

Urdu, Step by Step, Root by Root

A gentle, etymology-driven introduction to contemporary Urdu

Adhithya Rajasekaran

Starter edition — fifteen short chapters, with more being written.

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Preface

This book teaches Urdu one word at a time, and it teaches each word by taking it apart. It assumes no Urdu and no Perso-Arabic script: every section takes one small expression, introduces only the letters, sounds, and grammar that expression needs, connects it to words you may already know, and ends by asking for it back. Urdu reads right to left — but you will be reading real words long before you have met the whole alphabet.

Urdu makes several histories visible at once. Its grammar and much of its everyday vocabulary are Indo-Aryan, closely related to Hindi, while Persian and Arabic have contributed a large literary and formal layer on top. Etymology in this book is a memory aid — never a claim that a borrowed word is any less fully Urdu today.

Urdu is traditionally printed in the flowing, descending *Nastaliq* style. This edition uses the vendored Noto Nastaliq Urdu family, so the script’s diagonal word shape and joining behaviour reproduce identically in local and published builds. The book keeps romanization beside each new form while the script becomes familiar.

This is a starter edition: fifteen short chapters, complete in themselves, with more being written.

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 Urdu 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.

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Chapter 1

Greetings and responses

Modes: 🗣️ voice (1) 👁️ eyes (3) ✍️ pen (2) 🗣️ **Hands-free start:** first 1 of 6 lessons.

***By the end of this chapter:** I can greet someone in Urdu, respond courteously, and close the exchange naturally. I can also write the three shapes inside shukriyā and the letter sīn from memory.*

Complete UR-C01-nahin, the canonical closing checkpoint, and demonstrate the chapter promise: greet someone in Urdu, respond courteously, and close the exchange naturally.

1.1 سلام — hello across a family of languages

This is the first Urdu word in this book, and the one you will reach for most. Nothing has to be written today. Look, listen, say it.

Script — notice the direction

Urdu is written **right to left**, traditionally in the flowing Nastaliq style. Begin with four letters:

س s · ل l · ا long ā · م m → **salām**

Letters usually connect inside a word. The tall ا does not connect onward to the final م, creating a visible break. That is enough script for today.

Each of these letters gets a lesson of its own later; their shapes and names here follow Zero Zabar: the Urdu alphabet.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

salām is both a greeting and the word “peace.” Urdu received it through the Persian-Arabic literary world. Its consonants **s-l-m** belong to a Semitic family concerned with peace, safety, and wholeness. Persian *salām* and Arabic *salām* are the same historical word; Hebrew *shalom* is a relative.

Your turn — use it

Say **salām** as a friendly short greeting. You will later extend it into the full conventional exchange. For now the safest reply is the same word back.

- A: سلام! — *salām!*
- B: سلام! — *salām!*

Before you move on

Read سلام right to left. Which letter carries the long *ā*? ا. Now cover the romanization and say **salām** once, picturing “peace.”

1.2 ر ک ش — three shapes, then stop

Urdu runs from right to left. Point to the right-hand edge of your page. Today you will meet only three shapes from the spoken word *shukriyā*. The complete joined word waits for the next lesson.

Script — recognize three shapes

Take one shape at a time:

shape	sound	one thing to notice
ش	<i>sh</i>	three dots above
ک	<i>k</i>	a long slash inside the upper shape
ر	<i>r</i>	a simple falling curve

Read them from right to left once: ش · ک · ر — *sh · k · r*.

Writing — trace before you copy

Write these out:

- trace ش once; pause before adding its three dots
- trace ک once; notice the separate slash
- trace ر once; let the curve fall

Tracing is enough. Do not join the shapes or write from memory yet.

Before you move on

Point in this order: *sh, k, r*. Stop after three. The next short lesson adds the final two shapes and only then lets you copy the whole word.

1.3 شکریہ — thank you

Point to ش · ک · ر and say *sh · k · r*. You traced those three shapes already. Keep your pen down while you meet only two more.

Script — add two shapes

Urdu normally omits short-vowel marks. In شکریہ, the visible letters guide you, while the vowels complete the learned word:

ش · ک · ر · ی · ے → shukriyā

You already know ش *sh*, ک *k*, and ر *r*. Add ی *y/i* and final ے. That is two new shapes, not five. The final vowel is pronounced long *ā* in this familiar expression.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

The central consonants **sh-k-r** belong to the Arabic family for gratitude and thanks; Arabic *shukran* is a close comparison. Urdu **shukriyā** reflects the centuries-long Persian-Arabic layer of its vocabulary — and for all that history it is an ordinary, everyday modern Urdu expression.

Your turn

- *salām* — Hello. You can say it; its letters are still ahead of you, so it is printed here the way you say it.

- شکرِیہ — *shukriyā* — Thank you. This one you can already read.

Say the second word slowly once, then at a natural pace. Keep *shuk-ri-yā* as three light beats.

- *Write it:* copy شکرِیہ once while looking at the model; do not write it from memory yet
- *Say it:* **shukriyā** once after the pen stops

Before you move on

Which two shapes did this lesson add? **ی** and final **ہ**. Greet, then thank: **salām** — **shukriyā**. Copying with a model is enough for today.

1.4 ہاں جی — yes, respectfully

Say شکرِیہ once. Point to its first three shapes, then its final two. Your pen can rest; this lesson is for a spoken respectful answer.

The two words

The phrase is written right to left, so جی is the word on the right:

جی *jī* + ہاں *hā* → جی *jī* *hā* → yes

In ج, ج gives *j* and ی stretches the vowel to *ī*. In ہاں, the final sign ں marks a nasal vowel: let some air pass through your nose as you say *ā*. It is not a full English *n* at the end.

That sign has a name — **nūn ghunna** — and you will meet it again.

Grammar Lens: respect inside “yes”

ہاں alone means “yes.” جی adds respect and attentive warmth; it can also be used by itself as a polite response. Learning **jī hā** first gives you a safe answer for many situations.

Your turn

- “Do you understand?” — ہاں۔ جی — *jī hā*.
- “Would you like to continue?” — شکریہ۔ ہاں، جی — Yes, thank you.

Before you move on

Which mark makes the vowel nasal? Final ں. Answer politely: **jī hā**.

1.5 س — three teeth, then a bowl, without lifting

Point at ش, the first shape inside *shukriyā*. Three teeth in a row, a bowl, and three dots floating above.

Script — the shape

س

Three small **teeth** close together — short upward points in a row — and then the line flows straight on into a **bowl** below the baseline.

Remember which way you are working: the first tooth you draw is the **rightmost** one.

No lift anywhere. Teeth and bowl are one continuous movement, and letting the pen stop between them is the commonest way a beginner’s *sīn* comes out looking like two letters.

Its name is **sīn** and it says **s**.

You have seen this shape before. ش *shīn*, from *shukriyā*, is this exact letter wearing three dots above it. Take the dots off and you have س. That is the first pair of many: in Urdu a great deal of the alphabet is one skeleton shared by two or three letters, told apart only by dots.

Your turn

- *Write it:* س — three teeth from the right, flowing into the bowl, one movement
- *Say it:* s

Before you move on

Which tooth comes first? (The **rightmost**.)

1.6 نہیں — no, and later “not”

Say *jī hā̃, shukriyā* — “yes, thank you.” Now learn the answer that contrasts with *yes*.

Script — recombine known shapes

You have seen ہ, ی, and nasal ں. Add ن *n* at the right:

ں · ہ · ی · ن → **nahī̃**

Stretch *ī̃* slightly and nasalize it. The final ں does not add a strong separate *n* sound.

Grammar Lens: one word, two future jobs

As a complete answer, **nahī̃** means “no.” Inside a sentence it commonly means “not.” That second job will matter when the track introduces verbs. Today you only need the complete answer. Unlike the Persian-Arabic vocabulary that opened this chapter, this word is inherited Indo-Aryan, part of Urdu’s own core. Hindi says the same spoken word, *nahī̃*, and writes it in a different script — which you do not need here. The page looks different; the word and its grammar align closely.

Your turn

- *jī hā̃* — yes. Said, not yet read: its first letter is one you have not met.
- **نہیں** — *nahī̃* — no. This one you built out of known shapes a moment ago.

Before you move on

What does final **ں** do? It nasalizes the vowel. Answer “no”: **nahī̃**.

Chapter 2

Give your name

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

By the end of this chapter: I can say my name in Urdu in one sentence, keeping hai at the end where Urdu puts it. I can write alif, and say both directions a Nastaliq word runs in.

One sentence with a slot for your own name: merā nām ... hai, with the copula held to the end of the line.

2.1 میرا نام ... ہے — my name is ...

Greet once, then answer yes and no. The next line gives you one reliable Urdu sentence for your own name.

The exchange

Read the line right to left, but keep its spoken order:

میرا | نام | ... | ہے — merā nām ... hai

- میرا merā = my
- نام nām = name
- your name goes in the open slot
- ہے hai = is

The word **nām** is an old Indo-Aryan relative of Sanskrit *nāman* and distant English *name*. **merā** and **hai** show Urdu’s inherited grammatical core, shared closely with Hindi even though the two languages use different scripts.

Nearly every shape here is one you have already met. میرا opens with م, the letter that begins *salām*, then reuses ی, ر and ا. نام is ن plus that same ا and م. Only the final ے in ہے is new — it is called *barī ye*, the “big ye”, and here the whole word is said *hai*. Learn that vowel with this word and you will meet it again everywhere.

Grammar Lens: the verb waits

Urdu puts **hai** at the end. That is the only sentence-pattern fact to learn now: **my + name + NAME + is**. Keep this one frame; broader word-order and agreement rules can wait.

Your turn

ہے۔ سارا نام میرا — *merā nām Sārā hai*. — My name is Sara.

Replace **Sārā** with your own name. Do not add agreement rules yet; this exact frame is enough for the introduction.

Before you move on

Where does “is” go in this Urdu sentence? At the end. Say the four slots, then say the full sentence with your name.

2.2 ا — one stroke, and a page that runs the other way

Write ا. Three teeth from the right, flowing straight on into the bowl, no lift. That is one letter drawn from memory; here is the easiest one in the alphabet to put beside it.

Script — first, which way the page runs

You met this in your first week, told rather than explained. Here is the whole rule, and it governs every shape from now on.

English marches **left to right**. Urdu marches **right to left**. Your pen starts at the **right edge** of a word and travels **towards the left**, so the letter you meet **first** is the **rightmost** one.

There is a second direction, and it belongs to Urdu in a way it does not belong to Arabic. Urdu is written in a style called **Nastaliq**, and Nastaliq does not sit flat on the line. A word **cascades downward as it moves left**, each letter hanging a little below the one before it, so a word reads like a short diagonal staircase running down to the left.

That is why Urdu looks different from Arabic even where the letters are the same. It is not decoration and it is not optional: it is how Urdu is set.

Script — the letter itself

|

One tall downstroke. Draw it from the top down and lift. Nothing else.

Its name is **alif**, and one thing about it matters more than its shape: **alif does not join to the letter that follows it**. Hold that; the next few lessons will make it pay.

Your turn

- *Write it:* | — one stroke, top to bottom
- *Point to:* at the right edge of an Urdu word, where your pen would begin

Before you move on

How many strokes in alif? (**One.**)

Chapter 3

Ask and Answer Names

Modes: 🗣️ voice (4) 👁️ eyes (1) ✍️ pen (2) 🗣️ Hands-free start: first 2 of 7 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can ask someone’s name with respectful āp, answer with my own, and close the introduction politely. I can write lām and mīm from memory.

A six-line first meeting: greet, ask āp kā nām kyā hai?, answer with your own name, and close with āp se mil kar khushī huī.

3.1 آپ / تم / تو — three relationships inside “you”

Say **nahī** once, then **merā nām ... hai** with your own name. To ask the other person’s name, begin with the respectful form.

You'll want to know first — three forms

Urdu	read	use
آپ	<i>āp</i>	respectful: a new adult, elder, or anyone you wish to honor
تم	<i>tum</i>	familiar: friends and peers
تو	<i>tū</i>	intimate, or downward; unsafe as a beginner default

آپ begins with آ, an alif carrying the long *ā* mark, then پ *p*. تم and تو share ت *t*. In تو, و carries long *ū*.

Grammar Lens: choose the relationship first

English flattened these choices into one *you*. Urdu keeps three. Use **āp** in a first meeting. Move to **tum** when the relationship supports familiarity. Save **tū** for relationships where you already know it is welcome; used badly, it can sound belittling.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Tum/tū belong to the old Indo-European familiar-“you” family: Sanskrit *tvam*, English **thou**, and Latin *tū* are relatives. **Āp** followed another route: a word connected with “self/oneself” became honorific address.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- a new adult — **āp**
- a friend — **tum**
- the old family — **tum**, **tvam**, **thou**

Before you move on

Which form is safest when unsure? (**Āp.**) Which familiar forms share history with English *thou*? (**Tum/tū.**)
Source: *Basic Urdu: Cultural Notes.*

3.2 کیا — what

Which “you” opens a respectful first meeting? (*āp.*) Now add the question word.

You’ll want to know first — کیا

کیا — *kyā* — what

Read right to left: ک *k*, ی supplying the *y* glide here, then ا long *ā*. The same ی carried long *ī* in *jī* and *nahī* — words you say but cannot spell yet. Its job depends on the word; here the learned shape is *kyā*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Urdu **kyā** and Hindi **kyā** are the same inherited Indo-Aryan word in different scripts. Their history reaches Sanskrit *kīm* and the old Indo-European *k/kw-* question family behind English **wh-** words such as *what*, *who*, and *which*. The bridge helps memory; Urdu کیا remains the form you must read here.

Your turn

- Say it: **kyā** — what
- Read it: کیا as **k** + **yā**
- Say it: the family — **kyā**, **what**, **who**, **which**
- Recall: say *salām*, then say *shukriyā*

Before you move on

Which letter acts as *y* here but as long *ī* in *jī*? (جی.) What does کیا mean? (What.)

3.3 ج — alif, and then a bowl under the line

Write *l*. One stroke, top to bottom.

Script — the shape

ج

Start exactly as you started alif — a tall upright coming down — and then, without lifting, **carry on below the baseline** into a leftward bowl and back up.

One movement, no pen lift. The bowl going **below the line** is the part to get right; it is what tells *lām* apart from alif at a glance.

Its name is **lām** and it says *l*.

Your turn

- Write it: *l*, then ج — the same descent, then the bowl below the line
- Say it: *l*

Before you move on

Do you lift the pen between the upright and the bowl? (No.)

3.4 ہے؟ کیا نام کا آپ — ask a name respectfully

Recall **āp** “you,” **kyā** “what,” and the answer **merā nām ... hai**. The question reuses all three.

The exchange

آپ کا نام کیا ہے؟ — *āp kā nām kyā hai?* — What is your name?

Build it in spoken order:

you + **kā** + name + what + is?

Āp kā means “your” in this frame. The possessive form agrees with the thing owned: **nām** is masculine singular, so use **kā**. Keep that one pairing; the full *kā/kī/ke* system can wait. As in your answer, **hai** stays at the end.

Script: the question mark

Urdu ends the question with ؟, curved for a right-to-left line. Begin at **آپ** on the right and reach the punctuation at the far left.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **āp kā nām kyā hai?**
- *Say it:* ask, then answer — **merā nām ... hai**
- *Point to:* to ؟ at the end

Before you move on

Ask once without romanization. Where does **hai** remain? (At the end.)

Source: *Basic Urdu: Greetings and Introductions*.

3.5 ہوتی خوشی کر مل سے آپ — pleased to meet you

Say the opening ladder once: **shukriyā — jī hā — nahī**. Point to the three shapes you traced before the joined thank-you word. Then ask **āp kā nām kyā hai?** and answer **merā nām ... hai**.

The exchange

آپ سے مل کر خوشی ہوئی۔ *āp se mil kar khushī huī* **Pleased to meet you.**

For now, hold three meaning-sized chunks:

- **āp se** — with you
- **mil kar** — having met
- **khushī huī** — happiness happened

That yields the memorable literal picture: “**Having met you, happiness happened.**” The phrase is one social move; later lessons can generalize *se*, *-kar*, and past agreement one at a time.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Khushī “happiness” comes from Persian **khosh/khush** “pleasant, happy.” **Mil** “meet” and **huī** “happened” belong to Urdu’s inherited Indo-Aryan grammar. The sentence therefore joins Urdu’s two major historical layers without becoming any less ordinary Urdu.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- **āp se | mil kar | khushī huī** in three beats
- the literal picture — “having met you, happiness happened”
- which word came through Persian — **khushī**

Before you move on

Say the response once as a whole. Which chunk means “happiness happened”? (**Khushī huī.**)

Source: *Basic Urdu: Greetings and Introductions.*

3.6 م — a round head, and a tail under the line

Write م. Three teeth, then the bowl, no lift. Now write ل beside it: upright, then the bowl below the line.

Script — the shape

م

A small **round head** sitting on the line, and from it a **tail** running straight down **below** the baseline.

Keep the head small and closed. Plenty of letters dip below the line — you have already written one in lām — but mīm's drop is a **straight tail** hanging off a round head, and that combination is what makes it easy to spot standing alone. Joined into the middle of a word the tail is trimmed away and the head survives.

One movement, no lift.

Its name is **mīm** and it says **m**.

Your turn

- Write it: م — the round head, then the tail below the line
- Say it: m

Before you move on

Is the head open or closed? (**Closed.**)

3.7 Practice — a complete Urdu name exchange

Recall the four moves without adding anything: greet, ask, answer, acknowledge.

The exchange

A: سلام! — Salām! B: سلام! — Salām! A: ہے؟ کیا نام کا آپ —
 Āp kā nām kyā hai? B: ہے۔ سارا نام میرا — Merā nām Sārā

hai. A: آپ سے مل کر مل خوشی ہوئی۔ — *Āp se mil kar khushī huī.*

B: شکریہ۔ — *Shukriyā.*

Every line is already known. **Āp** keeps the meeting respectful; **hai** stays at the end of both name sentences; ؟ ends the question at the line's left.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- both voices, using your own name
- the exchange again without romanization
- only the three name moves — question, answer, response

Before you move on

Run the meeting once from **salām** to **shukriyā**. If a line stalls, review only that micro-lesson.

Chapter 4

How Are You?

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

By the end of this chapter: I can ask how someone is with respectful āp, choose kaise or kaisī for the person I am addressing, and reply that I am fine, thank you. I can join four letters into salām, and write kāf and nūn.

The wellbeing exchange run both ways — āp kaise haiñ? and āp kaisī haiñ? — answered with the unchanging main thūk hūñ, shukriyā.

4.1 کیسی / کیسے — “how” follows the addressee

Say **kyā** “what.” Urdu’s next question word begins with the same **k** family, but its ending changes with the person being addressed.

The two words

Urdu	read	use in the respectful question
کیسے	<i>kaise</i>	addressing a man
کیسی	<i>kaisī</i>	addressing a woman

Both begin ک *k* + ی carrying the *ai* sound. At the left edge, کیسے ends in broad ے *e*, while کیسی ends in ی long *ī*. Read the whole word before isolating the final shape.

Grammar Lens: one agreement contrast

English keeps *how* unchanged. Urdu makes this describing form agree with the person addressed: **kaise** for a man, **kaisī** for a woman. Learn only this pair today—not a table of adjective endings. Respectful **āp** itself remains the same for everyone.

Your turn

- *Say it:* addressing a man — **kaise**
- *Say it:* addressing a woman — **kaisī**
- *Point to:* broad final ے versus long-*ī* ی
- *Recall:* say *nahī*

Before you move on

Which form addresses a man? (**Kaise.**) A woman? (**Kaisī.**)
Source: *Basic Urdu: Formal Conversation*.

4.2 Letters that hold hands, and the one that will not

Write س, then م. Four letters are now yours.

Script — the running, falling line

Urdu letters **join**. They run into one another along a single connected line, and because this is Nastaliq that line is also **falling** — each joined letter sits a little lower and further left than the one before it.

Because they join, most letters **change shape** by position. A letter opening a joined run, one buried in the middle, one closing it, and one standing alone can all look different. They are the same letter.

That sounds like four times the work and it is not, because the change is almost always **the same trimming**: the part that identifies the letter stays, and the finishing flourish is cut short so the next letter can start. You saw it already in mīm, where joining costs the tail and keeps the head.

Script — and the letter that refuses

Now the rule that saves the most confusion.

Some letters take the hand of the letter on their right and offer nothing to the left. The run stops dead after them, and the next letter begins as though starting a fresh word.

alif is one of these. So a gap in the middle of an Urdu word is usually not a word break at all — it is a non-joining letter doing exactly what it always does. Without that fact a page of Urdu looks like it has been spaced at random.

What you've built

Four letters, and they spell the word this book opened with:

سلام

From the right: س *s*, ل *l*, ا *ā*, م *m*. Say it: **salām**.

Two things to see. The short vowel between *s* and *l* is **not written** — Urdu prints the long vowels and leaves the short ones to the reader. And the break before the final م is alif refusing to join, exactly as promised.

Your turn

- *Read it:* سلام — name each letter from the right, then say the word
- *Write it:* سلام — let the line fall as it goes, and let it break after alif
- *Say it:* **salām**

Before you move on

What does mīm lose when it joins? (Its **tail**.)

4.3 ہیں؟ کیسی آپ / ہیں؟ کیسے آپ — ask respectfully

Choose respectful **āp**. Then choose **kaise** for a man or **kaisī** for a woman. One final copula completes the question.

The exchange

to a man: آپ کیسے ہیں؟ — *āp kaise haiñ?* to a woman: آپ کیسی ہیں؟ — *āp kaisī haiñ?*

The order is **you + how + are?** Keep **ہیں** *haiñ* final, exactly as **ہے** *hai* stayed final in the name question. Respectful **āp** takes this plural-shaped copula even when speaking to one person.

Grammar Lens: respect does not erase agreement

Both lines are respectful. The choice between **kaise** and **kaisī** tracks the person addressed, not greater or lesser politeness. If you do not know how a person wishes to be addressed, listen for their usage or ask rather than guess; the grammar lesson does not replace social judgment.

Your turn

- *Say it:* to a man — **āp kaise haiñ?**
- *Say it:* to a woman — **āp kaisī haiñ?**
- *Keep:* respectful **āp** and final **haiñ** in both

Before you move on

What stays the same in both lines? (**Āp ... haiñ.**) What changes? (**Kaise / kaisī.**)

Sources: *Basic Urdu: Formal Conversation and Personal Pronouns* with “To Be”.

4.4 میں ... ہوں — one frame for “I am ...”

Ask **āp kaise haiñ?** You know the respectful “you are” ending **haiñ**. Your answer needs the first-person pair “I ... am.”

You’ll want to know first — the frame

میں ... ہوں — *main ... hūñ* — I am ...

میں *main* means “I.” Final ں marks a nasal ending. ہوں *hūñ* means “am” and carries long *ū* with ھ, followed again by nasal ں. Leave a space for the state word that comes next.

Grammar Lens: the verb closes the frame

Urdu puts the copula at the end:

maiñ + [state] + **hūñ** — I + [state] + am

Learn only this first-person frame. You do not need the full copula chart to answer one wellbeing question. Notice the useful contrast: respectful **āp ... haiñ**, but first-person **maiñ ... hūñ**.

Your turn

- Say it: **maiñ** — I
- Say it: **hūñ** — am
- Frame: **maiñ ... hūñ**, leaving the middle open

Before you move on

Which word opens the answer? (**Maiñ**.) Which copula closes it? (**Hūñ**.)

Source: *Basic Urdu*: Personal Pronouns with “To Be”.

4.5 ک — a bowl with a slash laid over it

Write سلام. Four letters, one break.

Script — the shape



Two movements, and exactly **one** lift between them.

1. a **stem** down, flowing right to left through a **flatter bowl** and finishing with a pronounced **hook** — all without lifting
2. lift once, then a **long slash** drawn down from the upper right towards the stem

The slash is not a dot and not decoration; it is part of the letter, and leaving it off writes nothing at all.

Its name is **kāf** and it says **k**.

Worth knowing: **this is the Urdu kāf**. Arabic writes the same sound with a different shape, and if you have seen Arabic you will notice the difference immediately. Urdu keeps the Perso-Arabic alphabet and does not keep every Arabic shape.

Your turn

- *Write it:* ک — stem, bowl and hook in one movement, then lift and lay the slash across
- *Say it:* **k**

Before you move on

Is the slash optional? (**No** — without it the letter is not written.)

4.6 ٹھیک — “fine,” “well,” and “correct”

Open and close the answer frame: **main** ... **hūn**. The middle now gets one high-frequency state word.

You'll want to know first — the word

ٹھیک — *ṭhīk* — fine, well, correct

The first sound is retroflex and aspirated: curl the tongue slightly back for **ٹ** *ṭ*, then release a puff marked by **ھ**. A plain English *t* is a useful first approximation while the contrast settles. **ی** carries long *ī* before final **ک** *k*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Urdu **ٹھیک** and Hindi *ṭhīk* are the same everyday Hindustani word. Their grammar is closely shared; their scripts make different literary histories visible. This Urdu lesson leaves the Hindi side romanized: mixed-language practice may show both scripts only after each form has been learned in its own right.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **ṭhīk** — fine, well
- *Feel:* tongue slightly back, then a small puff
- *Connect:* Urdu **ٹھیک** ↔ Hindi *ṭhīk*
- *Recall:* say *āp* / *tum* / *tū*, then say *kyā*

Before you move on

Where will **ṭhīk** go in the frame **maiṅ ... hūṅ**? (In the middle.)
Source: *Basic Urdu: Greetings and Introductions*.

4.7 شکریہ ہوں، ٹھیک میں — “I am fine, thank you”

Fill the frame **maiṅ ... hūṅ** with **ṭhīk**, then recall Chapter 1's *shukriyā*.

The exchange

شکریہ۔ ہوں، ٹھیک میں *Main ṭhīk hūn, shukriyā. I am fine, thank you.*

No word is new. The step is assembling the words quickly enough to answer a real person.

Grammar Lens: keep the copula final

The core reply is:

I + fine + am → **maiñ ṭhīk hūñ**

English places “am” after “I”; Urdu closes the clause with **hūñ**.

Shukriyā comes after the completed answer as the courtesy move you already own.

Your turn

- *Build:* **maiñ + ṭhīk + hūñ**
- *Add:* **shukriyā**
- *Say it:* the full reply without translating each word

Before you move on

Which word must close the core answer? (**Hūñ.**)

Source: *Basic Urdu: Formal Conversation.*

4.8 ن — a deep bowl, and one dot

Write ک. Bowl and hook, lift, slash.

Script — the shape

ن

A **bowl** swept from right to left, dropping well **below the baseline** and rising again — then one lift, and a single **dot** placed near the baseline, inside the curve.

Two parts, one lift. The bowl is deeper and rounder than the flatter one you drew in *kāf*, and the dot sits low rather than floating above.

Its name is **nūn** and it says **n**.

Your turn

- *Write it:* ن — the deep bowl, then lift and place the dot low inside it
- *Say it:* n

Before you move on

Which bowl is deeper, *nūn*'s or *kāf*'s? (**nūn**'s.)

4.9 Practice — an Urdu wellbeing exchange

Choose the question ending for the person addressed, then retrieve the complete answer before looking below.

The exchange

A to a man: سلام! آپ کیسے ہیں؟ *Salām! Āp kaise haiñ?* A to a

woman: سلام! آپ کیسی ہیں؟ *Salām! Āp kaisī haiñ?* B: ٹھیک میں

شکریہ۔ ہوں، *Main ṭhīk hūñ, shukriyā.*

The question keeps respectful **āp** and final **haiñ** while **kaise/kaisī** agrees with the addressee. The reply is unchanged for the speaker's gender: **ṭhīk** does not change, and first-person **hūñ** closes the line.

Grammar Lens: separate grammar from guessing

The two question forms are a grammatical contrast, not an instruction to infer someone's identity. In real interaction, follow the person's own language or ask. The stable beginner default is respect: **āp ... haiñ**.

Your turn

- *Say it:* the man-addressed exchange
- *Say it:* the woman-addressed exchange
- *Answer:* **maiñ ṭhīk hūñ, shukriyā** after either question

Before you move on

Run both question variants once. If the choice stalls, review only **kaise/kaisī**; if the answer order stalls, review only **maiñ ... hūñ**.

Chapter 5

Take Leave

Modes: 🗣️ voice (3) 👁️ eyes (1) ✍️ pen (2) 🗣️ Hands-free start: first 1 of 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can open a short Urdu conversation, ask how the other person is, and close it with khudā hāfiz. I can write choṭī ye and gol he, and name the face gol he wears in each position of a word.

A four-line interaction with a beginning and an end: salām, the wellbeing check, then khudā hāfiz from both voices.

5.1 خد — the first half of an Urdu farewell

Run one known wellbeing exchange. Chapter 5 will add only the move that ends it.

You’ll want to know first — one word

خد — khudā — God

Read from right to left: خ kh + د d + ā long ā. The short u is learned with the word and is normally unwritten. Let **kh** come from farther back than English h, but keep the sound relaxed.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Urdu borrowed **khudā** from Persian **khodā**, whose older Middle Persian ancestor *xwadāy* meant “lord.” Learn the Urdu sound and script first; the Persian connection then explains why both tracks will

share the phrase's first historical layer.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **khudā** — God
- *Read it:* خدا from the right edge
- *Connect:* Urdu **khudā** ← Persian **khodā**
- *Recall:* say *kaise* / *kaisī*

Before you move on

Which final letter carries long **ā**? (/.). Which short vowel must be remembered with the word? (u.)

Sources: *Basic Urdu*: Greetings and Introductions; Wiktionary: خدا.

5.2 ی — one S-curve, no dots

Write ی. Deep bowl, lift, low dot.

Script — the shape

ی

Start at the **upper right** and descend through an **S-shaped curve**, then carry on left around a bowl that drops **below the baseline**, and finish at its rising tip.

One movement. No lift, and no dots at all. Standing alone, ye is one of the few letters in this book with nothing added to it — no dot, no slash — and that emptiness is how you recognise it.

Its name is **ye**, and it does **three** jobs: the consonant **y**, the long vowel **ī**, and a second long vowel **e**. Which one it is comes from the word, not from the shape — there is nothing on the page to tell them apart.

You have met one already: کیا *kyā*, from two chapters back, uses the consonant. The other two are still ahead of you — نیلا *nīlā* uses the long **ī**, لینا *lenā* uses the **e** — and every letter in both is one you can already draw. Three words, one letter, three values, and only having heard them tells you which.

Your turn

- *Write it:* **ح** — the S-curve down, round the bowl, and up at the tip
- *Say it:* **y**, then **ī**, then **e** — one letter, three jobs

Before you move on

Can the shape alone tell you which of its three values it carries?
(No — the word tells you.)

5.3 حافظ — “guardian” or “protector”

Say **khudā** — a word you hold by ear, not yet by eye. Keep it separate while one second word is added.

You’ll want to know first — one word

حافظ — *hāfiz* — guardian, protector

Read **حافظ** from right to left. **ا** carries long **ā**. Final **ظ** is pronounced **z** in this Urdu word. The short **i** is heard in **hāfiz** but is normally not written as a separate letter.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Arabic **ḥāfiz** is an active participle from **ḥ-f-ẓ**, “guard, preserve.” Urdu receives **hāfiz** through its Persian-Arabic literary layer. Keep “guardian” as the useful meaning; the three-consonant root is a memory hook.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **hāfiz** — guardian, protector
- *Read it:* **حافظ**
- *Connect:* Arabic **ḥ-f-ẓ** — guard, preserve

Before you move on

What does **hāfiz** contribute to the farewell? (The idea of guarding or protecting.)

Source: American Heritage Dictionary: *hafiz*.

5.4 حافظ خدا — goodbye

Retrieve **khudā** and **hāfiz** separately: “God” + “guardian.”
Now use the two known pieces as one parting move.

The two words — put the known pieces together

حافظ خدا — *khudā hāfiz* — goodbye

Urdu keeps a visible space between the two words. Read خدا first, then حافظ, and preserve that space in the complete spelling حافظ خدا. Say the whole expression smoothly.

Grammar Lens — a whole social move

The protective sense is “God [be] guardian,” but everyday speakers use the formula as **goodbye** and nothing more. No new verb or agreement ending is needed. It is a reliable polite close for the short interaction learned so far.

Script Bridge — shared history, local spacing

Urdu حافظ خدا and Persian خدا حافظ share the same historical pieces. Urdu conventionally keeps the visible space; Persian normally joins them. Mixed practice may compare the two only now that each local phrase is independently readable.

Your turn

- *Build:* **khudā** + **hāfiz**
- *Read it:* spaced Urdu حافظ خدا
- *Use:* say it when the interaction ends

Before you move on

Where is the local writing contrast? (Urdu shows a space; Persian joins its spelling.)

Source: *Basic Urdu: Greetings and Introductions*.

5.5 ھ — the round he, and its four faces

Write ھ. The S-curve that sweeps below the line and hooks up at the tip. Now say *shukriyā* and think about the shape it ends on.

Script — the shape

ھ

Standing on its own it is **one small closed loop** with a short curved tail falling away to the left. Draw the loop clockwise from the top, then let the tail drop. Its name is ھ *gol he* — “round he” — and it says **h**.

You have already met this letter without drawing it: شکرِیہ *shukriyā* ends on it, and it has been sitting at the end of that word since your first week.

Joining **trims** a letter, you were told. Gol he is where that promise gets tested, because it changes more than any letter you have written. Four positions, four faces:

- **standing alone**, and at the **end** of a word after a non-joining letter: the small loop with its tail
- **opening** a word: the loop stays, the tail is cut short so the next letter can begin
- **in the middle**: the loop splits into **two small loops side by side**, low on the line
- **closing** a joined word: the loop flattens into a single round curl hanging off the letter before it

The middle form is the one to look at twice. It does not resemble the standing loop at all, and a reader who knows only the standing form meets it mid-word and thinks a new letter has arrived. Same letter, doing its middle job.

The letters in this word

Three words, one letter, three positions. Read each from the right, then copy it while the model is still in front of you.

هم

کهانی

کمره

هم *ham* “we” — gol he **opens** it, tail trimmed, running into م. کهانی *kahānī* “story” — gol he sits **in the middle**, wearing the two-loop face. کمره *kamrā* “room” — gol he **closes** it, flattened into a round curl hanging off the ʌ in front of it. Three positions, one letter, and every other shape in all three is one you have already drawn.

Your turn

- *Write it:* ه standing alone — the loop, then the falling tail
- *Write it:* هم — and say **ham**
- *Read it:* کهانی — name its five letters, and say which face its he wears
- *Point to:* at the gol he that closes شکریه

Before you move on

Which word have you been saying since chapter one that ends on this letter? (شکریه.) What sound does gol he carry? (**h**.)

5.6 Practice — open, check, and close

Retrieve the known expression for the beginning and the new expression for the end. Keep the middle unchanged.

The exchange — the complete interaction

A: *Salām! Āp kaise haiñ?* B: *Main thīk hūñ, shukriyā.* A: خدا حافظ — *Khudā hāfiz.* B: خدا حافظ — *Khudā hāfiz.*

Every line is already learned by ear. **Salām** opens; **khudā hāfiz** closes. The same farewell works for both speakers, so this practice adds no gender choice, pronoun, or copula form.

Only the closing line is printed in script for both voices, because it is the only one whose letters you have all been given. Three pieces of the exchange sit inside your ladder right now — حافظ خدا, شکر یہ, سلام — and the two middle lines wait on letters the next three chapters hand you. Nothing in them is new to say, only new to see.

Your turn

- *Choose:* meeting begins → **salām**
- *Choose:* interaction ends → **khudā hāfiz**
- *Run through:* both voices once from the romanization, then read the closing line off the script alone

Before you move on

Run the full exchange once. If the final line stalls, return only to the assembled-farewell lesson.

Chapter 6

Five Verbs at the Core

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ✍ pen (2) ⇄ Hands-free start: first 1 of 7 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name five everyday Urdu verbs by their shared -nā ending, take that ending off to reach the stem, and say what I do in the present with the participle agreeing for gender and the copula agreeing for person. I can write nūn ghunna and baṛī ye, and read maiñ, haiñ, nahīñ and the copula hai off the page.

The fifth verb runs the whole machine at once: strip -nā from all five infinitives, hold the doubled nūn that keeps jānnā apart from jānā, and put the stem into maiñ jāntā/jāntī hūñ.

6.1 ہونا — “to be,” and the ending every Urdu verb wears

You can already close an Urdu sentence with *hūñ* — “am.” It is still spoken rather than written: its last shape is a nūn with no dot, and that letter arrives in the very next lesson. That small word is a fragment of something larger. Here is the whole verb it was broken off.

You’ll want to know first — one word

ہونا — *honā* — to be

Read from the right edge:  *h*, then  carrying *o*, then  *n*, then  long *ā*. Every one of those four shapes has already turned up in a word you

have met. There is nothing new to decode here, which is rare, and worth enjoying.

Grammar Lens: the ending that names every verb

honā ends in **-نā**. So does every Urdu verb when you name it. English marks a verb's plain name by putting a word in front — *to be*, *to go*, *to come*. Urdu marks it by putting **-nā** on the end, and never uses a separate word for it. That ending is also a tool. Strip **-nā** off and what remains is the **stem**, the piece everything else in the verb is built on. **honā** minus **-nā** leaves **ho-**. Learn the ending once, and every new verb hands you its own stem for free.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

honā comes from Sanskrit *bhavati*, “becomes,” built on the root *bhū-*. The middle stage of Indo-Aryan softened that *bh-* to *h-*, so *bhavati* thinned to *hoi* and then to **honā**. The root is Indo-European: **b^huH-*, “grow, become.” English kept it in **be** and **been**, and — by way of “the place where one dwells” — in **build**, **booth**, and **bower**. Latin held it as *fuī* “I was” and *futūrus*, which English borrowed as **future**. Greek held it as *phúsis* “nature,” which English borrowed as **physics**.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **honā** — to be
- *Strip:* **honā** minus **-nā** leaves the stem **ho-**
- *Read it:* **نā** from the right edge
- *Connect:* **honā** ← Sanskrit *bhavati* → English **be**
- *Recall:* say *thīk*

Before you move on

Which ending names an Urdu verb? (**-nā**.) What is left of *honā* once you take that ending off? (**Ho-**.) Which English verb grew from the same ancient root? (**Be**.)

Sources: *Basic Urdu*: Personal Pronouns with “To Be”; Wiktionary:

ہونا.

6.2 ن — nūn with the dot taken off

Write ن. The deep bowl, a lift, and one dot placed low inside the curve.

Script — the shape

ن

The **same deep bowl** you drew two chapters ago, swept right to left below the baseline — and then you stop. **No lift. No dot.**

Every other letter so far was identified by what was **added** to it: nūn's dot, kāf's slash, the three teeth of sīn. This one is identified by what was **taken away**, and the taking away is the meaning. Its name is ن *nūn ghunna*, and *ghunna* is the Urdu word for a nasal hum.

Here is the difference it makes. A dotted ن is a full consonant: your tongue touches the roof of your mouth and you say **n**. A dotless ن asks for no consonant at all. It tells you to send the **vowel before it** through your nose and then stop. In *maīn* the tongue never lands.

Two more facts and the letter is yours:

- ن closes a word and appears nowhere else. Inside a word, that same nasal hum is carried by the ordinary dotted ن, which therefore does two jobs depending on where it stands — a real **n** in some words, a hum in others. Only at the end of a word does Urdu bother to spell the difference.
- Because it ends the word, ن has one shape to learn and no joined faces.

The letters in this word

Three words, all of them already in your mouth, none of them readable until now. From the right:

میں

ہیں

نہیں

main “I” — *haiṇ* “are” — *nahīn* “no.”

The one to dwell on is **نہیں**. It is the word you learned for saying no, in the very first handful of words this book gave you, and it is four letters you can now name one by one: **ن، ہ، ی، ں** — with a dotted nūn opening it and a dotless one closing it, doing two entirely different jobs in a single short word.

Your turn

- Write it: **ں** — the deep bowl, and then nothing
- Write it: **یں**, then **ہیں**, then **نہیں**
- Say it: **maiṇ**, letting the vowel hum and keeping your tongue down
- Point to: at the two nūns in **نہیں** and say what each one does
- Read it: **ہیں** — and say why it ends on a hum rather than an n

Before you move on

Write “no.” (**نہیں**.) Write “I.” (**میں**.) Does your tongue touch the roof of your mouth at the end of *maiṇ*? (**No** — the hum goes through the nose.)

6.3 جانا — “to go,” and two agreements in one sentence

Take the ending off **honā** and say the stem aloud. The next verb gives that same ending a second workout.

You’ll want to know first — one word

جانا — *jānā* — to go

From the right edge: **ج** *j*, then **ا** long *ā*, then **ن** *n*, then **ا** long *ā*. The **ج** is the one from **جی** *jī*. Strip the **-nā** and the stem is **jā-**.

Grammar Lens: the present tense agrees twice

“I go” in Urdu is two words after the pronoun, not one:

main̄ jāṭā hūñ — **I go** (man speaking) *main̄ jāṭī hūñ* — **I go** (woman speaking)

The frame is printed the way you say it rather than the way it is spelled. The **t** of *jāṭā* and the **ū** of *hūñ* both ride letters you have not been given yet, and a line you cannot decode is not reading practice. The first word is the stem **jā-** plus **-tā**. It says *going*, and it agrees with the **gender and number** of the person doing it: **-tā** for one man, **-tī** for one woman, **-te** for more than one man or for a respectful singular. The second word is **hūñ**, which you already own, and it agrees with **person** — who is speaking.

Two agreements, split across two words, in one short clause. English makes one agreement at most, and usually none. Say both Urdu lines and let the difference sit in the ear rather than on paper.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

jānā continues Sanskrit *yāti*, “goes,” from the root *yā-*, “travel.” The change from *y-* to *j-* is not a quirk of this word: initial *y-* regularly hardened to *j-* on the road from Sanskrit into the middle stage of Indo-Aryan that Urdu descends from. Meet the law once and it decodes other words later.

English gives nothing here. The *yā-* root travelled north and west into Lithuanian and Slavic rather than into Germanic, so this is a word where Sanskrit is the whole hook and English cannot help.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **jānā** — to go
- *Strip:* **jānā** minus **-nā** leaves **jā-**
- *Say it:* **main̄ jāṭā hūñ**, then **main̄ jāṭī hūñ**
- *Choose:* the ending that fits you — **-tā** or **-tī**

Before you move on

Which word in *main jātā hūn* carries gender? (**Jātā** — the one built on the stem.) Which one carries person? (**Hūn**.) And which Sanskrit verb stands behind *jānā*? (*Yā-*, “travel.”)
Source: Wiktionary: **جاتا**.

6.4 آ — “to come,” which is “go” pointed back at you

Say **jānā**, then its stem **jā-**. The opposite direction is the same verb wearing a prefix.

You’ll want to know first — one word

آ — *ānā* — to come

From the right edge: **آ**, then **ا** *n*, then **ا** long *ā*. That first shape is *alif madd* — alif wearing a small wave — and it is how Urdu writes a long *ā* at the start of a word. It opens *āp* too, which you will be able to spell out once *p* arrives. Strip the **-nā** and the stem is **ā-**.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ānā continues Sanskrit *āyāti*, and that word is two pieces: *ā-*, “toward,” plus *yā-*, “go.” So the Urdu verb for *coming* is, underneath, the verb for *going* aimed back at the speaker. “Go toward me” is “come.”

You already have the second piece: *yā-* is the same root that hardened into the **j-** of **jānā**. One Sanskrit verb, two Urdu words, and the difference between them is a direction marker.

English does the identical trick with a Latin verb: *venīre* “to come” plus a prefix gives **advent**, **convene**, **intervene**, **prevent**, and **revenue**. Urdu welds its prefix on the front and lets the seam disappear; English keeps the seam visible.

Your turn

- Say it: **ānā** — to come

- *Pair*: **jānā** away, **ānā** toward
- *Split*: ā- “toward” + yā- “go”
- *Read it*: , starting from *alif madd*
- *Recall*: say *khudā*

Before you move on

Which two pieces are hiding inside *ānā*? (*Ā*- “toward” and *yā*- “go.”) Which Urdu verb shares the second piece? (**Jānā**.) And what does the stem become once **-nā** comes off? (*Ā*-.)

Source: Wiktionary: .

6.5 — the big ye, and the end of the sentence

Write , then , then . An S-curve, a loop, a bowl with no dot.

Script — the shape



A **wide, flat sweep**. Start high on the right, drop through a long shallow curve that goes **well below the baseline**, and carry it a long way to the left, finishing **flat** — with no hook, no lift at the tip, and no dots.

Its name is  *barī ye*, “big ye,” and the letter you already know, , is *choṭī ye*, “small ye.” Two names, one family, and one test that separates them at a glance:

-  *choṭī ye* is narrow and **curls back up** at its tip
-  *barī ye* is broad and **runs out flat**

There is a second difference, and it is about where each one lives. Small ye turns up anywhere in a word — opening it, in the middle, closing it. Big ye belongs to the **end of a word** and turns up nowhere else, which means you will never have to work out its middle face. It has none.

Big ye carries a final **e** or **ai** sound.

The letters in this word

Two letters, and the smallest word in Urdu that does real work:

ہے

From the right: ہ, then ے. Say it: **hai** — “is.”

That is the word you have been ending sentences with since you first said your name, four chapters ago. Read it now.

Two more, both already in your ear:

کیسے

میرے

کیسے *kaise* — “how,” with small ye in the middle and big ye at the end, so the pair sit in one word and you can see the difference for yourself. میرے *mere* — “my” before a plural, every letter of it now yours.

What you’ve built

Twelve letters. Now read the first sentence this book ever gave you, whole, with nothing taken on trust:

ہے ... نام میرا

merā nām ... hai — “my name is ...”. Every letter in it is one you can form: ہ، م، ا، ن، ر، ی، م.

Your turn

- Write it: ے — wide, flat, below the line, no hook at the tip
- Write it: ہے — and say **hai**
- Read it: کیسے — and point at the small ye and the big ye in turn
- Write it: ہے ... نام میرا — and say it with your own name in the gap

Before you move on

Which ye curls up at the tip? (Small ye, ی.) Which runs out flat? (Big ye, ے.) Write “is.” (ہے.)

6.6 بولنا — “to speak,” and the two layers of Urdu

Retrieve the opening without looking: **shukriyā** — **jī hā** — **nahī**. Air-trace the five shapes of the thank-you word once. Then return to the three verbs whose stems you pulled from the same ending. Here is a fourth, with one new letter.

You’ll want to know first — one word

بولنا — *bolnā* — **to speak**

From the right edge: ب *b*, then و carrying *o*, then ل *l*, then ن *n*, then / long *ā*. Strip the **-nā** and the stem is **bol-**.

ب is new, and it is worth one careful second. Its body is a single low scoop with **one dot below**. Hold that skeleton in mind: the very next chapter adds *pe*, which is the identical scoop with **three dots below** — the *p* you already say in *āp*. Same skeleton, different dot count, different consonant. Urdu builds much of its alphabet this way, so counting dots is a real reading skill and not a fussy detail.

Grammar Lens: put it in the frame

The stem takes the same two-agreement frame as before:

main boltā hūn — **I speak** (man speaking) *main boltī hūn*
— **I speak** (woman speaking)

Nothing new is being learned there. That is the point of a stem: the machine is already built, and each verb walks into it.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

bolnā goes back to Prakrit *bolai*, “speaks” — and then the trail stops. A link onward to Sanskrit *brūte* “speaks” has been proposed, but it is not settled, so treat it as a maybe rather than a fact.

That plainness is the lesson. Urdu’s everyday verbs are inherited Indo-Aryan and often short-rooted like this, while its formal and literary vocabulary was borrowed from Persian and Arabic and tends to be long, elegant, and easy to trace. Beside homely **bolnā** sits Persian-derived *guftagū*, “conversation,” from Persian *guftan*, “to speak.” Both are fully Urdu. One is the floor of the house; the other is the ornament on it — and the flowing *nasta‘līq* hand Urdu is traditionally written in belongs to that same Persian inheritance.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **bolnā** — to speak
- *Count:* ب one dot below — and say what the three-dot version will be
- *Say it:* **main boltā hūn**, then **main boltī hūn**
- *Sort:* **bolnā** inherited, **guftagū** borrowed

Before you move on

How many dots does ب carry, and where? (One, below.) How far back can *bolnā* be traced with confidence? (To Prakrit *bolai*, and no further.) Which layer of Urdu does *guftagū* belong to? (The Persian one.)

Sources: *Zero Zabar*: The Urdu alphabet; Wiktionary: بولنا.

6.7 جانا — “to know,” a word English has been carrying all along

Run the four verbs you have — *honā*, *jānā*, *ānā*, *bolnā* — and pull the stem off each one. The fifth is the closest of them to English.

You’ll want to know first — one word

جانا — *jānnā* — to know

From the right edge: ج j, / long ā, then ج, then ج a second time, then / long ā. Two separate nūns, written out one after the other, and both are pronounced: hold the *n* long, *jān-nā*, the way English does across the seam of *thin · ness*. Strip the final **-nā** and the stem is **jān-**.

That doubling is what keeps **jānnā** “to know” apart from **jānā** “to go.” One letter, and the whole meaning turns.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

jānnā continues Sanskrit *jānāti*, from the root *jñā-*, “know.” That root is Indo-European **ǵneh₃-*, and English is stuffed with it.

Straight down the Germanic line: **know**, **knowledge**, **can** (once “to know how”), **cunning**, **ken**, and **uncouth** — literally “un-known.”

Borrowed from Latin (*g*)*nōscere*: **notice**, **note**, **notion**, **cognition**, **recognize**, **acquaint**, and **ignore**, which is “not to know.” Borrowed from Greek *gnōsis*: **diagnosis**, **prognosis**, and **agnostic**.

So the Urdu verb is not a stranger. It is a first cousin of the plainest word English has for the same idea, and every one of those borrowings is another place to hang it.

Your turn

- *Say it*: **jānnā** — to know, holding the long *n*
- *Contrast*: **jānā** to go, **jānnā** to know
- *Say it*: **maiñ jāntā hūñ**, then **maiñ jāntī hūñ**
- *Run through*: all five — *honā*, *jānā*, *ānā*, *bolnā*, *jānnā* — stripping each stem
- *Connect*: **jānnā** ← *jñā-* → English **know**, **notice**, **diagnosis**
- *Recall*: say *hāfiz*, then say *honā*

Before you move on

What single written difference separates *jānā* from *jānnā*? (A second ج, held long in speech.) Which two words in *maiñ jāntī hūñ* agree, and with what? (**Jāntī** with gender, **hūñ** with person.) And which English verb is the same word as *jānnā*? (**Know**.)
Source: Wiktionary: جَانَا.

Chapter 7

Four Verbs of the Mind

Modes: 👁 eyes (4) ✍ pen (2) 🖐 Hands-free start: none of the 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say that I think, understand, read and write in Urdu, take the -nā off each verb to reach its stem, and read the two-eyed he that turns a plain consonant into an aspirated one. I can write alif madda and pe, and say which spelling a long ā takes at the start of a word and which inside it.

The fourth verb arrives with no new letters at all: read لکھنا straight off, then run all four stems through main ...tā/tī hūn and sort the chapter's inherited verbs from the borrowed words for pen, book and script.

7.1 ٱ — alif, with a wave on its head

Write ٱ. One tall downstroke, top to bottom, and it refuses to join to whatever comes after it.

Script — the shape

ٱ

The tall stroke you already know, and then **one small wave laid across the top of it**, drawn left to right like a shallow lazy S. Two movements: the downstroke, a lift, the wave.

Its name is ٱ *alif madda* — *madda* means “an extension” — and it says a long ā.

Now the reason it exists, which is the useful part.

Plain *l* does two different jobs. At the **start** of a word it is a carrier: a place for a short vowel to sit, with the vowel itself left off the page. Inside a word it is the long *ā* you have been reading in *kām*, *nām*, *salām*.

So what does a writer do when a word **starts** with a long *ā*? Both jobs want the same stroke, and the answer used to be to write alif twice — carrier plus vowel — which is awkward to write and worse to read. The wave is the shorthand that replaced it. *ā* at the front of a word means: this begins on a long *ā*.

That gives you a rule you can apply on sight. Long *ā* at the start of a word is written *ā*; the same long *ā* in the middle of a word is written plain *l*. One sound, two spellings, decided by position.

The letters in this word

Two words, every letter already yours. Copy each with the model in view.

آنا

آسان

آنا *ānā* “to come” — a word you can now write rather than take on trust.
آسان *āsān* “easy” — look closely: *ā* at the front, plain *l* in the middle, one long vowel spelled two ways inside a single word.

Your turn

- *Write it:* *ā* — the downstroke, lift, then the wave across its head
- *Write it:* آنا, then آسان
- *Point to:* at both alifs in آسان and say which is which
- *Say it:* *ānā*, and name the two movements that make *ā*

Before you move on

How many movements make *ā*? (**Two** — stroke, then wave.) Which verb can you now write? (آنا.) Which of آسان’s two alifs carries the

wave? (The first.)

7.2 سوچنا — “to think,” and it used to mean “to grieve”

Say **jānnā** — the one with the doubled *n*, the one that turned out to be English **know**. Knowing is where the mind arrives. Here is the verb for the work it does on the way.

You’ll want to know first — one word

سوچنا — *sochnā* — to think

Strip the **-nā** and the stem is **soch-**. That stem is also a noun: سوچ *soch*, “a thought” — and, no less ordinarily, “a worry.” Both meanings matter; the history explains them.

The letters in this word

From the right edge: س *s*, then و carrying *o*, then چ *ch*, then ن *n*, then ا long *ā*.

چ is new, and you own the trick already. It is the body of *jīm*, the *j* you say in *jī* and *jānā*, carrying **three dots below** instead of one. Second time this has happened: *be* has one dot below the low scoop, *pe* has three. Counting dots stays a reading skill — one you are given by ear here, a lesson before the shapes arrive.

Grammar Lens: nothing new to run it

maiñ sochtā hūñ — **I think** (man speaking) *maiñ sochtī hūñ* — **I think** (woman speaking)

The participle takes gender, هون takes person. The machine is built; every new verb walks into it.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

sochnā comes through Prakrit *soccadi* from Sanskrit *śocati* — “burns; grieves; mourns” — on the root *śuc-*. The sense cooled by stages: *burn* → *be consumed by something* → *brood on it* → plain

think. Urdu’s everyday word for thinking is an old word for sorrow that went quiet, which is why **soch** is still a thought *and* a worry. State the limit plainly: *śuc-* has **no secure English cousin**. Inventing one would be worse than admitting it.

What is worth noticing sits inside Urdu. Beside inherited **soch**, Urdu keeps Arabic *fikr*, “thought, reflection,” on the root *f-k-r* — and *fikr* also means **worry**: *koī fikr nahīn*, “no worries.” Two words, two unrelated languages, opposite sides of Urdu’s vocabulary, each sliding from thinking to fretting on its own.

Your turn

- *Say it*: **sochnā** — to think; then the stem **soch-**
- *Count*: *jīm* one dot below, **چ** three dots below
- *Say it*: **maiñ sochtā hūñ**, then **maiñ sochtī hūñ**
- *Run through*: **bolnā**, **jānnā**, **sochnā** — speak, know, think
- *Say it*: both meanings of the noun **soch** — a thought, and a worry

Before you move on

How many dots does **چ** carry, and where? (Three, below.) What did *śocatī* mean before it meant “think”? (**To burn, to grieve.**) Is there an English cousin of *śuc-*? (**No.**)

Sources: Wiktionary: **سوچنا**; *Zero Zabar*: The Urdu alphabet.

7.3 **سمجھنا** — “to understand,” which is a way of waking up

You can think — *sochnā*, three dots under its *che*. You can know — *jānnā*. Between brooding and knowing sits the moment a thing clicks, and Urdu has a verb for exactly that.

You’ll want to know first — one word

سمجھنا — *samajhnā* — to understand

Strip the **-nā** and the stem is **samajh-**. The stem is a noun too:  *samajh*, “**understanding, sense.**”

The letters in this word

From the right edge:  *s*,  *m*,  *j*, then  *h*, then  *n*, then  long *ā*.

 is *do-chashmī* *he*, “**two-eyed he**,” named for its two loops. It is not a consonant you pronounce. Its whole job is to grab the letter before it and add a puff of breath:  *j* plus  gives  *jh*.

You have used it once already. In *ṭhīk*, the retroflex *ṭe* takes this same  — retroflex *ṭ*, then the breath. One letter, one job.

Keep it apart from  *gol* *he*, “round *he*,” which **is** a real *h* and which you write in *hūñ* and *honā*. Round  speaks; two-eyed  only breathes on its right-hand neighbour.

Grammar Lens: into the frame

main samajhtā hūñ — **I understand** (man speaking) *main samajhtī hūñ* — **I understand** (woman speaking)

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

samajhnā comes through Prakrit *saṃbujjhadi* from Sanskrit *sambudhyate*: **sam-**, “fully, together,” plus **budh-**, “**to wake; to become aware.**” To understand something is to come awake to it. That root has a famous derivative. **Buddha** is *buddha*, “**the woken one**” — the same *budh-*, as are *bodhi*, the awakening, and *buddhi*, “intellect.” English borrowed all three without noticing they were relatives of anything.

One stage back the root is Indo-European **b^hewd^h-*, “be awake, be aware.” Its English descendants are quieter: **bode** and **forebode**, about being warned, and **forbid** — Old English *bēodan*, “to announce, to command,” a word for making someone aware of your will. So Urdu’s plainest way of saying *I get it* and the Buddha’s title are one word.

Your turn

- *Say it*: **samajhnā** — to understand; then the stem **samajh-**
- *Say it*: **ṭhīk**, then **samajhnā** — hear the same  breath in both

- *Contrast:* **ه** speaks in *hūñ*; **ہ** only aspirates in *samajh-*
- *Say it:* **maiñ sochtā hūñ**, then **maiñ samajhtā hūñ** — I think, I understand
- *Connect:* **samajhnā** ← *budh-* → **Buddha**, “the woken one”

Before you move on

What does **ہ** do, and does it sound by itself? (It aspirates the letter before it; **no**.) What did *budh-* mean, and which famous title is built on it? (**To wake; Buddha**.)

Sources: Wiktionary: **سمجھنا**; *Zero Zabar*: The Urdu alphabet.

7.4 **پ** — three dots under a boat

Write **آنا** and **آسان**, and say which alif wears the wave.

Script — the shape

پ

A **shallow open curve** lying along the baseline, like a small flat-bottomed boat — and then a lift, and **three dots placed underneath it**, arranged as a triangle with its point downward.

Two parts, one lift. Its name is **پ** *pe* and it says **p**.

The shapes it wears by position follow the pattern you have already seen twice:

- **standing alone** and **closing** a joined word: the full boat, dots beneath
- **opening** a word and **in the middle**: the boat shrinks to a small tooth — a short upward point on the line — with the three dots still beneath it

Note what survives the shrinking. The curve goes; **the three dots stay**. On a page of Nastaliq you find *pe* by counting dots below the line, not by looking for a boat.

That triangle of dots is worth one sentence of history. Arabic has no **p**, so the Arabic alphabet has no letter for it. Persian needed one, invented

it by taking the shape that carries a **single** dot below and giving it **three**, and Urdu inherited the invention along with the script. The same trick made letters for **ch**, **zh** and **g**. So the dots under pe are a record of a borrowed alphabet being altered to fit a language it was not built for — which every language that took this alphabet has done, Urdu among them. Sindhi went furthest of Urdu’s neighbours, and carries around fifty letters to Urdu’s thirty-nine.

The letters in this word

Three words, pe in three different places, and no letter in any of them that is not already yours. Copy each with the model in view.

آپ

پیر

اپنا

آپ *āp* — the respectful “you,” and the word this book has addressed you with from the beginning. Pe **closes** it, wearing the full boat, because alif madda hands nothing to the left.

پیر *pair* “foot” — pe **opens** it, shrunk to a tooth with its three dots still underneath.

اپنا *apnā* “one’s own” — pe sits **in the middle**, the same tooth, hemmed in on both sides.

Your turn

- *Write it:* پ — the boat, then a lift, then three dots beneath
- *Write it:* آپ, then پیر, then اپنا
- *Point to:* at the pe in پیر and the pe in آپ, and say what changed
- *Say it:* āp, and say who you would use it with rather than *tum*

Before you move on

How many dots does pe carry, and where? (**Three, underneath.**)
Why did Persian have to invent this letter? (**Arabic has no p.**)

Write “you.” (آپ)

7.5 پڑھنا — “to read,” and “to study,” and “to recite”

Say *samajhnā*, strip its *-nā*, and hear the breath the two-eyed *ھ* puts into the stem. This verb uses that letter and one more.

You’ll want to know first — one word

پڑھنا — *parhnā* — to read

It is also the ordinary word for “to study”: the noun *parhāī* is “studies, schooling.” Urdu does not keep reading and studying in separate boxes. Strip the *-nā* and the stem is *parh-*.

The letters in this word

From the right edge: پ *p*, then ڑ, then ھ, then ن *n*, then *ā* long *ā*.

Two are yours: پ, the low scoop with **three dots below**, from آپ *āp*; and ھ, the two-eyed *he* from *samajhnā* — ڑ plus ھ gives *ṛh*.

ش is new, and built from two things you have met. Its body is ر *r*, from شکریہ *shukriyā*. On top sits the very mark that *ṭe* carries in *ṭhik*: Urdu’s retroflex sign, meaning *curl the tongue back*. *Ṭe* is a curled *t*; ڑ is a curled *r*, flicked rather than rolled. You meet the mark here, on the letter that is yours today, and meet its other bearer by ear until the shape is handed to you.

Grammar Lens: into the frame

main parhtā hūn — **I read** (man speaking) *main parhtī hūn* — **I read** (woman speaking)

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

parhnā comes from Prakrit *padhāi*, from Sanskrit *paṭh-*, “to recite; to read aloud.” Its *ṭh* softened into the flapped *ṛh* you have learned,

and the meaning widened from reciting to reading to studying. Be honest about the far end: **paṭh-** has **no secure Indo-European ancestry**. There is no English cousin, and the trail stops inside India. The near end is better. The oldest sense — *speaking a text you hold in memory* — is everyday, not a fossil. To perform the Muslim ritual prayer is *namāz paṛhnā*, literally “to **read** the prayer,” and nobody performing it holds a book. You already met the word for someone who does that with the whole Quran: a *hāfiz*, on the Arabic root *h-f-ẓ*, “to guard, to preserve.” Guarding a text and reciting it are two halves of one practice — one word borrowed, one inherited.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **paṛhnā** — to read, and to study; then the stem **paṭh-**
- *Count:* ۞ three dots below, and name the word it opens
- *Trace it:* the retroflex mark on ڑ — the same mark ڑ carries
- *Say it:* **maiṅ paṛhtā hūṅ**, then **maiṅ samajhtā hūṅ** — I read, I understand

Before you move on

Name the two everyday meanings of *paṛhnā*. (**To read; to study.**) What does the mark on ڑ tell you to do, and which other letter carries it? (**Curl the tongue back; ڑ.**) Does *paṭh-* have an English cousin? (**No.**) Sources: Wiktionary: ۞; *Zero Zabar*: The Urdu alphabet.

7.6 لکھنا — “to write,” with nothing new left to decode

Three verbs so far: *sochnā*, *samajhnā*, *paṛhnā*. Strip the ending off each and say the three stems. The fourth completes the set, and every letter in it is one you already own.

You'll want to know first — one word

لکھنا — *likhnā* — **to write**

Strip the **-nā** and the stem is **likh-**.

The letters in this word

From the right edge: ل *l*, from سلام *salām*; ک *k*, from کیا *kyā*; then ه, the two-eyed *he*, aspirating the ک to give کہ *kh*; then ن *n* and ا long *ā*.
Not one new shape — a whole verb you can read straight off.

Grammar Lens: all four in the frame

main likhtā hūn — **I write** (man speaking) *main likhtī hūn*
— **I write** (woman speaking)

Run the chapter through that frame without changing anything but the stem: *main sochtā hūn*, *main samajhtā hūn*, *main parhtā hūn*, *main likhtā hūn*. One machine, four verbs, and *main ... hūn* holding the ends of every sentence.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

likhnā is Sanskrit *likhati*, “**scratches, scrapes**.” Writing was cutting a mark into a surface. Three other families reached for that picture out of three unrelated roots: Latin *scribere* “to incise,” behind **scribe** and **script**; Greek *gráphein* “to scratch,” behind **graph**; Old English *writan* “to score, to cut,” which is **write**. Four families, each deciding that writing is scratching.

Now the part only Urdu can show you. All four verbs of this chapter are inherited Indo-Aryan, the plain floor of the language — but the **things** writing needs are borrowed to a word: *qalam*, the pen, Arabic from Greek *kálamos*, “a reed”; *kitāb*, the book, from the Arabic root *k-t-b*, “to write”; and *nasta‘līq*, the Persian name of the flowing hand Urdu is set in. All three are printed the way you say them: each is spelled with letters still ahead of you. The deed is inherited; the equipment came by ship.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **likhnā** — to write; then the stem **likh-**
- *Run through:* all four — *sochnā, samajhnā, paṛhnā, likhnā* — stripping each stem
- *Say it:* the four in the frame — *main sochtā hūn ... main likhtā hūn*
- *Name:* which letter is *che*, which is *ṛe*, and what **h** does to a neighbour
- *Trace it:* *soch-* from grieving, *samajh-* from waking, *paṛh-* from reciting
- *Sort:* **likhnā** inherited; **qalam** and **kitāb** borrowed

Before you move on

Name the four verbs of this chapter and their four stems. What did *likhati* mean before it meant “write”? (**Scratches.**) Which layer of Urdu does *qalam* belong to? (**The borrowed one.**)

Sources: Wiktionary: لکھنا; Wiktionary: *qalam*.

Chapter 8

Four Verbs Between People

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) 👁 eyes (3) ✍ pen (1) ⇄ Hands-free start: none of the 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can take, ask and help in Urdu, build a verb by bolting a borrowed noun onto karnā, and say what I like in the sentence where the thing liked is the subject and I am only the person it happens to. I can write vāʔo, and name both letters that refuse to join to their left.

mujhe parhnā pasand hai — the first Urdu sentence the learner cannot open with mainī. It closes over the chapter's own four verbs by dropping each -nā infinitive into the liked-thing slot, and reuses madad karnā's join in pasand karnā.

8.1 ۞ — a head, a tail, and no hand to the left

Name the letter that takes the hand of what is on its right and offers nothing to the left, so that a gap opens inside a word. (l.)

Script — the shape

۞

A **small round head** at the top, closed like a tiny loop, and then a **tail** that sweeps down and away to the left, dropping below the baseline. One movement, no dots.

Its name is ۞ vāʔo.

Now the part that matters more than the shape. **vāʔo is a non-joiner**, the second one you have met. Like alif, it accepts the letter on its right and

hands nothing to the letter on its left, so the run stops after it and whatever follows begins as if starting fresh. When you see a break inside an Urdu word, you now have two suspects instead of one.

With nothing ever attached on its left, $vā^o$ has no separate middle face to learn. It looks the same wherever it stands; only whether something is joined to its right changes.

And it carries more than one sound. $Vā^o$ does four jobs:

- the consonant **v** or **w**
- the long vowel **ū**
- the long vowel **o**
- and in some Persian borrowings, nothing at all — a letter written and not said

Which one it is comes from the word, not the shape, exactly as with *ye*. Having heard the word is what tells you.

The letters in this word

Three words, three of $vā^o$'s values. Copy each with the model in front of you.

وکیل

ہوں

کون

وکیل

vakīl “lawyer” — $vā^o$ opens it as a **consonant**, and because it hands nothing leftward, **ک** begins a fresh run right after it. The gap you see inside the word is the letter refusing to join, not a space.

ہوں *hūn* — “I am.” $Vā^o$ is the long **ū** here, and the break after it is the same non-joining behaviour, with **ں** starting clean.

کون

kaun — “who.” $Vā^o$ is the **o** of the diphthong.

One letter, three sounds, in three words you already say.

Your turn

- Write it: و — the closed head, then the tail sweeping down and left
- Write it: وکیل, then ہوں, then کون
- Write it: میں ... ہوں — and say it with something true about yourself
- Point to: at the break after vā°o in ہوں and say why it is there

Before you move on

Write “I am.” (ہوں ... میں) How many sounds can vā°o carry? (Four, counting the silent one.) What tells you which? (Having heard the word.)

8.2 لینا — “to take,” and the letter that will not sit still

Last chapter’s four verbs were about the mind. Say **likhnā**, and name which layer of Urdu *qalam* came from. Now the hands take over: four verbs about what happens between people.

You’ll want to know first — one word

لینا — *lenā* — to take

Strip the **-nā** and the stem is **le-**. That is the whole stem: one syllable, no consonant after the vowel. It is the shortest verb you have met, and the etymology says why.

The letters in this word

From the right edge: ل *l*, then ی *y*, then ن *n*, then ِ long *ā*.

ی here carries a long *e* — *le-*, rhyming with English *lay*. That is its **third** job: it supplied a consonantal *y* in کیا *kyā* and stood for long *ī* in جی *jī*.

A fourth relative is yours too: broad final ڪ, which ends ڪيسے *kaise* and is not the shape that ends ڪیسی *kaisī*. One family of *ye* shapes covering *y*, *ī* and *e*, with the learned word telling you which — the abjad recording enough, not everything.

Grammar Lens: a two-letter stem in the same frame

maiṇ letā hūṇ — **I take** (man speaking) *maiṇ letī hūṇ* — **I take** (woman speaking)

No stem is too small for the machine. **le-** plus **-tā/-tī** plus **hūṇ**.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

lenā goes back to Sanskrit **labh-**, “**to gain, to obtain.**” Prakrit softened it to *lahai*, then the *-h-* went too and the vowels fused into a single *le*. A three-consonant root worn down to one syllable — the erosion that makes a language’s commonest words its shortest. Prakrit then did something tidy: it levelled *le-* “take” against *de-* “give” so the pair matched. That is why لینا *lenā* and *denā* still rhyme. They are not related; they were made to sound like partners. On the standard comparison, *labh-* matches Greek *lambánein*, “to take, to seize” — which English borrowed repeatedly without noticing. **Syllable** is *syn-* plus *lambánein*, “letters **taken together**”; **epilepsy** is “a seizing upon”; a **lemma** is something taken as given, which is why an argument with two of them is a **dilemma**.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **lenā** — to take; then the stem, which is **le-** alone
- *Name:* ڪ three ways — *y* in *kyā*, *ī* in *jī*, *e* in *lenā*
- *Say it:* **maiṇ letā hūṇ**, then **maiṇ letī hūṇ**
- *Say it:* **maiṇ likhtā hūṇ**, then **maiṇ letā hūṇ** — I write, I take
- *Connect:* **lenā** ← *labh-* → Greek *lambánein* → English **syllable**

Before you move on

What sound does **ی** carry in *lenā*, and name one other value it takes elsewhere. (**Long e**; *y* in *kyā* or *ī* in *jī*.) What did *labh-* mean? (**To gain, to obtain.**) Why do *lenā* and *denā* rhyme? (**Prakrit levelled the pair.**)

Sources: Wiktionary: لینا; *Zero Zabar*: The Urdu alphabet.

8.3 پوچھنا — “to ask,” a word Urdu inherited and borrowed at the same time

Say **lenā** and name the sound **ی** carries in it. You also hold کیا *kyā*, “what,” and two whole questions built with it. Here is the verb for the act itself.

You’ll want to know first — one word

پوچھنا — *pūchhnā* — to ask

Strip the **-nā** and the stem is **pūchh-**. It covers both asking a question and asking after someone.

The letters in this word

From the right edge: پ *p*, then و carrying long *ū*, then چ *ch*, then ه, then ن *n*, then | long *ā*.

Every shape is already earned, and two are the dot-counting pair: پ has three dots **below** a low scoop, چ three below the taller *jīm* body. Then ه aspirates the چ into چھ *chh* — its job in *samajhnā* and *parhnā* too.

A written question still ends in the mirrored ؟, closing ہے؟ کیا نام کا آپ at the left-hand end of the line.

Grammar Lens: into the frame

main pūchhtā hūn — **I ask** (man speaking) *main pūchhtī hūn* — **I ask** (woman speaking)

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

pūchhnā is Sanskrit **pr̥cchati**, “asks,” on the Indo-European root **prek-*, “to ask.” Latin took it as *precārī*, “to beg, to pray” — hence English **pray**, **prayer**, and **precarious**, a thing held only as long as someone is willing to be asked. German still asks with it: *fragen*. English’s own inherited cousin, Old English *frīġnan*, died out, so English prays with the related word and asks with an unrelated one. Here is the part that is Urdu’s alone. Persian asks with پرسیدن *porsīdan*, and *porsīdan* is **the same root**, carried west into Iran rather than east into India. Urdu borrowed it back: پرسش *pursish* is “inquiry, asking after someone’s health,” and حال پرسان *pursān-e-ḥāl* is “one who asks how you are.” So *pūchhnā* came down the inherited road, *pursish* came in sideways off a Persian ship, and they are cousins. Urdu is the room where the two roads meet, and the wellbeing question آپ کیسے ہیں؟ *āp kaisē hīn?* is what either of them names.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **pūchhnā** — to ask; then the stem **pūchh-**
- *Count:* three dots below پ, three below چ, then ه for the breath
- *Say it:* **maiṅ pūchhtā hūṅ**, then **maiṅ pūchhtī hūṅ**
- *Say it:* **kyā**, then **āp kaise haiṅ** — a word and a question about asking
- *Connect:* **pūchhnā** and Persian **pursish** ← one root → English **pray**

Before you move on

Which English word for praying shares a root with *pūchhnā*, and are Persian *porsīdan* and Urdu *pūchhnā* related? (**Pray; the same root, by two roads.**)

Sources: Wiktionary: پوچھنا; Wiktionary: پرسیدن; Rekhta Dictionary: pursish.

8.4 کرنا مدد — “to help,” and the join that built half of Urdu

Say **pūchhnā** and name the English word for praying that shares its root. Every verb so far was one word ending in **-nā**. This one is two, and only the second half moves.

You’ll want to know first — two words

کرنا مدد — *madad karnā* — to help

مدد *madad* is a **noun**: “help, aid.” Alone it does nothing. کرنا *karnā* is the verb “to do,” already readable: ک from *kyā*, ن from *shukriyā*, then نا. Bolt them together: “to do help.”

Grammar Lens: only the second half conjugates

main madad kartā hūn — I help (man speaking) *main madad kartī hūn* — I help (woman speaking)

Madad never changes. It is not a verb and never becomes one; *karnā* carries every ending. This is the **conjunct verb**, the most productive verb-making device Urdu owns: name a noun, add *karnā*, and you have a verb.

You have met *karnā*’s stem before without being told. *āp se mil kar*

khushī hū — the line that closed a first introduction — holds ک *kar* in the middle doing a different job: “**having** met.” One little word, two pieces of machinery.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

مدد is Arabic, on the three-consonant root م-د-د (*m-d-d*), whose verb *madda* means “to stretch out, to extend.” Help, in Arabic, is something **extended** toward you — the picture English reaches for when it *extends* a hand, though English inherited nothing from *m-d-d* and its own **help** is unrelated Germanic. Better said plainly than dressed up as a cousin.

The root pattern is not new. *hāfiz* sits on *ḥ-f-z*, “to guard, to preserve.” Three consonants carrying a meaning, vowels poured in around them: that is how Arabic builds words, and now you have two. *Madad* travelled the same road as *khudā* — into Persian first, then into Urdu. Here is why the join matters more than the word. A borrowed noun **cannot be conjugated**. With *karnā* it never has to: the loan stays a frozen noun and native grammar does the work. That is how Urdu took in centuries of Persian and Arabic vocabulary without changing its verb system by one letter.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- **madad karnā** — to help; and which half is the noun
- **maiñ madad kartā hūñ**, then **maiñ madad kartī hūñ**
- two Arabic roots — *ḥ-f-z* to guard, *m-d-d* to extend
- **maiñ pūchhtā hūñ**, then **maiñ madad kartā hūñ** — I ask, I help

Before you move on

Which half of *madad karnā* takes the endings, and what does *m-d-d* mean underneath? (کرتا; **to stretch out, to extend**.) Why does this join let Urdu borrow so freely? (**The loan stays a noun; native *karnā* carries the grammar.**)
Sources: Wiktionary: مدد; Wiktionary: كرن (Arabic).

8.5 پسند — Urdu does not like things; things please Urdu

Say **maiñ madad kartā hūñ** and name which half takes the endings. Every sentence so far opened with میں *maiñ*, “I.” This one takes that away.

You'll want to know first — *mujhe*, the shape of “to me”

mujhe — to me

Mujhe is what **میں** *main* becomes when the sentence refuses to let you be its subject. It is not “I.”

The letters in this word

From the right edge: **م** *m*, then *jīm* carrying *j*, then the two-eyed *he* aspirating it to *jh*, then broad final **ے** for *e* — the shape that ends **کے** *kaise*. All four already yours.

Grammar Lens: the thing you like is the subject

mujhe parhnā pasand hai. — I like reading.

Taken apart: **mujhe** + **parhnā** (“reading”) + **pasand** (“pleasing”) + **hai**. Literally: “To me, reading is pleasing.”

parhnā is the **subject**, which is what **ہے** agrees with. No Urdu sentence puts *I* in front of *like*. And any **-nā** infinitive drops into that slot, because an Urdu infinitive doubles as a noun — so every verb of the last three chapters is likeable.

mujhe likhnā pasand hai. — I like writing.

Urdu keeps company with unrelated languages: Spanish *me gusta el libro*, “to me the book pleases”; Italian *mi piace*; Tamil *enakku piḍikkum*, “it catches me”; Bengali *āmār bhālo lāge*, “good sticks to me.” Three families borrowing nothing from each other, each deciding liking happens to you.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

پسند is not a verb. It is **Persian**, from **پسنیدن** *pasandīdan*, “to approve, to find pleasing” — *pati*-, “towards,” plus *sand*, “to look good.” It arrived as a noun and adjective, and a non-verb cannot carry the liker, so the grammar put that person elsewhere: **mujhe**.

Where *sand* goes next is genuinely **disputed**. One proposal ties it to the root behind Latin *candēre*, “to glow” — English **candid**,

incendiary — and Sanskrit *candra*, “moon,” Urdu’s *chānd*. Lovely, but unsettled.

It came by the Persian road that gave you *khushī*, and sits beside Arabic *مدد* *madad*. *Lenā* and *pūchhnā* are inherited; *madad* and *pasand* are borrowed. Urdu’s hands stayed home; its social words travelled.

کرنہ پسند *pasand karnā*, “to do liking,” reuses *madad karnā*’s join; پسند آنا *pasand ānā* uses آنا *ānā*, “to come” — liking that *comes*.

Your turn

- *Say it*: **mujhe paṛhnā pasand hai**, then its literal sense
- *Swap*: hold **mujhe ... pasand hai**, change the middle — *likhnā* · *sochnā* · *pūchhnā*
- *Say it*: the chapter — *maiñ letā hūñ*, *maiñ pūchhtā hūñ*, *maiñ madad kartā hūñ*, *mujhe paṛhnā pasand hai*
- *Sort*: *lenā*, *pūchhnā* inherited; *madad*, *pasand* borrowed

Before you move on

In *mujhe paṛhnā pasand hai*, what is the subject, and what part of speech is *pasand*? (*paṛhnā*; a **noun and adjective** from **Persian**.)

Sources: Wiktionary: پسند; Wiktionary: پسندیدن.

Chapter 9

People You’d Introduce

Modes: ⇄ voice (3) 👁 eyes (1) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name my brother, sister, friend and family in Urdu, and choose *merā* or *merī* correctly for each noun’s grammatical gender.

Say merā bhāī, merī bahan, merā dost and merā khāndān with merā/merī chosen correctly for each noun, and sort the four into inherited bhāī/bahan against Persian dost/khāndān — the same native-versus-borrowed split Chapter 8’s verbs drew.

9.1 بھائی — “brother,” and the first real English cousin among these nouns

Say **mujhe paṛhnā pasand hai**. That closed the verb chapters. This chapter opens a new kind of word: nouns for the people you would actually introduce.

You’ll want to know first — one word

بھائی — *bhāī* — brother

بھائی-میرا — *merā bhāī*. — “[He’s] my brother.”

Urdu, like English, can drop the subject when it is obvious from context — pointing at someone while you say this is enough.

The letters in this word

From the right edge: ب *b*, then ه aspirating it to *bh*, then ا long *ā*, then ي, then ی *ī*.

ی is new: **ye with hamza above**. It is a fourth shape in the *ye* family, alongside consonantal *y* in کیا, long *ī* in جی, and broad final *e* in کیسے. Its job is narrower than any of those: it marks a glide between two vowels that would otherwise collide — here, between *ā* and *ī*. ه is new too, extending the two-eyed *he* you already know from *jh*, *th*, *rh* and *chh* to a fifth base letter, ب.

Grammar Lens: a noun with a gender

بھائی is grammatically **masculine** — the same class as نام in **merā nām**. That is why **merā** needs no change here. Not every noun agrees this easily; the next lesson breaks the pattern.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

bhāī comes from Sanskrit *bhrātr*, “brother,” from Proto-Indo-Iranian ***b^hráHtā**, from Proto-Indo-European ***b^hréh₂tēr**. English **brother** comes from the very same root. Unlike *pasand*’s disputed link to *candēre* two lessons ago, this one is settled: Sanskrit and English are both Indo-European, so **bhāī** and *brother* are real relatives, not two languages landing on the same idea by accident.

Your turn

- *Say it*: **bhāī** — brother; then **merā bhāī**
- *Name*: the fourth *ye* shape — hamza above, between two vowels
- *Connect*: **bhāī** ← *bhrātr* → English **brother**, real cousins
- *Say it*: **mujhe paṛhnā pasand hai** once more, then **merā bhāī**
- *Recall*: say *ānā*, then say *bolnā*

Before you move on

What does بھائی mean, and is بھائی masculine or feminine?
(Brother; masculine.) Which English word is its real cousin, not
 only a resemblance? **(Brother.)** Name the four jobs of the *ye*
 family now. **(Consonantal *y*, long *ī*, final *e*, and hamza-glide.)**
 Sources: Wiktionary: بھائی.

9.2 بہن — “sister,” and the word that makes میرا move

Say **merā bhāī** — my brother, a real cousin of the English word.
 Here is the other half of the pair, and it changes something you
 have used unchanged since Chapter 2.

You’ll want to know first — one word

بہن — *bahan* — **sister**

میری بہن — *merī bahan*. — “[She’s] my sister.”

Not میرا بہن. Read on for why.

Grammar Lens: میرا bends to the noun, not to you

بہن is grammatically **feminine**. Urdu’s word for “my” carries that
 agreement: میرا *merā* before a masculine noun, میری *merī* before a
 feminine one — regardless of whether the speaker is a man or a
 woman. It is the noun’s gender that decides, never the speaker’s.

merā bhāī, merī bahan. — my brother, my sister.

نام in Chapter 2’s **merā nām** is masculine, which is why that phrase
 never had to teach you this rule — one gender, hidden in plain sight,
 until a feminine noun finally showed up.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

bahan continues Sanskrit *bhaginī*, traditionally connected to **bhaj-**, “to share, to portion out” — a sister pictured as a co-heir, sharing the family’s portion. Specialists flag a real problem with the sound history, though: the aspiration in *bhaginī* does not shift the way this derivation needs it to. Hold this one loosely, the way *pasand*’s *candēre* link was held loosely — a plausible story, not a settled one like *bhāī*’s.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **bahan** — sister; then **merī bahan**
- *Contrast:* **merā bhāī** — **merī bahan**
- *Say it:* why **merā** changed — the noun’s gender, not the speaker’s
- *Say it:* **bahan** ← *bhaginī* ← *bhaj-*, “to share” — held loosely
- *Recall:* say *jānnā*

Before you move on

Why is it **میری بہن** and not **میرا بہن**? (**بہن** is feminine, and **merā/merī** agrees with the noun’s gender.) What does *bhaj-* mean, and is the connection to *bahan* certain? (“To share”; no, it is debated.)

Sources: Wiktionary: **بہن**.

9.3 دوست — “friend,” and the relationship تم was made for

Back in Chapter 3 you learned three Urdu words for “you” — respectful **āp**, familiar **tum**, intimate **tū** — and were told to use **tum** once a relationship supports familiarity. Here is the relationship that phrase meant.

You’ll want to know first — one word

دوست — *dost* — friend

دوست — میرا — *merā dost*. — “[He’s/She’s] my friend.”

Grammar Lens: a noun that will not pick a gender

bhāī was masculine and needed **merā**. *bahan* was feminine and needed **merī**. دوست breaks the pattern on purpose: it takes **the same form** for a male or a female friend, and **merā dost** works for either. Native Urdu nouns almost always commit to a gender; this Persian loan does not carry the machinery that would make it agree.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

dost is Persian, inherited from Old Persian **dauštā**, from Proto-Iranian ***jawštā**, from Proto-Indo-European ***ǵews-**, “to taste, to choose, to enjoy.” That root also gave English **choose** and Latin *gustus* — behind English **gusto**. A friend, on this history, is someone **tasted and chosen**, the same picture as *lenā*’s worn-down “take.” Persian’s own word for “ask,” **porsīdan**, turned out to share one root with Urdu’s inherited *pūchhnā*. دوست is not that kind of cousin — Urdu has no inherited word from ***ǵews-** to compare it against — but it is the same general shape: an old Indo-European root, arriving in Urdu by the Persian road alone.

Grammar Lens: where تم (*tum*) actually lives

Chapter 3 taught **āp** / **tum** / **tū** and told you to move to **tum** once familiarity is safe. A دوست is exactly that relationship: someone you have moved off **āp** for. You do not need a new rule — only the word for the person the old rule was describing.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **dost** — friend; then **merā dost**, for either a man or a woman
- *Contrast:* **merā bhāī**, **merī bahan**, **merā dost** — two that agree, one that does not
- *Connect:* **dost** ← ***ǵews-** → English **choose**, **gusto**
- *Say it:* **āp**, **tum**, **tū** — then name which one fits a دوست

Before you move on

Does دوست change form for a male or female friend? (No — it stays دوست either way.) Which two English words share دوست's root? (Choose and gusto.) Which of āp / tum / tū fits a دوست? (tum.)

Sources: Wiktionary: دوست.

9.4 خاندان — “family,” the word your three new nouns never needed

Three people-words so far: *bhāī*, *bahan*, *dost* — a specific brother, a specific sister, a specific friend. Not one of them names the group they belong to.

You'll want to know first — one word

خاندان — *khāndān* — family

میرا خاندان — *merā khāndān*. — “[This is] my family.”

خاندان is grammatically masculine, so *merā* stays unchanged — the same class as *bhāī*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

خاندان is Classical Persian, borrowed into Urdu whole. Unlike *khudā hāfiz*, whose Persian *khudā* and Arabic-rooted *hāfiz* this book could pull apart piece by piece, no source here commits to what خاندان is built from internally — so this one stays a single unanalyzed loan, not a compound to take apart.

Line up this chapter's four nouns by where they came from. *bhāī* and *bahan* are inherited, straight from Sanskrit, the same road as every kin word before them. *dost* and خاندان are Persian, the same road as خدا and *hāfiz* back in Chapter 5. The people you would point to and name stayed native; the words for choosing them as friends and grouping them as family reached outside the language.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **khāndān** — family; then **merā khāndān**
- *Say it:* all four — **bhāī, bahan, dost, khāndān**
- *Sort:* inherited — **bhāī, bahan**; Persian — **dost, khāndān**
- *Choose:* **merā** or **merī** for each of the four

Before you move on

Which two of this chapter's nouns are inherited from Sanskrit, and which two are Persian loans? (**bhāī, bahan** inherited; **dost, خاندان Persian.**) Say all four people-words with **merā** or **merī** correctly chosen for each.

Sources: Wiktionary: **خاندان**.

Chapter 10

Four Words on the Face

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) 👁 eyes (3) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name my ear, nose, eye and mouth in Urdu, notice that *kān* and *nāk* share the same three letters reversed, and read the *nūn* that marks a nasal vowel instead of a spoken consonant.

Name kān, nāk, āñkh and muñh, explain the plain nūn that nasalizes āñkh and muñh against the dedicated ُ of main and hūn, and count three settled Indo-European cousins found this chapter — nāk/nose, āñkh/eye — against kān’s honest dead end.

10.1 کان — “ear,” where the body words start

Say **merā khāndān** — my family, closing the last chapter. This chapter turns from the people around you to the wellbeing check itself: four words for the body, starting with the one you use to hear the question.

You’ll want to know first — one word

کان — *kān* — ear

کان-میرا — *merā kān*. — “my ear.”

کان is masculine, so **merā** keeps the form you already know from *bhāī* and *khāndān*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

kān continues Sanskrit *karṇa* by way of Prakrit and Apabhramsa *kaṇṇa*. That much is solid. Where *karṇa* itself comes from is not: the trail runs out inside Indo-Aryan, with only a loose, unconfirmed suggestion linking it to Persian  (*kar*), “deaf.” No English cousin, no settled Indo-European root — the same honest dead end *paṛhnā*’s *paṭh*- hit two chapters ago.

Notice the pattern from last chapter still holds:  is inherited, straight from Sanskrit, the same road as *bhāī* and *bahan*. *khāndān*, the word that closed that chapter, was Persian instead — the body’s own words stay native even where their history goes quiet.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **kān** — ear; then **merā kān**
- *Say it:* **khāndān**, then **kān** — one word ends, the body words begin
- *Name:* what’s uncertain about *karṇa*’s own origin
- *Recall:* say *sochnā*, then say *samajhnā*, then say *paṛhnā*

Before you move on

Is  masculine or feminine? (**Masculine.**) Does *karṇa* have a secure English cousin? (**No — the origin is unsettled.**)
Sources: Wiktionary: .

10.2 — “nose,” the same three letters as , backwards

Say **merā kān** — my ear, masculine, unchanged **merā**. This word shares every letter with it.

You’ll want to know first — one word

 — *nāk* — **nose**

ناک- میری — *merī nāk*. — “my nose.”

ناک is feminine — **merī**, not **merā**. Grammatical gender does not follow shape or sound; it has to be learned noun by noun.

The letters in this word

کان is اک ن — *k, ā, n*. ناک is ان ک — *n, ā, k*. The same three letters, in exactly the opposite order. Ear and nose, spelled as mirror images of each other — a coincidence of Urdu’s script, not of its history; the two words are not related.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

nāk continues Sauraseni Prakrit *ṇakka*, from Proto-Indo-Iranian ***náHs**, from Proto-Indo-European ***néh₂s**, “nose.” English **nose** comes from that very root. Where کان’s ancestry ran out unanswered — recall *karṇa*’s own origin was left unsettled last lesson — ناک’s does not: *nāk* and *nose* are genuine cousins, joining *bhāī* and *brother* as this book’s settled Indo-European matches.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **nāk** — nose; then **merī nāk**
- *Spell:* **kān** forward, then **nāk** — the same three letters, reversed
- *Connect:* **nāk** ← **néh₂s* → English **nose**, real cousins
- *Contrast:* **merā kān** — **merī nāk**
- *Recall:* say *likhnā*, then say *pūchhnā*

Before you move on

What is the letter relationship between کان and ناک? (**Same three letters, reversed order.**) Is ناک’s English cousin settled or disputed? (**Settled — *nose* shares its root.**) Is ناک masculine or feminine? (**Feminine.**)

Sources: Wiktionary: ناک.

10.3 آنکھ — “eye,” and a fifth letter learns to breathe

Say **merī nāk** — my nose, feminine. The next word on the face is feminine too, and it puts the two-eyed **ه** on a letter it has never touched.

You’ll want to know first — one word

آنکھ — *āṅkh* — eye

آنکھ - میری — *merī āṅkh*. — “my eye.”

The letters in this word

From the right edge: **آ**, alif carrying long *ā* (the same mark you already read in **آپ**), then **ن**, then **ک** *k*, then **ه**.

ه extends the two-eyed *he* to a fifth base letter. It has already aspirated *jīm* in *samajh-*, *ṭe* in *ṭhīk*, *re* in *paṛh-*, and *che* in *pūchh-*; here it does the same job to **ک**, giving *kh*.

The **ن** in this word is not pronounced as its own consonant. It marks the **آ** before it as nasal — the vowel said through the nose, with no separate *n* sound following it. Say **āṅkh** by nasalizing the *ā*, not by adding a clean *n*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

āṅkh continues Sanskrit *ákṣi*, from Proto-Indo-European ***h₃ek^w-**, “eye, to see.” English **eye** descends from that same root. This chapter has now found two settled Indo-European cousins in a row —

ناک/*nose*, آنکھ/*eye* — after کان’s honest dead end.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **āṅkh** — eye; then **merī āṅkh**
- *Nasalize:* **ā** through the nose, no separate **n**
- *Count:* five letters now carrying **ṇ** — *jīm, ṭe, re, che, kāf*
- *Connect:* **āṅkh** ← **h₃ek^w* - → English **eye**
- *Recall:* say *lenā*

Before you move on

Which letter does  newly pair the two-eyed *he* with, and name two letters it already paired with? (; any two of **jīm**, **te**, **re**, **che**.)

What job does ن do in أنك؟ (Marks the $\bar{a}$ as nasal — it is not its own consonant.) Is ع's English cousin settled? (Yes — *eye*.)

Sources: Wiktionary: آنکھ.

10.4 — “mouth,” and the *ānkh* already used without explaining

Three face words: **kān**, **nāk**, **ānkh** — recall that **کان** and **ناک** shared the same three letters, reversed. One more word closes the chapter, and it finally explains something *ānkh* already did.

You'll want to know first — one word

𐌚𐌗𐌊 — *munh* — **mouth** (also: **face**)

میرا منہ — *merā munh.* — “my mouth.”

 is masculine.

The letters in this word

From the right edge: م *m*, then ن *n*, then ه *h*, the round *he* you already write in هون and هونا — a real, spoken *h*, not the two-eyed aspirator.

That middle ن *n* does the same job it did in *āṅkh*, unglossed at the time: it marks the vowel before it as nasal, not a separate *n* sound. Say **muṅh** by nasalizing the *u*, with no clean *n* in between.

Keep this apart from مین *main* and هون *hūn*, whose nasal ending is written with a different letter entirely: ڻ, *nūn ghunna*, a dedicated nasalization mark. من and *āṅkh* nasalize with a plain ن *n* doing double duty; مین and هون nasalize with ڻ, a letter built for exactly that job and nothing else. Same sound, two different letters, depending on which word you are in.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

muṅh continues Sanskrit *múkha*, “mouth, face.” One proposal, from the Sanskrit etymologist Manfred Mayrhofer, ties it to a Proto-Indo-European gesture-root **mu-*, “pressed lips” — the same root that would sit behind Greek *mýthos* (“word,” behind English **myth**) and German *Maul*, “mouth.” Mayrhofer himself calls a non-Indo-European origin less likely but does not rule it out. Hold this one the way you held *bahan*’s link to *bhaj-* — a real proposal, not a verdict.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **muṅh** — mouth; then **merā muṅh**
- *Contrast:* plain ن *n* nasalizing in **āṅkh** and **muṅh**; ڻ *nūn ghunna* nasalizing in **main** and **hūn**
- *Say it:* four face words now — **kān**, **nāk**, **āṅkh**, **muṅh**
- *Connect:* **muṅh** possibly ← **mu-* → Greek **mýthos** → English **myth**, held loosely

Before you move on

Which earlier word in this chapter used a plain ن *n* for nasalization the same way من does? (*āṅkh*.) Which letter does مین use instead? (ڻ, *nūn ghunna*.) Is من’s link to Greek *mýthos* certain? (No — a proposal, held loosely.)

Sources: Wiktionary: .

Chapter 11

The Heart

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can name my heart in Urdu and trace dil to the same Indo-European root as Sanskrit ḥṛdaya and English heart, arriving by the Persian road instead of the Sanskrit one.

*Say merā dil, and trace it through Middle Persian and Proto-Iranian back to the same PIE *kērd- that gives Sanskrit ḥṛdaya, English heart, Latin cor and Greek kardía — dil and ḥṛdaya split at the Indo-Iranian fork, not opposite lineages but the same root by two roads, echoing pūchhnā and porsīdan.*

11.1 دل — “heart,” Persian, and still a cousin of the English word

Recall من: its plain ن marked a nasal vowel, and its possible tie to Greek *mýthos* was held loosely. Recall also *pūchhnā*: one root, two roads into Urdu — inherited *pūchhnā* and borrowed *pursish*, cousins by two different paths. This chapter’s single word runs that same two-roads shape one level deeper, on the body’s most-named part.

You’ll want to know first — one word

دل — *dil* — heart

دل-میرا — *merā dil*. — “my heart.”

دل is masculine.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

دل is Persian — borrowed into Urdu from Middle Persian *dil*, by the same road as *khudā* back in Chapter 5. But unlike *khudā*, whose Sanskrit side this book never named, دل has one, and it is worth naming precisely.

Middle Persian *dil* is itself **inherited**, not borrowed, within the Iranian branch of Indo-Iranian: from Proto-Iranian ***jārd**, from Proto-Indo-Iranian ***j^hārd**, from Proto-Indo-European ***kērd-**, “heart.” That is the exact same root behind **Sanskrit** *hṛdaya*, English **heart**, Latin **cor** (behind *courage*, *cordial*), and Greek **kardía** (behind *cardiac*).

So دل and Sanskrit’s word for heart are not opposites, and they did not arrive by accident on the same idea. They are the **same PIE root**, split at the Indo-Iranian fork: one branch went east into Sanskrit and became *hṛdaya*; the other went west into Iranian and became *dil*, then travelled back into Urdu as a loan. Persian and Sanskrit both keep the family’s heart-word — Urdu happens to have taken the Iranian branch’s copy.

Your turn

- *Say it*: **dil** — heart; then **merā dil**
- *Say it*: the four PIE cousins so far — **bhāī/brother**, **nāk/nose**, **āṅkh/eye**, **dil/heart**
- *Trace it*: **dil** ← Middle Persian ← Proto-Iranian ← PIE ***kērd-** → Sanskrit **hṛdaya**
- *Say it*: one root, two roads — Iranian and Indo-Aryan, the same shape as **pūchhnā/pursish**

Before you move on

Is دل’s resemblance to Sanskrit *hṛdaya* a coincidence, like پسند and *candēre*? (No — **both come from PIE *kērd-*, real cousins.**)

Which branch of Indo-Iranian gave Urdu دل, and which gave

Sanskrit **hṛdaya**? (**Iranian; Indo-Aryan.**) Name three other English words from the same root as دل. (**Heart, cardiac, courage** or **cordial.**)
Sources: Wiktionary: دل.

Chapter 12

Water, Tea, Milk, Bread

Modes: ⇨ voice (2) 👁 eyes (2) ⇨ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name water, tea, milk and bread in Urdu, say what I like using the frame Chapter 8 built, and sort each word as inherited or Persian.

Say mujhe roṭī pasand hai, reusing Chapter 8’s dative-experiencer frame on a plain noun instead of an infinitive, and sort pānī/dūdh/roṭī as inherited against chāy’s Persian loan — with pānī reusing lenā’s verb frame and dūdh correcting a tempting false cognate with English dough.

12.1 پانی — “water,” and لینا put back to work

Say **merā dil** — my heart, closing the body words, and recall that its PIE root reached Urdu by the Persian road while the same root reached Sanskrit’s *hrdaya* by a different one. This chapter turns to the four things you would actually ask for. لینا, “to take,” from three chapters back, gets its first real use since it was taught.

You’ll want to know first — one word

پانی — *pānī* — **water**

پانی is masculine.

Grammar Lens: naming what you'd take

maiṇ pānī letā hūñ. — I take/get water (man speaking).

maiṇ pānī letī hūñ. — I take/get water (woman speaking).

لینا's stem **le-** slots a noun in front of it the same way any transitive verb does. You already hold the whole verb; پانی is the first noun you have had to put in front of it.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

pānī continues Sanskrit *pānīya*, “water, drink,” built on **pā-**, “to drink,” from Proto-Indo-European ***peh₃-**. English **water** is unrelated — it comes from an entirely different PIE root. But **peh₃-* itself did reach English, by a different door: Latin *potare*, “to drink,” gave English **potion** and, by way of a sense narrowed to “a poisoned drink,” **poison**. پانی is, underneath, “the drinkable thing” — the same idea English kept for what you drink, not for the substance itself.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **pānī** — water; then **merā pānī**
- *Say it:* **maiṇ pānī letā hūñ**, then **maiṇ pānī letī hūñ**
- *Connect:* **pānī** ← *pā-* → Latin *potare* → English **potion**, **poison** — not **water**
- *Recall:* say *madad karnā*

Before you move on

Is پانی related to English **water**? (**No.**) Name two English words that do share its root. (**Potion** and **poison**.) Say “I take/get water,” once as a man would, once as a woman would.

Sources: Wiktionary: پانی.

12.2 چائے — “tea,” which walked to Urdu rather than sailed

Say **merā pānī** — my water, underneath “the drinkable thing.”
Here is the drink you would politely ask for right after it, and a letter from Chapter 9 makes a second appearance.

You’ll want to know first — one word

چائے — *chāy* — tea

میری چائے — *merī chāy*. — “my tea.”

چائے is feminine.

The letters in this word

From the right edge: چ *ch*, already yours from *sochnā* and *samajhnā*; then *ā*; then ی, hamza-ye, the vowel-glide letter *bhāī* introduced; then ے, broad final *e* from *kaise*. چائے’s ی does the same job it did in *bhāī*: keeping *ā* and the vowel after it from colliding.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

چائے is borrowed from Classical Persian چای (*chāy*), which traces back to Northern Chinese **chá**, carried overland through Central Asia into Persian before Urdu ever had it. That is the same road *khudā* and *dil* travelled in earlier chapters — Persian into Urdu — with a Chinese starting point this time instead of one further west.

Tea that instead reached Europe by **sea** kept a different form, from southern coastal Chinese, which is why English says **tea** and French says *thé* instead of *chai*. One drink, two words, sorted by whether it travelled by land or by water.

Your turn

- Say it: **chāy** — tea; then **merī chāy**
- Name: the hamza-ye letter’s two words so far — **bhāī**, **chāy**

- *Say it:* the road — chá ... chāy ... chāy
- *Contrast:* merā pānī — merī chāy
- *Recall:* say *pasand*

Before you move on

Which three languages did چائے pass through, in order? (**Chinese, then Persian, then Urdu.**) Why does English say “tea” instead of “chai”? (**It arrived by sea, carrying a different Chinese form.**) Which earlier Urdu word already used the hamza-ye letter? (*bhāī.*)

Sources: Wiktionary: چائے.

12.3 دودھ — “milk,” and a false friend worth naming before you fall for it

Say **merī chāy** — my tea, which walked overland from China through Persian before reaching Urdu. This word is what turns it milky, and it hands the two-eyed د a sixth letter to aspirate.

You’ll want to know first — one word

دودھ — *dūdḥ* — milk

میرا دودھ — *merā dūdḥ*. — “my milk.”

دودھ is masculine.

The letters in this word

From the right edge: د *d*, then و carrying long *ū*, then د again, then ه. ه extends the two-eyed *he* to a sixth base letter: it has now aspirated *jīm*, *ṭe*, *ṛe*, *che*, *kāf*, and here it aspirates د, giving *dh*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

dūdḥ continues Sanskrit *dugdhá*, literally “milked,” from Proto-Indo-European ***d^hewg^h-**, “to be fit, to yield, to produce.” That root also gives Sanskrit **duh-**, “to milk” — the verb sitting

directly under this noun.

Here is the trap. English **dough** looks like the obvious match, and it is **not**: *dough* comes from a completely different PIE root, **d^heigh-*, “to knead, to form” — the root behind the shape of bread, not the substance of milk. The real English cousin of **दूध** is a quieter word: **doughty**, “brave, capable,” from the very same **d^hewg^h-*, “fit for, of use.” A doughty person and milked milk share an ancestor; bread dough does not.

Your turn

- *Say it*: **dūdh** — milk; then **merā dūdh**
- *Count*: six letters now carrying **द** — *jīm, ṭe, ṛe, che, kāf, dāl*
- *Reject*: **दूध** is NOT related to English **dough**
- *Connect*: **दूध** ← **d^hewg^h-* → English **doughty**, the real cousin

Before you move on

Which English word looks like a match for **दूध** but is not one? (**Dough**.) Which English word actually is the cousin? (**Doughty**.) What Sanskrit verb sits directly under **दूध**? (**duh-**, “to milk.”) Sources: Wiktionary: **दूध**; Etymonline: doughty.

12.4 **रोटी** — “bread,” and *pasand* closes the chapter

Three drinks so far: **pānī**, **chāy**, **dūdh** — and recall *dūdh*’s real English cousin was **doughty**, not the tempting **dough**. This chapter’s fourth and final word is the one you would eat, not drink.

You’ll want to know first — one word

रोटी — *roṭī* — bread

मेरी रोटी — *merī roṭī*. — “my bread.”

रोटी is feminine.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

roṭī continues Sauraseni Prakrit *roṭṭa-*, from Sanskrit *roṭikā*, “a kind of bread.” That word is built inside Sanskrit itself, on a root meaning “to **strike, to crush**” — the pounding and rolling that turns grain into flatbread. The trail stops there: no proposed

Proto-Indo-European ancestor, no English cousin. **کان** and *paṛhnā* hit the same honest wall earlier in this book. Not every word gets a Greek or Latin relative, and saying so plainly is better than inventing one.

Grammar Lens: *mujhe ... pasand है*, one more time

mujhe roṭī pasand hai. — **I like bread.**

The dative-experiencer frame from Chapter 8 was built for **-nā** infinitives — *paṛhnā*, *likhnā*. It works as well for a plain noun: whatever pleases you sits in the subject slot, and **है** agrees with it, not with you.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **roṭī** — bread; then **merī roṭī**
- *Say it:* **mujhe roṭī pasand hai**, then swap in **pānī**, then **dūdh**
- *Sort:* inherited — **pānī**, **dūdh**, **roṭī**; Persian — **chāy**
- *Say it:* all four foods with **merā** or **merī** correctly chosen

Before you move on

Does **रोटी** have a secure English cousin? (**No** — **the trail stops at Sanskrit.**) Of this chapter’s four foods, which one is the Persian loan? (*chā²e.*) Say “I like bread” using the frame from Chapter 8.

Sources: Wiktionary: **रोटी**.

Chapter 13

Four Colors

Modes: ⇄ voice (4) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name red, white, black and blue in Urdu, and tell which colors change their ending for the noun they describe and which never do.

Say all four colors — لال, سفید, کالا, نیلا — sorting the two that agree with the noun’s gender from the two that never change, and trace نیلا’s cousin nīlī forward through Persian and Arabic into English aniline.

13.1 لال — “red,” and a word that never changes shape

Recall *rotī* — bread, an honest dead end with no English cousin. This lesson opens a new kind of word: colors, starting with the one you’d use for a ripe tomato or a bride’s dress.

You’ll want to know first — one word

لال — *lāl* — red

merā koṭ lāl hai. — “My coat is red.”

Grammar Lens: a color that never agrees

لال ends in a consonant, not in *l*. That matters: it stays لال whether the thing it describes is masculine or feminine, singular or plural. *merā*

kam̄z lāl hai, merī ṭopī lāl hai — same word, no change. Not every color in this book will be this simple.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

لال is borrowed from Classical Persian لال, “red.” No further ancestor is documented for the Persian word itself — the trail stops, the same honest kind of dead end *roṭī*’s Sanskrit root hit last lesson, except this time on the Persian side of the book’s two layers rather than the inherited one.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **lāl** — red; then **merā koṭ lāl hai**
- *Note:* لال never changes its ending, unlike the colors still to come
- *Connect:* **lāl** ← Persian, no further root — like *roṭī*’s Sanskrit root, but on the other side of the book’s two layers
- *Recall:* say *bhāī*, then say *bahan*

Before you move on

What does لال mean, and which layer does it belong to — inherited or Persian? (**Red; Persian.**) Does لال change its ending for a feminine noun? (**No — it stays لال.**) Does لال have a documented ancestor before Persian? (**No — an honest dead end.**) Is *khudā hāfīz* written as one word or two in Urdu spelling? (**Two, spaced — unlike Persian’s joined form.**) When you read *ہے ... نام میرا* right to left, does the spoken order of the words change? (**No — the script direction changes, the spoken order does not.**)
Sources: Wiktionary: لال.

13.2 سفید — “white,” and English joins the family this time

Recall لال — red, Persian, and a dead end. This word is also Persian, also ends in a consonant, and also never changes shape.

But its root does not stop where لال's did.

You'll want to know first — one word

سفید — *safed* — **white**

merī ṭopī safed hai. — “My cap is white.”

Like لال, سفید never changes its ending.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

سفید continues Middle Persian *spēt*, from Old Iranian **spaita-*, from Proto-Indo-Iranian **ćwaytás*, from Proto-Indo-European **kweyt-*, “to shine, white.” That is the **exact same root** behind Sanskrit *śvetá*, “white” — so سفید and Sanskrit's word for white split at the Indo-Iranian fork, one road east into Sanskrit, one road west into Iranian and then Urdu, the same shape as دل and *hṛdaya* two chapters back.

This time a third road leads somewhere new: that same PIE root, through Proto-Germanic, gives English **white** as well. *pūchhnā* and *porsīdan* were cousins by two roads; سفید, *śvetá*, and **white** are cousins by three.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **safed** — white; then *merī ṭopī safed hai*
- *Contrast:* لال — Persian, dead end; سفید — Persian, and the root keeps going
- *Trace it:* **safed** ← Middle Persian ← PIE **kweyt-* → Sanskrit *śvetá* → English **white**
- *Say it:* one root, three roads this time, not two

Before you move on

What does سفید mean? (**White**.) Name its two settled cousins in other languages. (**Sanskrit śvetá; English white**.) Recall *thīk* and how a short Urdu word once bridged to a Hindi cognate — how

is that bridge different from what سفید did? (*thīk*’s bridge was Urdu-to-Hindi, the same modern language pair; سفید’s is a PIE root three languages deep.) How did the earlier take-leave dialogue end? **(With khudā hāfiz, spoken by both voices.)**
 Sources: Wiktionary: سفید, Wiktionary: white.

13.3 ک — “black,” and the first color that agrees

Recall *safed* — white, cousin of Sanskrit *śvetá* and English **white**, three roads from one PIE root. This word is inherited rather than Persian, and it breaks the “never changes” rule the last two colors kept.

You’ll want to know first — one word

ک — *kālā* — black

merā koṭ kālā hai. — “My coat is black.”

merī ṭopī kālī hai. — “My cap is black.”

Grammar Lens: a color that agrees like میرا

ک ends in *l* — and a color ending in *l* changes with the noun it describes, exactly the way **merā/merī** changed for gender back in the family chapter. Masculine stays ک; feminine becomes کالی. لال and *safed* never had to make this choice, because neither one ends in *l*. Watch for it again on the last color of this chapter.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ک is inherited from Sanskrit *kāla*, “black, dark” — so far, the same kind of story as *bhā* or *āñkh*. But ک’s root does not continue into Proto-Indo-European at all. It is usually traced instead to Proto-Dravidian ***kār-**, “black, to be burnt”: Sanskrit itself borrowed this color word from its Dravidian neighbours, long before any of it reached Urdu. Inherited from Sanskrit, yes — but Sanskrit’s own source sits outside the Indo-European family this book has been

tracing.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **kālā** — black, masculine; **kālī** — black, feminine
- *Choose:* **merā koṭ kālā hai** against **merī ṭopī kālī hai**
- *Contrast:* *safed* never changes; **کال** always agrees
- *Name:* **کال**'s root sits outside Indo-European, in Dravidian — unlike every other inherited word so far

Before you move on

What does **کال** mean, and what does it become before a feminine noun? (**Black; kālī.**) Is **کال**'s ultimate root Indo-European? (**No — Proto-Dravidian, borrowed into Sanskrit.**) Which two colors so far never change their ending? (**لال and safed.**) Does *khudā hāfiz* need a verb or an agreement ending to work as a farewell? (**No — speakers use the fixed formula as “goodbye” and nothing more, no conjugation required.**) When choosing **kaise** or **kaisī**, whose gender decides the choice — yours, or the person you're addressing? (**The person you're addressing.**)
Sources: Wiktionary: **کال**.

13.4 نیلا — “blue,” and this book's fourth color closes the set

Recall **کالی/کالا**, the color that agrees, against **لال**, the color that never does. This chapter's last word decides which kind it is, then does something none of the other three managed: it left Urdu again, centuries later, and became an English word.

You'll want to know first — one word

نیلا — *nīlā* — blue

merā koṭ nīlā hai. — “My coat is blue.”

نیلا ends in /, so it agrees exactly like کالا: feminine نیلی.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

نیلا comes from Sanskrit *nīla*, “dark blue.” No further root is documented behind it — an honest dead end backward, unlike کالا’s root, which kept going sideways into Dravidian. But Sanskrit’s related word *nīlī*, “the indigo plant,” did not stop there. It travelled forward: into Persian *nīla*, then Arabic **an-nīl** (“the indigo”), then Portuguese **anil**, and finally into English as **aniline**, the name nineteenth-century chemists gave the dye compound first found in indigo. *safer* reached English through a shared PIE root, inherited by both languages independently. نیلا’s route to English is a completely different shape: one word, borrowed forward through four languages, arriving in English only a couple of centuries ago.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **nīlā** — blue, masculine; **nīlī** — blue, feminine
- *Sort:* agrees — کالا, نیلا; never changes — *lāl*, *safer*
- *Trace it:* **nīlā**’s cousin **nīlī** → Persian → Arabic **an-nīl** → Portuguese **anil** → English **aniline**
- *Say it:* all four colors — *lāl*, *safer*, *kālā*, *nīlā* — with *koṭ* or *ṭopī*

Before you move on

Which two of this chapter’s four colors agree with the noun they describe, and which two never change? (**Agree:** کالا, نیلا. **Never change:** لال, *safer*.) What English word ultimately comes from the same root as نیلا’s cousin **nīlī**? (**Aniline**.) Recall the phrase that closed a first introduction with a pleased response — say it now.

(کرم سے آپ **khushī huī**.) Does Urdu spell *khudā hāfiz* joined, the way Persian does, or spaced? (**Spaced**.) Reading ... نام میرا ... right to left changes which direction — the script’s, or the spoken word order’s? (**Only the script’s**.)
Sources: Wiktionary: نیلا, Etymonline: aniline.

Chapter 14

Four Things You Wear

Modes: ⇄ voice (2) ◉ eyes (2) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a shirt, shoe, cap and coat in Urdu, and sort each word by which direction it was borrowed: into Urdu, out of Urdu into English, or straight from English.

Name قمیض, جوتا, ٹوپی and کوٹ, then sort all four by the direction their loan travelled: Persian and Arabic into Urdu, Urdu out into English, or English straight into Urdu — three directions in one small set of words.

14.1 قمیض — “shirt,” and a word that meets its English cousin in a wardrobe

Recall نیلا’s long trip forward into English **aniline**. This lesson opens a new chapter — four things you wear — and its first word makes an even stranger connection than blue did.

You’ll want to know first — one word

قمیض — *qamīz* — shirt

نیلی قمیض میری ہے۔ — *merī qamīz nīlī hai.* — “My shirt is blue.”

قمیض is feminine — that is why نیلا becomes نیلی here.

The letters in this word

From the right edge: ق, م, ی, ض.

ق *qāf* is a new letter, said with the back of the tongue drawn further back in the throat than ک *kāf* — in relaxed speech many speakers merge the two, but careful and formal pronunciation keeps them apart. ض *zād* is also new: like *zoʿe*, already known from *hāfiz*, it represents the plain **z** sound in Urdu, even though Arabic once told the two letters apart. Urdu keeps both spellings without keeping the sound distinction Arabic makes.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

قمیض is borrowed from Classical Persian *qamīs*, from Arabic **qamīṣ**, probably from Latin **camisia**, from Proto-West Germanic ***hamiþi**, from Proto-Indo-European ***kam-**, “cover, clothes.” That same Latin **camisia** also gives French **chemise**, borrowed straight into English as **chemise**. Two roads out of one Late Latin word: one east through Arabic and Persian into Urdu, one north through French into English — and both landed, centuries later, meaning a piece of clothing worn on the upper body.

Your turn

- Say it: **qamīz** — shirt; then **merī qamīz nīlī hai**
- Name: ق and ض, the two new letters, and what each is close to — ک and *zoʿe*
- Connect: **qamīz** ← Latin **camisia** → English **chemise**, two roads, one Late Latin source
- Say it: قمیض نیلی — a blue shirt

Before you move on

What does قمیض mean, and is it masculine or feminine? (Shirt; feminine.) Which English word probably shares قمیض’s Latin

source? (**Chemise**.) What does ہے؟ کیا نام کا آپ ask, and which word is fixed there regardless of who is asked? (“**What is your name?**”; کا, in this frame.) Name the two new letters in this word and one letter each is close to. (ق, close to ک; ض, close to zoʿe.)

Sources: Wiktionary: قیض, Wiktionary: chemise.

14.2 جوتا — “shoe,” a cousin of yoke, and a cousin of yoga too

Recall *gamāz* and its long-shot cousin English **chemise**. This word’s English cousin is even closer, and its Sanskrit cousin is a word you likely already know.

You’ll want to know first — one word

جوتا — *jūtā* — shoe

ہے۔ کالا جوتا میرا — *merā jūtā kālā hai.* — “My shoe is black.”

جوتا is masculine — that is why کالا stays काल here rather than becoming काली.

The letters in this word

From the right edge: ا, ت, و, ج.

ت *te* is new, and it shares its base shape with *ṭe*, already known from *thik*: the same scoop, but त carries two dots above where *ṭe* carries a small raised loop instead. Two dots make it plain dental *t*; the loop makes it the retroflex *ṭ* the tongue curls back for.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

jūtā continues Sauraseni Prakrit *jutta*, “joined,” from Sanskrit *yukta*, “joined, yoked,” from Proto-Indo-European ***yewg-**, “to yoke.” That root gives English **yoke** directly, the wooden bar that joins two oxen. It also gives Sanskrit its own word **yoga** — literally “a joining, a

yoking” — the same root, kept inside one language this time rather than split across two. جوتا keeps the oldest, plainest sense: a thing joined onto the foot.

Your turn

- Say it: **jūtā** — shoe; then **merā jūtā kālā hai**
- Contrast: ٲ, two dots, plain *t*; ٲe, raised loop, retroflex ٲ
- Connect: **jūtā** ← *yukta* ← PIE **yewg-* → English **yoke**, and → Sanskrit’s own **yoga**
- Say it: *nālī qamīz* and جوتا کال together

Before you move on

What does جوتا mean, and is it masculine or feminine? (**Shoe; masculine.**) Name جوتا’s two English-family cousins. (**Yoke, and Sanskrit’s own yoga.**) What marks ٲ apart from the already-known ٲe? (**Two dots above, instead of a raised loop.**) When asking how someone is, does **kaise/kaisī** agree with your own gender or the gender of the person you’re asking? (**The person you’re asking.**) Recall ٲhīk’s Hindi bridge — does it come before or after you can already read the Urdu form yourself? (**After.**) What line closes the take-leave dialogue this book opened early on? (**khudā hāfiz, spoken by both voices.**) Sources: Wiktionary: جوتا, Wiktionary: yukta.

14.3 ٲوپی — “cap,” a dead end behind it, a loan ahead of it

Recall *jūtā*, cousin of English **yoke** and Sanskrit **yoga**. This word has no such cousin behind it — but it made one of its own, going the other direction.

You’ll want to know first — one word

ٲوپی — ٲopī — **cap, hat**

merī ṭopī safed hai. — “My cap is white.”

ٹوپی is feminine, like روٹی and قامیز.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ٹوپی is inherited from Sauraseni Prakrit *ṭopiā*, “helmet,” related to Sanskrit *ṭopikā*. No further root is documented behind that — another honest dead end, like روٹی and کان.

But ٹوپی did something those two never did: it left Urdu and Hindi and became an English word. **Topee**, first recorded in English between 1825 and 1835, is borrowed directly from Hindi *ṭopī*, “hat” — the lightweight sun hat worn across British India. نیلا’s cousin *nīlī* took four languages and a chemistry lab to become English *aniline*. ٹوپی walked straight into English as itself.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **ṭopī** — cap; then **merī ṭopī safed hai**
- *Name:* ٹوپی’s own root stops at Prakrit — a dead end, like روٹی
- *Connect:* **ṭopī** → English **topee**, borrowed directly, no intermediate language
- *Say it:* *kālā jūtā* and *safed ṭopī* together
- *Recall:* say *kān*

Before you move on

What does ٹوپی mean, and is it masculine or feminine? (**Cap/hat; feminine.**) Does ٹوپی have a documented root before Prakrit? (**No — a dead end.**) What English word borrows ٹوپی directly, and roughly when? (**Topee, 1825–35.**) Recall the frame that put *ṭhīk* inside a full sentence — say it now with میں. (ہوں – *ṭhīk* میں) Does *khudā hāfiz* need a conjugated verb to work as a farewell? (**No — it’s used as a fixed formula, no agreement ending required.**)

Sources: Wiktionary: ٹوپي, Dictionary.com: topee.

14.4 کوٹ — “coat,” and every direction a loan can travel

Recall this chapter’s three words: *qamīz*, borrowed from Arabic through Persian; *jūtā*, inherited all the way from Proto-Indo-European; ٹوپي, borrowed *out* of Urdu into English as *topee*. This chapter’s last word takes the shortest road of all.

You’ll want to know first — one word

کوٹ — *koṭ* — coat

ہے۔ نیلا کوٹ میرا — *merā koṭ nīlā hai.* — “My coat is blue.”

کوٹ is masculine.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

کوٹ is borrowed directly from English **coat** — a modern loan, one generation old rather than a thousand years. It happens to look

identical to an older, unrelated کوٹ meaning “fort,” inherited from Sanskrit *kōṭṭa* — the two are homographs, not cousins, and the spelling gives no warning either way.

This book has named two layers before now: the inherited Indo-Aryan core, and the Persian-Arabic literary layer borrowed centuries ago.

کوٹ is the first clear example of a **third** layer — everyday English loans, arriving through more recent contact. And this chapter has now shown every direction a loanword can travel in one small set of four: Persian and Arabic *into* Urdu (*qamīz*), Urdu straight *out* into English (ٹوپي), and English straight *into* Urdu (کوٹ).

Your turn

- *Say it:* **koṭ** — coat; then **merā koṭ nīlā hai**
- *Name:* three layers now — inherited, Persian-Arabic, and modern English
- *Sort:* *qamīz* in, *ٹوپی* out, *کوٹ* in — three loans, three directions
- *Say it:* all four clothing words — *qamīz*, *jūtā*, *ṭopī*, *koṭ* — each with a color from the earlier chapter

Before you move on

What does *کوٹ* mean, and where does it come from? (**Coat; borrowed directly from English.**) Which of this chapter's four words was borrowed *out of* Urdu rather than into it? (*ٹوپی*, **into English as topee.**) Recall the farewell that closes almost any Urdu conversation — say it now. (*khudā hāfīz.*) What does the standard reply to the wellbeing question say about the speaker? (*تھیک میں* ***thīk***

شکریہ ہوں, — “I am fine, thank you.”)

Sources: Wiktionary: *کوٹ*.

Chapter 15

Rain, Sun, Wind, Heat, Cold

Modes: ⇐ voice (4) 👁 eyes (1) ⇐ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name rain, sunshine, wind, heat and cold in Urdu, and tell which of these words' roots reach back to a documented ancestor and which stop at an honest dead end.

Say all five weather words in one breath and sort each by how far its root reaches: two Persian dead ends, one inherited dead end, one loan of a loan, and گرمی's own root reaching all the way to Greek thermós — the same two-roads shape دل showed on the body's most-named part.

15.1 بارش — “rain,” and why you’d wear the last chapter’s coat

Recall *koṭ*, the modern English loan that closed the last chapter. This chapter gives you a reason to wear it: four words for weather, the small talk that follows almost any “how are you.”

You’ll want to know first — one word

بارش — *bārish* — rain

ہے۔ رہی ہو بارش — *bārish ho rahī hai*. — “It’s raining.”

بارش is feminine.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

بارش is borrowed from Classical Persian **bāriš**, itself built from **bār**, “load, downpour,” plus the ending **-eš** that turns a verb or noun stem into an action noun. No further Proto-Indo-European root is documented behind that Persian base — an honest dead end, the same shape as لال’s.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **bārish** — rain; then **bārish ho rahī hai**
- *Name:* بارش’s two Persian parts — **bār** plus the **-eš** ending
- *Connect:* بارش’s dead end is the same shape as لال’s — Persian, and no further
- *Say it:* *āj bārish hai, is liye merā koṭ chāhiye.* — “Today there’s rain, so I need my coat.”
- *Recall:* say *āñkh*

Before you move on

What does بارش mean, and is it masculine or feminine? (**Rain; feminine.**) What two Persian pieces build the word? (**bār, “load/downpour,” plus the -eš ending.**) Recall the three respect levels a single Urdu word for “you” once had to distinguish — name them. (**āp, tum, tū.**) Which letter in **hāfiz** carries the *f* sound? (*fe.*)
Sources: Wiktionary: بارش.

15.2 دھوپ — “sunshine,” rain’s opposite and its etymological twin

Recall *bārish* — rain, Persian, and a dead end. This word means the opposite in the sky, and reaches a dead end from the other side of the book’s two layers.

You'll want to know first — one word

دھوپ — *dhūp* — sunshine

āj dhūp hai. — “There’s sunshine today.”

دھوپ is feminine.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

دھوپ is inherited from Ashokan Prakrit ***dhuppā**, “sunshine.” No further root is documented behind that. *bārish* hit its dead end on the Persian side; دھوپ hits the same kind of honest wall on the inherited side — the same shape کان and *roṭī* already showed, not every inherited word traces back to a tidy Indo-European root.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **dhūp** — sunshine; then **āj dhūp hai**
- *Contrast:* *bārish*, Persian dead end; دھوپ, inherited dead end — opposite weather, same kind of etymological wall
- *Name:* two other inherited dead ends already met — کان and *roṭī*
- *Say it:* *āj bārish hai yā dhūp?* — “Is it rain today, or sunshine?”
- *Recall:* read منہ

Before you move on

What does دھوپ mean, and is it masculine or feminine?

(**Sunshine; feminine.**) Is دھوپ’s root documented past Prakrit?

(**No — a dead end.**) Recall whether *khudā hāfiz* is written as one word or two in Urdu spelling. (**Two, spaced, unlike Persian’s**

joined form.) What does آنکھ mean? (**Eye.**)

Sources: Wiktionary: دھوپ.

15.3 ہوا — “wind,” a loan carried twice rather than split once

Recall *dhūp* — sunshine, an inherited dead end. This word moves with the sunshine and the rain both, and its history takes a shape this book has not shown yet: not two roads from one root, but one word handed across two borrowings in a row.

You’ll want to know first — one word

ہوا — *hawā* — air, wind

āj hawā chal rahī hai. — “There’s wind blowing today.”

ہوا is feminine.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ہوا is borrowed from Classical Persian *hawā* — but Persian did not invent it either. Persian itself borrowed the word from Arabic هَوَا *hawā*. *khudā*, back in the take-leave chapter, came into Urdu directly from Persian, inherited within Iranian the whole way. *dil* and *safer* each split from one PIE root into two independent roads, Iranian and Indo-Aryan. ہوا is a different shape again: a single word passed hand to hand, Arabic to Persian, Persian to Urdu — a loan of a loan, not a shared inheritance at all.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **hawā** — wind; then **āj hawā chal rahī hai**
- *Name:* three shapes a word’s history can take — one root split two ways (*dil*), a word carried straight through one language (*khudā*), or borrowed twice in a row (ہوا)
- *Say it:* *bārish*, *dhūp*, *aur hawā* — rain, sunshine, and wind
- *Connect:* ہوا ← Persian ← Arabic **hawā**, a loan of a loan
- *Recall:* say *dil*

Before you move on

What does **ہوا** mean, and is it masculine or feminine? (**Air, wind; feminine.**) How is **ہوا**'s history different from *dil*'s? (**Dil split from one root into two roads; ہوا is one word borrowed twice in a row.**) Name your sister and your friend in Urdu. (*bahan; dost.*)
Sources: Wiktionary: **ہوا**.

15.4 گرمی — “heat,” a secure cousin and a disputed one

Recall **ہوا** — wind, a loan of a loan. This word is Persian too, but its root behaves like *dil*'s and *safed*'s: it keeps going back to a shared PIE root, with a genuine cousin waiting on the other side — though this time the cousin needs a careful claim, not a confident one.

You'll want to know first — one word

گرمی — *garmī* — heat

āj bahut garmī hai. — “It’s very hot today.”

گرمی is feminine.

The letters in this word

From the right edge: **گ, ر, م, ی**.

گ *gāf* is new: it is **ک** *kāf*, already known, with one extra stroke laid across the top — the same dot-count logic that separated *be* from **پ**, except this time the letter gains a stroke rather than a dot.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

گرمی continues Middle Persian *garmīh*, from Proto-Iranian ***garmáh**, from Proto-Indo-Iranian ***g^harmás**, from Proto-Indo-European ***g^{wh}er-**, “warm.” That root securely gives Greek **thermós**, “hot” — the source of English **thermal** and **thermometer**. English **warm** is often mentioned beside it, but dictionaries only call **warm** a “distant doublet” of *thermós*: a proposed relative, not a settled one, with a separate and more likely Germanic root offered as **warm**’s real source.

گرمی’s certain family is Greek’s, not English’s plainest weather word.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **garmī** — heat; then **āj bahut garmī hai**
- *Name:* گرمی’s relation to گرم — one extra stroke, not a dot
- *Sort:* secure cousin — Greek **thermós**; disputed cousin — English **warm**
- *Say it:* *bārish*, *dhūp*, *hawā*, *garmī* — all four weather words so far

Before you move on

What does گرمی mean, and is it masculine or feminine? (**Heat; feminine.**) Which English word is گرمی’s secure cousin, and which is only disputed? (**Secure: thermal/thermometer, via Greek thermós. Disputed: warm.**) Name your family in Urdu. (**khāndān.**) What does منہ mean? (**Mouth.**)

Sources: Wiktionary: گرمی, Wiktionary: warm.

15.5 سردی — “cold,” and one ending that ties this whole book’s weather and warmth together

Recall *garmī* — heat, with a secure cousin in Greek **thermós** and only a disputed one in English **warm**. This chapter’s last

word is its exact opposite, in meaning and in how far its own root travels.

You'll want to know first — one word

سردی — *sardī* — cold

āj bahut sardī hai. — “It’s very cold today.”

سردی is feminine, exactly like *garmī*.

Grammar Lens: one ending, two weather words

garmī and سردی are built the same way: the plain adjective — *garm* “hot,” سرد *sard* “cold” — plus the ending ی that turns it into a noun naming the weather itself. Neither word is a one-off; the ending is a small, reusable tool, the same kind of thing -ن was for verbs many chapters back.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

سردی is borrowed from Classical Persian *sardī*, from *sard*, “cold.” No further root is documented for that Persian base — a dead end, the same shape as لال’s and *bārish*’s, and the mirror image of *garmī*, whose root reaches all the way to Greek **thermós**.

Five weather words, every shape this book’s etymology has found: *bārish* and سردی, Persian dead ends; *dhūp*, an inherited dead end; ہوا, a loan of a loan; *garmī*, a root reaching a real if disputed cousin — the same two-roads shape دل showed on the body’s most-named part.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **sardī** — cold; then **āj bahut sardī hai**
- *Contrast:* *garmī*, a root reaching Greek; سردی, a Persian dead end
- *Say it:* all four weather words in one breath — **bārish, dhūp, ہوا, garmī, سردی**
- *Recall:* دل’s two roads from one PIE root, and how *garmī*’s own root follows the same shape

Before you move on

What does سردی mean? (**Cold.**) Does its root reach as far as *garmī*'s? (**No — a Persian dead end.**) Which letter in *bhā̄* marks the glide between two vowels? (**hamza-ye, ye with hamza.**) Which two face words share the same three letters reversed? (کأن and ناک.) What job does plain ن do in *ānkh* and منه? (**Marks the vowel before it as nasal.**) What PIE root ties دل to Sanskrit *hṛdaya*? (***kērd-**, split at the Indo-Iranian fork.)
 Sources: Wiktionary: سردی.

Chapter 16

Eight Words, Read Rather Than Recognised

Modes: 👁 eyes (1) ⇌ Hands-free start: all 1 lesson.

By the end of this chapter: I can read salam, kya, kan, nak, lal, kala, nila and lena letter by letter from the right rather than from the romanization, and explain why Urdu leaves its short vowels unwritten.

Eight words the book had only ever given by ear, read letter by letter from the right – including kan and nak, the same three letters in different orders, which is the proof that the reader is decoding rather than recognising. Every letter the reading needs was taught back in chapters one to five.

16.1 Practice — eight words you already knew, now read

Write the seven letters this reading needs — ک، م، س، ل، ا، — in a row, right to left, naming each as you go, and let the line fall as it travels.

Script — the words come back

Nothing new is taught here. Every word below was already given to you to say, and every letter in it is one you can now write.

Read each from the right, naming its letters before you say it:

سلام

کیا

کان

ناک

لال

کالا

نیلا

لینا

salām — kyā — kān — nāk — lāl — kālā — nīlā — lenā.

Eight words from seven letters. Two of them are worth a second look:

کان *kān* “ear” and ناک *nāk* “nose” use the **same three letters** in different orders, which is the clearest possible proof that you are reading rather than recognising a picture.

Why it’s said this way

Count the letters in کیا and count the sounds in *kyā*.

Urdu writes its long vowels and leaves the short ones off the page. The reader supplies them. That is why *salām* has a vowel between the s and the l that nothing on the page records.

This has a consequence worth accepting now rather than discovering later: **you cannot reliably sound out an Urdu word you have never heard.** Reading and listening have to grow together here, more tightly than in a language that spells every vowel — which is exactly why this book put every one of these words in your ear, chapters before it asked you to read one.

What you’ve built this chapter

Seven letters you have been carrying since chapter five, and three ideas that outlast them:

- **the page runs right to left**, and in Nastaliq the word also **falls** as it goes, each letter hanging below the last
- **letters join**, changing shape by position — but the change is a **trimming**, and **alif refuses to join leftward**, which is what puts gaps inside a word
- **what is added matters**: nūn’s dot, kāf’s slash, and ye’s bare curve are the identification, not the decoration

Seven of Urdu’s letters. The rest are mostly more of what you did here.

Your turn

- *Read it*: ناک and کان — same three letters, and say which is which
- *Write it*: سلام — and let it break after alif
- *Read it*: لال نیلا کالا — name the letters of each before saying it

Before you move on

Which of your seven letters refuses to join to the left? (/.)

Chapter 17

The Sentence Learns to End

Modes: ⇐ voice (4) 👁 eyes (3) ⇐ Hands-free start: first 3 of 7 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can read yih, kaam, kahan, maan and the copula hai off the page rather than from the romanization, write mera naam ... hai from dictation, and put gol he, bari ye and nun ghunna back to work in words I had only heard.

The copula hai comes off the page, and with it every sentence the reader already knew how to end, including mera naam ... hai, the first sentence the book ever gave them – built from three letters learned eleven chapters earlier and returned to here.

17.1 ٺ — “this,” and the letter you are owed

Read these off the page, naming the letters from the right before you say each word:

کان

ناک

kān — ear. nāk — nose. Seven letters bought you those.

You’ll want to know first — one word

ٺ — yih — this

Point at something within reach and name it:

کان یہ — *yih kān* — “this ear”

ناک یہ — *yih nāk* — “this nose”

Two letters, and you can read the first of them: **ی**, the S-curve with no dots. The second is new to your eye, and it will stay new for two more lessons. Say the word now; you will write it shortly.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

یہ points at what is **near** you. Urdu keeps a second word for what is **far**, and the two arrived together: both descend from the Old Indo-Aryan demonstratives that Sanskrit wrote as *iyam* and *asau*. English lost most of that system and kept a thinner **this/that**; Urdu kept the pair intact.

There is a gap in what you can do with یہ so far, and it is worth naming. *yih kān* is “this ear” — a label, not yet a sentence. To say “**this is** an ear” you need the small word *hai* at the end, which you have been saying since you gave your name. You cannot write *hai* yet, because both of its letters are still missing from your hand.

That is what this chapter buys back.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **yih** — this
- *Say it:* **yih kān**, then **yih nāk**, pointing each time
- *Read it:* کان and ناک, naming their letters from the right
- *Say it:* the near word **yih**, and name what it still needs to become a sentence — *hai*
- *Recall:* say *rotī*, then read لال, then say *safed*

Before you move on

Say “this ear.” (**yih kān**.) Which of یہ’s two letters can you already write? (The first one, **ی**.) What small word would turn *yih kān* into a full sentence? (**hai**.)

Sources: Wiktionary: یہ.

17.2 کام — “work,” and a word you can read the moment you meet it

Say the near-pointing word, then point at your own ear and use it. (*yih*; *yih kām*.)

You’ll want to know first — one word

کام — *kām* — work

Now do something you could not do with any word before this one.

Read it off the page. From the right: م, ا, ک.

Every letter in it is already yours, so this word arrives readable on the day you meet it. That is what the seven letters were for.

کام is masculine.

yih kām — “this work” — the near-pointing word is still an ear-word; its second letter reaches your hand next lesson

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

کام is **inherited**, not borrowed: Sanskrit *karman* “act, deed, work” became Prakrit *kamma* and then Urdu *kām*, losing a syllable to a few thousand years of being said out loud.

Then look at what English did with the same word. English did not inherit it — English **borrowed** it, late, out of books, and borrowed it whole: **karma**.

So one Sanskrit word reached two languages by two roads. The road through ordinary Indian speech wore it down to a plain word for the work you have to get done today. The road through scholarship carried it into English untouched and left it meaning cosmic consequence.

Same word. The difference in weight is the difference between being inherited and being borrowed, and you have watched that same fork before, when *pūchhnā* met *pursish*.

A caution worth keeping: Urdu has a **second** *kām*, from Sanskrit *kāma* “desire,” and it is a different word wearing the same clothes. This chapter means the working one.

Your turn

- *Read it:* کام — name the three letters from the right, then say it
- *Say it:* **kām** — work; then **yih kām**
- *Write it:* کام — three letters, right to left, letting the line fall
- *Trace it:* **kām** ← Prakrit *kamma* ← Sanskrit *karman* → borrowed into English as **karma**
- *Recall:* read لاك, then say *nīlā*, then say *qamīz*

Before you move on

Name کام's three letters from the right. (م، ا، ك.) Say “this work.” (**yih kām.**) Which road shortened the word, the inherited one or the borrowed one? (**The inherited one.**)

Sources: Wiktionary: کام.

17.3 کہاں — “where,” and the family it belongs to

Write یہ and say it. Which face is *gol* he wearing there — the opening one, the middle one, or the closing one? (**Closing.**)

You’ll want to know first — one word

کہاں — *kahānī* — **where**

Four letters. Three of them are yours: ك, then ہ wearing its middle face, then ل. The fourth is new, and it carries the nasal hum you can hear at the end of *kahānī* — the same hum that ends *maīnī*, *hūnī* and *nahīnī*. You wrote it back in chapter six: it is *nūn* with the dot taken off.

یہ کہاں؟ — *yih kahānī?* — “this, where?” — pointing and asking at once

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Put the question words you have met beside the new one and read down the right edge:

- کیا — *kyā* — what
- کہاں — *kahāñ* — where
- *kaun* — who
- *kab* — when
- *kaise* — how

Every one of them opens with ک. That shared consonant is not a coincidence and not a tidy invention: it is inherited. All five come from the Old Indo-Aryan interrogative stem *ka-*, and کہاں in particular runs back through Prakrit *kahiñ* to Sanskrit *kasmin*, “in what.”

Now say the English list out loud — *who, what, when, where, how* — and listen for its own shared opening. English marks its questions with **wh**, Latin marks them with **qu** in *quis* and *quid*, and Urdu marks

them with ک. Three marks, one inherited consonant:

Proto-Indo-European ***k^wis**, split three ways by three sound histories.

So a learner meeting کہاں is not memorising an arbitrary shape. They are meeting a relative of the word they already use for the same job.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **kahāñ** — where; then **yih kahāñ?**
- *Say it:* the five k- question words — **kyā, kahāñ, kaun, kab, kaise**
- *Read it:* کیا and کہاں, naming their letters from the right
- *Trace it:* **kahāñ** ← Prakrit *kahiñ* ← Sanskrit *kasmin* ← PIE ***k^wis**
→ English **where**, Latin **quis**
- *Recall:* say *jūtā*

Before you move on

Say “where.” (**kaḥāñ.**) How many of its four letters can you already write? (**Three.**) Name two other members of its k- family. (**kyā, kaun, kab, kaise** — any two.)

Sources: Wiktionary: کہاں.

17.4 Eight letters — read them, hear them, write them back

Say the eight letters you can now write, and say what the newest one does in the middle of a word. (**h**; it splits into **two small loops**.)

The letters in this word

Nothing new here. Ten words, every letter already yours. Read each from the right, naming its letters before you say it.

سلام

کان

ناک

لال

کالا

نیلا

لینا

کام

یہ

ہم

Two of them are new to your eye this chapter: کام *kām* “work” and یہ *yih* “this.” Two more are old friends whose letters you could not have named a chapter ago.

Your turn

Now hide the page. For each word below: look at it, cover it, write it from memory, then uncover and repair whatever came out wrong. Repairing is the part that teaches — do not skip to the next word until you have compared.

- Write it: **ک** — look, cover, write, uncover, repair
- Write it: **کام** — look, cover, write, uncover, repair
- Write it: **کھ** — look, cover, write, uncover, repair
- Say it: **kahāñ**, and name the one letter in it you still cannot form

Your turn — by ear

Now the ear, with the page shut.

- Say it: **yih kām**, **yih nāk**, **yih kām** — pointing each time
- Say it: **kahāñ** — and the four other k- question words
- Say it: **kām** and English **karma**, and which one was inherited
- Listen: for the nasal hum at the end of *kahāñ*, and hum it back

Before you move on

How many letters can you write? (**Eight.**) Which word in this lesson still has a letter you cannot form? (**kahāñ.**) What sound is that letter carrying? (**The nasal hum at the end.**)

17.5 ماں — “mother,” and a sentence you can read whole

Write **ہے** and say it. Then write **ہے ... نام میرا** and say it with your own name in the gap.

You'll want to know first — one word

ماں — *māñ* — **mother**

ماں is feminine, so the possessive takes its feminine form — *merī*, not *merā*, the same choice you already make for *bahan*.

ہے۔ ماں میری یہ — *yih merī māñ hai.* — “This is my mother.”

Read that sentence off the page. Every letter in it is one you can form except the last of ماں, which arrives shortly — and you can hear exactly where it goes, because it is the nasal hum you have been putting on the end of *mañ* and *hūñ* all along.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ماں is **inherited**. It comes down through Prakrit from Sanskrit *mātā*, stem *mātr*, and behind that stands Proto-Indo-European ***méh₂tēr**. The same root gives English **mother**, Latin **mater** (behind *maternal*, *matrix*), Greek **mētēr**, and Persian **mādar**.

Then notice what Urdu did with the Persian one. It took it. *mādar* lives in Urdu too, alongside *māñ* — the borrowed word kept for formal, poetic and respectful use, the inherited word used at home. This is the pairing you already saw when inherited *bhāñ* sat beside borrowed *khāndān*: Urdu rarely replaces a native word with a Persian one. It keeps both and gives them different rooms to stand in.

***méh₂tēr** also earns a caution. Words for mother across the world's languages tend to start with *m*, because *ma* is close to the first sound a baby makes, and that resemblance can arise anywhere without any shared ancestor. The Urdu-to-English link here is not that kind of accident — it is traceable step by step through Sanskrit and Proto-Indo-European. But a resemblance to a *mama* in an unrelated family would be.

Your turn

- Say it: **māñ** — mother; then **merī māñ**
- Read it: ہے۔ ماں میری یہ — name the letters of each word, then say it
- Say it: the family words so far — **māñ**, **bahan**, **bhāñ**, **dost**, **khāndān**

- *Trace it:* **māñ** ← Sanskrit *mātā* ← PIE **méh₂tēr* → English **mother**, Persian **mādar**
- *Say it:* which of *māñ* and *mādar* you would use at home

Before you move on

Say “this is my mother.” (**yih merī māñ hai.**) Why *merī* and not *merā*? (ماں is **feminine**.) Name the English cousin of ماں. (**Mother**.)
Sources: Wiktionary: ماں.

17.6 ہے — the smallest word, in every sentence you own

Write ہے. Two letters: the small loop, then the wide flat sweep.
Say it: **hai**.

The letters in this word

Four sentences. Read each from the right, word by word, and say it before you move on.

ہے۔ ... نام میرا

ہے۔ ماں میری یہ

ہے۔ کام یہ

ہے۔ کالا یہ

merā nām ... hai. — *yih merī māñ hai.* — *yih kām hai.* — *yih kālā hai.*

Look at what sits at the end of every one of them. ہے is where an Urdu sentence lands, in the place English puts *is* in the middle. You have been producing that landing by ear since the very first sentence you learned; from today you can also see it.

Your turn — by ear

Page shut. Point at things around you and land each sentence on *hai*.

- *Say it: yih kām hai* — this is work
- *Say it: yih merī māñ hai* — this is my mother
- *Say it: yih lāl hai*, then *yih kālā hai*
- *Say it: kahāñ?* — and hum the nasal at its end
- *Listen: to hai, haiñ, hūñ* one after another, and say which is yours when you speak about yourself

Your turn

- *Write it: ہے-کام یہ* — three words, right to left
- *Write it: ے* on its own, ten times, until the flat tail stops curling up
- *Say it:* which of *māñ* and *mādar* is inherited, and which is borrowed
- *Say it:* which of *kām* and English *karma* was worn short, and why

Before you move on

Write “this is work.” (ہے-کام یہ) Which two letters make ے? (ہ and ے.) Which of them can end a word and nothing else? (ے.)

17.7 Practice — ten letters, and a sentence that comes off the page

Write the three letters this chapter has been cashing in, and name each one: ہ، ے، ں. You learned all three in chapters five and six.

The letters in this word

Nothing new is taught here. Read each word from the right, naming its letters before you say it:

یہ
 کام
 ماں
 کہاں
 میں
 ہیں
 نہیں
 ہے

Then the sentences:

ہے۔ ... نام میرا
 ہے۔ ماں میری یہ
 ہے۔ کام یہ
 ہے۔ نہیں کام میرا یہ نہیں،

merā nām ... hai. — yih merī mān hai. — yih kām hai. — nahīn, yih merā kām nahīn hai.

That last one is the first thing in this book you can read that argues back.

What you've built this chapter

Three letters, and three ideas that will keep paying:

- **a letter can change face by position** — gol he standing as one loop and sitting in the middle of a word as two, which is the shape most likely to make a reader think a stranger has arrived
- **a letter can belong to one position only** — big ye and nūn ghunna both close a word and turn up nowhere else, so neither

costs you a middle form

- **a letter can be defined by subtraction** — nūn ghunna is nūn with its dot removed, and the removal is what the letter means

And one arithmetic worth doing out loud. Seven letters gave you eight words. Three more gave you ہے, and with it every sentence you already knew how to end.

Your turn

Page covered. Someone says the word, or you say it to yourself from the romanization alone — then write it in Urdu without looking at a model, and only then compare.

Write these out:

- hear *hai*, write ہے, compare
- hear *main*, write میں, compare
- hear *nahīn*, write نہیں, compare
- hear *yih merī mān hai*, write it whole, compare and repair

Before you move on

How many letters can you now write? (**Ten.**) Which English word is کام's borrowed twin? (**Karma.**) Which English question words share کہاں's inherited consonant? (**The wh- family** — *who, what, when, where.*) Which of ماں and mādar would you say at home? (ماں.)

Chapter 18

The Meeting Comes Off the Page

Modes: ⇄ voice (4) 👁 eyes (3) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 7 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can read aam, aasmaan, purana, aap, voh and hun off the page, name a non-joining letter on sight, and write the opening meeting exchange from dictation.

The exchange the book opens with – salam, aap ka naam kya hai, mera naam ... hai, aap kaise hain, main ... hun – is readable and writable end to end for the first time, on letters taught across chapters one to eight.

18.1 آم — “mango,” and the name that did not travel

Write ہے-کام یت and say it. Ten letters are yours.

You’ll want to know first — one word

آم — ām — mango

Two letters. The second is م, which you have written many times. The first looks like the tall stroke you know with a small wave lying across its head, and that wave is doing a real job — it is the next lesson’s whole subject.

آم is masculine.

yih ām hai. — “This is a mango.”

Say that now; you can already write every word in it except the first letter of *ām*, and that letter arrives shortly.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ām is **inherited**: Sanskrit *āmra* became Prakrit *amba* and then Urdu *ām*, the ordinary north Indian name for the fruit for as long as there has been a north Indian name for it.

Now the part worth slowing down for. English calls the fruit **mango**, and a reader who has newly learned *ām* would reasonably guess the two words are relatives. They are not.

mango came by sea. Portuguese traders on the Malabar coast met the fruit under its **Dravidian** name — Tamil and Malayalam *māṅkāy*, “mango fruit” — carried it home as *manga*, and English took it from Portuguese. So the fruit travelled to Europe wearing a southern Indian name while the northern name stayed where it was.

Two unrelated words for one fruit inside one country, and the one that left is not the one you are learning. That is worth holding: a resemblance is evidence of nothing on its own, and here there is not even a resemblance — the relationship people assume is the one that does not exist.

Your turn

- *Say it*: **ām** — mango; then *yih ām hai*
- *Say it*: the food and drink words so far — **ām**, **pānī**, **chāy**, **dūdh**, **roṭī**
- *Trace it*: **ām** ← Prakrit *amba* ← Sanskrit *āmra*
- *Trace it*: English **mango** ← Portuguese *manga* ← Tamil and Malayalam *māṅkāy* — a different road, from a different family
- *Recall*: say *ṭopī*

Before you move on

Say “this is a mango.” (**yih ām hai.**) Which Indian language family gave English its word for the fruit? (**Dravidian** — Tamil and Malayalam.) Which one gave Urdu آم? (**Indo-Aryan**, through Sanskrit.)
Sources: Wiktionary: آم.

18.2 آسمان — “sky,” which used to mean stone

Say “this is a mango.” (*yih ām hai.*) Which family gave English its word for that fruit? (**Dravidian.**)

You’ll want to know first — one word

آسمان — *āsmān* — sky

Six letters, and five of them are already yours: ن, ا, م, س — and the tall stroke that opens it, wearing the same small wave you met on آم. One shape stands between you and reading this word off the page.

آسمان is masculine.

āsmān nīlā hai. — “The sky is blue.”

That sentence reuses a colour you already own and the copula you learned to write back in chapter six.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

آسمان is **borrowed**, from Persian *āsmān* — the same road that brought *khudā*. Inside Iranian it is inherited, running back through Avestan *asman-* to Proto-Indo-Iranian **aśman-* and to Proto-Indo-European ***h₂ékmōn**.

And ***h₂ékmōn** did not mean sky. It meant **stone**.

Follow it sideways and the family is unmistakable: Sanskrit *aśman* “stone,” Greek *ákmōn* “anvil,” Lithuanian *akmuo* “stone.” Through Germanic the standard reconstruction carries the same root into

English as **hammer** — a word that named a stone tool long before anyone made one out of metal. That last step is the mainstream account rather than a settled one; specialists note formal difficulties with it, so hold it as probable rather than proven.

So how does stone become sky? Because the sky was pictured as a **vault of stone** arching overhead, and the word for the material became the word for the thing built of it. When you say *āsmān*, you are calling the sky a stone in a language that stopped noticing centuries ago.

Set that beside *آم* from the lesson before. There, a resemblance people expect turns out to be nothing. Here, a resemblance nobody would expect — *āsmān* and *hammer* — is probably real, on evidence rather than on sound. Neither one can be settled by how the words sound. Only the trail settles it, and sometimes the trail answers “probably” rather than “yes”.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **āsmān** — sky; then *āsmān nīlā hai*
- *Say it:* the weather words so far — **āsmān, bārish, dhūp, hawā, garmī, sardī**
- *Trace it:* **āsmān** ← Persian ← Avestan *asman-* ← PIE **h₂ékmon* “stone” → English **hammer**
- *Say it:* which of *آم* and *آسمان* has a real English cousin, and which has one people wrongly assume

Before you move on

Say “the sky is blue.” (**āsmān nīlā hai.**) Was *آسمان* inherited or borrowed into Urdu? (**Borrowed**, from Persian.) Name its English cousin. (**Hammer.**)

Sources: Wiktionary: *آسمان*.

18.3 پرانا — “old,” and the word behind the Purāṇas

Write آسمان. Two alifs, one wearing the wave and one not — say which is which as you draw them.

You’ll want to know first — one word

پرانا — *purānā* — old

Five letters, and four are yours already: پ, ر, ا, ن. The one that opens it is new to your hand, and it is the next lesson.

پرانا changes its ending to agree with the noun it describes, the way کالا *kālā* and نیلا *nīlā* do:

- پرانا *purānā* with a masculine noun
- پرانی *purānī* with a feminine one

yih kām purānā hai. — “This work is old.”

merī qamīz purānī hai. — “My shirt is old.”

Say each, and notice you are choosing the ending by the noun’s gender without being told which to use — you have made that choice for two chapters of colours already.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

پرانا is **inherited**: Sanskrit *purāṇa*, “ancient, belonging to former times,” built on *purā*, “formerly.” Behind that stands Proto-Indo-European ***per-**, in the sense “forward, before.” That root went everywhere. Greek *pró*, Latin *pro* and *prior*, and in English a whole quiet family: **fore, former, first, before**. Each of them is a way of saying “in front” that turned into a way of saying “earlier” — and پرانا made the same turn, in the same direction, in a different branch.

One more thing this word names. The Sanskrit texts called the **Purāṇas** are this very word, plural: literally “the old ones,” a body of writing whose title is an adjective. When you say *purānā* you are using

the everyday form of a word that also names a library.

Beside $\tilde{A}$, this is the other kind of result. There, a link people expect turns out not to exist. Here, a link nobody expects — *purānā* and English *first* — turns out to hold, all the way down.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **purānā**, then **purānī**, and say what decides the ending
- *Say it:* *yih kām purānā hai*, then *merī gamīz purānī hai*
- *Say it:* the agreeing words you now have — **kālā**, **nīlā**, **purānā**
- *Trace it:* **purānā** ← Sanskrit *purāṇa* ← *purā* ← PIE **per-* → English **fore**, **former**, **first**, **before**

Before you move on

Say “this work is old.” (*yih kām purānā hai*.) What does the name of the Purāṇas mean? (**The old ones.**) Name two English cousins of $\tilde{A}$. (**Fore, former, first, before** — any two.)
Sources: Wiktionary: $\tilde{A}$.

18.4 Eleven letters, and two kinds of answer

Write $\tilde{A}$, then $\tilde{A}$. Say what the wave does and where in a word it belongs. (**Long ā**; at the **start**.)

The letters in this word

Read from the right, naming letters before saying each word:

आ

आस्मान

आना

मा

نہیں

And two sentences, whole:

ہے۔ نیلا آسمان

ہے۔ آم یہ

āsmān nīlā hai. — yih ām hai.

Count what that took. Ten letters carried you to *hai*; one more carried you to the sky.

Your turn

Cover the page. Look, hide, write, uncover, repair.

- Write it: آم — look, cover, write, uncover, repair
- Write it: آسمان — look, cover, write, uncover, repair
- Write it: ہے۔ نیلا آسمان — the whole sentence, then compare
- Say it: *purānā*, and name the one letter in it your hand cannot yet make

Your turn — by ear

Page shut. Three words, three etymologies, and two different verdicts — say which is which out loud.

- Say it: **ām** and English *mango* — related, or only assumed to be?
- Say it: **āsmān** and English *hammer* — related, or only assumed to be?
- Say it: **purānā** and English *first* — related, or only assumed to be?
- Say it: *yih ām purānā hai*, then *merī qamīz purānī hai*
- Listen: for the long ā opening *ām*, *āsmān* and *ānā*, and hold it

The point of putting those three together is that **the sound tells you nothing**. *ām* and *mango* look like a match and are not one. *āsmān* and *hammer* look like nothing at all and are probably cousins. Only the trail decides, and it is allowed to answer “probably”.

Before you move on

How many letters can you write? (**Eleven.**) Write “the sky is blue.”
(ہے۔ نیلا آسمان) Which word in this lesson is still waiting on a
letter? (*purānā.*)

18.5 وہ — “that,” and everyone who is not here

Write آپ. Say where pe’s three dots sit, and who you would
address as *āp*.

You’ll want to know first — one word

وہ — *voh* — **that**; and **he, she, they**

Two letters. The second is **ہ**, closing the word with its round curl. The
first is **و**, which you learned to write in chapter eight.

وہ is the far partner of یہ. One points at what is beside you; the other
points at what is over there:

yih ām hai. — “This is a mango.” (in your hand)

voh ām hai. — “That is a mango.” (on the tree)

And then it does a second job that English splits across four words. The
thing over there does not have to be a thing:

voh merī mān haiñ. — “She is my mother.”

Urdu names the person you are talking **about** with the same word it
uses for the thing you are pointing **at**. Notice the copula in that sentence:
haiñ, not *hai*, because a mother is spoken of with respect, exactly as you
already do when you address someone as *āp*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

یہ and وہ did not arrive separately. They come down together from the
Old Indo-Aryan demonstratives Sanskrit wrote as *iyam* — the near
one — and *asau* — the far one. Urdu inherited a **pair**, and it still runs
the pair the way it inherited it: everything Urdu points at gets sorted

into near or far first, and only then into what it actually is. English does the same sorting with **this** and **that**, and once did it with a third, **yon**, now almost gone. But English uses separate words for the people it talks about — *he, she, they*. Urdu keeps the far pointer doing both jobs, which is fewer words to learn and one more reason context does the work.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- **voh** — that; and point at something across the room
- *yih ām hai*, then *voh ām hai*, pointing differently each time
- *voh merī mān hai* — and say why the copula is *hai*
- the three pointing and person words you now own — **main**, **yih**, **voh**

Before you move on

Which is nearer, **ye** or **wo**? (**ye**.) Say “that is a mango.” (**voh ām hai**.) Why *hai* when you speak about your mother? (**Respect** — the same reason you say *āp*.)

Sources: Wiktionary: **ye**.

18.6 The opening exchange, read off the page

Write **آ**. The wave on the alif, then the boat with three dots under it.

The letters in this word

Here is the exchange you learned in your first hour of Urdu. Every letter in it is now one your own hand can make. Read each line from the right, naming its words, then say it:

سلام

ہے؟ کیا نام کا آپ

ہے۔ ... نام میرا

ہیں؟ کیسے آپ

salām — āp kā nām kyā hai? — merā nām ... hai. — āp kaise haiñ?

Look at the second line. آپ ends with pe wearing its full boat, and ہے and میں are the same gol he under two different endings.

Only the reply *main̄ thīk hūñ* is still out of reach, and by three shapes — one of which arrives next lesson.

Your turn

Cover the page. Look, hide, write, uncover, repair.

Write these out:

- ہے؟ کیا نام کا آپ — look, cover, write the whole question, uncover, repair
- ہے۔ ... نام میرا — with your own name in the gap
- ہیں؟ کیسے آپ — and check both endings against the model

Your turn — by ear

Page shut. Run the whole meeting aloud with an imagined stranger, then a friend.

Say these aloud:

- *salām — āp kā nām kyā hai?* — and answer as yourself
- *āp kaise haiñ?* to a man, then *āp kaisī haiñ?* to a woman
- *yih ām hai*, then *voh ām hai*, and point differently

Before you move on

Read the question aloud from the page. (ہے؟ کیا نام کا آپ) Which reply can you still not write? (*main thīk hūn.*) How many letters do you now have? (Twelve.)

18.7 Practice — thirteen letters, and the meeting comes off the page

Write the three letters this chapter has been cashing in, and name each: آ، پ، و. You learned all three in chapters seven and eight.

The letters in this word

Nothing new is taught here. Read each word from the right, naming its letters first:

آم

آسمان

پرانا

پانی

آپ

وہ

ہوں

کون

Then the whole meeting, whole:

سلام

ہے؟ کیا نام کا آپ

ہے۔ ... نام میرا

ہیں؟ کیسے آپ

ہوں۔ ... میں

ہوں۔ رہا کر کام میں نہیں،

The last line is beyond what you can say yet, and it is there on purpose: every shape in it is one you can name, even where the grammar is still ahead of you. Reading has overtaken speaking for the first time.

What you've built this chapter

Three letters, and three ideas worth more than the letters:

- **a mark can be shorthand for a repetition** — alif madda is two alifs collapsed into one, so it opens a word and appears nowhere else
- **dots outlive shapes** — pe's boat shrinks to a tooth when it joins, its three dots stay, and on a crowded page you count dots rather than hunt curves
- **non-joiners come in a family** — with vā'o beside alif, the gaps inside Urdu words stop being surprises

And the chapter's real argument: پ exists because Arabic has no p and Persian built the letter Urdu now uses. The alphabet was borrowed and then altered, and the alterations are visible if you count dots.

Your turn

Page covered. Hear the word — or say it to yourself from the romanization — then write it in Urdu with no model in front of you, and only then compare.

Write these out:

- hear *āp*, write آپ, compare
- hear *hūn*, write ہوں, compare
- hear *voḥ ām hai*, write it whole, compare and repair
- hear *āp kā nām kyā hai?*, write it whole, compare and repair

Before you move on

How many letters can you now write? (**Thirteen.**) Which of آم/*mango* and آسمان/*hammer* is a real cousin pair? (آسمان and *hammer*.) Why does پ carry three dots? (**Persian invented it** for a sound Arabic lacks.)

Chapter 19

The Word That Was Deferred

Modes: ⇄ voice (4) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say that I do not understand, put **نہیں** in front of any verb this book has taught, turn any statement into a yes-or-no question with **کیا** at the front, and refuse two things at once with **نہ ... نہ**.

*The sentence chapter one explicitly deferred – سمجھتا نہیں میں – is said at last, and the question **ہاں** **جی** and **نہیں** were taught to answer eighteen chapters ago can finally be asked.*

19.1 سمجھتا نہیں میں — the sentence chapter one promised

Chapter one taught **نہیں** and said, in as many words, that its second job — *not*, inside a sentence — would matter once the book had verbs. Fourteen verbs later, here it is.

- *Recall:* the wellbeing reply — *main̄ ṭhīk hūn̄*

You'll want to know: **نہیں** in front of the verb

نہیں سمجھتا میں — *main̄ nahīn samajhtā* — **I do not understand**
(man speaking)

سمجھتی نہیں میں — *main nahīn samajhtī* — the same, a woman speaking

Take the affirmative frame chapter seven built, *main samajhtā hūn*, and put **نہیں** in front of the verb. Nothing else moves, and one thing is allowed to disappear: with **نہیں** in the sentence, the closing **ہوں** is usually dropped in speech. Both *main nahīn samajhtā* and *main nahīn samajhtā hūn* are correct; the shorter one is what people say.

Grammar Lens: where the negator stands

said	means
<i>main samajhtā hūn</i>	I understand
<i>main nahīn samajhtā</i>	I do not understand
<i>main nahīn jāntā</i>	I do not know

نہیں goes **before** the verb, not after it. That is the opposite of Bengali and the same as English, which puts *not* before *understand* as well. The agreement stays on the verb and the negator never changes shape. The three letters of **نہیں** are all yours: **ن**, **ہ**, **ی**, and the dotless **ں** that hums at the end. The verb beside it is not — three of its letters are still ahead of you in the script ladder — so it is printed here in the word this lesson owns and left in romanization everywhere else.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the affirmative first — *main samajhtā hūn*
- *main nahīn samajhtā*
- *main nahīn jāntā* — I do not know
- *main nahīn bōltā* — I do not speak

Before you move on

Where does **نہیں** stand in relation to the verb? (**Before it.**) What

happens to ہوں when the negator arrives? (**It is usually dropped**, and keeping it is not wrong.) And what still marks who is speaking? (**The verb ending** — *-tā* or *-tī*.)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

19.2 ہیں؟ ٹھیک آپ کیا — the question that could not be asked

jī hān and نہیں were the first two words this book taught, and they answer a question. Eighteen chapters have gone by without the book being able to ask it.

- *Recall*: the item before this one — *main nahīn samajhtā*

You'll want to know: کیا at the front

ہیں؟ ٹھیک آپ کیا — *kyā āp ṭhīk haīn?* — are you well?

ہے؟ پانی یہ کیا — *kyā yih pānī hai?* — is this water?

Chapter three taught کیا as *what*. Put it at the **front** of a statement and it stops meaning *what* altogether: it marks the whole sentence as a yes-or-no question, and nothing else in the sentence moves.

Grammar Lens: one word, two jobs, told apart by position

where کیا stands	what it means
in the middle	what
at the front	(yes-or-no)

Position is the whole difference. English cannot do this: it has to move the verb in front of the subject, *you are* becoming *are you*. Urdu adds one word at the edge and leaves the sentence alone. In speech the fronted کیا is often left out and the rise of the voice carries it by itself.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *kyā āp thīk haiñ?* — then answer it *jī hāñ* or *nahīñ*
- *kyā yih pānī hai?*
- the same question without the word, on the voice alone

Before you move on

What tells you whether کیا means *what* or marks a yes-or-no question? (**Where it stands** — front, or inside.) And which two words answer it? (*jī hāñ* and نہیں, from chapter one.)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

19.3 نہ ... نہ ... — neither, nor

نہیں stands in front of a verb. Urdu has a shorter form of the same word that stands in front of a **noun**, and it is almost always doubled.

- *Recall:* the two items before this one — *main nahīñ samajhtā, kyā āp thīk haiñ?*

You'll want to know: نہ ... نہ ...

ہوا نہ پانی، نہ — *na pānī, na hawā* — **neither water nor air**.

One نہ in front of each thing refused. Strip the نہیں off -یں and what is left is نہ, the older and shorter negator: the two are the same word at different stages of wear, which is why the doubled refusal sounds like the plain one cut short.

Grammar Lens: three negators, told apart by what follows them

form	stands before	example
نہیں	a verb	<i>maiñ nahĩñ samajhtā</i>
نہیں	alone	the complete answer <i>no</i>
نہ ... نہ	each refused noun	<i>na pāñī, na hawā</i>

Urdu has a third, *mat*, which belongs in front of a command — and this book has no command yet, so it waits. Its second letter has no lesson in the script ladder either, which is a second reason to leave it where it is.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *na pāñī, na hawā*
- *na chāy, na dūdh* — neither tea nor milk
- *na garmī, na sardī* — neither heat nor cold
- the refusal as a question — *kyā pāñī hai? ... nahĩñ*

Before you move on

Which negator stands in front of a verb, and which in front of a noun? (نہیں before a verb; نہ before each refused noun.) How many نہ does *neither ... nor* need? (**Two, one for each thing.**) And what is نہ to نہیں? (**The same word, shorter and older.**)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

19.4 Asking, and being able to say no

Three items landed in this chapter, and between them they let the book ask a question and let you refuse it. Name all three, and say what each one stands in front of.

Your turn

- *Say it:* the sentence chapter one deferred — *main nahīn samajhtā*
- *Say it:* a question the book can now ask — *kyā āp thīk haiñ?*
- *Say it:* both answers — *jī hāñ ... nahīn*
- *Say it:* a double refusal — *na pānī, na hawā*
- *Say it:* a negative asked back, which is how you check something you suspect — *kyā āp nahīn samajhte?*
- *Recall:* the reply from chapter four, then deny it — *main thīk hūñ ... main thīk nahīn hūñ*

Before you move on

Which word turns a statement into a yes-or-no question, and where does it go? (کیا, at the **front**.) Which word denies a verb, and where does it go? (نہیں, **before** the verb.) And what is the shorter form of that word for? (**Refusing a noun**, doubled — *na ... na*.)

Chapter 20

Two Things at Once

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can put two nouns in one sentence with اور, offer a choice with یا, turn a clause against the one before it with لیکن, and agree with somebody using ہے ٹھیک.

The chapter-15 practice line bārish, dhūp, aur hawā – which asked the learner to say a word the book had never taught – is said with every word owned, then re-joined as a choice and refused twice over.

20.1 اور (aur) — and

The last chapter gave you a way to refuse two things at once. There has never been a way to accept two things at once.

- Recall: the double refusal — na pānī, na hawā

You'll want to know: اور

ہوا اور پانی — pānī aur hawā — **water and air.**

bārish aur hawā, rain and wind, is the same shape: the first noun's letters are still ahead of you in the script ladder, so it is printed in romanization.

Chapter fifteen already asked you to say this. Its practice line reads bārish, dhūp, aur hawā — and the book had never taught اور, so the learner was told to say a word they had never met and could not read. This lesson pays that back.

Three letters, all of them yours: ا, و, ر. The middle one is the *vāʾo* of chapter eight, doing its vowel job.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

اور is inherited, not borrowed — Sanskrit *aparam*, “the other one, the further one,” worn through Prakrit into one syllable. The counting sense is still there when the word stands alone in front of a noun: اور پانی means *more water*, not *and water*. Bengali’s *ār* is the same word by the same road, which is the sort of relative Urdu’s Persian layer usually hides.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *bārish aur hawā*
- the chapter-fifteen line, this time knowing every word — *bārish, dhūp, aur hawā*
- *pānī aur dūdh* — water and milk
- *aur pānī* — and hear it mean *more water*

Before you move on

What did اور mean before it meant *and*? (**More, the other one** — Sanskrit *aparam*.) What does it mean standing alone before a noun? (**More.**) And which word refuses the two things اور joins? (ر, doubled.)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

20.2 یا (yā) — or

اور gives somebody both things. Nothing in this book has ever made anybody choose.

- *Recall:* the joiner from the lesson before — *aur*

You'll want to know: یا

ہوا یا پانی — *pānī yā hawā* — **water or air**.

And with a noun whose letters are still ahead of you, in romanization: *pānī yā dūdh*, **water or milk**.

Two letters — ی and ا — and it sits exactly where اور sits, between the two things. Nothing else in the sentence changes.

The word hides inside one you already read every day: کیا, *what*, ends in these same two letters, and every raw search for یا in the first eighteen chapters of this book turned up that tail and nothing else. The word was everywhere on the page and nowhere in the book.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

یا is Persian, taken whole. Urdu's two ordinary coordinators come from opposite directions — اور inherited from Sanskrit through Prakrit, یا borrowed from Persian — and a learner uses them in the same breath without noticing the seam. That seam is the language.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *pānī yā dūdh*
- the same pair joined instead of split — *pānī aur dūdh*
- *chāy yā dūdh* — tea or milk
- it as an offer — *kyā āp chāy yā dūdh lenge?*

Before you move on

Which joiner adds and which one chooses? (اور adds; یا chooses.)
Which of the two is inherited and which borrowed? (اور inherited from Sanskrit; یا borrowed from Persian.) And which word already
on every page ends in the same two letters? (کیا.)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

20.3 لیکن (lekin) — but

Two joiners so far. One adds, one chooses, and neither of them can disagree with anything.

- *Recall:* the two items before this one — *aur, yā*

You'll want to know: لیکن

پانی نہیں ہوا لیکن ہے، — *pānī hai, lekin hawā nahīn* — **there is water, but no air.**

And with the two clauses chapters four and nineteen taught, whose verbs carry letters still ahead of you in the script ladder: *main̄ thīk hūn, lekin main̄ nahīn samajhtā* — **I am well, but I do not understand.**

اور puts two clauses on the same side. لیکن turns the second one against the first. It stands at the head of the clause it turns, after a comma in writing and after a small drop of the voice in speech.

Four letters, and every one of them is already yours: ن، ک، ی، ل.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

لیکن is Arabic *lākin*, and there is a negator inside it: Arabic *lā*, “not,” plus an old particle. English did the same thing by a different road — **but** is Old English *be-ūtan*, “be **out**, except.” Two unrelated languages built their adversative out of a word for leaving something aside. Urdu has a second word for *but*, *magar*, which is Persian and slightly more literary. Its middle letter has no lesson in the script ladder yet, so it is named here and left in romanization; لیکن is the one to reach for anyway.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *main̄ thīk hūn, lekin main̄ nahīn samajhtā*

- the same two clauses with the other joiner — *maiñ ṭhīk hūñ aur maiñ samajhtā hūñ*
- and hear what changed — the second clause no longer argues
- *pāñī hai, lekin chāy nahīñ* — there is water, but no tea

Before you move on

What is buried inside لیکن? (Arabic *lā*, “not”.) Which English word was built the same way? (**But**, from *be-ūtan*, “be out.”) And

what does لیکن do that اور cannot? (**Turn the second clause against the first.**)

Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

20.4 ہے ٹھیک — all right

ٹھیک has meant *fine* since chapter four, and only ever about your health. It has a second life, and it needs one more word.

- *Recall*: the joiner from the lesson before — *lekin*

You’ll want to know: ہے ٹھیک

ہے ٹھیک — *ṭhīk hai* — all right; that’s right; agreed.

لیکن ہے، ٹھیک ... — *ṭhīk hai, lekin ...* — all right, but ...

The copula of chapter two, ہے, does all the work. *ṭhīk hai* is what a speaker says to accept a plan, to agree with a claim, and to end a phone call — one phrase covering everything English spreads across *okay*, *fine*, *right* and *deal*.

Grammar Lens: agreeing, and taking it back

said	means
<i>thīk hai</i>	agreed
<i>thīk nahīn hai</i>	that is not right
<i>thīk hai, lekin ...</i>	agreed as far as it goes

The middle row is the negator of the last chapter dropped in front of the copula, which is exactly where chapter nineteen said it goes. The third row is the shape almost every real disagreement takes: accept first, then turn.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *thīk hai*
- *thīk nahīn hai*
- the half-agreement — *thīk hai, lekin ...*
- the one-word answers it replaces — *jī hān ... nahīn*

Before you move on

What word does  need to become an agreement? (ہے, the copula from chapter two.) How do you disagree with it? (Put  **in front of the copula** — *thīk nahīn hai*.) And what does *thīk hai, lekin ...* do that a flat *nahīn* does not? (**Accepts first, and then turns.**)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

20.5 Two things at once

Three joiners landed in this chapter. Name them, and say for each one whether it adds, chooses, or turns.

Your turn

- *Say it*: the chapter-fifteen line, whole — *bārish, dhūp, aur hawā*
- *Say it*: the same three as a choice — *bārish yā dhūp*
- *Say it*: all three refused — *na bārish, na dhūp, na hawā*
- *Say it*: the half-agreement — *thīk hai, lekin ...*
- *Recall*: five lessons back, the question this book learned to ask — *kyā āp thīk hain?*

Your turn: the distant band — every noun in the book, two at a time

This is what the chapter actually bought. Chapters eight to eighteen taught thirty-odd nouns that could only ever be named one at a time, and every one of them is now combinable. Go back and take them two at a time, cold, from memory — most of these were taught between twenty and sixty lessons ago and have not been asked for since.

Say these aloud:

- two foods joined, then the same two as a choice — *pānī aur chāy ... dūdh yā roṭī*
- two colours, and mind the agreement — *kālā aur nīlā, lāl aur safed*
- two garments, then two refused — *qamīz aur jūtā ... na ṭopī, na koṭ*
- two people, then the word that holds them all — *bhāī aur bahan ... dost aur khāndān*
- the face, four parts at once — *kān, nāk, ānkh aur munh*
- the one that is not on the face — *dil*
- heat against cold, joined and then chosen — *garmī aur sardī ... garmī yā sardī*
- three from chapter eighteen — *ām, āsmān aur purānā*

Before you move on

Which of this chapter's joiners is inherited and which two are borrowed? (اور inherited; یا from Persian, لیکن from Arabic.) Which one can disagree? (لیکن.) And what turns any of these sentences into a question? (کیا at the front, and nothing else moved.)

Chapter 21

Why, and What For

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 👁️ eyes (1) 🖱️ Hands-free start: first 2 of 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can ask why and who, answer why with a cause using کیونکہ or with a purpose using لیے کے, and report what I think with کہ.

Urdu's k- question family is completed – کیا, کہاں, کیوں, کون – and the reader answers کیوں two different ways, with a cause and with a purpose, then reports an opinion over سوچنا from chapter seven.

21.1 کیوں (kyūn) — why

Chapter seventeen gathered Urdu's k- question words and named them a family. One member was left out, and it is the one that asks for a reason.

- *Recall:* the joiner two lessons back, the one that turns — *lekin*

You'll want to know: کیوں

کیوں؟ — *kyūn?* — why?

آپ کیوں نہیں آئے؟ — *āp kyūn nahīn āye?* — **why did you not come?**

Every letter is one you own: ک، ی، و، and the humming ں of chapter six. It stands where کہاں stands — in front of the verb, not at the front of the sentence, which is where English puts *why*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

word	asks
کیا	what
کہاں	where
کیوں	why

One stem, three questions. It is Sanskrit **ka-**, the interrogative stem behind Latin *quis* and *quid*, and behind English **who**, **what**, **where** and **why** — the *wh-* of English and the *k-* of Urdu are the same ancient consonant, moved apart by one sound change.

کیوں on its own, said flatly, is a complete question, and it is what a child says twenty times a day in either language.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *kyūn?* — on its own
- the three k- words in a row — *kyā*, *kahān*, *kyūn*
- *āp kyūn nahīn āye?* — why did you not come?

Before you move on

Which stem do کیا، کہاں and کیوں share? (**Sanskrit ka-**, the interrogative stem.) Which English consonant answers Urdu's **k-**?
(The *wh-* of *who*, *what*, *where*, *why*.) And where does کیوں stand in

the sentence? (**In front of the verb**, not at the front.)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

21.2 کون (kaun) — who

The chapter-eight writing lesson used a three-letter word to practise the letter و and glossed it in passing. It never became a word you own.

- *Recall*: the question word from the lesson before — *kyūn*

You'll want to know: کون

یہ کون ہے؟ — *yih kaun hai?* — **who is this?**

کون؟ — *kaun?* — **who?**

Three letters, all long since taught: ک، و، ن. The و is the same letter chapter eight taught as a vowel, and this word is where you first met it without being told what the word meant.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

کون is the fourth of the **k-** family, from Sanskrit *kaḥ punaḥ*, “who then,” worn to a syllable. It is the direct cousin of English **who** — the ancient word began with a *k*-sound, and English wrote it *hw-* and then *wh-* while keeping the sound, which is why *who* still starts with the breath the letter *w* does not say.

Now the family is whole: کیا what, کہاں where, کیوں why, کون who. Four questions and one stem, and a reader who hears the **k-** knows a question is coming before the sentence ends.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *kaun?* — on its own
- *yih kaun hai?*
- and answer it — *yih merī māñ hai*
- the whole family — *kyā, kahāñ, kyūñ, kaun*

Before you move on

How many members does the **k-** family now have in this book, and what are they? (**Four** — *kyā, kahāñ, kyūñ, kaun*.) Which English word is کون's direct cousin? (**Who**.) And which letter in the middle of it did chapter eight teach? (و.)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

21.3 کیونکہ (kyūñki) — because

The question is now askable. The answer is not: nothing in this book can put a reason after a claim.

- *Recall*: the two items before this one — *kyūñ, kaun*

You'll want to know: کیونکہ

پانی کیونکہ ہے نہیں پانی ... — *pāñī nahīñ hai kyūñki ...* — **there is no water, because ...**

And over the wellbeing frame of chapter four, whose adjective carries two letters still ahead of you in the script ladder: *main̄ th̄ik nahīñ hūñ kyūñki ...*, **I am not well, because ...**

Look at the word and the last lesson is inside it: کیوں plus کہ. Urdu builds *because* by welding *why* to *that* — the language answers its own question in a single word.

Spanish does exactly this: *por qué* asks, *porque* answers, and the only difference is a space and an accent. English did it too, in *forasmuch as*, before the phrase went out of use.

Grammar Lens: claim first, reason after

head word

what follows it

لیکن
کیونکہ

an objection

a reason

Both stand at the head of the clause they govern, and both come **after** the claim they attach to. Put them in one sentence and you have the whole shape of an argument: *ṭhīk hai, lekin ... kyūnki ...*

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the question, then the answer word — *kyūn? ... kyūnki*
- *main ṭhīk nahīn hūn kyūnki main nahīn samajhtā*
- an objection and a reason in one breath — *ṭhīk hai, lekin ... kyūnki ...*

Before you move on

What two words is کیونکہ built from? (کیوں, why, and کہ, that.)
Which Spanish pair is built the same way? (*Por qué* and *porque*.)
And which comes first, the claim or the reason? (**The claim** — the reason follows it.)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

21.4 کہ (ki) — that

sochnā, “to think,” has been in this book since chapter seven, and in all that time nobody has been able to say what they think.

- *Recall*: the reason word from the lesson before, and the two words inside it — *kyūnki*

You'll want to know: کہ

... ہے پانی یہ کہ — *main sochtā hūn ki yih pānī hai* — **I think that this is water.**

The verb in front of کہ is *sochtā*, whose *che* and *te* are still ahead of you in the script ladder, so the frame is printed in romanization and the clause کہ introduces is printed whole.

کہ does one job: it takes a whole sentence and makes it the object of a verb of thinking, knowing or saying. Everything before it is the frame; everything after it is the thought, in exactly the order it would have had standing alone.

Two letters, both yours — ک and ہ — and you have been reading them together since the last lesson, welded onto کیوں.

Grammar Lens: what English drops and Urdu keeps

English can leave *that* out — *I think this is right* is ordinary English.

Urdu cannot: کہ is obligatory, and a sentence built without it is not merely informal, it is wrong.

The word is Persian *ki*, borrowed rather than inherited — which is why it sits unstressed and one-shaped wherever it lands. Compare کہاں, *where*, which begins with the same two letters and is a completely different word from a different source: one of the places Urdu's two ancestries look identical on the page.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *main sochtā hūn ki yih thīk hai*
- *main samajhtā hūn ki ...*
- an opinion, then an objection to it — *main sochtā hūn ki thīk hai, lekin ...*

Before you move on

What does **کے** attach to the verb in front of it? (**A whole sentence**, as its object.) Can it be left out, the way English leaves out *that*? (**No** — Urdu requires it.) And where have you already read these

two letters? (**Inside** **کیونکہ**.)

Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

21.5 **کے لیے** (ke liye) — for, in order to

Chapter six taught the **-تا** ending every Urdu verb wears in the dictionary. Fourteen verbs have that ending and not one of them has ever been the reason for anything.

- *Recall*: the complementiser from the lesson before — *ki*

You'll want to know: **کے لیے**

پانی کے لیے — *pānī ke liye* — **for water**.

پڑھنے کے لیے — *parhne ke liye* — **in order to read**.

Two words, five letters, and every one of them long since yours: **کے لیے**. Put it after a noun and it means **for**. Put it after a verb and it means **in order to** — and the verb's **-تا** becomes **-نے** first, which is the one change the construction asks for.

Grammar Lens: two ways to say why

shape

says

کیونکہ + a whole clause

because something is so

verb + **کے لیے**

in order to do something

The first gives a cause, the second gives a purpose, and a learner who owns both can answer *kyūn?* two different ways.

لیے is the perfective participle of لینا, “to take,” which chapter eight taught. Urdu builds *for* out of *having taken*: a purpose is what the action was taken for. English went the other way and built *for* out of a word for *before*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *pānī ke liye*
- the infinitive, then the purpose — *paṛhnā ... paṛhne ke liye*
- *samajhne ke liye* — in order to understand
- both answers to *kyūn?* — *kyūnki ...* and *... ke liye*

Before you move on

What does the infinitive’s -نا become before لیے کے? (نے۔) Which verb is لیے built on? (لینا, to take — chapter eight.) And what does لیے کے give that کیونکہ does not? (**A purpose**, rather than a cause.) Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

21.6 Asking why, and answering it two ways

Five items landed in this chapter. Two ask, two answer, and one hangs a sentence off a verb. Name all five.

Your turn

- *Say it*: the whole k- family — *kyā, kahān, kyūn, kaun*
- *Say it*: an opinion — *main sochtā hūn ki yih thik hai*
- *Say it*: a cause, then a purpose — *kyūnki ... samajhne ke liye*
- *Recall*: six lessons back, the joiner that turns — *lekin*
- *Recall*: nine lessons back, the joiner that chooses — *yā*

Before you move on

Which of this chapter's words answers *kyūn?* with a cause, and which with a purpose? (کیونکہ with a cause; کیے لیے with a purpose.)

Which one is obligatory where English drops its equivalent? (کہ.)

And what is inside کیونکہ? (کیوں and کہ, the chapter's own two other items.)

Chapter 22

When You Are Lost

Modes: ⇄ voice (4) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 4 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say I have not understood, ask what somebody said, and ask them to say it again gently – three sentences that need no letter this book has not taught.

A learner who has stopped following says so, asks for the words back, and asks for them slower: main nahīn samajhtā, kyā kahā, ārām se kaheñ – a repair kit this track did not have at all four chapters ago.

22.1 کہنا (kahnā) — to say

Chapter six taught *bolnā*, “to speak” — a word whose opening letter is still ahead of you in the script ladder, so it stays in romanization here. Urdu has a second verb here, and the line between them is the line between the act and the words.

- *Recall:* the complementiser two lessons back — *ki*

You’ll want to know: کہنا

کہنا — *kahnā* — to say, to tell

Four letters, all of them yours: ک، ہ، ن، ا. Strip the -نا of chapter six and the stem is کہ-

bolnā is about producing speech — *main urdū boltā hūn*, I speak Urdu.
 کہنا is about the content — what somebody actually said. English merges the two under *speaking* and *saying* without a clean rule; Urdu keeps them apart, and after کہنا the clause introduced by کہ follows naturally.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

کہنا is Sanskrit *kathayati*, “to tell, to relate,” on the noun *kathā*, “a story.” That noun is still in Urdu as کہانی, *kahānī*, “a tale” — the word a chapter-seventeen writing lesson already put in front of you. *To say* and *a story* are one root, two syllables apart.

Its stem کہ- looks exactly like the borrowed complementiser کہ of the last chapter and has nothing to do with it: one is inherited from Sanskrit, the other borrowed from Persian, and they collided on the page. Urdu is full of these seams.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *kahnā*, then the stem — *kah-*
- the pair, and hear the line between them — *bolnā ... kahnā*
- *main kahtā hūn ki ...* — I say that ...
- the word and the story — *kahnā ... kahānī*

Before you move on

What separates کہنا from *bolnā*? (*bolnā* is producing speech; کہنا is what was said.) Which noun shares its root? (کہانی, a story.) And is its stem the same word as the کہ of the last chapter? (**No** — one inherited, one borrowed, and they only look alike.)
 Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

22.2 کیا؟ کہا — what did you say?

Chapter nineteen gave you the first thing a lost learner says. This is the second, and it is made of the verb from the lesson before and one word from chapter three.

- *Recall*: the sentence chapter one deferred — *main nahīn samajhtā*

You'll want to know: کیا؟ کہا

کیا؟ کہا — *kyā kahā?* — what did you say?

Two words. کیا is the *what* of chapter three, back in the middle of the sentence where it means *what* rather than marking a yes-or-no question — the distinction the nineteenth chapter drew. کہا is کہنا in the past, the form you use for something that has already been said.

Say it with the voice rising and it is a request to repeat. Said flatly, with a frown, it is a challenge — so the tune matters more here than in any sentence this book has taught.

Grammar Lens: the repair kit, in three sentences

when	say
you did not follow at all	<i>main nahīn samajhtā</i>
you did not catch the words	<i>kyā kahā?</i>
you want it slower	the next lesson

Not one of these needed a new word before this chapter. کیا has been in the book since chapter three, نہیں since chapter one, and کہنا arrived one lesson ago. What was missing was somebody putting them next to each other.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *kyā kahā?* — rising, as a request
- the two together — *main nahīn samajhtā ... kyā kahā?*
- and close it politely — *shukriyā*

Before you move on

Which chapter taught each half of کیا؟ کہا (کیا in chapter three; کہنا, whose past this is, one lesson ago.) Is the کیا here the question-marker of chapter nineteen? (**No** — it is in the middle, so it means *what*.) And what changes it from a request into a challenge? (**The tune**.)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

22.3 سے آرام — slowly, gently

Asking somebody to say it again only helps if they say it again at a speed you can follow.

- *Recall*: the request from the lesson before — *kyā kahā?*

You'll want to know: سے آرام

سے آرام — *ārām se* — slowly; gently; take your time.

کہیں سے آرام — *ārām se kahen* — please say it slowly.

The wave over the first letter is the *alif madda* of chapter seven. سے is the postposition *with*, so the phrase is literally *with ease* — and the second word is the same سے the book has been showing since chapter three in *āp se mil kar*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

آرام is Persian *ārām*, “rest, ease, repose,” on an old Indo-Iranian root for standing still. So Urdu’s way of asking somebody to slow down

does not ask them to be **slow**; it asks them to be **at ease**. That is a gentler thing to say to a stranger than the English request, and it is why *ārām se* also means *take it easy, carefully*, and *no rush* depending on where it lands.

کہنا is کہیں in the polite request form. You are not asked to learn that ending here — only to hear that the verb from the last lesson is inside it.

Grammar Lens: the repair kit is now whole

when	say
you did not follow	<i>maiñ nahīñ samajhtā</i>
you did not catch it	<i>kyā kahā?</i>
you want it slower	<i>ārām se kaheñ</i>
Three sentences, four chapters, and not one new letter. Before chapter nineteen this track had no repair language at all: a learner who lost the thread had شکر یہ and نہیں and nothing else.	

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *ārām se*
- *ārām se kaheñ*
- the whole kit in order — *maiñ nahīñ samajhtā ... kyā kahā? ... ārām se kaheñ ... shukriyā*

Before you move on

What does آرام mean on its own? (**Rest**, **ease** — Persian.) So what are you literally asking for? (**Ease**, not slowness.) And which verb is inside کہیں (کہنا, from two lessons ago.)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

22.4 When you are lost

Three items landed in this chapter, and between them they rescue a conversation. Name all three, and say which chapter each of their pieces came from.

Your turn

- *Say it:* the repair kit in order — *main nahīn samajhtā ... kyā kahā? ... ārām se kahēn*
- *Say it:* a report — *main kahtā hūn ki yih thīk hai*
- *Say it:* an argument — *thīk hai, lekin ... kyūnki ...*
- *Recall:* seven lessons back, the reason word and the two words inside it — *kyūnki*
- *Recall:* twelve lessons back, the joiner that adds — *aur*

Your turn: the distant band — the first conversation, rescued

The exchange this book opened with was taught between eighty and a hundred lessons ago and has not been asked for since. It is also the exact place a beginner gets lost — so run it now, cold, and put the repair kit inside it.

- *Say it:* the opening, from memory — *salām ... āp kā nām kyā hai?*
- *Say it:* your answer, and the courtesy after it — *merā nām ... hai. āp se mil kar khushī hūn*
- *Say it:* the wellbeing question respectfully, choosing for a man or a woman — *āp kaise haiñ? / āp kaisī haiñ?*
- *Say it:* the reply — *main thīk hūn, shukriyā*
- *Say it:* now lose the thread, and rescue it — *main nahīn samajhtā. kyā kahā? ārām se kahēn*
- *Say it:* and close — *khudā hāfiz*
- *Recall:* which of *āp*, *tum* and *tū* you used, and why

Before you move on

Four chapters ago this book could not deny a sentence, ask a yes-or-no question, join two nouns, give a reason, or say that it had not understood. Say the sentence chapter one promised and never delivered. (*main nahīn samajhtā.*) Say the question that asks for a repeat. (کہا؟ کیا) And say the four members of the **k-** family. (*kyā, kahāñ, kyūñ, kaun.*)

Chapter 23

Before a Postposition, Everything Changes

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 👁️ eyes (1) 🖐️ Hands-free start: first 3 of 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can put something in a room, on a thing, or to a person – and I know why the noun changes shape before I do it.

The book's whole vocabulary becomes placeable for the first time: a pantry, a wardrobe and five kinds of weather that could only ever be named can now be put somewhere, and the postpositions the reader has been reading since chapter three finally have their rule stated.

23.1 کمرہ (kamrā) — room

Say **this**. Then say **black**, and say what its last vowel is doing.

- *Recall:* the two items before this one — *kyā kahā?*, *ārām se*

You'll want to know: کمرہ

یہ کمرہ — *yih kamrā* — **this room**.

کمرہ پرانا — *purānā kamrā* — **an old room**.

Twenty-two chapters, and this book has named a mother, a brother, a friend, four foods, four garments and five kinds of weather — and not one **place**. A learner could say who they were and could not say where anything was.

کمرہ is said *kamrā* and ends in the vowel *-ā*, even though the last letter on the page is ھ. That is worth pausing on: at the end of a word like this the gol he is not an *h* at all — it is how Urdu writes a final *-ā*. You met the same letter in this job inside *shukriyā*.

So کمرہ is one of the masculine nouns whose adjectives agree with it: کالا کمرہ پرانا کمرہ. The *-ā* on the adjective is answering the *-ā* on the noun, exactly as chapter thirteen showed.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

کمرہ is **Portuguese**. *Câmara* came ashore with the sixteenth-century sea trade, and it is the same Latin *camera* — a vaulted room — that English borrowed twice: once as **chamber**, and once as **camera**, because a *camera obscura* is a dark room. So this word arrived by ship, where نیلا arrived by land — the Sanskrit indigo that also gives English *aniline*. Urdu takes words from every direction it has ever been reached from.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *kamrā*
- *yih kamrā*, then *voh kamrā*
- with an adjective that agrees — *kālā kamrā*, *nīlā kamrā*, *purānā kamrā*
- the English cousins — *chamber*, *camera*

Before you move on

Which language did کمرہ come from, and by what route? (**Portuguese**, by sea.) Which two English words share its Latin

root? (**Chamber** and **camera**.) And what does its final *-l* tell an adjective to do? (**End in *-l* too.**)
 Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

23.2 کمرے (kamre) — the shape a noun takes before a postposition

Say **this room**. Then say **your name**, and notice the little word standing between آپ and نام.

You'll want to know: the noun changes first

کمرہ — *kamrā* — a room, standing on its own.

کمرے کے لیے — *kamre ke liye* — **for the room**.

Look at what happened to the noun. It was کمرہ and it is now کمرے, and nothing about the meaning changed. The final *-ā* became *-e* because a postposition was coming.

This is the single most important rule in Urdu grammar that a learner can be taught, and this book has used it since chapter three without stating it. نام کا آپ and لیے کے are both postpositions, and both have been quietly demanding this change all along.

Grammar Lens: two shapes, and only two

Sanskrit inflected a noun eight ways. Urdu kept **one** distinction:

shape	when	example
direct	the noun is a subject, or alone	کمرہ
oblique	a postposition follows it	کمرے

And the adjective goes with it. کمرہ کالا becomes کمرے کالے: the

adjective is agreeing with the noun's new shape, not merely with its gender.

Nouns not ending in *-ā* do not visibly change — ماں is ماں either way. A reader can go a long way without noticing the shape-change, and then be unable to build a phrase.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the pair — *kamrā*, then *kamre ke liye*
- with the adjective following it over — *kālā kamrā*, then *kāle kamre ke liye*
- *purāne kamre ke liye*
- the one that does not move — *mānī*, and *mānī ke liye*

Before you move on

What makes a noun change shape? (**A postposition coming after it.**) What does کمرہ become? (کمرے.) Does the adjective follow it over? (**Yes** — کمرے کالے.) And which nouns do not visibly change? (**Those not ending in *-ā*.**)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

23.3 کو (ko) — to, and the one it happens to

What happens to کمرہ when a postposition follows it? Then say the sentence from chapter eight that means **I like mangoes**.

You'll want to know: کو

ماں کو — *mān ko* — **to the mother**, or **the mother**, as the one it happens to.

Chapter eight taught *mujhe ām pasand haiñ* — *mangoes are pleasing to me* — and then left you unable to say it about anybody else, because *mujhe* looked like one word.

It is not. *Mujhe* is *mujh* plus ۚ, fused so long ago that the seam has closed. Now that you have the postposition on its own, the frame opens to everybody:

میں ۚ *ām pasand haiñ* — *māñ ko ām pasand haiñ* — **mother**
likes mangoes.

Mujhe and *pasand* stay in romanization here. Between them they need three letters the script ladder has not reached — *jīm*, *do chashmī* *he* and *dāl* — and this book does not print a letter before it has taught it.

Grammar Lens: two jobs, one word

ۚ marks the person a thing is **given to**, and the person a thing is **done to**. English needs *to* for the first and word order alone for the second; Urdu uses one postposition for both.

And it takes the oblique in front of it, like every postposition:

• کو کمرہ → کو کمرے

A postposition never touches a direct-shape noun. That rule has no exceptions and it is worth over-learning now, because six more postpositions are coming.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *māñ ko*
- the frame, opened — *māñ ko ām pasand haiñ*
- the fused one beside the free one — *mujhe*, then *māñ ko*
- taking the oblique — *kamre ko*

Before you move on

What two pieces is *mujhe* made of? (*Mujh* and *کو*.) What does *کو* mark? (**The one a thing is given or done to.**) And what shape must the noun in front of it be in? (**Oblique.**)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

23.4 میں (meñ) — in

Say **to the mother**. Then say **I am well**, and look at the first word of it.

You'll want to know: میں after a noun

میں کمرے — *kamre meñ* — **in the room**.

میں پانی — *pānī meñ* — **in the water**.

Twenty-three chapters, and this is the first time anything in this book has been **inside** anything else.

Notice the noun. *کمرہ* became *کمرے* again, because a postposition is following it. That is the rule from two lessons ago, and it will be the rule every time.

Grammar Lens: the same spelling, two different words

This word is spelled **exactly** like the pronoun میں you have used since chapter four, and they are unrelated. They are told apart by **position**:

where it stands	what it is	said
at the head of a clause	I	<i>main</i>
after a noun	in	<i>meñ</i>

The pronoun comes from Sanskrit *maya*; the postposition from *madhye*, “in the middle of”. They fell together on the page because the Urdu script writes no short vowels — which is exactly the difficulty that makes reading Urdu hard and that this book will keep returning to.

Both in one sentence:

ہوں میں کمرے میں — *maiñ kamre meñ hūñ* — **I am in the room.**

First word, pronoun. Fourth word, postposition. Same three letters.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *kamre meñ*
- *pāñ meñ*, then *āsmāñ meñ*
- both words at once — *maiñ kamre meñ hūñ*
- the oblique doing its work — *kamrā*, then *kamre meñ*

Before you move on

How do you tell the pronoun from the postposition? (**By where it stands** — head of the clause, or after a noun.) Why do they look identical? (**The script writes no short vowels.**) And what shape is the noun in front of it? (**Oblique.**)

Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

23.5 پر (par) — on

Say **in the room**. Then say the joiner from chapter twenty that turns a sentence against the one before it.

You'll want to know: پر

پر کام — *kām par* — **at work.**

پر آسمان — *āsmāñ par* — **in the sky** (literally *on* the sky).

میں puts a thing inside; پر puts it on top of, or at. Between them they cover most of what an A1 learner needs to say about where something is — and Urdu draws the line in a slightly different place from English, which is why the sky is something you are *on*.

Grammar Lens: and a second **پر**, which is not this one

Urdu does this to the reader twice in one chapter. **پر** is also a joiner meaning **but** — the everyday rival of the **لیکن** you learned in chapter twenty — and again the two are told apart by where they stand:

where it stands

after a noun
at the head of a clause

what it is

on, at
but

One is Sanskrit *upari*, the ancestor of English **over**. The other is Persian. They are not related and they are spelled identically, which is the same trap **پس** set one lesson ago — and the same lesson: in Urdu, **position is meaning**.

And, like every postposition, it takes the oblique: **پر کے**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *kām par*
- the pair — *kamre menī*, then *kamre par*
- *āsmān par*
- the other **پر**, at the head — *par ...*, and its rival *lekin ...*

Before you move on

Which postposition puts a thing inside, and which on top? (**پس** and **پر**.) What else does **پر** mean, and how do you tell? (**But** — by standing at the head of a clause.) And which English word is its Sanskrit cousin? (**Over**.)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

23.6 Into, onto, and to

One rule ran under every lesson in this chapter. State it, then name the three postpositions that made it visible.

Your turn

- *Say it:* the shape-change, bare — *kamrā*, then *kamre*
- *Say it:* all three — *kamre ko*, *kamre meñ*, *kamre par*
- *Say it:* the sentence with both spellings of one word — *main̄ kamre meñ hūñ*
- *Recall:* two chapters back, the joiner that heads a reason — *kyūñki*

Your turn: the distant band — everything this book owns, put somewhere

Until this chapter nothing in this book could be anywhere. Every postposition the book has ever shown you — ڪ since chapter three, ڪيے since chapter twenty-one — was quietly demanding the same shape-change and never said so. Run all of it, cold.

Say these aloud:

- the foods, placed — *pāñi meñ*, *roṭi kamre meñ*, *ām kamre meñ*
- the weather, placed — *hawā kamre meñ*, *āsmān par*
- with an adjective that follows the noun over — *kāle kamre meñ*, *purāne kamre meñ*, *nīle kamre meñ*
- people, marked — *māñ ko*, and the older fused one, *mujhe*
- the postpositions you already had — *āp kā nām*, *kamre ke liye*
- pointing and placing at once — *yih kamrā*, then *is kamre meñ* ... which is the next chapter
- the two words spelled ٿي — *main̄*, then *meñ*

Before you move on

What must a noun do before a postposition? (**Take the oblique shape.**) Does the adjective follow? (**Yes.**) Which nouns show no visible change? (**Those not ending in -i.**) And which two words in this chapter are each spelled like something else entirely? (ٿي and ٿي.)

Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

Chapter 24

Here, There, and Where

Modes: ⇨ voice (4) 👁 eyes (1) ⇨ Hands-free start: first 2 of 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can put a demonstrative in front of a postposition, and I can say where something is and where it is not.

کہاں *has been askable since chapter seventeen and unanswerable ever since.* یہاں *and وہاں answer it, and اس and ان let the demonstratives the book already owned stand in front of a postposition for the first time.*

24.1 اس (is) — this, before a postposition

Say **this** and **that**. Then say what happens to کمرہ when a postposition follows it.

- *Recall:* two chapters back, the word that heads a reason — *kyūnki*

You'll want to know: اس

کمرہ یہ — *yih kamrā* — this room.

اس میں کمرے — *is kamre meñ* — in this room.

The demonstrative does what the noun does. *یہ* is the direct shape; *اس* is the oblique one, and it appears for the same reason *کمرہ* became *کمرے* — a postposition is coming.

So the whole phrase shifts together. Pointer, adjective and noun all move into the oblique, and only then does the postposition arrive:

اس میں کمرے کالے اس — *is kāle kamre men* — **in this black room.**

Three words changed shape for one little word standing after them. That is what Urdu does instead of case endings.

Grammar Lens: the far one too

وہ has the same pair, and its oblique is *اس* as well in the singular — Urdu's near and far demonstratives collapse into one oblique form and are told apart by context:

meaning	direct	oblique
this	<i>یہ</i>	<i>اس</i>
that	<i>وہ</i>	<i>اس</i>

Which means *اس کو* and *پر اس* are available for both, and a learner who has been unable to say *to him* since chapter one can now say it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- the pair — *yih kamrā*, then *is kamre men*
- the whole phrase moving together — *is kāle kamre men*
- on its own — *is ko*, *is par*
- *is kām ke liye* — for this work

Before you move on

What is the oblique of *یہ*? (*اس*.) And of *وہ*? (*اس* as well.) What else in the phrase changes shape with it? (**The adjective and the noun** — everything before the postposition.)

Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

24.2 ان (un) — those, and him respectfully

Say **in this room**. Then name the three words for **you** and say which one is the respectful one.

You'll want to know: ان

ان کو — *un ko* — **to them**.

ان میں کمرے — *un kamron meñ* — **in those rooms**.

اس is the oblique for one thing. ان is the oblique for more than one, and it serves both یہ and وہ exactly as اس does.

Grammar Lens: a plural that is not about number

Here is the part a learner has to be told, because guessing it wrong is rude.

Chapter three taught that Urdu says آپ to somebody it respects — a plural form used for one person. It does the same thing about somebody:

ان کو — *un ko* — **to him or to her**, respectfully.

So ان کو is *to them*, and it is also *to him*, and which one it is depends entirely on who you are talking about. Said of a mother, a teacher, an elder, ان is the only correct choice, and اس would be heard the way calling a stranger by their first name is heard.

The safe habit while you are learning: ان for anybody older than you, اس for children and for things.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *un ko*

- the two obliques side by side — *is ko, un ko*
- of a mother, respectfully — *māñ ... un ko*
- *un kamron meri*

Before you move on

What is the plural oblique? (ان.) Does it always mean more than one person? (No — it is also the respectful *him* or *her*.) And which word for **you** works the same way? (آپ.)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

24.3 یہاں (yahāñ) — here

Ask **where?** Then say **this**, and look at how the two words begin.

You'll want to know: یہاں

ہوں یہاں میں — *main yahāñ hūñ* — **I am here.**

Chapter seventeen taught کہاں — *where?* — and this book has had no way to answer it ever since. A learner could ask the question and could not receive the reply.

Look at the two words together. کہاں and یہاں share their ending, and differ only in the head: ک- asks, یہ- points near. That is not a coincidence to be memorised — it is a frame.

Grammar Lens: the frame, two thirds filled

head	frame	word
ک- asking	thing	کیا
ک- asking	place	کہاں
یہ- near	thing	یہاں
یہ- near	place	یہاں
وہ- far	thing	وہاں
وہ- far	place	

next lesson

Chapter seventeen already showed you that کیا, کون, and کہاں are one family. This is the other half of that observation: the *answers* are a family too, built on the pointing heads, and the ending is shared across both.

One cell is still empty, and you can already guess what goes in it.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *main yahān hūn*
- the question and its answer — *kahān? ... yahān*
- with a room in it — *kamrā yahān hai*
- the two endings, side by side — *kahān, yahān*

Before you move on

What do کہاں and یہاں share? (**Their ending.**) What is different? (**The head** — asking against near.) And which cell of the frame is still empty? (**The far one.**)

Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

24.4 وہاں (vahān) — there

Say **here**. Then say **that**. Now guess this lesson's word before you read on.

You'll want to know: وہاں

ہے وہاں وہ — *voh vahān hai* — **he is there.**

If you guessed it, that is the lesson. The frame is closed:

head	thing	place
ک- asking	کیا	کہاں
یہ- near	یہ	یہاں
وہ- far	وہ	وہاں

Six words, three heads, two frames — and every one of them was predictable from the shape of the others.

Grammar Lens: what a place word can now do

These two words and the postpositions of the last chapter answer the same question at different resolutions:

- وہاں — *there*, gesturing
- میں کمرے اس — *in that room*, naming

And the denial you already own works on both, because نہیں goes in front of the verb wherever the verb is:

ہے نہیں وہاں وہ — *voh vahān nahīn hai* — **he is not there.**

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *voh vahān hai*
- the pair — *maiṅ yahān hūn, voh vahān hai*
- the denial — *voh vahān nahīn hai*
- gesturing and naming — *vahān*, then *is kamre meṅ*
- the whole frame — *kyā, kahān; yih, yahān; voh, vahān*

Before you move on

What are the three heads? (ک- asking, یہ- near, وہ- far.) What ending do the place words share? (-اں.) And where does نہیں go in *he is not there?* (**In front of the verb.**)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

24.5 Here, there, and where

Two demonstratives learned a second shape in this chapter and two place words closed a frame. Name all four, and say which of the four is also a mark of respect.

Your turn

- *Say it:* the obliques — *is ko, un ko*
- *Say it:* *kahāñ? ... yahāñ ... vahāñ*
- *Say it:* gesturing, then naming — *vahāñ*, then *us kamre meñ*
- *Recall:* two chapters back, the word that asks *why* — *kyūñ*

Your turn: the distant band — everything the book owns, pointed at and placed

Two chapters ago nothing in this book could be anywhere and no demonstrative could stand in front of a postposition. Run the distance, cold.

Say these aloud:

- the question family — *kyā, kaun, kahāñ*
- the answer family — *yih, yahāñ; voh, vahāñ*
- the drinks, placed — *chāy yahāñ hai, pāñi vahāñ hai*
- the whole phrase bending together — *is kāle kamre meñ*
- people, respectfully and not — *is ko*, then of a mother, *un ko*
- the family, placed — *māñ yahāñ haiñ, bahan vahāñ hai*

- the weather — *sardī hai*, and *yahāñ sardī hai*
- a denial — *voh yahāñ nahīñ hai*

Before you move on

What is the oblique of **یہ** and of **وہ**? (**اس** for both.) What is the plural oblique? (**ان**.) When must you use **ان** about one person?

(**When you respect them.**) And what do **کہاں**, **یہاں** and **وہاں** share? (**Their ending.**)

Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

Chapter 25

More Than One

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can make a noun plural, and I can make it plural before a postposition, which is the one ending in Urdu that is never ambiguous.

No noun in this book had ever been more than one. The four-cell table closes, two of its cells collide on purpose, and کمرے gives the track its first plural pronoun and its first plural possessive.

25.1 کمرے (kamre) — more than one

Say **in the room**, and say what the noun had to do first.

- *Recall:* two chapters back, the postposition that marks the one a thing is done to — *ko*

You'll want to know: the plural

کمرہ — *kamrā* — a room.

کمرے — *kamre* — **rooms**.

Twenty-four chapters, and no noun in this book has ever been more than one.

Look hard at the plural, because you have seen it before. کمرے is exactly the oblique singular from chapter twenty-three — same three letters, same sound. Urdu spells *rooms* and *of the room* identically and lets the rest of the sentence tell them apart.

Grammar Lens: the table, and what the postposition settles

	one	more than one
direct	کمرہ	کمرے
oblique	کمرے	next lesson

Three of the four cells are filled and two of them look the same. A postposition settles it: میں کمرے can only be *in the room*, because a plural before a postposition takes a different shape again — which is the next lesson.

Nouns not ending in *-ā* do not change at all. ماں is one mother or several and is spelled ماں either way, so number, like the oblique, is often invisible in Urdu and has to be read off the sentence.

And the adjective agrees: کمرہ کالا → کمرے کالے.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *kamrā*, then *kamre*
- the two readings of one spelling — *kamre* (rooms), *kamre men* (in the room)
- with the adjective agreeing — *kāle kamre*
- the one that does not move — *māñ*, one or many

Before you move on

What is the plural of کمرہ (کمرے)? What else is spelled that way? (**The oblique singular.**) What tells them apart? (**Whether a postposition follows.**) And which nouns show no plural at all? (**Those not ending in -ā.**)

Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

25.2 کمروں (kamron) — more than one, before a postposition

Say **rooms**. Then say **in the room**, and say why those two are spelled the same.

You'll want to know: کمروں

میں کمروں — *kamron meri* — **in the rooms**.

Here is the fourth cell, and it is the one that removes the ambiguity:

	one	more than one
direct	کمرہ	کمرے
oblique	کمرے	کمروں

-و is unmistakable. Nothing else in Urdu ends that way, so a reader who meets it knows immediately that the noun is plural **and** that a postposition is coming.

Grammar Lens: the ending that catches every noun

This is the one place where **every** Urdu noun changes visibly, including the ones that have refused to move so far. کان is one ear or two and is spelled the same either way, and it does not mark an oblique — but put it in the plural **and** in front of a postposition and it becomes کانوں. So the rule to hold is: -و on the end means *plural, and something is coming after me*.

That final و is the nūn-e-ghunna of chapter one — the nasal with no dots that colours the vowel rather than sounding as an *n*. The same

letter ends ہاں and کہاں and یہاں.

And the demonstrative in front of it is already yours: the plural oblique ان from the last chapter.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *kamroni men*
- all four cells — *kamrā, kamre, kamre men, kamroni men*
- with the demonstrative — *un kamroni men*
- the noun that finally moves — *kān*, then *kānoni ko*

Before you move on

What does **ہم** tell you, in two parts? (**Plural**, and **a postposition is coming**.) Is it ever ambiguous? (**No** — nothing else ends that way.) And which letter is at the end of it? (**The nūn-e-ghunna**, the dotless nasal.)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

25.3 ہم (ham) — we

Say **I**. Then name the three words for **you**.

You'll want to know: ہم

ہم — *ham yahān haiṅ* — **we are here**.

Twenty-four chapters of this book have been about one person at a time. میں or آپ, and nobody else. ہم is the first pronoun that covers a group.

Notice the verb. میں ... ہوں but ہم ... ہیں the plural subject takes the plural form of *to be*, and it is the same ہیں you have been saying to آپ since chapter four.

Grammar Lens: a “we” that is sometimes one person

Urdu does the same thing with ہم that it does with آپ and ان: a plural form used of one person, for distance and formality.

word	grammatically	often used for
آپ	you, plural	one person, respectfully
ان	those	one person, respectfully
ہم	we	one speaker, formally

A speaker who says ہم of themselves is being formal or a little grand, and in much of Pakistan it is the ordinary way to say *I* in some registers. A learner should say میں and should recognise ہم.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *ham yahān haiñ*
- the singular and the plural — *maiñ yahāñ hūñ, ham yahāñ haiñ*
- *ham kamre meiñ haiñ*
- the three plural-for-one forms — *āp, un, ham*

Before you move on

Which form of *to be* follows ہم? (ہیں) What else can ہم mean besides *we*? (**A formal I.**) And which two other words in this book use a plural for one person? (آپ and ان.)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

25.4 ہمارا (hamārā) — our

Say **we**. Then say **my name** and **your name**, and notice that one of them has a separate little word in it and the other does not.

You'll want to know: ہمارا

کمرہ ہمارا — *hamārā kamrā* — **our room.**

ماں ہماری — *hamārī māñ* — **our mother.**

And now the thing worth seeing. میرا has looked like a word since chapter two and it is not one:

- آپ کا — *āp kā* — pronoun, then کا, written apart
- میرا — *merā* — pronoun and کا, fused
- ہمارا — *hamārā* — pronoun and کا, fused

All three are the same construction. The first person fuses and the respectful second person does not, which is an accident of wear, not a difference of grammar.

Grammar Lens: the possessive agrees, like any adjective

کا ends in -ا, so it behaves like کالا and پرانا and changes with the noun after it:

the noun is	the possessive	example
masculine, direct	-ا	کمرہ ہمارا
feminine	-ی	ماں ہماری
oblique or plural	-ے	میں کمرے ہمارے

That is the same three-way agreement chapter thirteen taught for colours, applied to a postposition. Nothing new to learn — one rule paying twice.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *hamārā kamrā*
- the three faces of one construction — *āp kā*, *merā*, *hamārā*
- agreeing with a feminine noun — *hamārī māñ*
- agreeing with an oblique — *hamāre kamre meñ*

Before you move on

What two pieces is **ہمارا** made of? (ہم and کا, fused.) Which possessive is written as two words? (کآپ.) And what does the ending agree with? (**The noun after it** — gender, and oblique or not.)

Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

25.5 More than one

Say all four shapes of **کمرہ**. Two of them are spelled the same — which two, and what tells them apart?

Your turn

- *Say it:* the four cells — *kamrā, kamre, kamre meñ, kamron meñ*
- *Say it:* *ham yahāñ haiñ*, then *hamārā kamrā*
- *Say it:* the possessive agreeing three ways — *hamārā kamrā, hamārī māñ, hamāre kamre meñ*
- *Recall:* two chapters back, the postposition that puts a thing inside another — *meñ*

Your turn: the distant band — three chapters of endings, run cold

Three chapters ago no Urdu noun in this book had ever changed shape, been more than one, or been anywhere. Run all of it, cold.

Say these aloud:

- the shape ladder — *kamrā, kamre, kamron*
- the wardrobe, placed — *ṭopī kamre meñ, ṭopī un kamron meñ*
- the pantry — *dūdh yahāñ hai, dūdh vahāñ nahāñ hai*
- the weather — *bārish hai*, and *yahāñ bārish hai*
- the ear that finally moves — *kāñ*, then *kānon ko*

- colours following the noun over — *kāle kamre meñ, nīle kamroñ meñ*
- all the possessives — *merā, hamārā, āp kā*
- the demonstratives bending — *is kamre meñ, un kamroñ meñ*
- I, and we — *maiñ yahāñ hūñ, ham yahāñ haiñ*

Before you move on

Which ending means *plural*, and a *postposition* is coming? (ـوں.)
 Which two of the four cells collide, and what settles them? (**Plural direct and oblique singular; whether a postposition follows.**)
 What is بیمار made of? (ہم and کا.) And which three words in this
 book use a plural form for one person? (آپ, ان, ہم.)
 Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

Chapter 26

Whose, and Who To

Modes: ⇐ voice (3) ⇐ eyes (2) ⇐ Hands-free start: none of the 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say whose something is for any person, mark when the owner is also the subject, invite agreement, and call somebody.

The possessive column fills from two of six to five of six, and اپنا adds a distinction English has not got at all – his own room against somebody else’s – which Urdu requires and a learner cannot skip.

26.1 کاس (is k̄ā) — his, her

What is the oblique of یہ? Then say **our room**.

- *Recall:* two chapters back, the shape a noun takes before a postposition — *kamre*

You’ll want to know: کاس

کمرہ کاس — *is k̄ā kamrā* — **his room**, or **her room**.

کمرہ کاس — *un k̄ā kamrā* — **their room**, or **his room**, respectfully.

Urdu has no word for *his* and none for *her*. It takes the demonstrative in the oblique shape you learned two chapters ago and puts ک after it — which is why this could not be taught earlier. The third-person possessive is built

on the oblique, and until the oblique existed there was nothing to build it on.

Grammar Lens: the column, finally full

person	possessive	written
I	میرا	fused
we	ہمارا	fused
you, respectfully	آپ کا	apart
he, she, it	اس کا	apart
they, or he respectfully	ان کا	apart

Five of the six an A1 candidate needs, and the shape of the sixth — *your*, to somebody close — follows the same rule.

Every one of them ends in *-a* and agrees like an adjective, so ماں کی اس is *his mother* and میں کمرے کے اس is *in his room*.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *is kā kamrā*
- the respectful one — *un kā kamrā*
- the whole column — *merā, hamārā, āp kā, is kā, un kā*
- agreeing — *is kī mān, is ke kamre meñ*

Before you move on

Does Urdu have a word for **his**? (**No** — it uses اس plus کا.) Why could this not be taught before chapter twenty-four? (**It needs the oblique demonstrative.**) And what does the کا agree with? (**The noun after it.**)

Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

26.2 اپنا (apnā) — one's own

Say **his room**, then **our room**. Then say **my name**.

You'll want to know: اپنا

ہوں میں کمرے اپنے میں — *main apne kamre mein hūn* — **I am**
in my (own) room.

Here is a rule English does not have and Urdu will not let you skip. When the owner is **the same person as the subject of the sentence**, Urdu replaces the ordinary possessive with اپنا.

So it is **میرا کمرہ** when somebody else is speaking about my room, and اپنا کمرہ the moment *I* am the one doing something in it.

Grammar Lens: getting it wrong changes the meaning

This is not a politeness or a nicety. The two sentences mean different things:

Urdu	what it means
ہے میں کمرے اپنے وہ	he is in his own room
ہے میں کمرے کے اس وہ	he is in somebody else's room

An English speaker hears *he is in his room* for both and has no way to tell them apart. Urdu marks the difference and requires you to.

اپنا agrees like every other possessive: **میرا کمرہ اپنی**, **میں کمرے اپنے**.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *main apne kamre mein hūn*
- the pair that differ — *voh apne kamre mein hai, voh is ke kamre mein hai*
- agreeing — *apnā kamrā, apnī mān*
- with we — *ham apne kamre mein haiñ*

Before you move on

When must you use اپنا? (When the owner is the subject of the sentence.) What does وہ ہے میں کمرے کے اس وہ mean? (He is in somebody else's room.) And does اپنا agree? (Yes — like every possessive.)

Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

26.3 نا؟ ہے (hai nā?) — isn't it?

Ask a yes-or-no question with کیا. Then say the negator that stands in front of a refused noun.

You'll want to know: نا؟ ہے

آپ نا؟ ہے ہیں، یہاں آپ — āp yahān haiṅ, hai nā? — you are here, aren't you?

یہ نا؟ ہے ہے، کمرہ کا آپ یہ — this is your room, isn't it?

Both halves have been in this book for twenty-five chapters. ہے arrived in chapter two and نہ in chapter nineteen, and nobody has ever put them together. It is not a new word; it is an assembly.

Grammar Lens: two ways to ask, and they mean different things

how you ask

what it says

کیا ... āp ṭhīk haiṅ?

I do not know. Tell me.

آپ ṭhīk haiṅ, نا؟ ہے

I think so. Agree with me.

Chapter nineteen's کیا opens a genuine question. The tag makes a statement and asks the listener to confirm it, and a conversation runs on the second far more than on the first.

The reply is the *jī hān* of chapter one. (*Ṭhīk* and *jī* stay in romanization: between them they need three letters the script ladder

has not reached.)

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *āp yahāñ haiñ, hai nā?*
- the two ways, back to back — *kyā āp thīk haiñ?*, then *āp thīk haiñ, hai nā?*
- and the reply — *jī hāñ*

Before you move on

What is the difference between asking with کیا and asking with the tag? (کیا asks; the tag **invites agreement**.) Which two pieces make the tag, and how old are they? (ہے from chapter two and ں from chapter nineteen.) And what do you reply? (*Jī hāñ*.)
Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

26.4 ماں! (māñ!) — calling somebody

Say **mother**. Then say the greeting from chapter one, and ask yourself who you said it *to*.

You'll want to know: the kin term as an address

ماں سلام — *māñ! salām* — **Mother! Hello.**

This book has taught ماں since chapter seventeen as a noun — a person you can *talk about*. Not once has anybody been **called**.

That matters more in Urdu than in English. An Urdu speaker addresses almost nobody by name. A mother is ماں, an older brother is *bhāī*, a shop-keeper is *bhāī*, a stranger of your parents' age is *uncle* or *auntie*. Using a first name where a kin term is expected is the mistake, not the other way round.

Grammar Lens: what the vocative does to the noun

Urdu kept a fragment of the old vocative case, and it is one letter's worth:

the noun	talking about	calling
ends in <i>-ā</i>	کمرہ	کمرے
plural	کروں (before a postposition)	کرو

The call form of a plural is *-و*, not the *-وں* you learned in chapter twenty-five. The nasal drops. That is the whole difference between shouting to a group and saying something about them.

ماں does not end in *-ā*, so it does not change — which is why calling your mother is the easiest vocative in the language.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *māñ! salām*
- the two plural endings — *kamroñ meñ* (about), *kamro* (calling)
- greeting and then checking — *māñ! āp yahāñ haiñ, hai nā?*
- the habit — a name is the exception, a kin term is the rule

Before you move on

How does an Urdu speaker usually address somebody? (**By a kin term**, not a name.) What is the plural call form? (*-و*, with the nasal dropped.) And why does *ماں* not change? (**It does not end in *-ā*.**) Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

26.5 Whose, and who to

Say the whole possessive column. Then say which of its members you must swap out when the owner is also the subject, and what you swap it for.

Your turn

- Say it: *merā, hamārā, āp kā, is kā, un kā*
- Say it: the pair that differ — *voh apne kamre meñ hai, voh is ke kamre meñ hai*
- Say it: the tag — *āp yahāñ haiñ, hai nā?*
- Recall: two chapters back, the oblique of *yih* — *is*

Your turn: the distant band — four chapters of shapes, run cold

Four chapters ago no Urdu noun in this book changed shape, nothing was anywhere, nobody was more than one, and nobody but you and the person in front of you could own anything. Run the whole distance, cold.

Say these aloud:

- the four shapes — *kamrā, kamre, kamre meñ, kamroñ meñ*
- and the fifth, for calling — *kamro*
- the demonstratives bending — *is kamre meñ, un kamroñ meñ*
- the possessives agreeing — *is kā kamrā, is kī māñ, is ke kamre meñ*
- one's own — *main apne kamre meñ hūñ, ham apne kamre meñ haiñ*
- placed, with a colour — *nīle kamre meñ*
- the pantry and the weather — *chāy yahāñ hai, garmī hai, hai nā?*
- calling, then greeting, then checking — *māñ! salām. āp yahāñ haiñ, hai nā?*
- to whom — *is ko, un ko, māñ ko*

Before you move on

Does Urdu have a word for *his*? (**No** — the oblique plus **کے**.) When is **پنا** compulsory? (**When the owner is the subject.**) What does the tag do that **کیا** does not? (**Invite agreement.**) And how do you call somebody? (**By a kin term**, with the plural ending **-و**.)

Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

Chapter 27

Where You Are From

Modes: 🗣️ voice (5) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can name a city, a country and a place, and I can say which place I am from.

The book writes its first place name. With لاہور, ملک, شہر and the nisba -ی, a learner can finally answer the two questions every A1 speaking test asks after a name – and the three words come from Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit respectively, which is the layering of Urdu shown on a map.

27.1 شہر (shahr) — city

Say **in the room**. Then say **here**.

- *Recall:* two chapters back, the ending that means plural-and-a-postposition-is-coming — *-on*

You'll want to know: شہر

میں شہر اس — *is shahr men* — **in this city**.

شہر پرانا — *purānā shahr* — **the old city**.

Twenty-six chapters, and the largest place this book has named is a room. شہر is the first word in it for somewhere you could be *from*.

شہر does not end in *-l*, so it does not change shape before the postposition — but *اس* does, exactly as it did with *کمرے*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

شہر is Persian, and behind it stands Old Persian *xsathra*, meaning **realm**. It is the same word that ends the royal name *Ardashir*, and the same root as Sanskrit *kshatra*, “dominion” — which is where *Kshatriya*, the warrior caste, comes from.

So a **city** in Urdu is etymologically *the place somebody rules*, where *کمرہ* came in by sea from Portugal. Two words for two kinds of space, from two directions, a thousand years apart.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *shahr*
- *is shahr men*, then *us shahr men*
- *purānā shahr*
- the two scales — *is kamre men*, *is shahr men*

Before you move on

What did *شہر* originally mean? (**A realm** — the place somebody rules.) Does it change shape before a postposition? (**No** — it does not end in *-l*.) And what does change? (**The demonstrative in front of it.**)

Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

27.2 ملک (mulk) — country

Say **in this city**. Then say what happened to *اس* to let you say it.

You'll want to know: ملک

ملک ہمارا — *hamārā mulk* — **our country.**

میں ملک اس — *is mulk meri* — **in this country.**

With شہر and ملک together, a learner can finally answer the two questions every A1 speaking test opens with after a name: *what city*, and *what country*.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ملک is **Arabic**, from the three-consonant root **m-l-k**, *to own, to rule*. The same root gives **malik**, a king, and the surname *Malik* carried by millions of people from Morocco to Malaysia. Now put it beside the last lesson. شہر is **Persian** for the seat of a realm; مکہ is **Arabic** for the thing a king owns; and کمرہ is **Portuguese** for a vaulted room. Three words for three sizes of place, from three languages, and the reader has met all three in two chapters. That is what Urdu is: a Sanskrit-descended grammar with a Persian, Arabic and European vocabulary poured into it — the same layering that put *khudā* beside *Allāh* in chapter twelve.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *hamārā mulk*
- the two scales — *is shahr meri, is mulk meri*
- the three languages — *kamrā* Portuguese, *shahr* Persian, *mulk* Arabic
- *voh us mulk meri hai*

Before you move on

What does the root of ملک mean? (**To own, to rule.**) Which king shares it? (**Malik.**) And which three languages gave this book its

three words for a place? (Portuguese, Persian and Arabic.)

Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

27.3 لاہور (Lāhaur) — Lahore

Say **city** and **country**. Then say **in this country**.

You'll want to know: لاہور

میں لاہور میں — *main Lāhaur men hūn* — **I am in Lahore.**

یہ لاہور ہے — *yih Lāhaur hai* — **this is Lahore.**

This book has written no place name at all — not a city, not a country, not even the name of the language it teaches. لاہور is the first.

Watch the sentence: میں لاہور, with the postposition after the name and no change to the name itself, because it does not end in -/.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

Lahore is traditionally **Lavapuri**, “the city of Lava” — Lava being a son of Rama in the Ramayana. So the great city of Urdu letters, where Iqbal wrote and where the language's printing houses stood, carries a **Sanskrit name out of a Hindu epic**.

That is the same layering the last two lessons showed in the vocabulary, showing up in the map. A Persian word for city, an Arabic word for country, and a Sanskrit name for the place itself.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *yih Lāhaur hai*
- *main Lāhaur men hūn*
- the three sizes — *is kamre men, Lāhaur men, is mulk men*
- the name behind the name — *Lavapuri*

Before you move on

What language is the name لاہور from? (**Sanskrit** — *Lavapuri*.)

Does the name change before یں? (**No** — it does not end in -ل.)

And what is the first place name in this book? (**This one**.)

Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

27.4 لاہوری (Lāhaurī) — from Lahore

Say **this is Lahore**. Then say **heat** and **cold**, and listen to how both of them end.

You'll want to know: the ending that makes an origin

ہوں لاہوری میں — *main Lāhaurī hūn* — **I am from Lahore**.

Add -ی to a place name and you have an adjective meaning *belonging to that place*. That is the whole rule, and this book has already taught you the ending twice without saying so: *garmī* and *sardī* are *garm* and *sard* — *hot* and *cold* — wearing the same -ی. (Those four stay in romanization: *garm* needs *gāf* and *sard* needs *dāl*, and the script ladder has reached neither.)

Grammar Lens: the ending that became a surname

This is the Arabic **nisba**, borrowed into Persian and then into Urdu, and once you can see it you will see it everywhere:

name	means
Bukhārī	the man from Bukhara
Ghazālī	the man from Ghazala
Lāhaurī	the one from Lahore

For most of Islamic history a person's last name **was** their place. The nisba is a naming system, not merely a suffix, and Urdu inherited it whole.

One warning: unlike کالا and ہمارا, a nisba adjective ends in -ی already and does not change for gender. A man and a woman are both لاہوری.

Your turn

Say these aloud:

- *main̄ Lāhaurī hūn̄*
- the ending you already had — *garm*, *garmī*; *sard*, *sardī*
- the surnames — *Bukhārī*, *Ghazālī*, *Lāhaurī*
- it does not change for gender — *voh Lāhaurī hai*, either way

Before you move on

What does adding -**ج** to a place name do? (**Makes an adjective meaning *from there*.**) Which two words in this book already carried it? (*Garmī* and *sardī*.) And does it change for gender? (**No.**)

Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

27.5 Where you are from

Three words for three sizes of place arrived in this chapter, from three different languages. Name them, and name the language each came from.

Your turn

- *Say it: shahr, mulk, Lāhaur*
- *Say it: main̄ Lāhaur men̄ hūn̄, then main̄ Lāhaurī hūn̄*
- *Say it: the question this answers — āp kahān̄ ...?*
- *Recall: two chapters back, the ending that means plural, and something is coming — -on̄*

Your turn: the distant band — five chapters, and the whole introduction

Five chapters ago this book could introduce a learner and could not say where they were, where they lived, what belonged to whom, or how many of anything there were. Put the whole introduction together, cold.

Say these aloud:

- greeting and calling — *mān̄! salām*

- the name — *merā nām ... hai*
- where you are — *maiñ Lāhaur meñ hūñ*
- where you are from — *maiñ Lāhaurī hūñ*
- the country — *hamārā mulk*
- the room, all five shapes — *kamrā, kamre, kamre meñ, kamron meñ, kamro*
- pointing, near and far — *is shahr meñ, us mulk meñ, yahāñ, vahāñ*
- whose — *is kā, un kā, hamārā, and apnā* when it is your own
- to whom — *is ko, un ko, māñ ko*
- and check it — *āp Lāhaurī haiñ, hai nā?*
- offer something, placed — *chāy yahāñ hai*

Before you move on

What turns a place name into *from there*? (**The -ی.**) Which three languages gave this chapter its three words? (**Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit.**) What must every noun do before a postposition? (**Take the oblique.**) And what is the one rule that all five of these chapters have been about? (**A word changes shape when something follows it.**)

Source: Unicode Arabic chart.

Chapter 28

One to Five, By the Road Urdu Did Not Borrow

Modes: 🗣️ voice (6) 🗣️ Hands-free start: all 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say, hear, read and write the Urdu numbers one to five, name the English cousin of each, and say why none of them came in from Persian.

Five numbers, five Indo-European roots, no new letter and no Persian borrowing – retrieved shuffled rather than recited.

28.1 ایک — one, and the road this book keeps calling the other one

Name the two roads a word can take into Urdu: inherited from Sanskrit through Prakrit, or borrowed from Persian.

You'll want to know first — one word

ایک — *ek* — one

Twenty-two chapters, and not one number. That has a price the book has been paying in silence: no age, no cost, no telephone number, no quantity, no time. It stops here.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

ایک continues Sanskrit *eka* through Prakrit, from Indo-European **oywos*, “one” — the root behind English **one**, Latin **ūnus** and Greek **oîos**.

This book has spent chapters on words that came the OTHER way: *garmī* and *sardī* are Persian borrowings, sitting in Urdu beside inherited words that mean much the same. Numbers are where that stopped. Persian’s **yek** was as available as Persian’s **sard** was, and Urdu declined it — every one of the first ten numbers is the inherited form.

That is worth holding on to, because it makes the whole count predictable in one direction: if you know a Sanskrit or Hindi number you already know the Urdu one, and if you know only the Persian one you do not.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **ek** — one
- *Connect:* **ek** ← Sanskrit *eka* ← **oywos* → English **one**
- *Contrast:* Persian *yek* is the same root by a different road, and Urdu did not borrow it

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: ایک; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

28.2 ۞ — two, and a spelling that has been hiding in plain sight

Say **ek** and which road it came by. Then say *friend*.

You’ll want to know first — one word

۞ — *do* — two

Two letters, and both of them have been on the page since the friend lesson — they open *dost*, “friend”. A search of this whole book for ۞ finds

it twice and both times inside *dost*, which is exactly why a machine could report the word as present when the number had never been taught.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

۞ continues Sanskrit *dvi* through Prakrit **do**, from Indo-European **dwóh₁*, “two.” English **two**, Latin **duo** and Greek **dýo** are the same word.

Say *do* and *two* one after the other. Nothing there has to be learned; it has to be recognised.

Your turn

- Say it: **do** — two
- Connect: **do** ← Sanskrit *dvi* ← **dwóh₁* → English **two**
- Run through: **ek**, **do**

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: ۞; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

28.3 تین — three, and how much of a word a language can keep

Say **do** and its English cousin.

You’ll want to know first — one word

تین — *tīn* — **three**

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

تین continues Sanskrit *tri*, from Indo-European **treyes*, “three.” English **three**, Latin **trēs** and Greek **treîs** are the same word. Now set it beside the Persian for three, *se*. Both descend from **treyes*. Urdu’s form still has the *t*; Persian’s has lost the *t* AND the *r*, leaving one syllable. Same root, two roads, and one of them wore the word down much further.

An English speaker hears *tīn* and gets **three** for nothing. Hearing *se* as

three takes a moment.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **tīn** — three
- *Connect:* **tīn** ← Sanskrit *tri* ← **treyes* → English **three**
- *Run through:* **ek, do, tīn**

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: تین; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

28.4 چار — four, and one consonant's three fates

Say **tīn**, say which sound it keeps that Persian lost, then say **do**.

You'll want to know first — one word

چار — *chār* — **four**

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

چار continues Sanskrit *catvāraḥ*, from Indo-European **k^wetwóres*, “four.”

The opening **k^w* is where this gets interesting, because three branches did three different things with it. Latin kept it whole: **quattuor**.

English lost the lip-rounding and softened the *k* to *f*: **four**.

Indo-Aryan pushed it forward to a **ch**, which is what you are saying.

One sound, three descendants, and the numbers still line up.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **chār** — four
- *Connect:* **chār** ← Sanskrit *catvāraḥ* ← **k^wetwores* → Latin **quattuor**, English **four**
- *Run through:* **ek, do, tīn, chār**

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: چار; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

28.5 پانچ — five, and a word you have met on a map

Say **chār**, and what three languages did with the sound it starts from.

You'll want to know first — one word

پانچ — *pānch* — five

The ن in the middle is nasalising the vowel before it rather than standing as a full *n* of its own — the behaviour this book named several chapters ago.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

پانچ continues Sanskrit *pañca*, from Indo-European **pénk^we*, “five.” Greek **pén-te**, Latin **quīnque** and English **five** are the same word. An English speaker has almost certainly met it already without being told. **Punjab** is *panj* + *āb*, “five waters” — the land of the five rivers — and the fruit drink **punch** is named for its five ingredients. The number was in the reader’s language before this lesson was.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **pānch** — five
- *Connect:* **pānch** ← Sanskrit *pañca* ← **penkwe* → Greek **pén-te**, English **five**
- *Run through:* **ek**, **do**, **tīn**, **chār**, **pānch** — the whole first five

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: پانچ; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

28.6 Payoff — one to five, out of order

Say **pānch**, then **ek**, then which of the two roads both came by.

Your turn

A run learned forwards is a rhyme. Break it four ways.

1. Hear each of the five named singly and out of order, and say what it is.
2. Count backwards from **pānch** to **ek**.
3. Read the five printed shuffled — **پانچ، ایک، چار، دو تین** — and say each.
4. Write all five from dictation. Every letter in all five has been on the page for chapters; the tranche adds no new sign at all.

Then say each number's English cousin: **one, two, three, four, five**. All five have one, and that is not a coincidence — it is the same set of words, five thousand years apart, arriving by the inherited road rather than the Persian one.

Before you move on

Source: Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

Chapter 29

Six to Ten, and the Change That Happened Next Door

Modes:  voice (6)  Hands-free start: all 6 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can count aloud from one to ten in Urdu, and explain why Persian says haft where Urdu says sat.

Five more numbers with no new letter, the Iranian s-to-h change seen from the side that did not undergo it, and the whole run of ten shuffled.

29.1 — six, and a puff of air

Count one to five, then five to one.

You'll want to know first — one word

 — *chhe* — six

Two signs and the shortest number in the whole count. The first is the  of ; the second is the two-eyed  that puts a puff of air on the consonant in front of it.

Hand at the mouth: *chār* moves nothing, *chhe* pushes air out. The tongue does the same thing in both; the lungs do not.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

 continues Sanskrit *ṣaṣ*, from Indo-European **sweks*, “six.” English *six*, Latin *sex* and Greek *héx* are the same word.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **chhe** — six
- *Test:* hand at the mouth — **chār** still, **chhe** breathed
- *Connect:* **chhe** ← Sanskrit *ṣaṣ* ← **sweks* → English **six**

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: سات; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

29.2 سات — seven, and a change that happened next door

Say **chhe** and its English cousin.

You'll want to know first — one word

سات — *sāt* — seven

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

سات continues Sanskrit *sapta*, from Indo-European **septm*, “seven.” Latin **septem**, English **seven** and Greek **heptá** are the same word. Now the neighbour. Persian’s seven is **haft**, and it is the same word — but Iranian turned every Indo-European *s* at the front of a word into an *h*, so *sapta* became *hapta* became *haft*. Indo-Aryan did not, so *sapta* stayed *sāt*.

This is the sharpest illustration in the book of the two roads. A word that came into Urdu FROM Persian carries that change; a word Urdu inherited does not. The numbers are inherited, and the *s* is the proof.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **sāt** — seven
- *Connect:* **sāt** ← Sanskrit *sapta* ← **septm* → Latin **septem**
- *Contrast:* Persian **haft** — same word, with the *s* turned to *h*

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: سات; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

29.3 آٹھ — eight, and a sound Europe never had

Say **sāt**, and what Persian did to its first sound.

You'll want to know first — one word

آٹھ — āṭh — **eight**

Three signs: $\tilde{A}$, the alif with its wave; ٹ , the retroflex; ھ , the breath. The middle one is made with the tongue **curled back** against the roof of the mouth, not against the teeth.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

آٹھ continues Sanskrit *aṣṭa*, from Indo-European **oktow*, “eight.” Latin **octō**, Greek **oktō** and English **eight** are the same word.

The retroflex is where the family resemblance stops. Latin and English both have a plain *t* or *ct* here; the curled-back consonant is South Asian, and it is one of the sounds that makes an Indo-Aryan language sound like itself rather than like a European one. Eight is a good place to practise it, because the word is short and the sound is stressed.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **āṭh** — eight, with the tongue curled back
- *Connect:* **āṭh** ← Sanskrit *aṣṭa* ← **oktow* → Latin **octō**
- *Run through:* **chhe**, **sāt**, **āṭh**

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: آٹھ; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

29.4 ٩ — nine, and a spelling that carries two words

Say **āṭh**, with the tongue in the right place, and its Latin cousin.

You'll want to know first — one word

٩ — *nau* — **nine**

Two letters, like the word for two. The second is the same ٩ that closes it.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

٩ continues Sanskrit *nava*, from Indo-European **h1newn*, “nine.” Latin **novem**, English **nine** and Greek **ennéa** are the same word.

There is a trap here worth meeting once. The same two letters, ٩, also spell the Persian borrowing *nau*, “new” — as in *nau roz*, the new year. That is a DIFFERENT root that happens to arrive at the same spelling by the other road. Only the sentence tells you which is meant. That is the two roads colliding on one page, and it is the reason this book keeps naming them.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **nau** — nine
- *Connect:* **nau** ← Sanskrit *nava* ← **h1newn* → Latin **novem**
- *Run through:* **sāt**, **āṭh**, **nau**

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: ٩; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

29.5 دس — ten

Say **nau**, and the other word its two letters can spell.

You'll want to know first — one word

دس — *das* — **ten**

Two letters again, and the first is two's د.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

دس continues Sanskrit *daśa*, from Indo-European **dekm*, “ten.” Latin **decem** — and through it **decimal** and **December** — English **ten** and Greek **déka** are the same word.

das is the first number in this book that a shop is likely to say out loud. Very little is priced below ten, which is why a course stopping at five could name amounts nobody charges.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **das** — ten
- *Connect:* **das** ← Sanskrit *daśa* ← **dekm* → Latin **decem**
- *Run through:* āṭh, nau, **das**

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: دس; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

29.6 Payoff — counting aloud to ten

Count one to five, then say which of the two roads all five came by.

Your turn

1. **Count aloud**, one to ten, without a model — the whole of it, in one breath if you can.
2. Count backwards from **das** to **ek**.
3. Hear all ten named singly and out of order, and say each.
4. Read the ten printed shuffled and say each.

5. Write all ten from dictation. The tranche has added **no new letter**: every sign in all ten words was already on the page.

Then say the English cousin of each. All ten have one.

Before you move on

Source: Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

Chapter 30

Twenty, a Hundred, and the Nine Words That Are Not Here

Modes: ⇄ voice (3) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can count aloud, say twenty and a hundred, and say why Urdu’s eleven to nineteen are nine separate words rather than a rule.

The two round amounts a price actually names, the pair a noisy counter confuses, and an explicit account of what the teens cost and why they wait.

30.1 بیس — twenty, and the nine words that are not in this chapter

Count one to ten, then say ten on its own.

You’ll want to know first — one word

بیس — *bīs* — twenty

بیس goes back through Sanskrit *vimshati* to the Indo-European word for twenty, the same word behind Latin **vīgintī** and, through it, English **vigesimal**.

Grammar Lens: what is NOT here, and why

Eleven to nineteen are missing from this book on purpose, and the reason is a fact about Urdu rather than a shortage of pages. Some languages build their teens. Persian, next door, puts a unit in front of its word for ten and stops: *yâz-dah*, *si-dah*, *chahâr-dah* — nine numbers from one rule.

Urdu does not. *gyārah*, *bārah*, *terah*, *chaudah*, *pandrah*, *solah*, *satrah*, *aṭhārah*, *unnīs* — the ten is worn down differently in almost every one, and the unit with it. They are nine words, not one pattern, and the same is true of every number up to ninety-nine.

So they belong to a tranche of their own rather than to this one, and saying so is more useful than pretending a rule exists. What this book gives you instead is the frame the teens will hang on: **ek** to **das** below, **bīs** above.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **bīs** — twenty
- *Connect:* **bīs** ← Sanskrit *vimshati* ← **wikmtih* → Latin **vīgintī**
- *Say why:* Urdu's teens are nine words, not one rule

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: بیس; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

30.2 سو — a hundred

Say **bīs**, then **nau**, then the other word **سو** can spell.

You'll want to know first — one word

سو — *sau* — a hundred

Two letters: the **س** that opens seven and the **و** that closes nine. The largest number in this book is the shortest word in it.

Say **سو** and **سو** one after the other. One consonant apart, and a hundred apart in value — which is exactly where a price is misheard at a busy counter, so drill them as a pair.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

س continues Sanskrit *śata*, from Indo-European **kmtom*, “hundred.” Latin **centum**, Greek **hekatón** and English **hundred** are the same word. Anybody who has read a **per cent** has met its cousin.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **sau** — a hundred
- *Pair:* **nau** and **sau** — one consonant, a hundredfold
- *Run through:* **das**, **bīs**, **sau** — the three round amounts

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: س; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

30.3 Payoff — counting aloud, and the three round amounts

Count one to ten, then say why eleven to nineteen are not in this book yet.

Your turn

Four skills, scored separately.

1. **Count aloud** one to ten without a model, then say **bīs** and **sau**.
2. **Listening.** Hear twelve amounts named singly and out of order and write each down in figures of your own language.
3. **Reading.** Read the twelve printed shuffled and say each.
4. **Writing.** Write all twelve from dictation, shuffled.

Then say the three amounts a shop is likeliest to name — **das**, **bīs**, **sau** — and the pair a noisy counter confuses: **nau** and **sau**.

An A1 examiner asks a candidate their age, the price of something and a telephone number. Before this slice none of the three was reachable in this book. Two of them are now, and the third waits on the digits.

Before you move on

Source: Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

Chapter 31

The Ten Urdu Digits

Modes: ⇄ voice (1) ✍ pen (4) ⇄ Hands-free start: none of the 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can read and write the ten Urdu digits, read a price, a bus number and a telephone number off the page, and say which way a number runs inside a right-to-left line.

Ten signs across four lessons, grouped by what makes each set hard: the reversed direction, the one-tooth pair, the three shapes Arabic draws differently, and the mirror pair.

31.1 • ۱ — two digits, and a direction that reverses

Which way does an Urdu line run? Count aloud to ten.

Script — the shapes, and the direction

• — *sifr*, zero ۱ — *ek*, one

Urdu has its own ten digit signs, and a price ticket, a bus number, a page number and a telephone number in Pakistan are written in them. A reader who can say **ek** and cannot read ۱ still cannot read a price.

• is a **dot**, not a ring. Fix that first: a European eye reads a dot as a decimal point, and Urdu's nine is the ring.

Now the part no earlier chapter of this book has had to say. **Numbers run left to right, inside a line that runs right to left.** Ten is ۱• — one, then zero, in the order English uses — while the words on either side of it move the other way. The page changes direction at the number and changes back after it.

Your turn

- *Write it:* • — a dot; ۱ — a stroke
- *Read it:* ۱• — *das*, ten, left to right

Before you move on

Sources: Unicode Arabic chart; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

31.2 ۲ ۳ — one tooth apart

Write • and ۱, then read ۱•.

Script — the shapes

۲ — *do*, two ۳ — *tīn*, three

۳ is ۲ with one more tooth, and that is the whole difference. It is small enough that the two have to be written as a pair rather than one at a time: say *do* and *tīn* aloud as the hand makes them, and the shapes stop competing.

Your turn

- *Write it:* ۲, then ۳ beside it
- *Read it:* ۱۲, ۱۳, ۲۳, left to right

Before you move on

Sources: Unicode Arabic chart; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

31.3 ۴ ۵ ۶ — the three Urdu keeps for itself

Write ۲ and ۳, and say which has the extra tooth.

Script — the shapes

چ — *chār*, four ٥ — *pānch*, five ٦ — *chhe*, six

These three are why this chapter exists as more than a list.

Urdu and Arabic share an alphabet, letter for letter, and a reader of this book has spent twenty-five chapters on that shared inheritance. **The digits are where the sharing stops.** Seven of the ten are drawn the same way in both; چ, ٥ and ٦ are not, and Arabic writes those three with quite different shapes.

So a reader who picked the digits up from an Arabic book will misread a Pakistani price ticket at exactly these three places and nowhere else. If you drill three of the ten harder than the rest, drill these.

Your turn

- Write it: چ, ٥, ٦, saying *chār*, *pānch*, *chhe*
- Read it: ١٢, ١٥, ١٦, left to right

Before you move on

Sources: Unicode Arabic chart; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

31.4 ‹ ‹ ‹ — a mirror pair, and the ring

Write چ, ٥, ٦ — the three Arabic draws differently.

Script — the shapes

٧ — *sāt*, seven ٨ — *āth*, eight ٩ — *nau*, nine

٧ and ٨ are mirror images of each other, one opening upward and one downward. Write them as a pair, every time, and the mirror stops being a problem — the same trick that worked on چ and چ.

٩ is a **ring** with a tail, and this is where a dot-shaped zero earns its keep. Had • been a ring too, the page would carry two rings and no way to separate them.

Ten signs, four lessons, and the set is closed.

Your turn

- Write it: ﺇ and ﺀ as a pair, then ﺑ
- Run through: • ﺍ ﺏ ﺓ ﺔ ﺕ ﺖ ﺙ ﺘ ﺙ ﺊ ﺋ ﺌ ﺏ once, slowly

Before you move on

Sources: Unicode Arabic chart; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

31.5 Payoff — reading the figures

Count aloud to ten, then say which way digits run inside an Urdu line.

Your turn

1. Read all ten signs shuffled and say each as an Urdu word.
2. Read ﺍ•, ﺏ• and ﺏ•• and say each — *das*, *bīs*, *sau*.
3. Hear ten amounts named and write each in Urdu figures.
4. Write the ten signs from dictation, out of order, checking ﺏ, ﺓ and ﺕ against the models rather than against memory.
5. Read a seven-figure telephone number aloud, one digit at a time.

An A1 examiner asks for an age, a price and a telephone number. All three are now reachable. What is not: ﺏﻱ to ﺏﻱ, whose words are nine irregular forms rather than a rule, so the figure can be read and its name cannot yet be said.

Before you move on

Sources: Unicode Arabic chart; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

Chapter 32

Which One: the Ordinals

Modes: ⇄ voice (5) ⇄ Hands-free start: all 5 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can say first, second, third and fourth, and build the ordinal of any number I can count to.

Three irregular forms at the bottom of the series and one ending above them, with the break at first set against the same break in English.

32.1 پہلا — first

Read ۱, ۵ and ۱۰, then say **ek**.

You'll want to know first — one word

پہلا — *pehlā* — **first**

Counting says *how many*. Ordering says *which one* — and a floor number, a date on a notice, a queue, a chapter heading and “the first bus” all need the second. Twelve numbers do not give you one of them.

The word, taken apart — and its English cousins

پہلا does NOT come from ایک. It descends through Prakrit from Sanskrit *prathama*, “first, foremost,” a separate word. English does the same thing: **first** is not built from *one*, and **second** is not built from *two*, while **third**, **fourth** and **fifth** fall into line behind their numbers. Urdu breaks in the same place, for the same reason — the words people say most often wear away from their families first.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **pehlā** — first
- *Contrast:* **ek** counts, **pehlā** orders
- *Compare:* English **one**/**first** breaks in the same place

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: پہلا; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

32.2 دوسرا and تیسرا — second, third, and the ending

Say **pehlā** and why it is not built from **ek**. Then say **do** and **tīn**.

You'll want to know first — two words and an ending

دوسرا — *dūsra* — **second**

تیسرا — *tīsra* — **third**

Look at what came back. د is inside *dūsra*; تین is inside *tīsra*. The number returns, and an ending *-rā* is added to it.

So the series breaks at *first* and mends at *second* — one word out of line, then a pattern. English breaks one word later and mends at *third*; the shape is the same and only the seam moved.

Your turn

- *Say it:* **dūsra** — second; **tīsra** — third
- *Split:* *do* + *-srā*, *tīn* + *-srā*
- *Run through:* **pehlā**, **dūsra**, **tīsra**

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: **دوسرا**; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

32.3 چوتھا — fourth, and the ending that runs all the way up

Say **dūsra** and **tīsra**, and the number inside each.

You'll want to know first — one word, then the rule above it

چوتھا — *chauthā* — **fourth**

چار is still audible in it, bent at the vowel.

Above four the language settles. From five upward Urdu adds *-vān* to the plain number and stops bending: *pānchvān*, “fifth”; *dasvān*, “tenth”; *bīsivān*, “twentieth”.

So the whole series is three irregular forms at the bottom — *pehlā*, *dūsra*, *tīsra*, with *chauthā* half a step out — and one ending for everything above them. Twelve numbers and one ending is twelve ordinals.

Your turn

- Say it: **chauthā** — fourth
- Build: *pānch* + *-vān* → **pānchvān**, fifth
- Build: *das* + *-vān* → **dasvān**, tenth

Before you move on

Sources: Wiktionary: **چوتھا**; Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

32.4 Payoff — which one

Count aloud to ten, read ۷, ۲۰ and ۱۰۰, and say which way the digits ran.

Your turn

1. Say the first four in order, then out of order.
2. **Build**, do not recall: fifth, seventh, tenth, twentieth, hundredth.
3. Say which of the series is not built from its number at all, and say what English does in the same place.
4. Use one: name the floor a room is on, and the day of a month a notice gives.
5. Say what the ordinals still cannot reach, and why — the same nine irregular teens that the cardinals could not reach either.

Before you move on

Source: Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

32.5 Close the numeral slice

Say the first four ordinals, then count one to five.

Your turn

Everything this slice added, with nothing in front of you.

1. Count aloud one to ten, then say **bīs** and **sau**.
2. Write the ten figures shuffled, checking ۴, ۵ and ۶ against the models rather than against memory.
3. Say the first four ordinals, then build **fifth**, **tenth** and **twentieth**.
4. Say the two things this slice deliberately did NOT give you, and why: the nine irregular teens, and the ordinals built on them.

Then say what the whole slice cost the hand: **no new letter at all**. Every sign in every one of the twelve number words was already on the page; only the ten figures were new. And say which road all twelve came by.

Before you move on

Source: Omniglot, Numbers in Urdu.

Chapter 33

Reading — Six Words, Six Lines, and a First Paragraph

Modes:  voice (2)  eyes (1)  Hands-free start: none of the 3 lessons.

By the end of this chapter: I can read Urdu words cold, read a meeting in the order it happens, and hold a whole paragraph without translating it word by word.

Fifty-one words of Urdu in a row with no new word in them, carried by the one sentence shape the book has taught most: something is something, with  last.

33.1 (reading) — six words, nothing said first

You have written every letter in every one of these. Not one word is new, and not one shape inside them is new either.

What is new is that nobody says them before you read them.

Read this

لاہور ماں کمرہ شہر کام پانی

Read down the list once. Do not take each word apart — look at the whole shape and let it arrive.

Again, and notice which came at once and which you had to unpick. Both are fine. The difference is what practice removes.

What to know first

Urdu joins its letters, so a word is not five shapes standing in a row. It is one shape.

That is why reading a word cold is a different skill from writing it. Writing, you make the joins one at a time and know what is coming. Reading, the joins are already made and the whole word has to land at once.

Six is enough for one sitting.

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.**)

What was new? (**Nobody said them first.** You read them.)

33.2 (reading) — six lines, in the order they happen

The last lesson gave you single words. These are whole turns.

You have said every one of them. None is new.

Read this

نہیں شکریہ ہوں۔ یہاں میں ہیں؟ کیسے آپ ہے؟ کیا نام کا آپ سلام

Read down once, without stopping.

Again — and this time hear that these are not six separate lines. They are the opening of a meeting, in the order it happens.

What to know first

Two of these are questions and you can see it before you read a word of them, because the question mark sits at the end where Urdu puts it.

Spoken, a voice told you which turn was whose. On the page nothing does. You worked it out from where each line sits, which is most of what reading a conversation is.

Six lines, and the order is the whole lesson.

Your turn

- *Say it:* the six lines, once, in order, without stopping

Twice through:

Before you move on

How many of the six lines were new? (**None.**)

What told you which were questions? (**The mark at the end.**)

33.3 (reading) — the first paragraph

Six words, then six lines. Now a whole paragraph.

Thirty-seven words, and every letter inside them is one you can already write.

Read this

نیلا آسمان ہے۔ پانی میں کمرے ہے۔ کمرہ ہمارا یہ ہے۔ ماں میری یہ
کام یہاں ہے۔ شہر ایک لاہور ہیں۔ میں لاہور ہم ہے۔ کالا وہ ہے۔
شکریہ۔ اور سلام نہیں۔ ہے؟ پرانا یہ کیا ہے۔

Read it once without stopping. Do not translate as you go — let the sentences arrive.

Now read it again, and notice how little work it took.

What to know first

Almost every line here is the same sentence: something is something. ہے ends nearly all of them.

That is what makes a first paragraph possible. You know the shape of each line before you reach it, so your attention goes to the two or three words in the middle that change.

Then one line breaks the pattern, and you can see it break before you read it: the ninth ends in a question mark, and the tenth answers it in one word.

This is the first whole paragraph the book has asked you to hold at once, and it works because every piece was paid for.

Your turn

- *Say it:* the paragraph aloud, once, without stopping

Twice through:

Before you move on

How many words in that paragraph were new? (**None.**)

Which word ends nearly every line? (↵.)

Pronunciation & Script Reference

A **reference**, not a chapter. Use it when a lesson names a sound; do not clear it as an alphabet gate. Urdu script is introduced through useful expressions, with only the shapes and sound contrasts needed on that page.

The track shows a learner romanization beside new Urdu. A line above a vowel marks length ($\bar{a}$, $\bar{i}$), and a tilde marks nasalization ($\tilde{a}$, $\tilde{i}$). Cover the romanization once the Urdu form is familiar.

Script, spelling, and type style

- **Read right to left** (rtl). Start each word at its right edge.
- **Letters usually join** and change shape by position. Some letters, including ل and و in current words, break the connection to the following shape on their left.
- Urdu is an **abjad**: some vowels are unwritten and inferred from the learned word (**short-vowels-unwritten**). Long vowels use letter shapes such as ا , و , and ی ; ـ can carry e/ai .
- Urdu is traditionally printed in **Nastaliq**, whose connected words descend in a flowing slope. The book and app use the vendored static Noto Nastaliq Urdu family, including its Urdu OpenType localization and contextual joins. Naskh remains an accessibility fallback when a learner's browser cannot load the course font; it is no longer the normal presentation.

Sound ids used by the starter lessons

- **Sound id: rtl**
What to do: follow the word from its right edge leftward
First anchor: سلام *salām*
- **Sound id: long-a**
What to do: hold *ā* steady; *l* carries it in سلام
First anchor: سلام *salām*
- **Sound id: alif-madd**
What to do: read *ā* as word-initial long *ā*
First anchor: آپ *āp*
- **Sound id: short-vowels-unwritten**
What to do: supply the learned short vowels even when vowel marks are absent
First anchor: شکریہ *shukriyā*
- **Sound id: long-i**
What to do: hold *ī* as *ī* in this word
First anchor: جی *jī*
- **Sound id: long-u**
What to do: hold *ū* as long *ū* in the learned word
First anchor: ہوں *hūn*
- **Sound id: nasal-vowel**
What to do: let air pass through the nose; final *ṇ* does not add a full English *n*
First anchor: ہاں *hāṇ*, نہیں *nahīṇ*
- **Sound id: long-vowels**
What to do: read the word's written long-vowel cues rather than stretching every vowel
First anchor: نام میرا *merā nām*
- **Sound id: hai-diphthong**
What to do: say *hai* as one *hai* syllable, ending in an *ai* glide
First anchor: ہے *hai*

- **Sound id: sh**
What to do: read three-dotted ش as *sh*
First anchor: شکریہ *shukriyā*
- **Sound id: kh**
What to do: make خ farther back than English *h*
First anchor: خوشی *khushī*
- **Sound id: consonantal-ye**
What to do: let ی supply consonantal *y* before a vowel
First anchor: کیا *kyā*
- **Sound id: ai-diphthong**
What to do: say *ai* as one glide in the learned question word
First anchor: کیسے *kaise*
- **Sound id: final-ye**
What to do: distinguish broad final ے *e* from final ی long *ī*
First anchor: کیسے / کیسی *kaise / kaistī*
- **Sound id: retroflex-aspirated-th**
What to do: curl the tongue slightly back for ٹ, then release the aspiration marked by ہ
First anchor: ٹھیک *ṭhīk*
- **Sound id: urdu-question-mark**
What to do: recognize ؟ at the left end of a right-to-left question
First anchor: ہے؟ کیا نام کا آپ
- **Sound id: be-vs-pe-dots**
What to do: count the dots under the shared low scoop: one below is ب *b*, three below are پ *p*
First anchor: بولنا *bolnā* against آپ *āp*
- **Sound id: geminate-nun**
What to do: hold the *n* long when two ن letters are written in a row
First anchor: جانتا *jānnā*

- **Sound id: che-vs-jim-dots**
What to do: count the dots below the *jīm* body: one is چ *j*, three are چ *ch*
First anchor: سوچنا *sochnā* against جانا *jānā*
- **Sound id: do-chashmi-he**
What to do: give ہ no sound of its own; let it aspirate the letter to its right
First anchor: سمجھنا *samajhnā*, لکھنا *likhnā*
- **Sound id: retroflex-flap-rre**
What to do: flick a curled-back tongue once for ڑ; do not roll it
First anchor: پڑھنا *parhnā*
- **Sound id: majhul-e**
What to do: read medial ی as long *e* where the learned word calls for it
First anchor: لینا *lenā*
- **Sound id: qaf-uvular**
What to do: draw the back of the tongue further back in the throat for ق than for ک; many speakers merge the two in casual speech
First anchor: قیض *qamīz*
- **Sound id: te-dots-vs-tte-loop**
What to do: two dots above make plain dental ت; a small raised loop instead makes retroflex ٹ
First anchor: جوتا *jūtā* against ٹھیک *ṭhīk*
- **Sound id: gaf-stroke**
What to do: گ is ک with one extra stroke laid across the top
First anchor: گرمی *garmī*

Shape families already in use

- س *s* and ش *sh* share a skeleton; three dots distinguish ش.
- ن is consonantal *n*. Final dotless ں is *nūn-e ghunna* and marks nasalization in ہاں and نہیں.

- ی supplies the long $\bar{a}$ in جی and نہیں. Final ے participates in *hai* in ہے. Learn each role in its word before generalizing.
- کیا gives ی its consonantal y job; کیسی / کیسے then contrast broad final ے with long- $\bar{a}$ final ی.
- ٹھیک introduces the Indic retroflex-plus-aspiration sequence ٹھ only when the wellbeing reply needs it.
- حافظ خدا reuses خ and long l , adds a clear initial h in حافظ, and reads final ظ as z . Urdu conventionally keeps the two words visibly spaced, even though Persian normally joins its local spelling.
- بولنا adds the only new consonant the verb chapter needs: ب b , one low scoop with a single dot below. It shares that skeleton with پ p , already read in آپ, which carries three dots below instead. Dot count is the whole difference, and it is load-bearing throughout the alphabet.
- جانا writes two ن letters in a row and pronounces both, which is the only thing separating it from جانا $jānā$. Nothing about the doubling is decorative: جانا is “to go” and جانتا is “to know.”
- چ ch is the ج j body with **three dots below** instead of one — the same dot-count contrast as ب against پ, on a second skeleton.
- ھ is *do-chashmī* he , “two-eyed he.” It is never a consonant on its own; it aspirates whatever letter stands to its right. ٹھیک used it first, and سمجھنا, پڑھنا, پوچھنا and لکھنا use it again in جھ, ڑھ, چھ and کھ. Keep it apart from round ھ *gol* he , which is a real h and is the letter in ہوں and ہونا.
- ڑ is r wearing the small retroflex mark that also rides on ٹ. One diacritic, one instruction — curl the tongue back — now on two letters.
- ی takes a **third** value in لینا $lenā$: a long e . With consonantal y in کیا and long $\bar{a}$ in جی, and broad final ے beside it, the *ye* family covers y , $\bar{a}$ and e ; the learned word decides.

- **ق** *qāf*, first read in **قیض**, shares its throat position with already-known **خ** but is a stop rather than a fricative — a plosive version of the same back-of-the-mouth place. **ض** *zād*, in the same word, joins **ظ** (from **حافظ**) as a second letter carrying the plain **z** sound in Urdu, even though Arabic once told the two apart.
- **ت** *te*, first read in **جوتا**, shares its base scoop with already-known **ٹ**: two dots above make it plain dental *t*, where a small raised loop instead makes **ٹ** retroflex.
- **گ** *gāf*, first read in **گرمی**, is already-known **ک** with one extra stroke laid across the top — the same dot-count logic that told **ب** apart from **پ**, this time with a stroke instead of a dot.

The Persian-Arabic and Indo-Aryan layers

Script does not determine a word's history. **شکریہ** and **سلام** expose the Persian-Arabic literary layer; **نہیں**, **میرا**, **نام**, and **ہے** expose the inherited Indo-Aryan core that Urdu shares with Hindi. Mixed-language practice may use that relationship as a bridge, but the Urdu script remains the assessed form for this track.

Sources

- *Zero Zabar*: How the Urdu script works
- *Zero Zabar*: The Urdu alphabet

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.

آم *ām*

mango — the inherited Indo-Aryan name for the fruit, and not the ancestor of English mango
Introduced in Chapter 18.

آنا *ānā*

to come — literally “go toward,” built from a prefix and the verb for going
Introduced in Chapter 6.

آنکھ *ānikh*

eye — a fifth base letter for the two-eyed he, and another real cousin of an English word
Introduced in Chapter 10.

آپ / تم / تو *āp / tum / tū*

you — respectful / familiar / intimate
Introduced in Chapter 3.

آپ کا نام کیا ہے؟ *āp kā nām kyā hai?*

What is your name? (respectful)
Introduced in Chapter 3.

آپ کیسے ہیں؟ / آپ ہیں؟ کیسے آپ *āp kaise haiṅ? / āp kaisī haiṅ?*

How are you? — respectfully to a man / woman
Introduced in Chapter 4.

آپ سے مل کر خوشی ہوئی *āp se mil kar khushī huī*

pleased to meet you
Introduced in Chapter 3.

سے آرام *ārām se*

slowly, gently, take it easy — the third piece of a beginner’s repair kit, and five letters already yours
Introduced in Chapter 22.

آسمان *āsmān*

sky — Persian, from a root that meant stone, and a cousin of the English word hammer

Introduced in Chapter 18.

آٹھ *āṭh*

eight — a retroflex that no European cousin has
Introduced in Chapter 29.

اور *aur*

and — the commonest word in Urdu, asked for once in a chapter-15 practice line and never taught
Introduced in Chapter 20.

بہن *bahan*

sister — feminine, where بھائی was masculine, and the reason میرا has to change shape

Introduced in Chapter 9.

بارش *bārish*

rain — Persian, built from “load” plus a noun-forming ending, and a dead end behind that

Introduced in Chapter 15.

بھائی *bhāī*

brother — the first noun this book has taught with a real grammatical gender, and a genuine English cousin

Introduced in Chapter 9.

بیس *bīs*

twenty — the top of what this book can count to, and why the teens are not here
Introduced in Chapter 30.

بولنا *bolnā*

to speak — the plain Indo-Aryan verb under Urdu’s Persian and Arabic finery
Introduced in Chapter 6.

چار *chār*

four — one Indo-European sound, and three languages that did three things with it

Introduced in Chapter 28.

چوتھا *chauthā*

fourth — and the ending that carries every number above it
Introduced in Chapter 32.

چائے *chāy*

tea — Persian again, this time by an overland road from Chinese, and the hamza-ye letter's second word
Introduced in Chapter 12.

چھ *chhe*

six — four's consonant with the breath added, and the shortest number in the book
Introduced in Chapter 29.

دس *das*

ten — and the number a price actually names
Introduced in Chapter 29.

دھوپ *dhūp*

sunshine — inherited, and another honest dead end, like *کان* and *روٹی* before it
Introduced in Chapter 15.

دل *dil*

heart — Persian, and a real cousin of English heart by the Iranian road, not the Sanskrit one
Introduced in Chapter 11.

دو *do*

two — two letters, and the same word as English two
Introduced in Chapter 28.

دوست *dost*

friend — a Persian word that refuses to pick a gender, and exactly the relationship *تم* was made for
Introduced in Chapter 9.

دودھ *dūdh*

milk — a sixth letter learns to breathe, and an English cousin that is NOT the word you'd guess
Introduced in Chapter 12.

دوسرا *dūsra tīsra*

second and third — where the numbers come back and the ending appears
Introduced in Chapter 32.

ایک *ek*

one — the first number in the book, and the first word Urdu did NOT take from Persian
Introduced in Chapter 28.

گرمی *garmī*

heat — Persian, from the same PIE root as Greek *thermós*, with English warm only a disputed distant cousin
Introduced in Chapter 15.

حافظ *hāfiz*

guardian, protector — the Arabic-rooted half of the farewell
Introduced in Chapter 5.

ہے نا؟ *hai nā?*

isn't it? — a tag made of two words this book has had since chapter one and four,
and never put together
Introduced in Chapter 26.

ہم *ham*

we — the first plural pronoun this book has had, and one that Urdu also lends to
a single speaker being formal
Introduced in Chapter 25.

ہوا *hawā*

air, wind — Persian, and Persian's own loan from Arabic, a loan of a loan rather
than two roads from one root
Introduced in Chapter 15.

ہونا *honā*

to be — and the ending every Urdu verb wears when you name it
Introduced in Chapter 6.

جانا *jānā*

to go — the verb that shows the two agreements an Urdu present tense makes at
once
Introduced in Chapter 6.

جاننا *jānnā*

to know — the Urdu cousin of English know, Latin notice, and Greek gnosis
Introduced in Chapter 6.

جی ہاں *jī hā*

yes
Introduced in Chapter 1.

جوتا *jūtā*

shoe — inherited, and a real cousin of English yoke, and of Sanskrit's own yoga
Introduced in Chapter 14.

کہاں *kahāñ*

where — the fourth member of Urdu's k- question family, and a cousin of English
where by way of PIE *k^wis*
Introduced in Chapter 17.

کہنا *kahnā*

to say — the verb beside بولنا that carries the words themselves, and four letters
the reader can already write
Introduced in Chapter 22.

کیسے / کیسی *kaise / kaisī*

how — addressing a man / addressing a woman
Introduced in Chapter 4.

کالا *kālā*

black — inherited, but from a root borrowed into Sanskrit itself, and the first color that changes its own ending
Introduced in Chapter 13.

کام *kām*

work — inherited from Sanskrit karman, whose borrowed twin English spells karma
Introduced in Chapter 17.

کمرہ *kamrā*

room — a noun this chapter needs something to be inside, and the one everyday place the book has never named
Introduced in Chapter 23.

کان *kān*

ear — the first body word since Chapter 4 folded آپ کیسے؟ into a single wellbeing check
Introduced in Chapter 10.

کون؟ *kaun?*

who — a word this book has shown twice, glossed in passing, and never taught
Introduced in Chapter 21.

خاندان *khāndān*

family — the collective word this chapter's three people-words never needed, and Persian, like every social word Urdu has borrowed so far
Introduced in Chapter 9.

خدا *khudā*

God — the Persian-borrowed half of the standard Urdu farewell
Introduced in Chapter 5.

حافظ خدا *khudā hāfiz*

goodbye — a standard Urdu farewell
Introduced in Chapter 5.

کوٹ *koṭ*

coat — a modern English loan, closing a chapter that showed loans running in both directions
Introduced in Chapter 14.

کیا *kyā*

what

Introduced in Chapter 3.

کیا کہا؟ *kyā kahā?*

what did you say? — the repair sentence a beginner reaches for second, made of two words this book has now taught and nothing else

Introduced in Chapter 22.

کیوں؟ *kyūn?*

why — the k- question word chapter seventeen's family lesson had every chance to include and did not

Introduced in Chapter 21.

کیونکہ *kyūnki*

because — the question of the last lesson with one syllable added, and the first way this book can explain anything

Introduced in Chapter 21.

لاہور *Lāhaur*

Lahore — a place name, in a book that has never written one, and the city Urdu literature grew up in

Introduced in Chapter 27.

لال *lāl*

red — Persian, and an adjective that never changes its ending

Introduced in Chapter 13.

لیکن *lekin*

but — the first word in this book that can set one clause against another, and four letters the reader can already write

Introduced in Chapter 20.

لینا *lenā*

to take — a verb worn down to one syllable, and the third job Urdu gives the letter ی

Introduced in Chapter 8.

لکھنا *likhnā*

to write — an inherited verb for an act whose every tool Urdu named in Arabic and Persian

Introduced in Chapter 7.

کرنا مدد *madad karnā*

to help — an Arabic noun plus a native verb, which is the machine Urdu used to swallow two foreign vocabularies whole
Introduced in Chapter 8.

میں ہوں ... *main ... hūn*

I am ...

Introduced in Chapter 4.

سمجھتا نہیں میں *main nahīn samajhtā*

I do not understand — the sentence chapter one promised and never came back for, built from four things this book already taught
Introduced in Chapter 19.

ٹھیک میں، شکریہ ہوں، *main ṭhīk hūn, shukriyā*

I am fine, thank you

Introduced in Chapter 4.

ماں *mān*

mother — inherited from Sanskrit mātā, cousin of English mother, and neighbour of borrowed Persian mādar
Introduced in Chapter 17.

ہے ... نام میرا *merā nām ... hai*

my name is ...

Introduced in Chapter 2.

ملک *mulk*

country — the other half of the geography an A1 candidate is asked for in the first minute
Introduced in Chapter 27.

منہ *munh*

mouth — the plain *نون* that already nasalized *آنکھ*, unglossed, and a Greek word possibly hiding behind the same root
Introduced in Chapter 10.

نہیں *nahī*

no / not

Introduced in Chapter 1.

ناک *nāk*

nose — the same three letters as *کان*, read in reverse, and a real cousin of the English word this time
Introduced in Chapter 10.

نو *nau*

nine — two letters, and a spelling that also says new
Introduced in Chapter 29.

نیلا *nīlā*

blue — an honest dead end backward, and the word behind English aniline going forward
Introduced in Chapter 13.

پانچ *pānch*

five — the number inside Punjab, and the first five are complete
Introduced in Chapter 28.

پانی *pānī*

water — the first word you would actually ask for, and a verb from three chapters ago put back to work
Introduced in Chapter 12.

پڑھنا *paṛhnā*

to read — and to study, and to recite, because it never meant reading silently
Introduced in Chapter 7.

پسند *pasand*

liked, pleasing — a Persian word, not a verb, in the one Urdu sentence that refuses to let you be its subject
Introduced in Chapter 8.

پہلا *pehlā*

first — which one, not how many, and a word not built from ek
Introduced in Chapter 32.

پوچھنا *pūchhnā*

to ask — and the one place where Urdu's inherited half and its Persian half turn out to be the same word
Introduced in Chapter 8.

پرانا *purānā*

old — inherited from Sanskrit purāṇa “belonging to former times,” and a cousin of English fore and first
Introduced in Chapter 18.

قمیض *qamīz*

shirt — Arabic, and probably the very same word English borrowed as chemise, by a completely different road
Introduced in Chapter 14.

روٹی *roṭī*

bread — an honest dead end, and پسند put back to work on everything this chapter taught
Introduced in Chapter 12.

سفید *safed*

white — Persian, and a real cousin of English white by the Iranian road, the same shape as دل and ḥḍaya
Introduced in Chapter 13.

سلام *salām*

hello / peace
Introduced in Chapter 1.

سمجھنا *samaḡhnā*

to understand — literally to wake up fully, on the root that named the Buddha
Introduced in Chapter 7.

سردی *sardī*

cold — Persian, garmī's opposite, and a hook back through this whole book's two-roads words
Introduced in Chapter 15.

سات *sāt*

seven — the s that Persian turned into an h, kept
Introduced in Chapter 29.

سو *sau*

a hundred — two letters, and the largest number in the book
Introduced in Chapter 30.

شہر *shahr*

city — the first place-noun bigger than a room, and half of what a learner needs to say where they are from
Introduced in Chapter 27.

شکریہ *shukriyā*

thank you
Introduced in Chapter 1.

سوچنا *sochnā*

to think — a verb that began as a word for burning and grieving
Introduced in Chapter 7.

ٹھیک *ṭhīk*

fine, well, correct
Introduced in Chapter 4.

ہے ٹھیک *ṭhīk hai*

all right, agreed — the wellbeing word of chapter four doing a second job, and the first way this book can agree with somebody
Introduced in Chapter 20.

تین *tīn*

three — where Urdu keeps the t that Persian threw away
Introduced in Chapter 28.

ٹوپی *ṭopī*

cap, hat — an honest dead end backward, and the word English borrowed as
topee going forward
Introduced in Chapter 14.

وہاں *vahān*

there — the last cell of the frame, and a word the reader can predict before it is
shown
Introduced in Chapter 24.

وہ *voh*

that, and he, she, they — the far partner of yih, inherited from the same Old
Indo-Aryan pair
Introduced in Chapter 18.

یا *yā*

or — two letters, borrowed from Persian, and the word an offer cannot be made
without
Introduced in Chapter 20.

یہاں *yahān*

here — the near demonstrative on a frame that means place, and an answer کہاں
has been waiting six chapters for
Introduced in Chapter 24.

یہ *yih*

this — the nearer of Urdu's two pointing words, and a word whose second letter
you cannot yet write
Introduced in Chapter 17.

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 1

1.1 س — *three teeth, then a bowl, without lifting*
How many times do you lift the pen while writing s̄in?

Chapter 2

2.1 ہے ... نام میرا — *my name is ...*
Type the Urdu sentence 'My name is Sara.'

2.2 | — *one stroke, and a page that runs the other way*
Besides running right to left, what else does an Urdu word do as it moves across the page?

Chapter 3

3.1 آپ / تم / تو — *three relationships inside "you"*
Type the Urdu 'you' safest in a first meeting.

3.2 کیا — *what*
Type Urdu for 'what'.

3.3 ل — *alif, and then a bowl under the line*
Does the bowl of lām sit on the baseline or below it?

3.4 آپ کا نام کیا ہے؟ — *ask a name respectfully*

Type the respectful Urdu question 'What is your name?'

3.5 ہوئی خوشی کر مل سے آپ — *pleased to meet you*

Type the Urdu response 'Pleased to meet you.'

3.6 م — *a round head, and a tail under the line*

When mīm is joined into the middle of a word, which part of it survives?

3.7 Practice — *a complete Urdu name exchange*

After someone asks آپ کا نام کیا ہے؟, type the Urdu answer using Sara.

Chapter 4

4.1 کیسی / کیسے — *“how” follows the addressee*

Type the Urdu 'how' form used when respectfully addressing a woman.

4.2 Letters that hold hands, and the one that will not

You see a gap in the middle of an Urdu word. What is the likeliest reason?

4.3 آپ کیسی ہیں؟ / آپ کیسے ہیں؟ — *ask respectfully*

Type the respectful Urdu question 'How are you?' addressed to a man.

4.4 میں ... ہوں — *one frame for “I am ...”*

Type the Urdu frame 'I am ...', leaving three dots for the state word.

4.5 ک — *a bowl with a slash laid over it*

How many times do you lift the pen when writing kāf?

4.6 ٹھیک — *“fine,” “well,” and “correct”*

Type the Urdu word meaning 'fine' or 'well'.

4.7 شکر یہ ہوں، ٹھیک میں — *“I am fine, thank you”*

Reply in Urdu: 'I am fine, thank you.'

4.8 ن — *a deep bowl, and one dot*

Where does the dot of nūn sit — above the bowl or low inside it?

4.9 Practice — *an Urdu wellbeing exchange*

After آپ کیسے ہیں؟, type the polite Urdu reply.

Chapter 5

5.1 خدا — *the first half of an Urdu farewell*

Type the Urdu word khudā, meaning 'God'.

5.2 ی — *one S-curve, no dots*

How many dots does the standalone ye carry?

5.3 حافظ — *“guardian” or “protector”*

Type the Urdu word hāfiz, meaning 'guardian' or 'protector'.

5.4 حافظ خدا — *goodbye*

Type the standard Urdu expression for 'goodbye'.

5.5 ہ — *the round he, and its four faces*

What does gol he look like in the MIDDLE of a word?

5.6 Practice — *open, check, and close*

The short Urdu interaction is ending. Type the final expression.

Chapter 6

6.1 ں — *nūn with the dot taken off*

What is the difference between ں and ن?

6.2 ے — *the big ye, and the end of the sentence*

Where in a word does baṛī ye appear?

Chapter 7

7.1 آ — *alif, with a wave on its head*

Where in a word do you write آ rather than plain ا for a long ā?

7.2 پ — *three dots under a boat*

When pe shrinks to a tooth at the start of a word, what stays the same?

7.3 لکھنا — *“to write,” with nothing new left to decode*

Type the Urdu verb meaning 'to write'.

Chapter 8

8.1 و — *a head, a tail, and no hand to the left*

Which two letters so far refuse to join to the letter on their left?

8.2 پسند — *Urdu does not like things; things please Urdu*

Type the Urdu word for 'to me' — the form main takes when it cannot be the subject.

Chapter 9

9.1 بہن — *“sister,” and the word that makes میرا move*

Type the Urdu for 'my sister', choosing the correct form of my.

9.2 خاندان — *“family,” the word your three new nouns never needed*

Type the Urdu word for 'family' — the loan that groups bhāi and bahan together.

Chapter 10

10.1 ناک — *“nose,” the same three letters as کان, backwards*

Type the Urdu word for 'nose' — the same three letters as کان, reversed.

10.2 منہ — *“mouth,” and the نون āṅkh already used without explaining*

Which earlier body word in this chapter also used a plain نون to mark a nasal vowel, unglossed at the time?

Chapter 11

11.1 دل — *“heart,” Persian, and still a cousin of the English word*

Is Urdu دل related to Sanskrit hṛdaya, or is the resemblance a coincidence like پسند and candēre?

Chapter 12

12.1 دودھ — *“milk,” and a false friend worth naming before you fall for it*

Which English word is the REAL cousin of دودھ — dough, or doughy?

12.2 روٹی — “bread,” and pasand closes the chapter
Type the Urdu sentence ‘I like bread.’

Chapter 16

16.1 Practice — eight words you already knew, now read
Urdu writes its long vowels but leaves the short ones off the page. What does that mean for a word you have never heard?

Chapter 17

17.1 یہ — “this,” and the letter you are owed
Does یہ point at what is near you or what is far from you?

17.2 کام — “work,” and a word you can read the moment you meet it
Urdu kām and English karma come from one Sanskrit word. Which language inherited it and which borrowed it?

17.3 کہاں — “where,” and the family it belongs to
Urdu question words open with k and English question words open with wh. Are those two marks related?

17.4 Eight letters — read them, hear them, write them back
After you write a covered word from memory, what do you do before moving on?

17.5 ماں — “mother,” and a sentence you can read whole
Urdu keeps both māñ and Persian mādar. Which one is the inherited word?

17.6 ہے — the smallest word, in every sentence you own
Where in an Urdu sentence does ہے sit?

17.7 Practice — ten letters, and a sentence that comes off the page
نہیں opens with a dotted nun and closes with a dotless one. What does each do?

Chapter 18

18.1 آم — “mango,” and the name that did not travel
Is English mango descended from Urdu آم?

18.2 آسمان — “sky,” which used to mean stone

What did the Proto-Indo-European root behind آسمان originally mean?

18.3 پرانا — “old,” and the word behind the *Purāṇas*

You are describing a feminine noun as old. Do you say *purānā* or *purānī*?

18.4 Eleven letters, and two kinds of answer

Of ām/mango and āsmān/hammer, which pair is genuinely related?

18.5 وہ — “that,” and everyone who is not here

Besides meaning ‘that’, what else does *voh* mean?

18.6 The opening exchange, read off the page

In آپ کا نام ہے؟ کیا نام کا آپ which word carries the letter *pe*?

18.7 Practice — thirteen letters, and the meeting comes off the page

You see a gap inside an Urdu word. Name the two letters you have met that can cause it.

Chapter 28

28.1 ایک — one, and the road this book keeps calling the other one

Did Urdu borrow its word for one from Persian?

28.2 دو — two, and a spelling that has been hiding in plain sight

Which word you already knew begins with the two letters of *do*?

28.3 تین — three, and how much of a word a language can keep

Urdu *tin* and Persian *se* are the same word. Which sound does Urdu still have?

28.4 چار — four, and one consonant’s three fates

Which language kept the original *kw* of four whole?

28.5 پانچ — five, and a word you have met on a map

What does the *panj* in Punjab mean?

28.6 Payoff — one to five, out of order

Count backwards from five to one in Urdu.

Chapter 29

29.1 چھ — six, and a puff of air

Say four and six one after the other, and name what changes.

29.2 سات — *seven, and a change that happened next door*

Persian says haft and Urdu says sat for the same word. What did Iranian do to the s?

29.3 آٹھ — *eight, and a sound Europe never had*

Where is the tongue for the middle consonant of aath?

29.4 نو — *nine, and a spelling that carries two words*

نو can be read two ways. Give both.

29.5 دس — *ten*

Count aloud from six to ten in Urdu.

29.6 Payoff — *counting aloud to ten*

Count aloud from one to ten in Urdu.

Chapter 30

30.1 بیس — *twenty, and the nine words that are not in this chapter*

Can you build the Urdu for fourteen from chaar and das, the way Persian builds its teens?

30.2 سو — *a hundred*

Say nine and a hundred one after the other.

30.3 Payoff — *counting aloud, and the three round amounts*

Count aloud one to ten, then say twenty and a hundred.

Chapter 31

31.1 • | — *two digits, and a direction that reverses*

An Urdu line runs right to left. Which way do the digits inside it run?

31.2 ۲ ۳ — *one tooth apart*

Write the Urdu digit for three, then the digit for two.

31.3 ۴ ۵ ۶ — *the three Urdu keeps for itself*

Write the three Urdu digits that Arabic draws differently.

31.4 ۷ ۸ ۹ — *a mirror pair, and the ring*

Which two Urdu digits are mirror images of each other?

31.5 Payoff — *reading the figures*

Write a hundred in Urdu figures, and say its name.

Chapter 32

32.1 پہلا — *first*

Is pehla built from ek?

32.2 دوسرا and تیسرا — *second, third, and the ending*

Which number can you hear inside dusra?

32.3 چوتھا — *fourth, and the ending that runs all the way up*

Build tenth and twentieth from das and bis.

32.4 Payoff — *which one*

Say first, second, third, fourth in Urdu.

32.5 Close the numeral slice

Say ten and tenth in Urdu.

Chapter 33

33.1 (reading) — *six words, nothing said first*

Which of the six is a city?

33.2 (reading) — *six lines, in the order they happen*

How many of the six lines are questions?

33.3 (reading) — *the first paragraph*

Which city are they in?

Answer Key

The first response is the canonical display answer. When a question accepts other authored forms, they appear underneath.

Chapter 1

1.1 س — *three teeth, then a bowl, without lifting*

Answer: 0

Also accepted: none; zero; not at all; no lifts; 0 times

Chapter 2

2.1 ہے ... نام میرا — *my name is ...*

Answer: ہے سارا نام میرا

Also accepted: mera naam Sara hai; merā nām Sārā hai

2.2 | — *one stroke, and a page that runs the other way*

Answer: it cascades downward

Also accepted: it goes down; it descends; each letter sits lower; it slopes down to the left; it cascades

Chapter 3

3.1 آپ / تم / تو — *three relationships inside “you”*

Answer: آپ

Also accepted: aap; āp

3.2 کیا — *what*

Answer: کیا

Also accepted: kya; kyā

3.3 ل — *alif, and then a bowl under the line*

Answer: below it

Also accepted: below; below the line; under the baseline; beneath the line

3.4 آپ کا نام کیا ہے؟ — *ask a name respectfully*

Answer: آپ کا نام کیا ہے؟

Also accepted: آپ کا نام کیا ہے؟; aap ka naam kya hai; āp kā nām kyā hai

3.5 آپ سے مل کر مل ہوئی خوشی — *pleased to meet you*

Answer: آپ سے مل کر مل ہوئی خوشی

Also accepted: aap se mil kar khushi hui; āp se mil kar khushī huī

3.6 م — *a round head, and a tail under the line*

Answer: the round head

Also accepted: the head; the round part; the loop; the head, not the tail

3.7 Practice — *a complete Urdu name exchange*

Answer: ہاں سارا نام میرا

Also accepted: mera naam Sara hai; merā nām Sārā hai

Chapter 4

4.1 کیسی / کیسے — *“how” follows the addressee*

Answer: کیسی

Also accepted: kaisi; kaisī

4.2 Letters that hold hands, and the one that will not

Answer: a letter that does not join to the left

Also accepted: a non-joining letter; alif or another non-joiner; a letter that only joins on the right; a letter that refuses to join

4.3 آپ کیسے ہیں؟ / آپ کیسی ہیں؟ — *ask respectfully*

Answer: آپ کیسے ہیں؟

Also accepted: آپ کیسے ہیں؟; aap kaise hain; āp kaise haiñ

4.4 میں ... ہوں — *one frame for “I am ...”*

Answer: میں ... ہوں

Also accepted: میں ... ہوں; main ... hun; main ... hūñ

4.5 ک — *a bowl with a slash laid over it*

Answer: 1

Also accepted: once; one; one lift; 1 time

4.6 ٹھیک — *“fine,” “well,” and “correct”*

Answer: ٹھیک

Also accepted: thik; ṭhik; theek

4.7 شکر یہ ہوں، ٹھیک میں — *“I am fine, thank you”*

Answer: شکر یہ ہوں، ٹھیک میں

Also accepted: شکر یہ ہوں ٹھیک میں; main thik hun shukriya; main ṭhik hūn shukriyā

4.8 ن — *a deep bowl, and one dot*

Answer: low inside it

Also accepted: inside; low inside the bowl; near the baseline; inside the curve; below

4.9 Practice — *an Urdu wellbeing exchange*

Answer: شکر یہ ہوں، ٹھیک میں

Also accepted: شکر یہ ہوں ٹھیک میں; main thik hun shukriya; main ṭhik hūn shukriyā

Chapter 5

5.1 خدا — *the first half of an Urdu farewell*

Answer: خدا

Also accepted: khuda; khudā; xuda; xudā

5.2 ی — *one S-curve, no dots*

Answer: 0

Also accepted: none; zero; no dots; 0 dots

5.3 حافظ — *“guardian” or “protector”*

Answer: حافظ

Also accepted: hafiz; hāfiz; haafiz; hafez

5.4 حافظ خدا — *goodbye*

Answer: حافظ خدا

Also accepted: khuda hafiz; khudā hāfiz; xuda hafiz; khudahafiz

5.5 ہ — *the round he, and its four faces*

Answer: two small loops side by side

Also accepted: two loops; two small loops; a pair of loops; two little bowls side by side

5.6 Practice — *open, check, and close*

Answer: حافظ خدا

Also accepted: khuda hafiz; khudā hāfiz; khudahafiz

Chapter 6

6.1 ﺝ — *nūn with the dot taken off*

Answer: the dot

Also accepted: one has a dot; ﺝ has no dot; the missing dot; nun ghunna has no dot

6.2 ﻻ — *the big ye, and the end of the sentence*

Answer: at the end

Also accepted: end; word-finally; only at the end; the last letter

Chapter 7

7.1 ﺁ — *alif, with a wave on its head*

Answer: at the start

Also accepted: start; the beginning; word-initially; at the front

7.2 ﺏ — *three dots under a boat*

Answer: the three dots beneath it

Also accepted: the three dots; the dots; three dots below; its dots underneath

7.3 لکھنا — *“to write,” with nothing new left to decode*

Answer: لکھنا

Also accepted: likhna; likhnā; likhnaa

Chapter 8

8.1 و — *a head, a tail, and no hand to the left*

Answer: alif and vao

Also accepted: alif and vāʾo; ʾ and و; alef and vao

8.2 پسند — *Urdu does not like things; things please Urdu*

Answer: mujhe

Also accepted: mujhe.; mujhay

Chapter 9

9.1 بہن — *“sister,” and the word that makes میرا move*

Answer: بہن میری

Also accepted: meri bahan; merī bahan

9.2 خاندان — *“family,” the word your three new nouns never needed*

Answer: خاندان

Also accepted: khandan; khāndān

Chapter 10

10.1 ناک — “nose,” the same three letters as کان, backwards

Answer: ناک

Also accepted: naak; nāk

10.2 منہ — “mouth,” and the انہ ānkh already used without explaining

Answer: ānkh

Also accepted: aankh

Chapter 11

11.1 دل — “heart,” Persian, and still a cousin of the English word

Answer: related

Also accepted: related, same root; same PIE root; cousins; yes, related

Chapter 12

12.1 دودھ — “milk,” and a false friend worth naming before you fall for it

Answer: doughty

Also accepted: doughty, not dough

12.2 روٹی — “bread,” and pasand closes the chapter

Answer: mujhe rotī pasand hai

Also accepted: mujhe roti pasand hai

Chapter 16

16.1 Practice — eight words you already knew, now read

Answer: you cannot reliably sound it out

Also accepted: you cannot sound it out; you have to have heard it; you cannot be sure of the vowels; reading and listening must grow together

Chapter 17

17.1 ٰ — “this,” and the letter you are owed

Answer: near

Also accepted: close; nearby; the near one; what is close

17.2 کام — “work,” and a word you can read the moment you meet it

Answer: urdu inherited it, english borrowed it

Also accepted: urdu inherited, english borrowed; urdu inherited it; english borrowed it; urdu by inheritance, english by borrowing

17.3 کہاں — “where,” and the family it belongs to

Answer: yes, both from PIE k^wis

Also accepted: yes; yes, related; same root; both from the same PIE root; yes, from k^wis

17.4 Eight letters — read them, hear them, write them back

Answer: uncover and repair it

Also accepted: compare; compare and repair; uncover and compare; check it against the model; repair it

17.5 ماں — “mother,” and a sentence you can read whole

Answer: maan

Also accepted: mān; maa; the first one; mān is inherited

17.6 ہے — the smallest word, in every sentence you own

Answer: at the end

Also accepted: end; last; the final word; sentence-finally

17.7 Practice — ten letters, and a sentence that comes off the page

Answer: the first is the consonant n, the last is a nasal hum

Also accepted: one is n, one is a hum; first is a consonant, last nasalizes the vowel; dotted is n, dotless is the nasal; the first is n and the second is nasalization

Chapter 18

18.1 آم — “mango,” and the name that did not travel

Answer: no

Also accepted: no, unrelated; no, it is Dravidian; no, from Tamil/Malayalam; not related

18.2 آسمان — “sky,” which used to mean stone

Answer: stone

Also accepted: rock; a stone; stone or rock

18.3 پرانا — “old,” and the word behind the Purāṇas

Answer: purani

Also accepted: purānī; purānī with an i; the i ending

18.4 Eleven letters, and two kinds of answer

Answer: asman and hammer

Also accepted: āsmān and hammer; the second; āsmān/hammer; the sky one

18.5 وہ — “that,” and everyone who is not here

Answer: he, she, they

Also accepted: he; she; they; he/she/they; he or she; the third person

18.6 *The opening exchange, read off the page*

Answer: aap

Also accepted: آپ; āp; the first word; the word for you

18.7 *Practice — thirteen letters, and the meeting comes off the page*

Answer: alif and vao

Also accepted: alif and vāʾo; ا and ة; alef and vao; alif madda and vao

Chapter 28

28.1 *ایک — one, and the road this book keeps calling the other one*

Answer: no

Also accepted: no, it inherited it; no — it is inherited from Sanskrit; inherited

28.2 *دو — two, and a spelling that has been hiding in plain sight*

Answer: dost

Also accepted: dost, friend; friend

28.3 *تین — three, and how much of a word a language can keep*

Answer: the t

Also accepted: t; the t sound; the initial t

28.4 *چار — four, and one consonant's three fates*

Answer: Latin

Also accepted: Latin, in quattuor; quattuor

28.5 *پانچ — five, and a word you have met on a map*

Answer: five

Also accepted: five, panch; 5

28.6 *Payoff — one to five, out of order*

Answer: pānch chār tīn do ek

Also accepted: pānch, chār, tīn, do, ek; panch char tin do ek; panch, char, tin, do, ek

Chapter 29

29.1 *چھ — six, and a puff of air*

Answer: chār, chhe — the breath

Also accepted: chaar chhe, the breath; the breath; the puff of air

29.2 *سات — seven, and a change that happened next door*

Answer: turned it into h

Also accepted: it became h; s became h; s > h

29.3 *آٹھ — eight, and a sound Europe never had*

Answer: curled back

Also accepted: retroflex; curled back against the roof of the mouth; back, not at the teeth

29.4 نَوَ — *nine, and a spelling that carries two words*

Answer: nine, and new

Also accepted: nine and new; nau, nine; nau, new; nine / new

29.5 دَسَ — *ten*

Answer: chhe sāt āṭh nau das

Also accepted: chhe, sāt, āṭh, nau, das; chhe saat aath nau das; chhe, saat, aath, nau, das

29.6 Payoff — *counting aloud to ten*

Answer: ek do tīn chār pānch chhe sāt āṭh nau das

Also accepted: ek, do, tīn, chār, pānch, chhe, sāt, āṭh, nau, das; ek do tin char panch chhe saat aath nau das

Chapter 30

30.1 بیس — *twenty, and the nine words that are not in this chapter*

Answer: no

Also accepted: no, they are irregular; no — Urdu’s teens are separate words; no, each is its own word

30.2 سَوَ — *a hundred*

Answer: nau sau

Also accepted: nau, sau

30.3 Payoff — *counting aloud, and the three round amounts*

Answer: ek do tīn chār pānch chhe sāt āṭh nau das, bīs, sau

Also accepted: ek do tin char panch chhe saat aath nau das bis sau; ek, do, tīn, chār, pānch, chhe, sāt, āṭh, nau, das, bis, sau

Chapter 31

31.1 • | — *two digits, and a direction that reverses*

Answer: left to right

Also accepted: left-to-right; the other way, left to right

31.2 ۲ ۳ — *one tooth apart*

Answer: ۳ ۲

Also accepted: ۳ ۲; ۳۲

31.3 ۴ ۵ ۶ — *the three Urdu keeps for itself*

Answer: ۴ ۵ ۶

Also accepted: ۴ ۵ ۶; ۴۵۶; four five six

31.4 ۷ ۸ ۹ — *a mirror pair, and the ring*

Answer: ۷ and ۸

Also accepted: seven and eight; ۷ ۸; saat and aath

31.5 Payoff — *reading the figures***Answer:** ۱۰۰ — sau**Also accepted:** ۱۰۰ sau; ۱۰۰ sau**Chapter 32****32.1 پہلا** — *first***Answer:** no**Also accepted:** no, it is a separate word; no — like English first; separate word**32.2 دوسرا and تیسرا** — *second, third, and the ending***Answer:** do**Also accepted:** do, two; two**32.3 چوتھا** — *fourth, and the ending that runs all the way up***Answer:** dasvāñ bīsvāñ**Also accepted:** dasvan bisvan; dasvāñ, bīsvāñ; dasvan, bisvan**32.4 Payoff** — *which one***Answer:** pehlā dūsrā tīsrā chauthā**Also accepted:** pehlā, dūsrā, tīsrā, chauthā; pehla dusra tisra chautha; pehla, dusra, tisra, chautha**32.5 Close the numeral slice****Answer:** das dasvāñ**Also accepted:** das, dasvāñ; das dasvan; das, dasvan**Chapter 33****33.1 (reading)** — *six words, nothing said first***Answer:** lahore**Also accepted:** لاہور**33.2 (reading)** — *six lines, in the order they happen***Answer:** two**Also accepted:** 2**33.3 (reading)** — *the first paragraph***Answer:** lahore**Also accepted:** لاہور

A note on sources

Script descriptions follow Northwestern University’s open Zero Zabar Urdu-alphabet materials. Chapter 4’s wellbeing forms and register contrast, together with Chapter 5’s farewell, follow Michigan State University’s open *Basic Urdu*.

Index

Look up an English meaning, a dedicated language topic, or a chapter topic. Each linked reference opens the chapter where the material is introduced; the focus labels name only explicitly typed lesson sections.

A

a hundred — two letters, and the largest number in the book سو (sau)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 30, p. 237

air, wind — Persian, and Persian’s own loan from Arabic, a loan of a loan rather than two roads from one root ہوا (hawā)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 15, p. 113

all right, agreed — the wellbeing word of chapter four doing a second job, and the first way this book can agree with

somebody ہے ٹھیک (ṭhik hai)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 20, p. 157

and — the commonest word in Urdu, asked for once in a chapter-15 practice line and never taught اور (aur)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 20, p. 157

Ask and Answer Names

chapter topic; Chapter 3, p. 13

B

because — the question of the last lesson with one syllable added, and the first way this book can explain

anything کیونکہ (kyūnki)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 21, p. 165

Before a Postposition, Everything Changes

chapter topic; Chapter 23, p. 183

black — inherited, but from a root borrowed into Sanskrit itself,
and the first color that changes its own ending काल (kāḷā)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 13, p. 99

blue — an honest dead end backward, and the word behind

English aniline going forward نیلا (nīlā)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 13, p. 99

bread — an honest dead end, and پسند put back to work on

everything this chapter taught روٹی (roṭī)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 12, p. 93

brother — the first noun this book has taught with a real

grammatical gender, and a genuine English cousin بھائی (bhāī)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 9, p. 73

but — the first word in this book that can set one clause against

another, and four letters the reader can already write لیکن (lekin)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 20, p. 157

C

cap, hat — an honest dead end backward, and the word English
borrowed as topee going forward ٹोپی (ṭopī)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 14, p. 105

city — the first place-noun bigger than a room, and half of what
a learner needs to say where they are from شهر (shahr)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 27, p. 217

coat — a modern English loan, closing a chapter that showed

loans running in both directions کوٹ (koṭ)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 14, p. 105

cold — Persian, garmī's opposite, and a hook back through this
whole book's two-roads words سردی (sardī)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 15, p. 113

country — the other half of the geography an A1 candidate is

asked for in the first minute ملک (mulk)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 27, p. 217

E

ear — the first body word since Chapter 4 folded **ہیں؟ کیسے آپ**

into a single wellbeing check **کان** (kān)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 10, p. 81

eight — a retroflex that no European cousin has **آٹھ** (āṭh)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 29, p. 231

Eight Words, Read Rather Than Recognised

chapter topic; Chapter 16, p. 121

eye — a fifth base letter for the two-eyed he, and another real

cousin of an English word **آنکھ** (āṅkh)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 10, p. 81

F

family — the collective word this chapter's three people-words never needed, and Persian, like every social word Urdu has

borrowed so far **خاندان** (khāndān)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 9, p. 73

fine, well, correct **ٹھیک** (ṭhīk)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 4, p. 21

first — which one, not how many, and a word not built from

ek **پہلا** (pehlā)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 32, p. 245

five — the number inside Punjab, and the first five are

complete **پانچ** (pāṅch)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 28, p. 225

Five Verbs at the Core

chapter topic; Chapter 6, p. 39

Four Colors

chapter topic; Chapter 13, p. 99

four — one Indo-European sound, and three languages that did

three things with it **چار** (chār)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 28, p. 225

Four Things You Wear

chapter topic; Chapter 14, p. 105

Four Verbs Between People

chapter topic; Chapter 8, p. 63

Four Verbs of the Mind

chapter topic; Chapter 7, p. 51

Four Words on the Face

chapter topic; Chapter 10, p. 81

fourth — and the ending that carries every number above**it** چوتھا (chauthā)

Chapter 32, p. 245

friend — a Persian word that refuses to pick a gender, and**exactly the relationship** دوست (dost) **was made for**

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 9, p. 73

G**Give your name**

chapter topic; Chapter 2, p. 9

God — the Persian-borrowed half of the standard Urdu**farewell** خدا (khudā)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 5, p. 31

goodbye — a standard Urdu farewell حافظ خدا (khudā hāfiz)

explicit focus: script, grammar; Chapter 5, p. 31

Greetings and responses

chapter topic; Chapter 1, p. 1

guardian, protector — the Arabic-rooted half of the**farewell** حافظ (hāfiz)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 5, p. 31

H**heart — Persian, and a real cousin of English heart by the****Iranian road, not the Sanskrit one** دل (dil)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 11, p. 89

heat — Persian, from the same PIE root as Greek thermós, with**English warm only a disputed distant cousin** گرمی (garmī)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 15, p. 113

hello / peace سلام (salām)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 1, p. 1

here — the near demonstrative on a frame that means place, and**an answer** یہاں (yahān) **has been waiting six chapters for**

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 24, p. 193

Here, There, and Where

chapter topic; Chapter 24, p. 193

how — addressing a man / addressing a woman کیسی / کیسے (kaise / kaisī)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 4, p. 21

How Are You?

chapter topic; Chapter 4, p. 21

How are you? — respectfully to a man / woman آپ / ہیں؟ کیسے آپ

کیسی؟ ہیں؟ (āp kaise haiñ? / āp kaisī haiñ?)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 4, p. 21

I

I am ... میں ... ہوں (main ... hūñ)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 4, p. 21

I am fine, thank you میں ٹھیک ہوں، شکریہ (main ṭhīk hūñ, shukriyā)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 4, p. 21

I do not understand — the sentence chapter one promised and never came back for, built from four things this book already

taught سمجھتا نہیں میں (main nahīñ samajhtā)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 19, p. 151

isn't it? — a tag made of two words this book has had since chapter one and four, and never put together ہے نا؟ (hai nā?)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 26, p. 209

L

Lahore — a place name, in a book that has never written one, and the city Urdu literature grew up in لاہور (Lāhaur)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 27, p. 217

Letters that hold hands, and the one that will not

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 4, p. 21

liked, pleasing — a Persian word, not a verb, in the one Urdu sentence that refuses to let you be its subject پسند (pasand)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 8, p. 63

M

mango — the inherited Indo-Aryan name for the fruit, and not the ancestor of English mango آم (ām)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 18, p. 137

milk — a sixth letter learns to breathe, and an English cousin that is NOT the word you’d guess دودھ (dūdḥ)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 12, p. 93

More Than One

chapter topic; Chapter 25, p. 201

mother — inherited from Sanskrit mātā, cousin of English

mother, and neighbour of borrowed Persian mādar مان (mān)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 17, p. 125

mouth — the plain نون that already nasalized آنکھ, unglossed, and a Greek word possibly hiding behind the same root منہ (muñḥ)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 10, p. 81

my name is ... ہے ... نام میرا (merā nām ... hai)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 2, p. 9

N

nine — two letters, and a spelling that also says new نو (nau)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 29, p. 231

no / not نہیں (nahī)

explicit focus: script, grammar; Chapter 1, p. 1

nose — the same three letters as کان, read in reverse, and a real

cousin of the English word this time ناک (nāk)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 10, p. 81

O

old — inherited from Sanskrit purāṇa “belonging to former times,” and a cousin of English fore and first پرانا (purānā)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 18, p. 137

one — the first number in the book, and the first word Urdu did

NOT take from Persian ایک (ek)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 28, p. 225

One to Five, By the Road Urdu Did Not Borrow

chapter topic; Chapter 28, p. 225

or — two letters, borrowed from Persian, and the word an offer

cannot be made without یا (yā)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 20, p. 157

P

People You’d Introduce

chapter topic; Chapter 9, p. 73

pleased to meet you آپ سے مل کر خوشی ہوئی (āp se mil kar khushī huī)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 3, p. 13

R

rain — Persian, built from “load” plus a noun-forming ending,

and a dead end behind that بارش (bārish)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 15, p. 113

Rain, Sun, Wind, Heat, Cold

chapter topic; Chapter 15, p. 113

Reading — Six Words, Six Lines, and a First Paragraph

chapter topic; Chapter 33, p. 251

red — Persian, and an adjective that never changes its

ending لال (lāl)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 13, p. 99

room — a noun this chapter needs something to be inside, and

the one everyday place the book has never named کمرہ (kamrā)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 23, p. 183

S

second and third — where the numbers come back and the

ending appears تیسرا دوسرا (dūsra tīsra)

Chapter 32, p. 245

seven — the s that Persian turned into an h, kept سات (sāt)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 29, p. 231

shirt — Arabic, and probably the very same word English

borrowed as chemise, by a completely different road قمیض (qamīz)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 14, p. 105

shoe — inherited, and a real cousin of English yoke, and of

Sanskrit’s own yoga जूता (jūtā)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 14, p. 105

- sister — feminine, where میرا** **was masculine, and the reason** **has to change shape** بہن (bahan)
explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 9, p. 73
- six — four's consonant with the breath added, and the shortest number in the book** چھ (chhe)
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 29, p. 231
- Six to Ten, and the Change That Happened Next Door**
chapter topic; Chapter 29, p. 231
- sky — Persian, from a root that meant stone, and a cousin of the English word hammer** آسمان (āsmān)
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 18, p. 137
- slowly, gently, take it easy — the third piece of a beginner's repair kit, and five letters already yours** سے آرام (ārām se)
explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 22, p. 175
- sunshine — inherited, and another honest dead end, like** کان **and** **before it** دھوپ (dhūp)
explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 15, p. 113

T

Take Leave

chapter topic; Chapter 5, p. 31

tea — Persian again, this time by an overland road from Chinese, and the hamza-ye letter's second word چائے (chāy)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 12, p. 93

ten — and the number a price actually names دس (das)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 29, p. 231

thank you شکریہ (shukriyā)

explicit focus: script, etymology; Chapter 1, p. 1

that, and he, she, they — the far partner of yih, inherited from the same Old Indo-Aryan pair وہ (voh)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 18, p. 137

The Heart

chapter topic; Chapter 11, p. 89

The Meeting Comes Off the Page

chapter topic; Chapter 18, p. 137

The Sentence Learns to End

chapter topic; Chapter 17, p. 125

The Ten Urdu Digits

chapter topic; Chapter 31, p. 241

The Word That Was Deferred

chapter topic; Chapter 19, p. 151

there — the last cell of the frame, and a word the reader can**predict before it is shown** وہاں (vahāñ)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 24, p. 193

this — the nearer of Urdu's two pointing words, and a word**whose second letter you cannot yet write** ٰی (yih)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 17, p. 125

three — where Urdu keeps the t that Persian threw**away** تین (tīn)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 28, p. 225

to ask — and the one place where Urdu's inherited half and its**Persian half turn out to be the same word** پوچھنا (pūchhnā)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 8, p. 63

to be — and the ending every Urdu verb wears when you name**it** ہونا (honā)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 6, p. 39

to come — literally “go toward,” built from a prefix and the verb**for going** آنا (ānā)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 6, p. 39

to go — the verb that shows the two agreements an Urdu**present tense makes at once** جانا (jānā)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 6, p. 39

to help — an Arabic noun plus a native verb, which is the**machine Urdu used to swallow two foreign vocabularies whole** مدد کرنا

(madad karnā)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 8, p. 63

to know — the Urdu cousin of English know, Latin notice, and**Greek gnosis** جاننا (jānnā)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 6, p. 39

to read — and to study, and to recite, because it never meant**reading silently** پڑھنا (paṛhnā)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 7, p. 51

to say — the verb beside بولنا that carries the words themselves,**and four letters the reader can already write** کہنا (kahnā)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 22, p. 175

to speak — the plain Indo-Aryan verb under Urdu's Persian and**Arabic finery** بولنا (bolnā)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 6, p. 39

to take — a verb worn down to one syllable, and the third job**Urdu gives the letter** لینا (lenā)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 8, p. 63

to think — a verb that began as a word for burning and

grieving سوچنا (sochnā)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 7, p. 51

to understand — literally to wake up fully, on the root that

named the Buddha سمجھنا (samajhnā)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 7, p. 51

to write — an inherited verb for an act whose every tool Urdu

named in Arabic and Persian لکھنا (likhnā)

explicit focus: script, grammar, etymology; Chapter 7, p. 51

Twenty, a Hundred, and the Nine Words That Are Not Here

chapter topic; Chapter 30, p. 237

twenty — the top of what this book can count to, and why the

teens are not here بیس (bīs)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 30, p. 237

Two Things at Once

chapter topic; Chapter 20, p. 157

two — two letters, and the same word as English two دو (do)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 28, p. 225

W

Water, Tea, Milk, Bread

chapter topic; Chapter 12, p. 93

water — the first word you would actually ask for, and a verb

from three chapters ago put back to work پانی (pānī)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 12, p. 93

we — the first plural pronoun this book has had, and one that

Urdu also lends to a single speaker being formal ہم (ham)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 25, p. 201

what کیا (kyā)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 3, p. 13

what did you say? — the repair sentence a beginner reaches for

second, made of two words this book has now taught and

nothing else کیا کہا؟ (kyā kahā?)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 22, p. 175

What is your name? (respectful) آپ کا نام کیا ہے؟ (āp kā nām kyā hai?)

explicit focus: script; Chapter 3, p. 13

When You Are Lost

chapter topic; Chapter 22, p. 175

where — the fourth member of Urdu’s k- question family, and a

cousin of English where by way of PIE *k^wis* کہاں (kahān)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 17, p. 125

Where You Are From

chapter topic; Chapter 27, p. 217

Which One: the Ordinals

chapter topic; Chapter 32, p. 245

white — Persian, and a real cousin of English white by the

Iranian road, the same shape as دل and hr̥daya سفید (safed)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 13, p. 99

who — a word this book has shown twice, glossed in passing,

and never taught کون؟ (kaun?)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 21, p. 165

Whose, and Who To

chapter topic; Chapter 26, p. 209

Why, and What For

chapter topic; Chapter 21, p. 165

why — the k- question word chapter seventeen’s family lesson

had every chance to include and did not کیوں؟ (kyūn?)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 21, p. 165

work — inherited from Sanskrit karman, whose borrowed twin

English spells karma کام (kāṁ)

explicit focus: etymology; Chapter 17, p. 125

Y

yes جی ہاں (jī hā)

explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 1, p. 1

you — respectful / familiar / intimate آپ / تم / تو (āp / tum / tū)

explicit focus: grammar, etymology; Chapter 3, p. 13

Other

آ — alif, with a wave on its head

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 7, p. 51

ا — one stroke, and a page that runs the other way

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 2, p. 9

اس (is) — this, before a postposition

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 24, p. 193

کا (is kā) — **his, her**

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 26, p. 209

ان (un) — **those, and him respectfully**

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 24, p. 193

اپنا (apnā) — **one's own**

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 26, p. 209

س — **three teeth, then a bowl, without lifting**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 1, p. 1

رک ش — **three shapes, then stop**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script, writing; Chapter 1, p. 1

ل — **alif, and then a bowl under the line**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 3, p. 13

لاہوری (Lāhaurī) — **from Lahore**

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 27, p. 217

م — **a round head, and a tail under the line**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 3, p. 13

ماں! (māñ!) — **calling somebody**

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 26, p. 209

میں (meñ) — **in**

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 23, p. 183

ن — **a deep bowl, and one dot**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 4, p. 21

نہ ... نہ ... — **neither, nor**

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 19, p. 151

و — **a head, a tail, and no hand to the left**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 8, p. 63

پ — **three dots under a boat**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 7, p. 51

پر (par) — **on**

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 23, p. 183

ک — **a bowl with a slash laid over it**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 4, p. 21

کروں (kamroñ) — **more than one, before a postposition**

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 25, p. 201

کمرے (kamre) — **more than one**

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 25, p. 201

کمرے (kamre) — **the shape a noun takes before a postposition**

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 23, p. 183

کو (ko) — **to, and the one it happens to**

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 23, p. 183

کہ (ki) — **that**

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 21, p. 165

ہیں؟ ٹھیک آپ کیا — **the question that could not be asked**

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 19, p. 151

کے لیے (ke liye) — **for, in order to**

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 21, p. 165

ن — **nūn with the dot taken off**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 6, p. 39

ہ — **the round he, and its four faces**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 5, p. 31

ہماری (hamārā) — **our**

grammar topic; explicit focus: grammar; Chapter 25, p. 201

ی — **one S-curve, no dots**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 5, p. 31

ے — **the big ye, and the end of the sentence**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 6, p. 39

• ۱ — **two digits, and a direction that reverses**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 31, p. 241

۲ ۳ — **one tooth apart**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 31, p. 241

۴ ۵ ۶ — **the three Urdu keeps for itself**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 31, p. 241

۷ ۸ ۹ — **a mirror pair, and the ring**

script and writing topic; explicit focus: script; Chapter 31, p. 241