

# संस्कृतम्

# SANSKRIT PRONUNCIATION

अ	A	short a like <b>but</b> <sup>1</sup>
आ	Ā	long a like <b>father</b> <sup>1</sup>
ए	E	long e like <b>bed</b> <sup>1</sup>
इ	I	short i like <b>happy</b> <sup>2</sup>
ई	Ī	long i like <b>feel</b> , machine
ओ	O	long o like <b>law</b> <sup>3</sup>
उ	U	short u like <b>put</b> , <b>look</b>
ऊ	Ū	long u like <b>mood</b> <sup>1</sup>
ऐ	AI	short a + short i like <b>eye</b>
औ	AU	short a + short u like <b>proud</b>

ल	L	love
र	R	Indian <b>roti</b> <sup>4</sup>
व	V	between <b>wine</b> and <b>vine</b>
य	Y	<b>yes</b>

ं	Ṁ	hum <sup>5</sup>
ः	Ḥ	h + last vowel repeated <sup>6</sup>

ह	H	<b>high</b>
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ऋ	Ṛ	<b>pretty</b> <sup>4</sup>
ॠ	Ṝ	<b>Rita</b> <sup>4</sup>
ऌ	Ḍ	<b>bottle</b> + short i

ब	B	<b>bin</b>
भ	BH	<b>abhor</b>
प	P	<b>spin</b>
फ	PH	scoop <b>honey</b>

म	M	<b>much</b>
न	N	<b>nice</b>
ज	Ñ	<b>canyon</b>
ड	Ṇ	<b>sing</b>
ण	ṅ	retroflex <sup>8</sup> <b>n</b>

द	D	similar to <b>day</b> <sup>7</sup>
ध	DH	similar to <b>good</b> <sup>7</sup> <b>honey</b>
ड	Ḍ	retroflex <sup>8</sup> <b>d</b>
ढ	ḌH	retroflex <sup>8</sup> <b>d + h</b>
त	T	similar to <b>table</b> <sup>7</sup>
थ	TH	<b>eat</b> <sup>7</sup> <b>honey</b> <sup>9</sup>
ट	Ṭ	retroflex <sup>8</sup> <b>t</b>
ठ	ṬH	retroflex <sup>8</sup> <b>t + h</b>

ग	G	<b>give</b> , <b>dog</b>
घ	GH	<b>doghouse</b>
क	K	<b>kiss</b> , <b>cat</b>
ख	KH	<b>ask her</b>

च	C	<b>chair</b>
छ	CH	<b>chew</b>
ज	J	<b>juice</b>
झ	JH	<b>hedgheg</b>

स	S	<b>soup</b>
श	Ś	<b>sheep</b> <sup>10</sup>
ष	Ṣ	retroflex <sup>8</sup> <b>sh</b>

## WHAT IS SANSKRIT?

Sanskrit is the language of yoga. It's written in Devanāgarī, which is a different writing system than Latin script (the writing system used in English).

→ Devanāgarī looks like this: प्राणायाम

## WHAT IS „IAST“?

To make it possible for you to read Sanskrit, Yoga Paper uses the IAST system for writing Sanskrit. IAST is the „International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration“.

→ IAST looks like this: prāṇāyāma

## WHAT IS A DIACRITIC?

The IAST writing system uses Latin script with diacritics (tiny symbols like dots, horizontal lines or accents) because more characters are needed to describe all Sanskrit sounds.

→ Diacritics look like this: ṁ ṅ ḥ

## RETROFLEX SOUNDS

Sanskrit has some characters and sounds that don't exist in English.

Retroflex means that the tip of your tongue is pointed more backwards than in English. They are marked with a tiny dot underneath:

→ Retroflex sounds look like this: ḍ ṅ ṣ

## ASPIRATED SOUNDS

Aspiration means that there is a puff of breath after the consonant. For example, most English speakers pronounce **pin** aspirated but **nip** unaspirated. In Sanskrit, aspirated consonant are followed by an h.

→ Aspirated: dh ḍh th ṭh gh kh ch jh

→ Unaspirated: d ḍ t ṭ g k c j

## SOURCES

Killingley, Dermot: *Beginning Sanskrit*  
Stiehl, Ulrich: *The Original Pronunciation of Sanskrit*  
Bachmann, Nicolai: *The Language of Yoga*

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<sup>1</sup> UK pronunciation (Received Pronunciation)

<sup>2</sup> US pronunciation

<sup>3</sup> Australian pronunciation

<sup>4</sup> Use the Indian R, Scottish R or Spanish R, but not the English R.

<sup>5</sup> The sound ṁ is called Anusvāra and marks a nasal sound. This can be m, ñ, ṅ, n or ṇ. Experts disagree on how it's pronounced.

<sup>6</sup> The sound ḥ is called Visarga and it repeats the last vowel. Example: „ih“ is pronounced „ihī“.

<sup>7</sup> Your tongue is positioned further forward, against your teeth, same position as English „th“

<sup>8</sup> The tip of your tongue is pointed more backwards than in English

<sup>9</sup> Not like „th“ in English!

<sup>10</sup> Tongue more forward than in English