

देवनागरी - भूमिका
Introduction to the Devanāgarī Script
Version 0.1

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Vowels: Svāra

The sounds of the Sanskrit alphabet are divided among the different places in the mouth; a and ā are pronounced in the throat, i and ī at the palate, u and ū with the lips, ṛ and ṝ with the tongue curled upward at the roof of the mouth, ḷ and ḹ at the teeth, e at the palate, ai sliding from throat to palate, o at the lips, au sliding from throat to lips, and aḥ at the throat. (ā is a nasal sound)

अ — a, pronounced like “a” in “Roman,”¹

आ — ā, pronounced like “a” in “father,”

इ — i, pronounced like “i” in “it” or “pin,”

ई — ī, pronounced like “i” in “police,”

उ — u, pronounced like “u” in “push,”

ऊ — ū, pronounced like “u” in “rude,”

ऋ — ṛ, pronounced like “er” in “fiber,”

ॠ — ṝ, pronounced like “ree” in “reel,”

ऌ — ḷ, pronounced like “le” in “angle,”

ॡ — ḹ, pronounced like “lea” in “leash,”

ए — e, pronounced like “ay” in “way,”

ऐ — ai, pronounced like “ai” in “aisle,”

ओ — o, pronounced like “o” in “note,”

¹Many of these pronunciation examples have been taken from the fine introduction to Sanskrit called *Sanskrit: an easy introduction to an enchanting language* by Ashok Aklujkar. (Richmond, British Columbia: Svādhyāya Publications, 1992)

औ — au, pronounced like “ow” in “now,”
अं — aṁ, pronounced like “ung” in “rung,”
अः — aḥ, pronounced like “aha,”

Consonants: Viṣṇujana/Vyañjana

The Ka-varga

These velar consonants are all pronounced in the throat.

क् — k, pronounced like the “k” in “sky,”
ख् — kh, pronounced like “c” in “cat,”
ग् — g, pronounced like the “g” in “gum,”
घ् — gh, pronounced like the “gh” in “doghouse,”
ङ् — ṅ, pronounced like “ng” in “sung,”

The Ca-varga

These palatal consonants are all pronounced at the palate.

च् — c, pronounced like the “ch” in “church,”
छ् — ch, pronounced like the “ch” in “chew,”
ज् — j, pronounced like “j” in “jump,”
झ् — jh, pronounce this like “j” with a strong outward breath,
ञ् — ñ, pronounced like “n” in “canyon,”

The ṭa-varga

These retroflex consonants are all pronounced with the tip of the tongue curled upward touching the roof of the mouth.

ṭ — ṭ, pronounced like the “t” in “art” or “stop,”

ṭh — ṭh, pronounced like the “th” in “boathouse,”

ḍ — ḍ, pronounced like “d” in “ardent” or “bird,”

ḍh — ḍh, pronounce this like “dh” in “hardhat,”

ṇ — ṇ, pronounced like “n” in “yarn,” “land” or “tint,”

The ta-varga

These dental consonants are all pronounced at the teeth.

त — t, pronounced like the “th” in “the,” “them” or the french word “*tete* (head),

थ — th, pronounced like the above letter ‘t’, but with more aspiration,

द — d, pronounced like in the french word “*donner*” (to give),

ध — dh, pronounce this like “d” with a strong outward breath,

न — n, pronounced like “n” in “no,”

The pa-varga

These labial consonants are all pronounced with the lips.

प् — p, pronounced like the “p” in “spin,”

फ् — pha, pronounced like the “ph” in “tophat,”

ब् — b, pronounced like “b” in “boat,”

भ् — bh, pronounced like “bh” in “abhor,”

म् — m, pronounced like “m” in “mud,”

The Semivowels

The sounds are divided thus; y is produced at the palate, r at the roof of the mouth, l at the teeth, and v at the lips.

य् — y, pronounced like the “y” in “yoga,”

र्य् — r, pronounced like the “r” in “relic,”

ल्य् — l, pronounced like “l” in “land,”

व्य् — v, pronounced like “v” in “vote,”

The Sibilants

The sounds are divided thus; ś is produced at the palate, ṣ at the roof of the mouth, s at the teeth, and h at the throat.

श् — ś, pronounced like the “sh” in “Swedish-chocolate,”

ष् — ṣ, pronounced with tongue curled upward touching the roof of the mouth,

स् — s, pronounced like “s” in “sun,”

ह् — h, pronounced like “h” in “house,”

Combining Vowels and Consonants

Most vowel consonant combinations follow the pattern shown here.

क	+	अ	=	क
क	+	आ	=	का
क	+	इ	=	कि
क	+	ई	=	की
क	+	उ	=	कु
क	+	ऊ	=	कू
क	+	ऋ	=	कृ
क	+	ॠ	=	कृ
क	+	ऌ	=	कृ
क	+	ॡ	=	कृ
क	+	ए	=	के
क	+	ऐ	=	कै
क	+	ओ	=	को
क	+	औ	=	कौ

and

ग्	+	अ	=	ग
ग्	+	आ	=	गा
ग्	+	इ	=	गि
ग्	+	ई	=	गी
ग्	+	उ	=	गु
ग्	+	ऊ	=	गू
ग्	+	ऋ	=	गृ
ग्	+	ॠ	=	गृ
ग्	+	ऌ	=	ग्ल
ग्	+	ॡ	=	ग्ल
ग्	+	ए	=	गे
ग्	+	ऐ	=	गै
ग्	+	ओ	=	गो
ग्	+	औ	=	गौ

And so forth.

Compound Consonants

क्क kka	क्ख kkha	क्च kca	क्ण kṇa	क्त kta	क्त्य ktya
क्त्र ktra	क्त्रय ktrya	क्त्वा ktva	क्न kna	क्न्य knya	क्म kma
क्य kya	क्र kra	क्रय krya	क्ल kla	क्व kva	क्व्य kvya
क्ष kṣa	क्ष्म kṣma	क्ष्य kṣya	क्ष्व kṣva	ख्य khya	ख्र khra
ग्य gya	ग्र gra	ग्रय grya	घ्न ghna	घ्न्य ghnya	घ्म ghma
घ्य ghya	घ्र ghra	ङ्क ṅka	ङ्क ṅta	ङ्क्य ṅktya	ङ्क्य ṅkya
ङ्क ṅkṣa	ङ्कṣ ṅkṣva	ङ्क्य ṅkya	ङ्क्य ṅkya	ङ्ग ṅga	ङ्ग्य ṅgya
ङ्घ ṅgha	ङ्घ्य ṅghya	ङ्घ ṅghra	ङ्घ ṅghra	ङ्घ ṅgha	ङ्घ ṅgha
ञ्य ñya	ञ्च cca	ञ्छ ccha	ञ्छ cchra	ञ्च cña	ञ्म cma
च्य cya	छ्य chya	छ्य chra	ज्ज jja	ज्ज jja	ज्ञ jña
ज्य jña	ज्म jma	ज्य ज्या	ज्र jra	ज्व jva	ञ्च ñca
ञ्म ñcma	ञ्य ñcya	ञ्छ ñcha	ञ्ज ñja	ञ्ज्य ñjya	ट्ट ṭṭa
ट्य ṭya	ट्थ ṭhya	ट्थ ṭhra	ङ्ग ḍga	ङ्ग्य ḍgya	ङ्घ ḍgha
ङ्घ ḍghra	ङ्घ ḍghra	ङ्घ ḍghra	ङ्घ ḍghra	ङ्घ ḍghra	ङ्घ ḍghra
ण्ट ṇ ṭa	ण्ट ṇṭha	ण्ड ṇḍa	ण्ड्य ṇḍya	ण्ड्य ṇḍya	ण्ड्य ṇḍya
ण्ढ ṇ ḍha	ण्ण ṇṇa	ण्म ṇma	ण्य ṇya	ण्व ṇva	त्क tka
त्क्र tkra	त्त tta	त्य ttya	त्त ttra	त्व ttva	त्थ ttha
त्न tna	त्न्य tnya	त्प tpa	त्प्र tpra	त्म tma	त्म्य tmya
त्य tyā	त्र tra	त्र्य trya	त्व tva	त्स tsa	त्स्र tsna
त्स्व tsnva	थ्व thva	द्ग dga	द्ग dgra	द्घ dgha	द्घ dghra
द्द dda	द्द्य ddyā	द्द ddha	द्द ddhya	द्द dna	द्द dba
द्भ dbha	द्भ्य dbhya	द्म dma	द्म dya	द्म dra	द्म drya
द्द dva	द्द द्या	द्ध dhna	द्ध्य dhnya	द्म dhma	द्ध्य dhya
द्ध dhra	द्ध्य dhrya	ध्व dhva	न्त nta	न्त्य ntya	न्त्र ntra
न्द nda	न्द्र ndra	न्ध ndha	न्ध ndhra	न्न nna	न्प npa
न्प्र npra	न्म nma	न्य nya	न्न nra	न्स nsa	प्त pta
प्य pyā	प्न pna	प्प ppa	प्म pma	प्य pya	प्र pra
प्ल pla	प्व pva	प्स psa	प्स्व psva	ब्घ bgha	ब्ज bja
ब्द bda	ब्ध bdha	ब्ब bna	ब्ब bba	ब्म bbha	ब्भ्य bbhya
ब्भ bya	ब्र bra	ब्ब bva	भ्र bhna	भ्य bhya	भ्र bhra
भ्व bhva	म्र mra	म्प mpa	म्प्र mpra	म्ब mba	म्भ mbha
म्म mma	म्य mya	म्र mra	स्र mla	म्व mva	य्य yya
य्व yva	ल्क lka	ल्प lpa	ल्म lma	ल्य lya	ल्ल lla
ल्व lva	ल्ह lha	व्व vna	व्य vya	व्र vra	व्व vva
श्च śca	श्च्य ścya	श्च śna	श्य śya	श्च śra	श्य śrya

स्र śla	श्व śva	श्र्य śvya	श्रश śśa	ष्ट ṣṭa	श्र्य ṣṭya
ष्ट ṣṭra	श्र्य ṣṭrya	श्र्य ṣṭva	ष्ट ṣṭha	ष्ण ṣṇa	ष्ण्य ṣṇya
ष्प ṣpa	ष्प्र ṣpra	ष्म ṣma	ष्प ṣya	ष्व ṣva	स्क ska
स्व skha	स्त sta	स्त्य stya	स्त्र stra	स्त्व stv	स्थ stha
स्र sna	सन्य snya	स्प spa	स्फ spha	स्म sma	सम्य smya
स्य sya	स्र sra	स्व sva	स्स ssa	ह्र hṛa	ह्र hna
ह्र hma	ह्य hya	ह्र hra	ह्र hla	ह्र hva	

Pronunciation Table

	guttural	palatal	retroflex	dental	labial
short vowel	अ	इ	ऋ	लृ	उ
long vowel	आ	ई ए	ऋ	लृ	ऊ औ
unvoiced/unaspirated	क	च	ट	त	प
unvoiced/aspirated	ख	छ	ठ	थ	फ
voiced/unaspirated	ग	ज	ड	द	ब
voiced/aspirated	घ	झ	ढ	ध	भ
nasal	ङ	ञ	ण	न	म
semivowel		य	र	ल	व
sibilants		श	ष	स	ह

ऐ slides from guttural to palatal.

औ slides from guttural to labial.