.)

The Telugu script — a reference

A **reference**, not a chapter — a place to look things up. You are *not* meant to read this before the lessons: the lessons teach reading through real words, introducing each letter as a word needs it. This page just gathers the system in one spot.

How the Telugu script works (the three facts the lessons teach)

1. **Consonants carry a built-in “a”.** క = “ka,” మ = “ma,” ర = “ra.” (Many wear the *talakattu*, a small check-mark hat.) You never write the short *a*.
2. **A vowel sign changes that built-in vowel.** Attached to a consonant it gives కా = k̄ā · కి = k̄i · కీ = k̄ī · కు = k̄u · కూ = k̄ū · కె = k̄e · కే = k̄ē · కొ = k̄o · కో = k̄ō. The signs themselves are ా ā · ి i · ి̄ ī · ం u · ు ū · ే e · ై ē · ొ o · ో ō.
3. **A *virama* (్) strips the vowel, and the bare consonant stacks below the next as a conjunct.** న్ + క → స్క (ska), న్ + య → న్య (nya). A dot anusvāra (ం) adds a final nasal.

Independent vowels (word-initial)

అ a · ఆ ā · ఇ i · ఈ ī · ఉ u · ఊ ū · ఎ e · ఏ ē · ఐ ai · ఒ o · ఓ ō · ఔ au.

Worth flagging

- **Aspiration is written.** క k / ఖ kh, గ g / ఘ gh, చ d / ఛ dh — the “h” is a real puff. Like Kannada and unlike Tamil, Telugu keeps separate letters for the Sanskrit aspirates and voiced stops, because it borrowed so many Sanskrit words.
- **Round, looping forms.** Telugu and Kannada are script-sisters, shaped for palm-leaf writing; the two look far more alike than either does to Tamil.
- **“The Italian of the East.”** Telugu words tend to end in vowels, giving the language an open, musical flow.

Telugu in the Dravidian family

Dravidian is a family entirely separate from Indo-European (English, Latin, Sanskrit). Telugu shares grammar and native vocabulary with Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam — but, like Kannada and unlike Tamil, it borrowed **heavily** from Sanskrit. It also shows the family is not uniform: where its sisters say “no” with a word from the root *il-* (*illai* / *illa*), Telugu uses its own *lēdu* / *kādu*. The lessons trace, word by word, what is home-grown and what is borrowed.

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.

-కు *-ku*

the dative suffix -ku, 'to / for' — and the idea of stacking
Introduced in Chapter 6.

అద్దం *addam*

a mirror

Introduced in Chapter 62.

అది *adi*

that one — the thing over there

Introduced in Chapter 41.

అడుగు *aḍugu*

to ask — a native verb none of the three literary sisters share, and the clue to which branch of Dravidian Telugu actually sits on

Introduced in Chapter 34.

ఐదవ *aidava*

fifth — where the vowel that goes is a diphthong's tail

Introduced in Chapter 81.

ఆకలి *ākali*

hunger

Introduced in Chapter 63.

ఆకాశం *ākāśam*

the sky

Introduced in Chapter 53.

అక్కడ *akkaḍa*

there — where I am not

Introduced in Chapter 41.

అలాగే *alāgē*

just so, alright then

Introduced in Chapter 49.

ఆలకించు *ālakiñcu*

listen

Introduced in Chapter 44.

అల్లుడు *alluḍu*

a son-in-law

Introduced in Chapter 71.

అమ్మమ్మ *ammamma*

grandmother, the mother's mother

Introduced in Chapter 45.

అంగడి *aṅgaḍi*

a shop

Introduced in Chapter 72.

అని *ani*

that (reporting what was said or thought)

Introduced in Chapter 80.

అంతే *antē*

that's all; that's just it

Introduced in Chapter 58.

అనుకో *anukō*

to think — literally “say it to yourself”, built from the family's say-verb plus the ending that turns a verb back on its own doer

Introduced in Chapter 33.

అనుమతి *anumati*

permission

Introduced in Chapter 65.

ఆరవ *ārava*

sixth — the shortest of the ten

Introduced in Chapter 82.

ఆరోగ్యం *ārōgyam*

health

Introduced in Chapter 63.

అర్థం చేసుకో *arthamī cēsukō*

to understand — “make the meaning your own”, a Sanskrit noun on the native do-verb with the ending that hands the action back to you

Introduced in Chapter 33.

అర్థం కాలేదు *arthamī kālēdu*

I did not understand

Introduced in Chapter 78.

ఆరు ఏడు ఎనిమిది తొమ్మిది పది *āru ēḍu enimidi tommidi padi*

six to ten — where Telugu wanders furthest from its Dravidian cousins

Introduced in Chapter 7.

అరుపు *arupu*

a shout

Introduced in Chapter 68.

ఆశీర్వాదం *āśīrvādam*

a blessing

Introduced in Chapter 51.

అతను *atanu*

he (and ఆమె, she)

Introduced in Chapter 79.

అతిథి *atithi*

a guest

Introduced in Chapter 48.

అత్త *atta*

an aunt; a mother-in-law

Introduced in Chapter 71.

అవునా *avunā*

is it so?

Introduced in Chapter 78.

అవును *avunu*

yes (avunu)

Introduced in Chapter 1.

అయితే *ayitē*

in that case

Introduced in Chapter 64.

బాగా *bāgā*

well, fine — and the reply “నేను బాగున్నాను”

Introduced in Chapter 3.

బాట *bāṭa*

a path, a way

Introduced in Chapter 55.

బట్ట *baṭṭa*

cloth

Introduced in Chapter 46.

బావ *bāva*

a brother-in-law; a male cousin

Introduced in Chapter 71.

బయలుదేరు *bayaludēru*

to set out, to start off

Introduced in Chapter 50.

బేరం *bēram*

a bargain, haggling

Introduced in Chapter 72.

భారతదేశం *Bhāratadēśam*

India

Introduced in Chapter 77.

భర్త *bhartā*

husband

Introduced in Chapter 45.

భార్య *bhāryā*

wife

Introduced in Chapter 45.

భోజనం *bhōjanam*

a meal — the polite Sanskrit noun Chapter 32 already named and never taught, finally given its own lesson

Introduced in Chapter 40.

బురద *buradā*

mud

Introduced in Chapter 59.

బుట్ట *butṭa*

a basket

Introduced in Chapter 56.

చదువు *caduvu*

to read — and, with no second word, to study; the same form is the noun for an education, and its middle vowel moves as the endings change

Introduced in Chapter 33.

చైత్రం వైశాఖం జ్యేష్ఠం ఆషాఢం శ్రావణం భాద్రపదం ఆశ్వయుజం కార్తీకం మార్గశిరం

పుష్యం మాఘం ఫాల్గుణం *Caitram Vaiśākham Jyēṣṭham Āṣāḍham Śrāvaṇam*

Bhādrapadam Āśvayujam Kārtikam Mārgaśiram Puṣyam Māgham

Phālgunam

the twelve lunisolar months — matching Kannada and Hindi's shared pan-Indian calendar, completing the split with Tamil/Malayalam's own solar systems

Introduced in Chapter 16.

చక్కెర *cakkerā*

sugar

Introduced in Chapter 61.

చాలా మంచి *cālā manci*

very good

Introduced in Chapter 76.

చాలు *cālu*

enough, that will do

Introduced in Chapter 49.

చంద్రుడు *candrudu*

the moon

Introduced in Chapter 53.

చాప *cāpa*

a mat

Introduced in Chapter 56.

చెడ్డ *ceḍḍa*

bad

Introduced in Chapter 76.

చేదు *cēdu*

bitter, bitterness

Introduced in Chapter 73.

చెరువు *ceruvu*

a village tank, a reservoir

Introduced in Chapter 55.

చెట్టు *ceṭṭu*

a tree

Introduced in Chapter 54.

చెవి *cevi*

ear — native Dravidian, matching Tamil's own form closely

Introduced in Chapter 37.

చీమ *cīma*

an ant

Introduced in Chapter 60.

చిన్న *cinna*

small

Introduced in Chapter 42.

చీపురు *cīpuru*

a broom

Introduced in Chapter 62.

చూడు *cūḍu*

look

Introduced in Chapter 44.

చూడు *cūḍu*

to see, to look — Telugu's own everyday see-word, and the respectful -అండి ending that fits any verb stem

Introduced in Chapter 32.

చుక్క *cukka*

a star; a dot

Introduced in Chapter 53.

డబ్బు *ḍabbu*

money

Introduced in Chapter 72.

దగ్గు *daggu*

a cough

Introduced in Chapter 63.

దండం *daṇḍam*

a salutation, “my respects”

Introduced in Chapter 51.

దారం *dāram*

thread

Introduced in Chapter 62.

దయచేసి *dayacēsi*

please (dayacēsi — “having done compassion,” from దయ *daya* “compassion”)

Introduced in Chapter 8.

దయచేసి టీ *dayacēsi ṭī*

tea, please — Telugu’s traditional word for tea travelled by sea, not by the overland road most of its neighbours took

Introduced in Chapter 39.

దేశం *dēśam*

a country

Introduced in Chapter 77.

ధన్యవాదములు *dhanyavādamulu*

thank you (dhanyavādamulu — “utterances of ‘worthy’”)

Introduced in Chapter 1.

ధర *dhara*

a price

Introduced in Chapter 72.

దీపం *dīpam*

a lamp

Introduced in Chapter 46.

దోమ *dōma*

a mosquito

Introduced in Chapter 70.

ఏడవ *ēḍava*

seventh — a long vowel that stays long

Introduced in Chapter 82.

ఎక్కడ *ekkaḍa*

where? — asking about a place

Introduced in Chapter 41.

ఎక్కువ *ekkuva*

more, a great deal

Introduced in Chapter 58.

ఎలా *elā*

how

Introduced in Chapter 3.

ఎల్లుండి *elluṇḍi*

the day after tomorrow

Introduced in Chapter 50.

ఎలుక *eluka*

a mouse, a rat

Introduced in Chapter 70.

ఏమిటి *ēmiṭi*

what

Introduced in Chapter 2.

ఏమో *ēmō*

perhaps, who knows

Introduced in Chapter 49.

ఎముక *emuka*

a bone

Introduced in Chapter 57.

ఎందుకంటే *endukaṇṭē*

because

Introduced in Chapter 74.

ఎందుకు *enduku*

why?

Introduced in Chapter 74.

ఎనిమిదవ *enimidava*

eighth — where the vowel that goes is an i, not a u

Introduced in Chapter 82.

ఎప్పుడు వస్తారు? *eppuḍu vastāru?*

when will you come?

Introduced in Chapter 75.

ఎవరు *evaru*

who? — asking about a person

Introduced in Chapter 41.

గడప *gaḍapa*

a threshold

Introduced in Chapter 67.

గడ్డి *gaḍḍi*

grass

Introduced in Chapter 66.

గాలి *gāli*

wind, air

Introduced in Chapter 59.

ಗಂಟ *ganṭa*

hour — matching Kannada and Hindi exactly, the same Sanskrit “bell” word
Introduced in Chapter 18.

ಗಾರು *gāru*

the respectful suffix on a name
Introduced in Chapter 79.

ಗೌರವಂ *gauravam*

respect
Introduced in Chapter 51.

ಗೆಡೆ *gēde*

a buffalo
Introduced in Chapter 60.

ಗಿನ್ನೆ *ginne*

a cooking vessel, a bowl
Introduced in Chapter 56.

ಗోಡ *gōḍa*

a wall
Introduced in Chapter 67.

ಗೊಡ್ಡಲಿ *goḍḍali*

an axe
Introduced in Chapter 69.

ಗೊಡುಗು *goḍugu*

an umbrella
Introduced in Chapter 62.

ಗೊಂతు *gontu*

a voice
Introduced in Chapter 68.

ಗೋರು *gōru*

a fingernail, a claw
Introduced in Chapter 57.

ಗ್ರಾಮಂ *grāmani*

a village
Introduced in Chapter 55.

ಗುಂಡೆ *guṇḍe*

heart — the everyday native Dravidian word, cognate with Kannada’s own native heart-word
Introduced in Chapter 38.

ಗುರುವು *guruvu*

a teacher
Introduced in Chapter 48.

గుట్ట *guṭṭa*

a low hill

Introduced in Chapter 55.

హృదయం *hṛdayam*

heart — the literary Sanskrit word for the same organ, a genuine Indo-European cousin of English “heart”

Introduced in Chapter 38.

ఇది *idi*

this one — the thing near me

Introduced in Chapter 41.

ఇక్కడ *ikkada*

here — where I am

Introduced in Chapter 41.

ఇంకా *inkā*

still, yet

Introduced in Chapter 64.

ఇప్పుడు *ippuḍu*

now

Introduced in Chapter 50.

ఇసుక *isuka*

sand

Introduced in Chapter 59.

ఇవాళ *ivāḷa*

today

Introduced in Chapter 75.

ఇవ్వ *ivvu*

give

Introduced in Chapter 43.

జుట్టు *juṭṭu*

hair (of the head)

Introduced in Chapter 47.

కబురు *kaburu*

a message, news

Introduced in Chapter 68.

కడుపు *kaḍupu*

the stomach, the belly

Introduced in Chapter 47.

కల్లం *kallam*

a threshing floor

Introduced in Chapter 66.

కాలు *kālu*

leg, foot

Introduced in Chapter 47.

కానీ *kānī*

but

Introduced in Chapter 74.

కన్ను *kannu*

eye — a word this book has already used once, unglossed, as proof of the family's shared oldest seeing-root

Introduced in Chapter 37.

కప్ప *kappa*

a frog

Introduced in Chapter 70.

కప్పు *kappu*

a roof

Introduced in Chapter 67.

కారం *kāraṁ*

pungency, heat

Introduced in Chapter 73.

కర్ర *karra*

a stick

Introduced in Chapter 69.

కష్టం *kaṣṭaṁ*

difficult; trouble

Introduced in Chapter 76.

కత్తి *katti*

a knife

Introduced in Chapter 56.

కిటికీ *kiṭiki*

a window

Introduced in Chapter 67.

కోడి *kōḍi*

a hen

Introduced in Chapter 60.

కొడుకు *koḍuku*

son — a native Dravidian root that shares its shape with a word already met in this book, and not with the next lesson's word for daughter

Introduced in Chapter 36.

కొమ్మ *komma*

a branch

Introduced in Chapter 54.

కొంచెం *koñcem*

a little, a bit

Introduced in Chapter 58.

కొత్త *kotta*

new

Introduced in Chapter 42.

కృతజ్ఞత *kr̥tajñata*

gratitude

Introduced in Chapter 51.

క్షమించండి *kṣamiñcaṇḍi*

please forgive / sorry (kṣamiñcaṇḍi — from kṣamiñcu “to forgive,” Sanskrit

kṣamā + respectful -aṇḍi)

Introduced in Chapter 9.

కూడా *kūdā*

also

Introduced in Chapter 64.

కుక్క, పిల్లి *kukka, pilli*

dog and cat — kukka genuinely breaks from its Dravidian cousins’ shared naayi

root, debated as onomatopoeic or a Sanskrit loan; pilli most likely closes the

ENTIRE arc’s cat-story loop, the probable Dravidian source behind Sanskrit’s

biDaala and so Hindi’s billi

Introduced in Chapter 21.

కుర్చీ *kurcī*

a chair

Introduced in Chapter 52.

కూర్చో *kūrcō*

sit

Introduced in Chapter 43.

కుటుంబం *kuṭumbam*

family — the collective word Chapter 12’s parents and siblings never needed,

because each of them was already the name of one specific person

Introduced in Chapter 35.

కూతురు *kūturu*

daughter — a second, separate Proto-Dravidian root, cognate across the family

with a word for “infant” rather than with Telugu’s own word for son

Introduced in Chapter 36.

లేదా *lēdā*

or

Introduced in Chapter 74.

లేదు *lēdu*

no / there isn’t (lēdu)

Introduced in Chapter 1.

లోపలికి రండి *lōpaliki raṇḍi*

please come in

Introduced in Chapter 80.

మా *mā*

our (not including you)

Introduced in Chapter 79.

మబ్బు *mabbu*

a cloud

Introduced in Chapter 53.

మధ్యాహ్నం *madhyāhnam*

“afternoon” — the same word already met meaning precisely “noon” (TE-C17), confirmed via a directly-fetched source to also cover “the time between noon and evening” in modern usage — the same kind of semantic widening already found for Hindi’s दोपहर and, more thinly, Kannada’s ಮಧ್ಯಾಹ್ನ

Introduced in Chapter 28.

మధ్యాహ్నం అర్ధరాత్రి *madhyāhnam ardharātri*

noon (Sanskrit “middle of day,” same as Kannada) and midnight (Sanskrit “HALF of night” — a different root than Kannada’s midnight word)

Introduced in Chapter 17.

మళ్ళీ కలుద్దాం *maḷḷi kaluddām*

we’ll meet again

Introduced in Chapter 4.

మామ *māma*

an uncle; a father-in-law

Introduced in Chapter 71.

మనవి *manavi*

a polite request

Introduced in Chapter 65.

మంచి *manci*

good

Introduced in Chapter 42.

మంచిది *mancidi*

it is a good one

Introduced in Chapter 76.

మంచు *mañcu*

mist, dew, snow

Introduced in Chapter 59.

మరదలు *maradalu*

a sister-in-law; a female cousin

Introduced in Chapter 71.

మరియు *mariyu*

and

Introduced in Chapter 74.

మర్యాద *maryāda*

good manners

Introduced in Chapter 65.

మాట్లాడు *māṭlāḍu*

speak

Introduced in Chapter 44.

మాట్లాడు *māṭlāḍu*

to speak

Introduced in Chapter 5.

మాత్రమే *mātramē*

only

Introduced in Chapter 64.

మెడ *meḍa*

the neck

Introduced in Chapter 57.

మేక *mēka*

a goat

Introduced in Chapter 60.

మేలు *mēlu*

a good turn, a benefit

Introduced in Chapter 51.

మెట్టు *metṭu*

a step

Introduced in Chapter 67.

మీ పేరు ఏమిటి? *mī pēru ēmiṭi?*

what's your name?

Introduced in Chapter 2.

మిరప *mirapa*

a chilli

Introduced in Chapter 61.

మీరు ఎలా ఉన్నారు? *mīru elā unnāru?*

how are you? (respectful)

Introduced in Chapter 3.

మొదటి *modaṭi*

first — the one ordinal Telugu does not build from a number

Introduced in Chapter 81.

మొక్క *mokka*

a young plant

Introduced in Chapter 54.

మూడవ *mūḍava*

third — the swap on its second number

Introduced in Chapter 81.

ముగ్గు *muggu*

the rice-flour design drawn at the doorstep

Introduced in Chapter 52.

ముక్కు *mukku*

nose — native Dravidian, but an irregular reflex of its own Proto-Dravidian root, contaminated in shape by the separate word for “face”

Introduced in Chapter 37.

ముందు *mundu*

before, in front

Introduced in Chapter 75.

ముప్పై *muppai*

thirty (and the tens above it)

Introduced in Chapter 77.

నా *nā*

my

Introduced in Chapter 2.

నా పేరు ... *nā pēru* ...

my name is... (with no “is”)

Introduced in Chapter 2.

నది *nadi*

a river

Introduced in Chapter 55.

నాకు కావాలి *nāku kāvāli*

I want it

Introduced in Chapter 80.

నాకు తెలియదు *nāku teliyadu*

I do not know

Introduced in Chapter 78.

నాకు తెలుగు ఇష్టం *nāku telugu iṣṭam*

‘I like Telugu’ — a sentence with no verb in it at all, the liker in the dative and the liked thing left standing plain

Introduced in Chapter 34.

నాకు తెలుగు వచ్చు *nāku telugu vaccu*

‘I know Telugu’ — literally ‘to me Telugu comes’, with no subject at all

Introduced in Chapter 6.

నాలుగవ *nālugaṇa*

fourth — the longest of the ten, and still the same ending

Introduced in Chapter 81.

నలుపు తెలుపు ఎరుపు నీలం *nalupu telupu erupu nīlam*

black, white, red, blue — Telugu’s own basic colors, completing the whole family’s shared blue

Introduced in Chapter 11.

నమస్కారం *namaskāram*

hello / greetings (namaskāram — “a making of a bow”)

Introduced in Chapter 1.

నమ్మకం *nammakam*

trust

Introduced in Chapter 65.

నాన్న అమ్మ అన్న తమ్ముడు అక్క చెల్లి *nānna amma anna tammudu akka celli*
father, mother, and four age-graded sibling words — Telugu’s own father-word
and “younger sister” word, but the same age-first system

Introduced in Chapter 12.

నన్ను *nannu*

me (as the object)

Introduced in Chapter 79.

నేను *nēnu*

I

Introduced in Chapter 3.

నేను తెలుగు మాట్లాడతాను *nēnu telugu māṭṭāḍatānu*

I speak Telugu

Introduced in Chapter 5.

నెయ్యి *neyyi*

ghee

Introduced in Chapter 61.

నీ వయసెంత? *nī vayasenta*

how old are you? — literally “your age how-much?”, matching Kannada’s simple
verbless possessive exactly

Introduced in Chapter 19.

నిద్ర *nidra*

sleep

Introduced in Chapter 63.

నిజం *nijam*

true; the truth

Introduced in Chapter 49.

నిలబ్బి *nilcō*

stand

Introduced in Chapter 43.

నీళ్ళు బియ్యం అన్నం *nīḷḷu biyyam annam*

water (matching Tamil/Kannada’s neer/niiru), and rice raw/cooked —
completing the family’s water and rice pattern

Introduced in Chapter 15.

నిన్న *ninna*

yesterday

Introduced in Chapter 75.

నిప్పు *nippu*

fire, a live coal

Introduced in Chapter 59.

నోరు *nōru*

mouth — the one face-word where Telugu does not obviously match the root its three sisters all share
Introduced in Chapter 37.

నుంచి *nunci*

from
Introduced in Chapter 77.

నూనె *nūne*

oil
Introduced in Chapter 61.

నువ్వు / మీరు *nuvvu / mīru*

you (familiar / respectful)
Introduced in Chapter 2.

ఒకటి రెండు మూడు నాలుగు ఐదు *okaṭi reṇḍu mūḍu nālugu aiḍu*

one to five — the Dravidian family numbers, with Telugu’s maverick “one”
Introduced in Chapter 7.

పచ్చ, పసుపు *pacca pasupu*

green and yellow — a genuine Telugu doublet pair, both from the same Proto-Dravidian *pac-* root, unlike Kannada, where the yellow word broke away as a Sanskrit loan
Introduced in Chapter 22.

పదకొండు — ఇరవై *padakoṇḍu — iravai*

11-20 — additive “ten-echo” compounds for the teens; ఇరవై (20) most likely continues the SAME pan-Dravidian “two-tens” pattern as Kannada’s *ippattu*, though worn down further and less transparent on the surface today
Introduced in Chapter 20.

పదవ *padava*

tenth — the ten closed, and the shortest swap of all
Introduced in Chapter 82.

పక్షి *pakṣi*

a bird
Introduced in Chapter 60.

పాలు *pālu*

milk — the same Proto-Dravidian word the whole family shares, with Telugu on the majority side of a regular Kannada sound law
Introduced in Chapter 39.

పండు *paṇḍu*

a fruit
Introduced in Chapter 46.

పని చేయు *pani cēyu*

to work (lit. “work-do”)
Introduced in Chapter 5.

పన్ను *pannu*

a tooth

Introduced in Chapter 47.

పంట *paṇṭa*

a harvest

Introduced in Chapter 66.

పార *pāra*

a spade

Introduced in Chapter 69.

పరవాలేదు *paravālēdu*

it's okay / no problem / you're welcome

Introduced in Chapter 3.

పాట *pāṭa*

a song

Introduced in Chapter 68.

పాత *pāta*

old — of a thing, not of a person

Introduced in Chapter 42.

పట్టణం *paṭṭaṇam*

a town

Introduced in Chapter 77.

పెదవి *pedavi*

a lip

Introduced in Chapter 57.

పెద్ద *pedda*

big

Introduced in Chapter 42.

పేరు *pēru*

name

Introduced in Chapter 2.

పెరుగు *perugu*

curd

Introduced in Chapter 61.

పెట్టె *pette*

a box

Introduced in Chapter 56.

పొలం *polam*

a field

Introduced in Chapter 66.

ప్రయాణం *prayāṇam*

a journey

Introduced in Chapter 50.

పూలదండ *pūladanḍa*

a flower garland

Introduced in Chapter 52.

పులుపు *pulupu*

sour, sourness

Introduced in Chapter 73.

పుస్తకం *pustakam*

a book

Introduced in Chapter 46.

పువ్వు *puvvu*

a flower

Introduced in Chapter 52.

రా *rā*

come

Introduced in Chapter 43.

రా *rā*

to come — the command is రా, but every ending attaches to వచ్చు instead

Introduced in Chapter 32.

రైతు *raitu*

a farmer

Introduced in Chapter 48.

రంపం *rampam*

a saw

Introduced in Chapter 69.

రాత్రి *rātri*

“night” — the same Sanskrit tatsama word already hiding inside ardharātri;

unlike day’s Persian surprise, night genuinely follows the

Sanskrit-tatsama-as-everyday pattern, matching Kannada

Introduced in Chapter 24.

రాయి *rāyi*

write

Introduced in Chapter 44.

రాయు *rāyu*

to write — an old Dravidian word for drawing a line, still spelled వ్రాయు in books,
and the chapter’s fourth mind-verb

Introduced in Chapter 33.

రెండవ *reṇḍava*

second — and the one swap that makes every ordinal from here to the end

Introduced in Chapter 81.

రేపు కలుద్దాం *rēpu kaluddām*

see you tomorrow

Introduced in Chapter 4.

రోగం *rōgam*

a disease

Introduced in Chapter 63.

రోజు *rōju*

“day” — a genuine surprise: Telugu’s everyday word isn’t Sanskrit or native Dravidian at all, it’s a Persian loanword; దినము, the Sanskrit tatsama form, is the more formal alternate here — the mirror image of Kannada’s pattern

Introduced in Chapter 23.

శబ్దం *śabdani*

a sound

Introduced in Chapter 68.

సహాయం చేయు *sahāyam cēyu*

to help — a Sanskrit noun on the native do-verb, and the noun takes apart into “a going with somebody”

Introduced in Chapter 34.

సాలీడు *sālīḍu*

a spider

Introduced in Chapter 70.

సంవత్సరం *saṁvatsaram*

a year

Introduced in Chapter 75.

సంతోషం *santōṣam*

joy / pleased to meet you

Introduced in Chapter 2.

సరే *sarē*

okay / alright (sarē)

Introduced in Chapter 1.

సాయంత్రం *sāyantram*

“evening” (sāyantram) — Sanskrit tatsama from సాయం (sāyam, “in the evening”)

+ a “-tana” time-adjective suffix; సాయం itself traces to PIE *seh₁*- (“long, lasting”), the SAME root as Latin’s *sērus* — attested as the root of French *soir* and Italian *sera* — a genuine distant cognate across two completely different Indo-European branches

Introduced in Chapter 27.

స్నేహితుడి *snēhituḍi*

the friend’s

Introduced in Chapter 79.

స్నేహితుడు *snēhituḍu*

friend — the everyday Sanskrit-derived word, with Telugu’s own DEDR-attested alternative named beside it

Introduced in Chapter 35.

సోమవారం మంగళవారం బుధవారం గురువారం శుక్రవారం శనివారం

ఆదివారం *Somavāram Maṅgaḷavāram Budhavāram Guruvāram Śukravāram Śanivāram Ādivāram*

the seven weekdays — Sanskritic like Hindi, but Sunday means “the FIRST day,” not “Sun’s day”

Introduced in Chapter 10.

శుభ మధ్యాహ్నం *śubha madhyāhnam*

“good afternoon” (śubha madhyāhnam), built on the widened “noon” word rather than the classical later-afternoon term

Introduced in Chapter 31.

శుభ రాత్రి *śubha rātri*

“good night” — the standard Sanskrit-tatsama translation (rātri already met, śubha new); some sources describe everyday speakers often code-switching to English “good night” instead

Introduced in Chapter 25.

శుభ సాయంత్రం *śubha sāyantram*

“good evening” (śubha sāyantram) — pairs with సాయంత్రం (TE-C27, the word with the striking Latin sērus/French soir cognate); unlike GREETING-MORNING’s single, dramatic “displaced by English” source, TWO independently-fetched sources agree this one is genuinely, commonly used in both formal and casual speech, with నమస్కారం as a time-independent alternative rather than a replacement

Introduced in Chapter 30.

శుభాకాంక్షలు *śubhākāṅkṣalu*

congratulations, good wishes

Introduced in Chapter 80.

శుభోదయం *śubhodayam*

“good morning” (subhodayam) — శుభ + ఉదయం, the traditional phrase; one directly-fetched source (a Telugu-learning blog, the same low-authority genre already found overstated for Hindi/Kannada) claims it’s archaic, displaced by English “good morning” — treat with real skepticism, not as confirmed;

నమస్కారం remains a safer everyday-greeting bet regardless

Introduced in Chapter 29.

సూది *sūdi*

a needle

Introduced in Chapter 62.

సులభం *sulabham*

easy

Introduced in Chapter 76.

సూర్యుడు *sūryudu*

the sun

Introduced in Chapter 53.

సుత్తి *sutti*

a hammer

Introduced in Chapter 69.

స్వాగతం *svāgatam*

a welcome

Introduced in Chapter 65.

తక్కువ *takkuva*

less, too little

Introduced in Chapter 58.

తల చెయ్యి *tala ceyyi*

head (matching its cousins) and hand (the SAME Dravidian root as the others, transformed almost past recognition)

Introduced in Chapter 13.

తలుపు *talupu*

a door

Introduced in Chapter 52.

తప్పకుండా *tappakundā*

certainly, without fail

Introduced in Chapter 49.

తరువాత *taruvāta*

after that, later

Introduced in Chapter 64.

తాత *tāta*

grandfather

Introduced in Chapter 45.

తెలుసా *telusā*

do you know?

Introduced in Chapter 78.

తెలుసు *telusu*

it is known — the verb that carries no person at all, so the knower rides in the dative

Introduced in Chapter 32.

తిను *tinu*

to eat — the inherited Dravidian root Telugu kept as its plain everyday verb, with the mealtime nouns borrowed from Sanskrit

Introduced in Chapter 32.

తీపి *tīpi*

sweet, sweetness

Introduced in Chapter 73.

తీసుకో *tīsukō*

to take — తీయు, “to pull out”, wearing the same -కో as the last chapter’s two mind-verbs, so taking is pulling something out for yourself

Introduced in Chapter 34.

తొమ్మిదవ *tommidava*

ninth — the doubled consonant survives the swap
Introduced in Chapter 82.

తూకం *tūkamī*

weight

Introduced in Chapter 72.

ఉదయం *udayam*

“morning” (udayam) — Sanskrit tatsama from udaya (“rise”) + Telugu -mu, Telugu’s most general everyday word, though genuine native competitors (poddu/podduna, vēkuva) also do real everyday work; unlike Kannada, where the same Sanskrit root (udaya) shows up ONLY inside the greeting śubhōdaya, Telugu’s everyday noun and its greeting-root are the SAME word
Introduced in Chapter 26.

ఉడుత *uḍuta*

a squirrel

Introduced in Chapter 70.

ఉండు *uṇḍu*

to be, to exist, to stay — and the negative Telugu has to fetch from a different verb

Introduced in Chapter 32.

ఉండు *uṇḍu*

to be, to stay, to live

Introduced in Chapter 5.

ఉన్నారా *unnārā*

is he or she there?

Introduced in Chapter 78.

ఉప్పు *uppu*

salt

Introduced in Chapter 46.

వద్దు *vaddu*

no, I don’t want it

Introduced in Chapter 58.

వగరు *vagaru*

astringent

Introduced in Chapter 73.

వైద్యుడు *vaidyudu*

a doctor, a physician

Introduced in Chapter 48.

వరి *vari*

paddy, rice still in the field

Introduced in Chapter 66.

వసంత ఋతువు వేసవి వానాకాలం శీతాకాలం *vasanta ṛtuvu vēsavi vānakālam śītākālam*

spring, summer, monsoon, winter — completing the Dravidian pattern of native heat/rain words plus Sanskrit spring
Introduced in Chapter 14.

వాతావరణం *vātāvaraṇam*

weather/atmosphere — a PURE Sanskrit compound, unlike Kannada’s Persian+Sanskrit hybrid: vata (“air/wind”) + avarana (“covering”)
Introduced in Chapter 20.

వెళ్ళవచ్చు *vellavaccu*

you may go
Introduced in Chapter 80.

వెళ్ళి వస్తాను *velli vastānu*

goodbye (lit. “I’ll go and come back”)
Introduced in Chapter 4.

వెళ్ళొస్తాను *vellōstānu*

I’ll go and come back — the everyday goodbye
Introduced in Chapter 50.

వెళ్ళు *vellu*

to go (and వచ్చు, to come)
Introduced in Chapter 4.

వెళ్ళు *vellu*

to go — with one tense-piece covering both “I go” and “I will go”, and “right now” built out of the be-verb
Introduced in Chapter 32.

వేలు *vēlu*

a finger
Introduced in Chapter 47.

వేరు *vēru*

a root
Introduced in Chapter 54.

విద్యార్థి *vidyārthi*

a student
Introduced in Chapter 48.

వీపు *vīpu*

the back
Introduced in Chapter 57.

విత్తనం *vittanam*

a seed
Introduced in Chapter 54.

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 31

31.1 శుభ మధ్యాహ్నం — *register and evidence*

Do both sources claim subha madhyahnam is less common?

Chapter 83

83.1 (*reading*) — *six words, read down as well as along*

Which word is the lamp?

83.2 (*reading*) — *six lines, and no word for is*

What English word has no Telugu equivalent in these lines?

83.3 (*reading*) — *the first passage*

Who is not in the room?

Answer Key

The first response is the canonical display answer. When a question accepts other authored forms, they appear underneath.

Chapter 31

31.1 శుభ మధ్యాహ్నం — *register and evidence*

Answer: no

Also accepted: no they do not; only one source does

Chapter 83

83.1 (*reading*) — *six words, read down as well as along*

Answer: deepam

Also accepted: దీపం; lamp

83.2 (*reading*) — *six lines, and no word for is*

Answer: is

Also accepted: to be; the verb is

83.3 (*reading*) — *the first passage*

Answer: the farmer

Also accepted: రైతు; farmer

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.

0–9

11-20 — additive “ten-echo” compounds for the teens; ఇరవై (20) most likely continues the SAME pan-Dravidian “two-tens” pattern as Kannada’s ippattu, though worn down further and less transparent on the surface today పదకొండు — ఇరవై (padakonḍu — iravai)
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 20, p. 155

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a bargain, haggling బేరం (bēraṁ)
Chapter 72, p. 429
a basket బుట్ట (buṭṭa)
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a bird పక్షి (pakṣi)
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Chapter 51, p. 301
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Chapter 57, p. 339
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a box పెట్టె (peṭṭe)
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chapter topic; Chapter 40, p. 245

**a meal — the polite Sanskrit noun Chapter 32 already named
and never taught, finally given its own lesson** భోజనం (bhōjanam)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 40, p. 245

a message, news కబురు (kaburu)

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a mirror అద్దం (addam)

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a mosquito దోమ (dōma)

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a mouse, a rat ఎలుక (eluka)

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a young plant మొక్క (mokka)

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after that, later తరువాత (taruvāta)

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Afternoon

chapter topic; Chapter 28, p. 183

“afternoon” — the same word already met meaning precisely

“noon” (TE-C17), confirmed via a directly-fetched source to also

cover “the time between noon and evening” in modern usage —

the same kind of semantic widening already found for Hindi’s

दोपहर and, more thinly, Kannada’s

మధ్యాహ్న మధ్యాహ్నం (madhyāhnam)

explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 28, p. 183

also కూడా (kūdā)

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And, But, Or

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chapter topic; Chapter 49, p. 289

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astringent వగరు (vagaru)

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B

bad చెడ్డ (ceḍḍa)

Chapter 76, p. 453

because ఎందుకంటే (endukaṇṭē)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 74, p. 441

before, in front ముందు (mundu)

Chapter 75, p. 447

before the noun, unchanged — five words, one rule

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 42, p. 253

big పెద్ద (pedda)

Chapter 42, p. 253

bitter, bitterness చేదు (cēdu)

Chapter 73, p. 435

black, white, red, blue — Telugu's own basic colors, completing

the whole family's shared blue నలుపు తెలుపు ఎరుపు నీలం (nalupu

telupu erupu nīlam)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 11, p. 113

but కానీ (kānī)

Chapter 74, p. 441

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Case Endings and Dative Subjects

chapter topic; Chapter 6, p. 81

certainly, without fail తప్పకుండా (tappakuṇḍā)

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cloth బట్ట (baṭṭa)

Chapter 46, p. 271

come రా (rā)

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congratulations, good wishes శుభాకాంక్షలు (śubhākāṅkṣalu)

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Counting in Order

chapter topic; Chapter 81, p. 483

Courtesy Words

chapter topic; Chapter 51, p. 301

curd పెరుగు (perugu)

Chapter 61, p. 363

D

daughter — a second, separate Proto-Dravidian root, cognate

across the family with a word for “infant” rather than with

Telugu’s own word for son కూతురు (kūturu)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 36, p. 225

Day

chapter topic; Chapter 23, p. 165

“day” — a genuine surprise: Telugu’s everyday word isn’t

Sanskrit or native Dravidian at all, it’s a Persian loanword;

దినము, the Sanskrit tatsama form, is the more formal alternate

here — the mirror image of Kannada’s pattern రోజు (rōju)

explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 23, p. 165

Days of the Week

chapter topic; Chapter 10, p. 107

Describing Things

chapter topic; Chapter 42, p. 253

difficult; trouble కష్టం (kaṣṭam)

Chapter 76, p. 453

do you know? తెలుసా (telusā)

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Dog and Cat

chapter topic; Chapter 21, p. 159

dog and cat — kukka genuinely breaks from its Dravidian

cousins’ shared naayi root, debated as onomatopoeic or a

Sanskrit loan; pilli most likely closes the ENTIRE arc’s cat-story

loop, the probable Dravidian source behind Sanskrit’s biDaala

and so Hindi’s billi కుక్క, పిల్లి (kukka, pilli)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 21, p. 159

E

ear — native Dravidian, matching Tamil’s own form

closely చెవి (cevi)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 37, p. 229

easy సులభం (sulabham)

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eighth — where the vowel that goes is an i, not a

u ఎనిమిదవ (enimidava)

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“evening” (sāyantram) — Sanskrit tatsama from సాయం (sāyam, “in the evening”) + a “-tana” time-adjective suffix; సాయం itself traces to PIE *seh₁-* (“long, lasting”), the SAME root as Latin’s *sērus* — attested as the root of French *soir* and Italian *sera* — a genuine distant cognate across two completely different

Indo-European branches సాయంత్రం (sāyantram)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 27, p. 181

eye — a word this book has already used once, unglossed, as proof of the family’s shared oldest seeing-root కన్ను (kannu)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 37, p. 229

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Family

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Family and Friends

chapter topic; Chapter 35, p. 221

family — the collective word Chapter 12’s parents and siblings never needed, because each of them was already the name of one specific person కుటుంబం (kuṭumbam)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 35, p. 221

Farewells

chapter topic; Chapter 4, p. 53

father, mother, and four age-graded sibling words — Telugu’s own father-word and “younger sister” word, but the same age-first system నాన్న అమ్మ అన్న తమ్ముడు అక్క చెల్లి (nānna amma anna tammudu akka celli)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 12, p. 117

fifth — where the vowel that goes is a diphthong's

tail ఐదవ (aidava)

Chapter 81, p. 483

fire, a live coal నిప్పు (nippu)

Chapter 59, p. 351

first — the one ordinal Telugu does not build from a number మొదటి (modaṭi)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 81, p. 483

Four Core Colours

chapter topic; Chapter 11, p. 113

Four Verbs Between People

chapter topic; Chapter 34, p. 213

Four Verbs of the Mind

chapter topic; Chapter 33, p. 203

Four Words on the Face

chapter topic; Chapter 37, p. 229

fourth — the longest of the ten, and still the same

ending నాలుగవ (nālugaṇa)

Chapter 81, p. 483

friend — the everyday Sanskrit-derived word, with Telugu's own

DEDR-attested alternative named beside it స్నేహితుడు (snēhituḍu)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 35, p. 221

from నుంచి (nunci)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 77, p. 459

G

ghee నెయ్యి (neyyi)

Chapter 61, p. 363

give ఇవ్వ (ivvu)

Chapter 43, p. 259

good మంచి (manci)

Chapter 42, p. 253

Good Afternoon

chapter topic; Chapter 31, p. 189

“good afternoon” (śubha madhyāhnam), built on the widened

“noon” word rather than the classical later-afternoon term శుభ

మధ్యాహ్నం (śubha madhyāhnam)

Chapter 31, p. 189

Good Evening

chapter topic; Chapter 30, p. 187

“good evening” (śubha sāyantram) — pairs with సాయంత్రం (TE-C27, the word with the striking Latin *sērus*/French *soir* cognate); unlike GREETING-MORNING’s single, dramatic “displaced by English” source, TWO independently-fetched sources agree this one is genuinely, commonly used in both formal and casual speech, with నమస్కారం as a time-independent alternative rather than a replacement శుభ సాయంత్రం (śubha sāyantram)

explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 30, p. 187

good manners మర్యాద (maryāda)

Chapter 65, p. 387

Good Morning

chapter topic; Chapter 29, p. 185

“good morning” (subhodayam) — శుభ + ఉదయం, the traditional phrase; one directly-fetched source (a Telugu-learning blog, the same low-authority genre already found overstated for Hindi/Kannada) claims it’s archaic, displaced by English “good morning” — treat with real skepticism, not as confirmed; నమస్కారం remains a safer everyday-greeting bet regardless శుభోదయం (śubhodayam)

explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 29, p. 185

Good Night

chapter topic; Chapter 25, p. 173

“good night” — the standard Sanskrit-tatsama translation (rātri already met, śubha new); some sources describe everyday speakers often code-switching to English “good night”

instead శుభ రాత్రి (śubha rātri)

explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 25, p. 173

goodbye (lit. “I’ll go and come back”) వెళ్ళి వస్తాను (velli vastānu)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 4, p. 53

grandfather తాత (tāta)

Chapter 45, p. 267

grandmother, the mother’s mother అమ్మమ్మ (ammamma)

Chapter 45, p. 267

Grandparents, and the Married Pair

chapter topic; Chapter 45, p. 267

grass గడ్డి (gaḍḍi)

Chapter 66, p. 393

gratitude కృతజ్ఞత (kṛtajñata)

Chapter 51, p. 301

Green and Yellow

chapter topic; Chapter 22, p. 163

green and yellow — a genuine Telugu doublet pair, both from the same Proto-Dravidian *pac-* root, *unlike Kannada, where the yellow word broke away as a Sanskrit loan* పచ్చ, పసుపు (pacca pasupu)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 22, p. 163

Greetings

chapter topic; Chapter 1, p. 1

H

hair (of the head) జుట్టు (juṭṭu)

Chapter 47, p. 277

he (and ఆమె, she) అతను (atanu)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 79, p. 471

He, She, and Whose

chapter topic; Chapter 79, p. 471

Head and Hand

chapter topic; Chapter 13, p. 121

head (matching its cousins) and hand (the SAME Dravidian root as the others, transformed almost past recognition) తల

తెయ్యి (tala ceyyi)

Chapter 13, p. 121

health ఆరోగ్యం (ārōgyam)

Chapter 63, p. 375

heart — the everyday native Dravidian word, cognate with

Kannada's own native heart-word గుండె (guṇḍe)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 38, p. 235

heart — the literary Sanskrit word for the same organ, a genuine

Indo-European cousin of English “heart” హృదయం (hṛdayam)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 38, p. 235

hello / greetings (namaskāram — “a making of a

bow”) నమస్కారం (namaskāram)

explicit focus: pronunciation, script, etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 1, p. 1

here — where I am ఇక్కడ (ikkaḍa)

Chapter 41, p. 247

hour — matching Kannada and Hindi exactly, the same Sanskrit “bell” word గంట (ganṭa)

explicit focus: grammar, usage and culture; Chapter 18, p. 147

how ఎలా (elā)

explicit focus: pronunciation, script, etymology; Chapter 3, p. 39

How Are You?

chapter topic; Chapter 3, p. 39

how are you? (respectful) మీరు ఎలా ఉన్నారు? (mīru elā unnāru?)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 3, p. 39

how old are you? — literally “your age how-much?”, matching Kannada’s simple verbless possessive exactly నీ వయసెంత? (nī vayasenta)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 19, p. 153

hunger ఆకలి (ākali)

Chapter 63, p. 375

Hunger, Sleep and Health

chapter topic; Chapter 63, p. 375

husband భర్త (bharta)

Chapter 45, p. 267

I

I నేను (nēnu)

explicit focus: pronunciation, script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 3, p. 39

i- / a- / e- — six words, one machine

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 41, p. 247

I did not understand అర్థం కాలేదు (artham kālēdu)

Chapter 78, p. 465

I do not know నాకు తెలియదు (nāku teliyadu)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 78, p. 465

‘I know Telugu’ — literally ‘to me Telugu comes’, with no subject at all నాకు తెలుగు వచ్చు (nāku telugu vacchu)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 6, p. 81

‘I like Telugu’ — a sentence with no verb in it at all, the liker in the dative and the liked thing left standing plain నాకు తెలుగు

ఇష్టం (nāku telugu iṣṭam)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 34, p. 213

I’ll go and come back — the everyday

goodbye వెళ్ళిస్తాను (veḷḷostānu)

Chapter 50, p. 295

I speak Telugu నేను తెలుగు మాట్లాడతాను (nēnu telugu māṭṭlāḍatānu)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 5, p. 65

I want it నాకు కావాలి (nāku kāvāli)

Chapter 80, p. 477

in that case అయితే (ayitē)

Chapter 64, p. 381

In the House

chapter topic; Chapter 56, p. 333

In the Kitchen

chapter topic; Chapter 61, p. 363

India భారతదేశం (Bhāratadēśam)

Chapter 77, p. 459

Introducing Yourself

chapter topic; Chapter 2, p. 19

is he or she there? ఉన్నారా (unnārā)

Chapter 78, p. 465

is it so? అవునా (avunā)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 78, p. 465

it is a good one మంచిది (mancidi)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 76, p. 453

it is known — the verb that carries no person at all, so the

knower rides in the dative తెలుసు (telusu)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 32, p. 193

it's okay / no problem / you're welcome పరవాలేదు (paravālēdu)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 3, p. 39

J

joy / pleased to meet you సంతోషం (santōṣam)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 2, p. 19

just so, alright then అలాగే (alāgē)

Chapter 49, p. 289

L

leg, foot కాలు (kālu)

Chapter 47, p. 277

less, too little తక్కువ (takkuva)

Chapter 58, p. 345

listen ఆలకించు (ālakiñcu)

Chapter 44, p. 263

look చూడు (cūḍu)

Chapter 44, p. 263

M

me (as the object) నన్ను (nannu)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 79, p. 471

**milk — the same Proto-Dravidian word the whole family shares,
with Telugu on the majority side of a regular Kannada sound**

law పాలు (pālu)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 39, p. 239

mist, dew, snow మంచు (mañcu)

Chapter 59, p. 351

money డబ్బు (ḍabbu)

Chapter 72, p. 429

more, a great deal ఎక్కువ (ekkuva)

Chapter 58, p. 345

More Everyday Verbs

chapter topic; Chapter 43, p. 259

More Good Manners

chapter topic; Chapter 65, p. 387

More of the Body

chapter topic; Chapter 57, p. 339

More Short Replies

chapter topic; Chapter 58, p. 345

Morning

chapter topic; Chapter 26, p. 177

“morning” (udayam) — Sanskrit tatsama from udaya (“rise”) + Telugu -mu, Telugu’s most general everyday word, though genuine native competitors (poddū/podduna, vēkuva) also do real everyday work; unlike Kannada, where the same Sanskrit root (udaya) shows up ONLY inside the greeting śubhōdaya, Telugu’s everyday noun and its greeting-root are the SAME word ఉదయం (udayam)

explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 26, p. 177

mouth — the one face-word where Telugu does not obviously match the root its three sisters all share నోరు (nōru)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 37, p. 229

mud బురద (burada)

Chapter 59, p. 351

my నా (nā)

explicit focus: pronunciation, script, etymology; Chapter 2, p. 19

my name is... (with no “is”) నా పేరు ... (nā pēru ...)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 2, p. 19

N

name పేరు (pēru)

explicit focus: pronunciation, script, etymology; Chapter 2, p. 19

Naming Who Someone Is

chapter topic; Chapter 48, p. 283

new కొత్త (kotta)

Chapter 42, p. 253

Night

chapter topic; Chapter 24, p. 169

“night” — the same Sanskrit tatsama word already hiding inside ardharātri; unlike day’s Persian surprise, night genuinely follows the Sanskrit-tatsama-as-everyday pattern, matching

Kannada ರಾತ್ರಿ (rātri)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 24, p. 169

ninth — the doubled consonant survives the

swap తొమ్మిదవ (tommidava)

Chapter 82, p. 491

no, I don’t want it వద్దు (vaddu)

Chapter 58, p. 345

no / there isn’t (lēdu) లేదు (lēdu)

explicit focus: pronunciation, script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 1, p. 1

Noon and Midnight

chapter topic; Chapter 17, p. 139

noon (Sanskrit “middle of day,” same as Kannada) and midnight (Sanskrit “HALF of night” — a different root than Kannada’s midnight word) మధ్యాహ్నం అర్ధరాత్రి (madhyāhnam ardharātri)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 17, p. 139

nose — native Dravidian, but an irregular reflex of its own

Proto-Dravidian root, contaminated in shape by the separate

word for “face” ముక్కు (mukku)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 37, p. 229

now ఇప్పుడు (ippuḍu)

Chapter 50, p. 295

Numbers 11–20 and Weather

chapter topic; Chapter 20, p. 155

Numbers One to Ten

chapter topic; Chapter 7, p. 89

O

oil నూనె (nūne)

Chapter 61, p. 363

okay / alright (sarē) సరే (sarē)

explicit focus: pronunciation, script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 1, p. 1

old — of a thing, not of a person పాత (pāta)

Chapter 42, p. 253

ృ — one character, met inside a word you already say

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 39, p. 239

ౌ — one character, met inside a word you already say

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 51, p. 301

- ౧ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 1, p. 1
- ౧̄ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 1, p. 1
- ౧̇ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 2, p. 19
- ౧̈ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 2, p. 19
- ౧̉ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 2, p. 19
- ౧̊ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 2, p. 19
- ౧̋ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 7, p. 89
- ౧̌ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 11, p. 113
- ౧̍ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 15, p. 129
- ౧̎ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 16, p. 133
- one to five — the Dravidian family numbers, with Telugu’s maverick “one” ఒకటి రెండు మూడు నాలుగు ఐదు** (okaṭi reṇḍu mūḍu nālugu aidu)
explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 7, p. 89
- only మాత్రమే** (mātramē)
Chapter 64, p. 381
- or లేదా** (lēdā)
Chapter 74, p. 441
- our (not including you) మా** (mā)
Chapter 79, p. 471

P

- paddy, rice still in the field పరి** (vari)
Chapter 66, p. 393
- perhaps, who knows ఏమో** (ēmō)
Chapter 49, p. 289
- permission అనుమతి** (anumati)
Chapter 65, p. 387
- Please**
chapter topic; Chapter 8, p. 99
- please come in లోపలికి రండి** (lōpaliki raṇḍi)
Chapter 80, p. 477

please (dayacēsi — “having done compassion,” from దయ daya

“compassion”) దయచేసి (dayacēsi)

explicit focus: script, etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 8, p. 99

please forgive / sorry (kṣamiñcaṇḍi — from kṣamiñcu “to
forgive,” Sanskrit kṣamā + respectful

-aṇḍi) క్షమించండి (kṣamiñcaṇḍi)

explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 9, p. 103

Pointing, and Asking

chapter topic; Chapter 41, p. 247

pungency, heat కారం (kāraṁ)

Chapter 73, p. 435

R

Reading — Words, Lines, and a First Passage

chapter topic; Chapter 83, p. 499

respect గౌరవం (gauravam)

Chapter 51, p. 301

River and Road

chapter topic; Chapter 55, p. 327

S

salt ఉప్పు (uppu)

Chapter 46, p. 271

sand ఇసుక (isuka)

Chapter 59, p. 351

Seasons

chapter topic; Chapter 14, p. 125

second — and the one swap that makes every ordinal from here

to the end రెండవ (reṇḍava)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 81, p. 483

see you tomorrow రేపు కలుద్దాం (rēpu kaluddām)

explicit focus: pronunciation, script, etymology; Chapter 4, p. 53

seventh — a long vowel that stays long ఏడవ (ēḍava)

Chapter 82, p. 491

sit కూర్చో (kūrcō)

Chapter 43, p. 259

six to ten — where Telugu wanders furthest from its Dravidian

cousins ఆరు ఏడు ఎనిమిది తొమ్మిది పది (āru ēḍu enimidi tommidi padi)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 7, p. 89

sixth — the shortest of the ten ఆరవ (ārava)

Chapter 82, p. 491

Sixth to Eleventh

chapter topic; Chapter 82, p. 491

sleep నిద్ర (nidra)

Chapter 63, p. 375

small చిన్న (cinna)

Chapter 42, p. 253

Small Creatures

chapter topic; Chapter 70, p. 417

son — a native Dravidian root that shares its shape with a word already met in this book, and not with the next lesson's word for daughter కొడుకు (koḍuku)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 36, p. 225

Son and Daughter, Two Different Roots

chapter topic; Chapter 36, p. 225

Sorry

chapter topic; Chapter 9, p. 103

Sound and Voice

chapter topic; Chapter 68, p. 405

sour, sourness పులుపు (pulupu)

Chapter 73, p. 435

speak మాట్లాడు (māṭlāḍu)

Chapter 44, p. 263

spring, summer, monsoon, winter — completing the Dravidian pattern of native heat/rain words plus Sanskrit spring వసంత

ఋతువు వేసవి వానాకాలం శీతాకాలం (vasanta ṛtuvu vēsavi vānākālam

śītākālam)

explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 14, p. 125

stand నిలబ్బి (nilcō)

Chapter 43, p. 259

still, yet ఇంకా (inkā)

Chapter 64, p. 381

sugar చక్కెర (cakkera)

Chapter 61, p. 363

sweet, sweetness తీపి (tīpi)

Chapter 73, p. 435

T

Taking Your Leave

chapter topic; Chapter 50, p. 295

Tastes

chapter topic; Chapter 73, p. 435

Tea and Milk, Two Roads

chapter topic; Chapter 39, p. 239

tea, please — Telugu’s traditional word for tea travelled by sea,
not by the overland road most of its neighbours took దయచేసి

టీ (dayacēsi tī)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 39, p. 239

Telling Time

chapter topic; Chapter 18, p. 147

tenth — the ten closed, and the shortest swap of all పదవ (padava)

Chapter 82, p. 491

thank you (dhanyavādamulu — “utterances of
 ’worthy’”) ధన్యవాదములు (dhanyavādamulu)

explicit focus: pronunciation, script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 1, p. 1

that one — the thing over there అది (adi)

Chapter 41, p. 247

that (reporting what was said or thought) అని (ani)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 80, p. 477

that’s all; that’s just it అంతే (antē)

Chapter 58, p. 345

the back వీపు (vīpu)

Chapter 57, p. 339

The Core Verbs

chapter topic; Chapter 32, p. 193

the dative suffix -ku, ’to / for’ — and the idea of

stacking -కు (-ku)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 6, p. 81

the day after tomorrow ఎల్లుండి (elluṇḍi)

Chapter 50, p. 295

The Field

chapter topic; Chapter 66, p. 393

The First Verbs

chapter topic; Chapter 5, p. 65

the friend’s స్నేహితుడి (snēhituḍi)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 79, p. 471

The Heart, Two Ways

chapter topic; Chapter 38, p. 235

The House Itself

chapter topic; Chapter 67, p. 399

The Leg and the Tooth

chapter topic; Chapter 47, p. 277

The Market

chapter topic; Chapter 72, p. 429

the moon చంద్రుడు (candruḍu)

Chapter 53, p. 315

the neck మెడ (meḍa)

Chapter 57, p. 339

the respectful suffix on a name గారు (gāru)

Chapter 79, p. 471

the rice-flour design drawn at the doorstep ముగ్గు (muggu)

Chapter 52, p. 309

the seven weekdays — Sanskritic like Hindi, but Sunday means

“the FIRST day,” not “Sun’s day” సోమవారం మంగళవారం బుధవారం

గురువారం శుక్రవారం శనివారం ఆదివారం (Somavāram Maṅgalavāram

Budhavāram Guruvāram Śukravāram Śanivāram Ādivāram)

explicit focus: etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 10, p. 107

్రి — the short one of the pair

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 7, p. 89

The Sky

chapter topic; Chapter 53, p. 315

the sky ఆకాశం (ākāśam)

Chapter 53, p. 315

the stomach, the belly కడుపు (kaḍupu)

Chapter 47, p. 277

the sun సూర్యుడు (sūryuḍu)

Chapter 53, p. 315

The Traditional Months

chapter topic; Chapter 16, p. 133

The Tree

chapter topic; Chapter 54, p. 321

the twelve lunisolar months — matching Kannada and Hindi’s

shared pan-Indian calendar, completing the split with Tamil/

Malayalam’s own solar systems చైత్రం వైశాఖం జ్యేష్ఠం ఆషాఢం శ్రావణం

భాద్రపదం ఆశ్వయుజం కార్తీకం మార్గశిరం పుష్యం మాఘం ఫాల్గుణం (Caitram

Vaiśākham Jyēṣṭham Āṣāḍham Śrāvaṇam Bhādrapadam Āśvayujam

Kārtikam Mārgaśiram Puṣyam Māgham Phālgunaṁ)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 16, p. 133

The Wider Family

chapter topic; Chapter 71, p. 423

there — where I am not అక్కడ (akkaḍa)

Chapter 41, p. 247

Things People Make

chapter topic; Chapter 62, p. 369

Things You Ask For

chapter topic; Chapter 46, p. 271

third — the swap on its second number మూడవ (mūḍava)

Chapter 81, p. 483

thirty (and the tens above it) ముప్పై (muppai)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 77, p. 459

this one — the thing near me ఇది (idi)

Chapter 41, p. 247

thread దారం (dāraṁ)

Chapter 62, p. 369

to ask — a native verb none of the three literary sisters share, and the clue to which branch of Dravidian Telugu actually sits on అడుగు (aḍugu)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 34, p. 213

to be, to exist, to stay — and the negative Telugu has to fetch from a different verb ఉండు (uṇḍu)

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar; Chapter 32, p. 193

to be, to stay, to live ఉండు (uṇḍu)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 5, p. 65

to come — the command is రా, but every ending attaches to వచ్చు instead రా (rā)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 32, p. 193

to eat — the inherited Dravidian root Telugu kept as its plain everyday verb, with the mealtime nouns borrowed from

Sanskrit తిను (tinu)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 32, p. 193

to go (and వచ్చు, to come) వెళ్ళు (vellu)

explicit focus: pronunciation, script, etymology; Chapter 4, p. 53

to go — with one tense-piece covering both “I go” and “I will go”, and “right now” built out of the be-verb వెళ్ళు (vellu)

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar; Chapter 32, p. 193

to help — a Sanskrit noun on the native do-verb, and the noun takes apart into “a going with somebody” సహాయం చేయు (sahāyaṁ cēyu)

explicit focus: script, etymology, usage and culture; Chapter 34, p. 213

to read — and, with no second word, to study; the same form is the noun for an education, and its middle vowel moves as the endings change చదువు (caduvu)

explicit focus: script, grammar; Chapter 33, p. 203

to see, to look — Telugu’s own everyday see-word, and the respectful -అండి ending that fits any verb stem చూడు (cūḍu)

explicit focus: pronunciation, grammar; Chapter 32, p. 193

to set out, to start off బయలుదేరు (bayaludēru)

Chapter 50, p. 295

to speak మాట్లాడు (māṭlāḍu)

explicit focus: pronunciation, script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 5, p. 65

to take — తీయు, “to pull out”, wearing the same -కో as the last chapter’s two mind-verbs, so taking is pulling something out for yourself తీసుకో (tīsukō)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 34, p. 213

to think — literally “say it to yourself”, built from the family’s say-verb plus the ending that turns a verb back on its own

doer అనుకో (anukō)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 33, p. 203

to understand — “make the meaning your own”, a Sanskrit noun on the native do-verb with the ending that hands the action back to you అర్థం చేసుకో (artham cēsukō)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 33, p. 203

to work (lit. “work-do”) పని చేయు (pani cēyu)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 5, p. 65

to write — an old Dravidian word for drawing a line, still spelled వ్రాయు in books, and the chapter’s fourth mind-verb రాయు (rāyu)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 33, p. 203

today ఇవాళ (ivāḷa)

Chapter 75, p. 447

Today, Yesterday, When

chapter topic; Chapter 75, p. 447

Tools

chapter topic; Chapter 69, p. 411

true; the truth నిజం (nijam)

Chapter 49, p. 289

trust నమ్మకం (nammakam)

Chapter 65, p. 387

V

Verbs of Seeing and Saying

chapter topic; Chapter 44, p. 263

very good చాలా మంచి (cālā manci)

Chapter 76, p. 453

Very Good, Very Bad

chapter topic; Chapter 76, p. 453

W

Wanting, Allowing, Wishing

chapter topic; Chapter 80, p. 477

Water and Rice

chapter topic; Chapter 15, p. 129

water (matching Tamil/Kannada's neer/niiru), and rice raw/
cooked — completing the family's water and rice pattern నీళ్లు**బియ్యం అన్నం** (nīḷḷu biyyam annam)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 15, p. 129

we'll meet again మళ్ళీ కలుద్దాం (maḷḷi kaluddām)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 4, p. 53

Weather and Ground

chapter topic; Chapter 59, p. 351

weather/atmosphere — a PURE Sanskrit compound, unlike
Kannada's Persian+Sanskrit hybrid: vata (“air/wind”) +**avarana (“covering”) వాతావరణం** (vātāvaraṇam)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 20, p. 155

weight తూకం (tūkam)

Chapter 72, p. 429

Welcoming a Guest

chapter topic; Chapter 52, p. 309

well, fine — and the reply “నేను బాగున్నాను” బాగా (bāgā)

explicit focus: pronunciation, script, etymology; Chapter 3, p. 39

what ఏమిటి (ēmiṭi)

explicit focus: pronunciation, script, etymology; Chapter 2, p. 19

what's your name? మీ పేరు ఏమిటి? (mī pēru ēmiṭi?)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 2, p. 19

when will you come? ఎప్పుడు వస్తారు? (eppuḍu vastāru?)

Chapter 75, p. 447

where? — asking about a place ఎక్కడ (ekkaḍa)

Chapter 41, p. 247

Where You Are From

chapter topic; Chapter 77, p. 459

who? — asking about a person ఎవరు (evaru)

Chapter 41, p. 247

why? ఎందుకు (enduku)

Chapter 74, p. 441

wife భార్య (bhārya)

Chapter 45, p. 267

wind, air గాలి (gāli)

Chapter 59, p. 351

Words That Join an Answer

chapter topic; Chapter 64, p. 381

write రాయ్ (rāyi)

Chapter 44, p. 263

Y

yes (avunu) అవును (avunu)

explicit focus: pronunciation, script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 1, p. 1

Yes or No, and I Do Not Know

chapter topic; Chapter 78, p. 465

yesterday నిన్న (ninna)

Chapter 75, p. 447

you (familiar / respectful) నువ్వు / మీరు (nuvvu / mīru)

explicit focus: pronunciation, script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 2, p. 19

you may go వెళ్ళవచ్చు (vellavaccu)

Chapter 80, p. 477

Other

అ — the vowel you have been saying since the first page

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 1, p. 1

ఆ — the long one, beside the short one that needs no sign

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 7, p. 89

ఇ — one character, met inside words you already say

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 9, p. 103

ఉ — one character, met inside words you already say

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 3, p. 39

ఋ — one character, met inside a word you already say

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 26, p. 177

ఎ — one character, met inside words you already say

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 21, p. 159

ఏ — the sign you know, as a letter

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 2, p. 19

ఐ — one letter for a vowel that moves

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 7, p. 89

ఒ — the sign from a page ago, standing alone

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 7, p. 89

ఓ — one character, met inside words you already say

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 1, p. 1

ఔ — one character, met inside words you already say

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 16, p. 133

ఋ — one character, met inside words you already say

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 14, p. 125

ష — one character, met inside words you already say

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 17, p. 139

చ — one character, met inside words you already say

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 8, p. 99

- జ** — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 24, p. 169
- ఇ** — **one character, met inside a word you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 51, p. 301
- ఓ** — **the curled t, in the question from this chapter**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 2, p. 19
- ఓ** — **the curled t, with the breath let out**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 17, p. 139
- ఊ** — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 4, p. 53
- ఋ** — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 18, p. 147
- ఋ** — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 23, p. 165
- అ** — **copy it where it lives**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: writing; Chapter 5, p. 65
- అ** — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 5, p. 65
- అ** — **the letter from the sound**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: writing; Chapter 5, p. 65
- అ** — **write it with the model covered**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: writing; Chapter 5, p. 65
- ఌ** — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 33, p. 203
- ఌ** — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 12, p. 117
- ఌ** — **the character the thank-you word opens with**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 1, p. 1
- న** — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 2, p. 19
- ప** — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 4, p. 53
- పదకొండవ (padakonḍava)** — **the ending does not stop at ten**
grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 82, p. 491
- ప** — **ప, with the breath let out**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 17, p. 139
- బ** — **the letter your answer starts with**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 3, p. 39
- భ** — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 25, p. 173
- మ** — **one character, and it is in the first word of the book**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 1, p. 1
- య** — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 6, p. 81

- ౪ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 3, p. 39
- ఁ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 10, p. 107
- ళ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 18, p. 147
- వ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 13, p. 121
- శ — **the third s, and the last one**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 10, p. 107
- శుభ మధ్యాహ్నం — **register and evidence**
culture and usage topic; explicit focus: usage and culture; Chapter 31, p. 189
- ష — **the second of the s letters**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 5, p. 65
- స — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 5, p. 65
- హ — **one character, met inside words you already say**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 5, p. 65
- ౦ — **the Telugu numeral for 0**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 6, p. 81
- ౧ — **the Telugu numeral for 1**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 2, p. 19
- ౨ — **the Telugu numeral for 2**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 2, p. 19
- ౩ — **the Telugu numeral for 3**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 3, p. 39
- ౪ — **the Telugu numeral for 4**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 3, p. 39
- ౫ — **the Telugu numeral for 5**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 3, p. 39
- ౬ — **the Telugu numeral for 6**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 4, p. 53
- ౭ — **the Telugu numeral for 7**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 4, p. 53
- ౮ — **the Telugu numeral for 8**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 5, p. 65
- ౯ — **the Telugu numeral for 9**
script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 5, p. 65