

LIVING REFERENCE

SANSKRIT LEARNING HELPER

English v0.2 • Companion to Levels 0–3

अ • क • रामः • गच्छति

Sounds, script, forms and sentence-reading clues—
organized for consultation, not compulsory memorization.

HOW THIS HELPER WILL GROW

This living reference supports Levels 0 and 1. New examples, patterns and cross-references will be added as Levels 2 and 3 are completed.

Sudhir K Agarwal, PhD

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LifeLoveMe: learning connected to life

LifeLoveMe is a developing human-centered framework for learning, reflection, wellness, relationships, memories and practical life assistance. It uses technology and AI as companions: to organize knowledge around a person's goals, preserve meaningful experiences and make learning easier to explore at one's own pace.

WHY THIS SERIES BELONGS HERE

Language is not presented as a wall of rules. The learner begins with a small example, observes what changes, compares Sanskrit with familiar languages and gradually builds confidence. This Helper is designed to evolve with that journey.

About the Author

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1. How to read this Helper

This is a reference companion, not a grammar book to memorize from beginning to end. Begin with an example in the lesson, consult the relevant entry here, and then return to the sentence.

Colour / label	Learning priority	What to do
B • CORE	Core	Learn and use now; common in both Sanskrit and Hindi.
G • SANSKRIT	Sanskrit-essential	Notice carefully; important in Sanskrit and often uncommon, merged or altered in everyday Hindi.
Y • OCCASIONAL	Occasional	Recognize it when encountered; memorization can wait.
R • SPECIALIST	Specialist	Vedic, historical or very rare; included for completeness.
H • HINDI	Hindi addition	Used in modern Hindi or loanwords, but not part of the traditional Classical Sanskrit inventory.

ACCESSIBILITY NOTE

Colour is never the only signal. Every entry also carries a written label, so the guide remains usable in black-and-white printing and for readers with colour-vision differences.

The visual language

Marker	Meaning	How it is used
 Observe	Look before learning a rule	Notice what changed between examples.
 Pronounce	Pay attention to sound	Compare place of articulation, vowel length or aspiration.
 Analyze	Separate the form	Identify stem, ending and possible grammatical features.
 Pattern	Keep the central insight	State the smallest useful generalization.
 Compare	Contrast systems	Compare Sanskrit with Hindi or English when helpful.
 Caution	Do not overgeneralize	See where a beginner shortcut can fail.

2. Devanagari: sounds before letter names

A COMBINING SIGN NEEDS A HOST

Do not judge ँ, ः, ऌ or a vowel sign from an isolated mark alone. The dotted circle shows its attachment point; an actual example such as अं, रामः, क् or कृ shows how it behaves in text.

IAST provides exact scholarly transliteration. The English guide is only an approximation: Sanskrit dental, retroflex and aspirated sounds do not map perfectly onto ordinary English spelling.

2.1 Independent vowels and their signs

Priority	Vowel	IAST	Sign + क	Pronunciation clue	Example
B • CORE	अ	a	— • क	short a; inherent vowel	अग्निः • agniḥ
B • CORE	आ	ā	ा • का	long aa, as in father	आकाशः • ākāśaḥ
B • CORE	इ	i	ि • कि	short i	इति • iti
B • CORE	ई	ī	ी • की	long ee	ईश्वरः • īśvaraḥ
B • CORE	उ	u	ु • कु	short u	उदकम् • udakam
B • CORE	ऊ	ū	ू • कू	long oo	ऊर्जा • ūrjā
G • SANSKRIT	ऋ	r̥	ृ • कृ	syllabic r; not simply ri	ऋषिः • ṛṣiḥ
Y • OCCASIONAL	ॠ	r̄	ॠ • कृ	long syllabic r	rare grammatical forms
R • SPECIALIST	ऌ	l̥	ॡ • कृ	syllabic l	extremely rare root/form
R • SPECIALIST	ॢ	l̄	ॢ • कृ	long syllabic l	specialist inventory
B • CORE	ए	e	े • के	long e	एकः • ekaḥ
B • CORE	ऐ	ai	ै • कै	diphthong ai	ऐक्यम् • aikyam
B • CORE	ओ	o	ो • को	long o	ओजः • ojaḥ
B • CORE	औ	au	ौ • कौ	diphthong au	औषधम् • auśadham

👁️ OBSERVE

The sign for इ appears visually before the consonant in कि, but the syllable is pronounced ki—not ik. Devanagari signs must be read as part of the complete syllable.

2.2 Consonants: five ordered classes

Each class moves from the back of the mouth toward the lips. Within a class, the pattern is: unvoiced, unvoiced aspirated, voiced, voiced aspirated, nasal.

Priority	Class	Unvoiced	+ breath	Voiced	+ breath	Nasal
B • CORE	Velar • कण्ठ्य	क k	ख kh	ग g	घ gh	ङ ṅ
B • CORE	Palatal • तालव्य	च c	छ ch	ज j	झ jh	ञ ñ
G • SANSKRIT	Retroflex • मूर्धन्य	ट ṭ	ठ ṭh	ड ḍ	ढ ḍh	ण ṇ
B • CORE	Dental • दन्त्य	त t	थ th	द d	ध dh	न n
B • CORE	Labial • ओष्ठ्य	प p	फ ph	ब b	भ bh	म m

🗨️ ASPIRATION IS NOT AN EXTRA H

क / ख, ग / घ, त / थ and द / ध are contrasting sounds. Sanskrit थ is an aspirated dental t, not the English th of “thin” or “this.”

2.3 Semivowels, sibilants and h

Priority	Letter	IAST	Type	Pronunciation clue	Example
B • CORE	य	y	semivowel	yes	यज्ञः • yajñah
B • CORE	र	r	semivowel	tap/roll	रामः • rāmaḥ
B • CORE	ल	l	semivowel	light l	लता • latā
G • SANSKRIT	व	v	semivowel	between English v and w	वनम् • vanam
G • SANSKRIT	श	ś	palatal sibilant	front/palatal sh	शिवः • śivaḥ
G • SANSKRIT	ष	ṣ	retroflex sibilant	retroflex sh	षट् • ṣaṭ
B • CORE	स	s	dental sibilant	s near teeth	सत्यम् • satyam
B • CORE	ह	h	aspirate	breathy h	हरिः • hariḥ
Y • OCCASIONAL	ळ	ḷa	retroflex lateral	regional/Vedic lateral	rare in Classical prose

2.4 Dependent signs and punctuation

Priority	Display	Name	IAST	What it does	Example
G • SANSKRIT	ं / अं	anusvāra	ṁ	nasal whose realization may adapt to the following consonant	संस्कृतम्
Y • OCCASIONAL	ँ / अँ	candrabindu	ṁ̐	nasalizes the vowel	rare in ordinary Sanskrit prose
G • SANSKRIT	ः / अः	visarga	ḥ	post-vocalic breath-like sound; changes under sandhi	रामः
G • SANSKRIT	् / क्	virāma / halant	—	removes the inherent a	खाद्
Y • OCCASIONAL	s	avagraha	,	marks elided initial अ after certain sandhi	रामोऽस्ति
B • CORE		daṇḍa	—	sentence or half-verse boundary	रामः पठति।
B • CORE		double daṇḍa	—	end of a verse or larger division	...

2.5 Common conjunct consonants

Priority	Form	Built from	IAST	Example
B • CORE	क्ष	क् + ष	kṣa	क्षेत्रम् • kṣetram
B • CORE	त्र	त् + र	tra	त्रयः • trayah
G • SANSKRIT	ज्ञ	ज् + ञ	jña	ज्ञानम् • jñānam
B • CORE	श्र	श् + र	śra	श्रद्धा • śraddhā
B • CORE	द्य	द् + य	dya	विद्या • vidyā
B • CORE	द्व	द् + व	dva	द्वारम् • dvāram
B • CORE	त्त	त् + त	tta	सत्त्वम् • sattvam
B • CORE	न्त	न् + त	nta	अन्तः • antaḥ

⚠ THESE ARE NOT NEW BASIC CONSONANTS

क्ष, त्र and ज्ञ are traditionally recited with the alphabet in some schools, but structurally they are conjuncts formed from two consonants.

2.6 Hindi additions: useful for comparison

Category	Hindi form	Transliteration	Typical use
H • HINDI	क	q	Persian/Arabic q
H • HINDI	ख	x / kh	sound in खान
H • HINDI	ग़	ḡ	Persian/Arabic gh
H • HINDI	ज़	z	z sound
H • HINDI	फ़	f	f sound
H • HINDI	ड़	ṛ	flapped retroflex sound
H • HINDI	ढ़	ṛh	aspirated counterpart

These letters are legitimate parts of modern Hindi orthography, especially in loanwords. They are shown separately because they are not members of the traditional Classical Sanskrit phoneme inventory.

2.7 Hindi habits that can conceal Sanskrit contrasts

Feature	Common Hindi tendency	Sanskrit learning point
श / ष / स	May merge in regional or casual speech	Traditionally three distinct sounds; spelling and derivation matter.
व	Often heard or described as v/w	Treat it as a Sanskrit semivowel with context-sensitive realization.
ऋ	Frequently pronounced ri	Traditionally a syllabic r; practical pronunciations vary.
अ	Often deleted in spoken Hindi	Retain it according to Sanskrit phonology and metre.
ं	Often treated as one generic nasal dot	Its pronunciation commonly follows the place of the next consonant.
ः	Uncommon in ordinary Hindi	Frequent in Sanskrit forms and sandhi.
Vowel length	May receive less attention	ह्रस्व/दीर्घ contrast can affect form, meaning and metre.

3. Halant and visarga through examples

3.1 Halant / virāma: the vowel remover

BUILD THE FORM

क normally represents ka because अ is inherent. क् represents only k. Thus खाद् is a root ending in the consonant d; it is not pronounced khāda as a bare root citation.

Form	What changed	Use
क	consonant + inherent अ	a complete syllable: ka
क्	halant removes inherent अ	bare consonant: k
त् + र → त्र	two consonants combine	conjunct tra
सत् + चित् → सच्चित्	final and initial consonants interact	sandhi/conjunct result

3.2 Visarga: a sound that responds to its neighbour

Visarga is written after a vowel. In careful recitation it has a breath-like realization coloured by the preceding vowel. Its written or spoken form can change before the next sound.

Before combination	Result	What to observe
रामः + अस्ति	रामोऽस्ति	अः before अ becomes औ; avagraha marks the lost initial अ.
देवः + अपि	देवोऽपि	The same common pattern.
रामः + पठति	रामः पठति	Visarga remains written before प in ordinary spelling.
नमः + ते	नमस्ते	Visarga is replaced in this established sandhi form.

BEGIN WITH RECOGNITION

Visarga sandhi has several conditioned patterns. Learn the frequent examples first; do not try to infer every possibility from one formula.

4. A small sandhi guide

Sandhi means regular sound adjustment where sounds meet. First learn to recover the two meaningful parts; the technical rule name can come later.

Priority	Separate forms	Combined form	Observed change	Meaning
B • CORE	रामः + अस्ति	रामोऽस्ति	visarga + vowel	Rāma is
B • CORE	देवः + अपि	देवोऽपि	visarga + vowel	the god also
B • CORE	विद्या + आलयः	विद्यालयः	vowel joining	school; “abode of learning”
G • SANSKRIT	महा + ईश्वरः	महेश्वरः	vowel change	great lord
B • CORE	तत् + जनः	तज्जनः	consonant assimilation	that person
B • CORE	सत् + चित्	सच्चित्	consonant assimilation	being-consciousness
Y • OCCASIONAL	जगत् + नाथः	जगन्नाथः	consonant assimilation	lord of the world
Y • OCCASIONAL	मनः + रथः	मनोरथः	visarga change	wish; “mind’s chariot”

5. Vibhakti: a quick role-finding reference

A vibhakti is a visible noun-form category. A kāraka is a semantic relation to an action. They often correspond, but they are not identical.

Vibhakti	Singular example	Beginner question	Frequent clue
प्रथमा • 1	रामः	who/what is presented?	often subject; patient in many passive constructions
द्वितीया • 2	रामम्	whom/what? where to?	object or goal
तृतीया • 3	रामेण	by/with whom?	instrument or passive agent
चतुर्थी • 4	रामाय	to/for whom?	recipient or beneficiary
पञ्चमी • 5	रामात्	from whom/what?	source, separation or cause
षष्ठी • 6	रामस्य	whose?	possession or relation
सप्तमी • 7	रामे	where/in what?	location or setting
सम्बोधन	हे राम	O ...!	person addressed

⚠️ CASE IS NOT ROLE

In रामेण फलम् खाद्यते, रामेण is instrumental in form but agent in meaning. Let the construction and verb determine the role.

6. Selected high-utility dhātus

The dhātu is a verbal root, not necessarily the visible present stem. Compare गम् → गच्छति, दृश् → पश्यति and दा → ददाति.

Dhātu	Present form	Meaning	Sanskrit example	English
अस्	अस्ति	be	रामः गृहे अस्ति।	Rāma is at home.
भू	भवति	become/be	सः प्रसन्नः भवति।	He becomes happy.
गम्	गच्छति	go	बालकः विद्यालयं गच्छति।	The boy goes to school.
आगम्	आगच्छति	come	सीता गृहम् आगच्छति।	Sitā comes home.
दृश्	पश्यति	see	रामः फलम् पश्यति।	Rāma sees the fruit.
खाद्	खादति	eat	बालकः फलम् खादति।	The boy eats the fruit.
पा	पिबति	drink	बालिका जलं पिबति।	The girl drinks water.
पठ्	पठति	read	छात्रः पुस्तकं पठति।	The student reads a book.
लिख्	लिखति	write	सीता पत्रं लिखति।	Sitā writes a letter.
वद्	वदति	speak	गुरुः वदति।	The teacher speaks.
कृ	करोति	do/make	सः कार्यं करोति।	He does the work.
दा	ददाति	give	रामः सीतायै पुष्पं ददाति।	Rāma gives Sitā a flower.
नी	नयति	lead/take	पिता बालकं नयति।	The father takes the boy.
स्था	तिष्ठति	stand/stay	सः तत्र तिष्ठति।	He stays there.
हस्	हसति	laugh	बालकः हसति।	The boy laughs.
क्रीड्	क्रीडति	play	बालकाः क्रीडन्ति।	The boys play.
स्मृ	स्मरति	remember	अहं रामं स्मरामि।	I remember Rāma.
श्रु	शृणोति	hear	छात्रः वचनं शृणोति।	The student hears the statement.

7. Beginner verb framework

For one present-tense active pattern, Sanskrit combines three persons with three numbers. Traditional Sanskrit person names run in the reverse order from English classroom labels: प्रथम refers to “he/she/it,” मध्यम to “you,” and उत्तम to “I/we.”

Person	Singular	Dual	Plural	Meaning pattern
प्रथम • other	पश्यति	पश्यतः	पश्यन्ति	he/she sees • two see • they see
मध्यम • you	पश्यसि	पश्यथः	पश्यथ	you see • you two see • you all see
उत्तम • I/we	पश्यामि	पश्यावः	पश्यामः	I see • we two see • we see

💡 WHY NUMBER APPEARS TWICE

A stated noun or pronoun carries its own number, and a finite verb normally agrees with the subject. If the subject is omitted, the verb ending can still supply person and number: पश्यामः already means “we see.”

8. Three noun patterns to recognize first

Priority	Pattern	Stem	One	Exactly two	More than two
B • CORE	Masculine ॐ-stem	राम	रामः	रामौ	रामाः
B • CORE	Neuter ॐ-stem	फल	फलम्	फले	फलानि
G • SANSKRIT	Feminine ॐ-stem	लता	लता	लते	लताः

These are nominative forms only. The complete $3 \times 3 \times 8$ framework adds gender, number and the eight traditional case/address positions. The Helper will expand the relevant patterns as later levels require them.

9. Five beginner lakāra meanings

Lakāra	Example	Beginner translation	Central use
लट्	गच्छति	goes / is going	present
लङ्	अगच्छत्	went / was going	narrative past
लृट्	गमिष्यति	will go	future
लोट्	गच्छतु	let him/her go	command or request
विधिलिङ्	गच्छेत्	may/should go	possibility, advice or prescription

⚠ MEANING IS BROADER THAN ONE ENGLISH TENSE

The translations above are learning anchors, not complete definitions. Context, aspect and textual style can change the best English rendering.

10. Major sentence-reading principles

Step	Principle	Practical instruction
1	Read the whole sentence	Do not translate the first word before seeing the predicate and endings.
2	Find the predicate	It may be a finite verb, participle, noun/adjective, or an implied अस्ति.
3	Examine the complete form	A final letter alone does not establish noun, verb, case or person.
4	Generate possibilities	Let morphology supply possible analyses before selecting one.
5	Ask what the verb expects	An eater invites food; a giver often invites gift and recipient.
6	Separate case from role	Vibhakti is form; kāraka is semantic relation.
7	Use agreement	Verb person/number and adjective/participle features constrain the reading.
8	Use word order as evidence	Order can signal ordinary structure or emphasis, but does not work alone.
9	Use context after grammar	Context ranks grammatically permitted readings; it does not legalize an impossible one.
10	Report uncertainty	When two readings remain possible, preserve both and explain the confidence.

11. Essential glossary

Term	Plain English	Definition	Example
varṇa • वर्ण	sound/letter	a basic sound unit or its written sign	क् + अ → क
dhātu • धातु	verbal root	lexical root behind verb forms and related words	दृश् → पश्यति
prātipadika • प्रातिपदिक	nominal stem	noun/adjective base before case-number ending	राम- → रामः
pratyaya • प्रत्यय	suffix/ending	grammatical element added to a base	पश्य + ति → पश्यति
pada • पद	inflected word	a form ready for syntactic use	रामः; पश्यति
kriyā • क्रिया	action/state	the event, process or state expressed	खादति; अस्ति
vidheya • विधेय	predicate	what the sentence asserts	रामः राजा।
liṅga • लिङ्ग	gender	masculine, feminine or neuter grammatical class	बालकः; लता; फलम्
vacana • वचन	number	singular, dual or plural	रामः; रामौ; रामाः
vibhakti • विभक्ति	case form	noun-form category that constrains relations	रामः / रामम् / रामेण
kāraka • कारक	semantic role	participant's meaning-relation to an action	agent, object, instrument
kartṛ • कर्तृ	agent	participant presented as independently carrying out action	रामः खादति।
karma • कर्म	object/patient	participant directly reached or affected	फलम् खादति।
karaṇa • करण	instrument	effective means used for an action	छुरिकया छिनत्ति।
sampradāna • सम्प्रदान	recipient	participant to/for whom something is directed	सीतायै ददाति।
puruṣa • पुरुष	person	speaker, addressee or other participant encoded by verb	पश्यामि / पश्यसि / पश्यति
lakāra • लकार	tense/mood system	traditional verbal category for time or modality	गच्छति / अगच्छत् / गच्छेत्
vācya • वाच्य	voice	how action and participants are presented	active / passive
anvaya • अन्वय	agreement/connection	matching or syntactic connection of related forms	रामाः पश्यन्ति।

Term	Plain English	Definition	Example
ākāṅkṣā / valency	expectancy	participants a word or verb invites for completion	ददाति: giver, gift, recipient
sandhi • सन्धि	sound joining	regular sound changes where sounds meet	रामः + अस्ति → रामोऽस्ति
samāsa • समास	compound	meaningful elements compressed into one expression	राजपुत्रः
sandarbha • सन्दर्भ	context	surrounding situation and discourse	rain changes plausibility
anekārthatā • अनेकार्थता	ambiguity	more than one analysis or meaning remains possible	फलम् जलं स्पृशति।

12. Specialist reference: what is intentionally deferred

A complete history of Devanagari and Vedic notation would distract from sentence reading. The following items are acknowledged here and will be expanded only when a lesson requires them.

Priority	Topic	What it includes	Why it is deferred
R • SPECIALIST	Vedic pitch accents	udāṭṭa, anudāṭṭa and svarita notation	Needed for Vedic recitation, not ordinary Classical prose.
R • SPECIALIST	jihvāmūliya	special visarga-like realization before क/ख	Vedic/phonetic specialist study.
R • SPECIALIST	upadhmāniya	special visarga-like realization before प/फ	Vedic/phonetic specialist study.
R • SPECIALIST	extended nasal signs	special manuscript or recitational notation	Not required for the beginner pathway.
Y • OCCASIONAL	regional glyph variants	different shapes for conjuncts and letters	Recognize variation across fonts and publishing traditions.

THE METHOD TO REMEMBER

See the example. Notice the change. Name the pattern only when the name helps. Test it on a new sentence. Keep alternative readings when the evidence does not decide.