The Aruna Sanskrit Language Series

The Aruna Sanskrit Grammar Reference

A.K. Aruna *PDF version*

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Upasana Yoga Media

Invocation

नारायणं नमस्कृत्य नरं चैव नरोत्तमम्।
देवीं सरस्वतीं चैव ततो जयमुदीरयेत्॥

Nārāyaṇaṃ namaskṛtya naraṃ caiva narottamam.

Devīṃ sarasvatīṃ caiva tato jayam udīrayet.

Bowing to Lord *Nārāyaṇa* (*Kṛṣṇa*), to *Nara*, the best of men [namely *Arjuna*], and to the Goddess [of knowledge] *Sarasvatī*, then may one commence the [lore called] *Jaya* (Victory).

Mahābhārata 1.1

The Aruna Sanskrit Language Series

The Aruna Sanskrit Language Series is a groundbreaking series of media that enriches the study of both the Sanskrit language and Vedanta. The six titles currently in the series are highly flexible and cross-referenced, guiding readers through Sanskrit basics to proficient level—unlocking the vocabulary and grammar and helping them comprehend the deeper meaning of the Bhagavad Gita. These titles are available through the publishing arm of Upasana Yoga at www.UpasanaYoga.org.

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Abbreviations

a. or adj.	adjective(s)		encl.	enclitic
abl.	ablative		esp.	especially
acc.	accusative		ex.	except
act.	active		Δ	difference (delta)
adv.	adverb		f. or fem.	feminine(s)
aor.	aorist (tense)		fr.	from
∘—	as first member		fut.	future
—∘	as second member		fut. pt.	future participle (active)
aspir.	aspiration		gram.	grammar
आ∘ or Ā.	*Ātmanaipada*		gutt.	guttural(s)
aug.	augment		impf.	imperfect
b/4	before		impv.	imperative
bene.	benedictive		in.	indeclinable
cf.	compare		in. pt.	indeclinable participle
ch.	chapter		inf.	infinitive
→	changes to		init.	initial (letter)
cj.	conjunction		intens.	intensive(s)
cmpd.	compound		interj.	interjection(s)
conj.	conjugation		irreg.	irregular
conj. cons.	conjunct consonant(s)		m. or masc.	masculine(s)
cons.	consonant(s)		mid.	middle (*Ātmanaipada*)
corr.	correlative		n. or neut.	neuter(s)
cpv.	comparative		nom.	nominative
cs.	causal		num.	numeral
decl.	declension(s)		opt.	optional(ly)
den.	denominative(s)		orig.	originally
des.	desiderative		पर∘, Par. or *P*.	*Parasmaipada*
du.	dual(s)		pt.	participle(s)

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Abbreviations (cont.)

pcl.	particle(s)		reflex.	reflexive
ps.	passive		rel.	relative
past act. pt.	past active participle		resp.	respective(ly)
pp.	past participle (passive)		√	root
perf.	perfect (tense)		s.	strong
peri.	periphrastic		s.f.	stem final
pl.	plural		sec.	secondary
poss.	possibly		semiv.	semivowel(s)
poss. prn.	possessive pronoun		sibi.	sibilant(s)
pot.	potential (mood)		sg.	singular
pot. ps. pt.	potential passive participle		spv.	superlative
prep.	preposition(s)		suff.	suffix(es)
pr.	present		term.	termination(s)
pr. pt.	present participle (active)		∴	therefore
pr. mid. pt.	present middle participle		vow.	vowel(s)
pri.	primary		w.	weak
prn.	pronoun		w/	with
prn. a.	pronominal adjective		w/wo	with or without
redup.	reduplicated/reduplication			
redup. perf. pt.	reduplicated perfect participle (active)			

Introduction

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Using This Book

This book provides the succinct grammar rules and structures for the Sanskrit language. If you are unfamiliar with Sanskrit grammar and wish to learn how to understand and apply these rules and structures for reading Sanskrit, please get the companion book, *The Aruna Sanskrit Grammar Coursebook: 64 Lessons Based on the Bhagavad Gita Chapter Two* by this author. The *Aruna Coursebook* and the *Grammar Reference* are designed to work together and are fully cross-referenced. To start this course of learning to read Sanskrit, begin with the *Aruna Coursebook*, which will assign specific sections of rules from this grammar book. In following all the lessons in the *Aruna Coursebook*, you will cover the entire grammar in this book and be able to fluently read with understanding the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita in its original Sanskrit.

To go even further into the study of Sanskrit so that you can completely read and understand the entire Bhagavad Gita, get the full set of *The Aruna Sanskrit Language Series*, of which this *Grammar Reference* and the *Aruna Coursebook* are the initial texts. The design and benefit of this series will be fully explained below within the context of Sanskrit and the methods of learning this language using *The Aruna Sanskrit Language Series*.

Introduction to Sanskrit

Sanskrit is a living language with ancient Vedic roots. Here I am using the term "living language" in its obvious sense—that it is still existing, still spoken, still studied, still communicative (and not just descriptive of what once was), and at least in one most highly desirable and non-academic area of study, namely, the Vedanta studied by people who newly come to its study to this day in the hundreds or thousands every year, is an irreplaceable medium for its full appreciation.

Recent archeological and related studies, just now scratching the surface, are seeing some indications of what could be described as the Vedic culture in the Indus-Saraswati civilization at its first urban development peak between 2600 to 1900 B.C. and its antecedent development in the same area starting at least eight thousand years ago including the large settlement of Mehrgarh (168 acres, one-quarter sq. mi., in 5000 B.C.—by many times the largest Neolithic settlement of its time in the world).[1] The sites linked to this civilization over

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[1] Georg Feuerstein, Subhash Kak and David Frawley, *In Search of The Cradle of Civilization* (Wheaton, Ill.: Quest Books, 1995), p. 146.

Sanskrit Grammar – 1

The Alphabet

The Sounds in the Sanskrit Language

1.1: The script. *Saṃskṛta* is the actual name of the language, but commonly is called by the Anglicized Hindi word *Sanskrit*. Today, *Saṃskṛta* is generally written in the *Devanāgarī* script, although some texts employ a regional script; for example, a version of the Tamil script in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. The *Devanāgarī* script itself has varied over time (even within the past century). The character formations used in this book are the current standard. The *Devanāgarī* alphabet consists of 48 characters, for the basic 13 vowel and 35 consonant sounds.

1.2: The sounds. The ancient grammarian *Pāṇani* recognized all 48 of the *Saṃskṛta* sounds and scientifically grouped them under a number of classifications, depending on the purpose. One classification (listed in **1.3:** using Western terminology) is the location of the sound as it is made by the human voice. Another classification is the effort of the contact within the mouth at that location (**1.4:**).

1.3: The five locations of sound.

Most characters have one location; some blend two locations; two (*ḥ* and *ṃ*) vary, depending on the sound that precedes them; and one of those two (*ḥ*) varies, depending on the sound that follows.

Guttural	Formed by contact of the base of the tongue against the back of the throat (*kaṇṭha*).
Palatal	Formed by contact of the middle of the tongue against the palate (*tālu*). The tip of the tongue touches near the front palatal ridge (the top of roots of upper front teeth, a half-inch above the top of the teeth).
Cerebral	Formed by contact of the tip of the tongue against the front of the downward hard dome (the *mūrdha*) at the middle of the palate. There is no good equivalent of this sound in English.
Dental	Formed by contact of the tip of the tongue against the base or root of the upper front teeth (*danta*).
Labial	Formed by contact of the lips (*oṣṭha*).

1.4: Five efforts of articulation and the characters that exhibit them.

The efforts are the extent of contact, or the shape of the restriction, between the organs of articulation where the sound is generated.

Touched	The five classes of consonants ($k - m$ in the alphabetical table, **1.5:**).
Slightly Touched	The **semivowels** ($y - v$).
Slightly Open	The **sibilants** ($ś - s$), *h*, **visarga** (*ḥ*), and **anusvāra** (*ṃ*) (see next pages).
Open	The **vowels** except *a* ($ā - au$).
Contracted	The short vowel *a*.

1.5: *Devanāgarī* alphabet with international transliteration, sound, and location. (Alphabetical order)

Vowels					Consonants *(col. 1)*			
Initial	Medial	Translit.	Sounds Like	Location	Initial or Medial	Translit.	Sounds Like	Location
अ	a	*a*	**o** *in* s**o**n	guttural	: [b]	*ḥ*	*half an* **h**	guttural or labial
आ	ा	*ā*	**o** *in* b**o**ttle		़ [c]	*ṃ*	**n** *in French*: bo**n**	conforms to preceding vowel
इ	ि	*i*	**e** *in* b**e**	palatal	क	*k*	**ck** *in* blo**ck**	guttural
ई	ी	*ī*	**e** *in* b**ee**		ख	*kh*	**ckh** *in* blo**ckh**ead	
उ	ु	*u*	**o** *in* m**o**ve	labial	ग	*g*	**g** *in* lo**g**	
ऊ	ू	*ū*	**oo** *in* m**oo**n		घ	*gh*	**gh** *in* lo**g-h**ut	
ऋ	ृ	*ṛ*	**rh** *in* **rh**ythm	cerebral	ङ	*ṅ*	**ng** *in* so**ng**	
ॠ	ॄ	*ṝ*	**rh** *-elongated*		च	*c*	**ch** *in* cat**ch**	palatal
ऌ	ॢ	*ḷ*	**le** *in* tab**le**	dental	छ	*ch*	**chh** *in* cat**ch h**im	
ए	े	*e*	**a** in t**a**pe	guttural-palatal	ज	*j*	**ge** *in* hed**ge**	
ऐ	ै	*ai*	**y** *in* m**y**		झ	*jh*	**geh** *in* hed**geh**og	
ओ	ो	*o*	**oe** *in* t**oe**	guttural-labial	ञ	*ñ*	**n** *in* cri**n**ge	
औ	ौ	*au*	**ow** *in* n**ow**				*(continued)*	

Sanskrit Grammar – 2

Rules of Sandhi

The Rules for Phonetic Combination of Letters

2.1: Coalescence of adjacent sounds. In *Saṃskṛta* every sentence is treated as a continuously spoken sequence of sounds, written exactly as they are pronounced. The coalescence of these sounds when pronounced as a sequence is called **sandhi**. The purpose of sandhi is to facilitate smooth pronunciation, and to avoid a gap between vowels in separate syllables, called a hiatus by Western grammarians. Although several consecutive consonant *sandhi*s may occur for easier pronunciation of a consonant cluster, only one vowel *sandhi* is applied between two adjoining vowels. Any hiatus in a finished *Saṃskṛta* text is either the result of only one vowel *sandhi*, in which case additional application of *sandhi* to avoid hiatus would render the original syllables unidentifiable, or the absence of any *sandhi* application at the end of a metrical line or the end of a sentence. Because of *sandhi*, generally the ends and sometimes the beginning of words will be written in a sentence as they orally sound in combination, and not as they may be found separately, e.g., as in a dictionary.

   a. The following *sandhi* rules, as well as many other grammar rules, are subject to occasional irregularities, of which only the common exceptions are noted herein. Not infrequent is the lack or irregular application of *sandhi* to maintain meter, such as retaining hiatus between two *pāda*s (**1.23:**).

2.2: Guṇa and vṛddhi. **Vowels** may **strengthen by** taking *guṇa* or *vṛddhi*. The simple liquid vowels (i.e., इ ई, उ ऊ, ऋ ॠ including ऌ, theoretically), as well as these vowels as components of diphthongs (i.e., the non-simple liquid vowels), may also be changed into semivowels, or those semivowels may revert back to their liquid vowel, called *samprasāraṇa*.

2.3: Strengthening of vowels.

Simple vowels		Guṇa (& components)		Vṛddhi		Semivowel[a]	Samprasāraṇa[a]		
अ	→	अ		आ	(= अ + अ)				
आ	→	आ	(= अ + आ)	आ	(= अ + आ)				
इ ई	→	ए	(= अ + इ/ई)	ऐ	(= अ + ए)	य्	य	→	इ
उ ऊ	→	ओ	(= अ + उ/ऊ)	औ	(= अ + ओ)	व्	व	→	उ
ऋ ॠ	→	अर्	(= अ + ऋ/ॠ)	आर्	(= अ + अर्)	र्	अर् or र	→	ऋ
ऌ	→	अल्	(= अ + ऌ)	(no *vṛddhi* for ऌ)					

   a. The simple liquid vowels (including the second half component इ or उ of diphthongs ए ऐ or ओ औ respectively) may become (or strengthen to) य्, व्, र् respectively. In reverse, these semivowels may **weaken**, called *samprasāraṇa*, to their respective simple liquid vowels. Notice that the semivowel's following or preceding अ is dropped in *samprasāraṇa*.

2.4: General and internal *sandhi*. There are two forms of *sandhi*: **general *sandhi*** between—

Independent word	+	**Independent word**
Word in a cmpd.	+	Next word in the **cmpd.** (**6.29:**), including verbal compounds (**6.11:**)
Nominal stem	+	**Secondary suffix** beginning **with** any **cons. except** य् (**6.27:**)
	+	**Pada** declension terms. – भ्याम्, भिस्, भ्यस्, सु (**3.2.a:**) – First apply general *sandhi* rules **2.23:** & **.24:**, then internal *sandhi* rules will apply.

In other combinations, applicable specific **internal *sandhi* rules apply first**, **then general *sandhi* rules**. With the exception that finals of roots usually don't change, nor generally would rule **2.23:** apply.

2.5: Reading *sandhi* charts. In the following *sandhi* charts, **unless otherwise noted**, the **Preceding column's letter**(s) alone **change**. For example, rule **2.9:** should read – when अ आ (i.e., अ or आ) precedes a *guṇa* vowel, then **both** (अ and following *guṇa* vowel, or आ and following *guṇa* vowel) are changed to the following's component liquid vowel's *vṛddhi* – in this case, the component liquid vowel being इ or उ of the *guṇa* vowel ए (=अ+इ) or ओ (=अ+उ) per **2.3.a:**, its *vṛddhi* would be ऐ or औ (**2.3:**), respectively. Rule **2.14:** should read – when *guṇa* vowel ओ precedes any vowel except अ, then the preceding ओ is changed to अव् and, if it is between independent words, it usually further becomes अ (i.e.**,** the व् drops). Notice how the same rows match across, e.g., ओ row matches अव् row, and certain rows are shared, e.g., "*guṇa* vowel" row is shared by both ए row and ओ row. In these listings **a later rule**, if equally applicable, **takes precedence over a prior** and thus more general rule. In the following rules, the word "radical" means "belonging to a root or a substitute for a root"; this may apply to verbal roots made into nouns or into verbs. "**May**" and "**usually**" mean optionally infrequent or frequent change, respectively; "**sometimes**" and "**often**" mean in certain words this change is found.

2.6: General vowel *sandhi*.

	Preceding	Following	Change					
2.7:	simple vowel (short or long)	**same** simple vow. (short or long)	both	→	**long** simple vowel			
2.8:		simple **liquid** vowel (**1.9:** & **2.2:**)	both	→	the liquid vowel's ***guṇa*** (**2.3:**)			
2.9:	अ आ	***guṇa*** vowel	both	→	the following's component liquid vowel's (**2.3.a:**) ***vṛddhi*** (**2.3:**)			
2.10:		***vṛddhi*** vowel						
2.11:	simple **liquid** vowel	different vowel		→	corresponding **semivowel** (**2.3.a:**)			
2.12:	*guṇa* vowels ए ओ	अ	अ	→	**drops**, often replaced with an ***avagraha*** ऽ			
2.13:	*guṇa* vowel	ए	any vowel except अ		→	अय्	if between indep. words (**2.4:**)	usually	→ अ [a]
2.14:		ओ			→	अव्		usually	
2.15:	*vṛddhi* vowel	ऐ	any vowel		→	आय्		usually	→ आ [a]
2.16:		औ			→	आव्		**rarely**	

a. The resulting vowels – अ/आ and following vowel normally remain separate, i.e., hiatus (**2.1:**) remains.

Sanskrit Grammar – 3
Declension of Nouns
The Inflection of Nominal Stems by Means of Case Terminations

3.1: Inflection. The inflection of nouns (including adjectives), numerals and pronouns is called declension (विभक्ति). In *Saṃskṛta* declensions there are−

- **a. Three genders** (लिङ्ग-s): masculine, feminine and neuter (पुं॰ स्त्री नपुंसक respectively, abbreviated as पुं॰ स्त्री॰ नपुं॰). See **6.26: − 6.28:** for examples of noun stems and gender.
- **b. Three numbers** (वचन-s): singular, dual and plural (एक द्वि बहु respectively, abbreviated as ए॰ द्वि॰ ब॰). See **7.4:** & **7.5:** for discussion of number.
- **c. Eight cases** (विभक्ति-s): nominative, vocative, accusative, instrumental, dative, ablative, genitive and locative. This is also the native grammarian order except that vocative, which, not being considered a proper case by them, is ordered at the end. I have followed the non-native order, since this shows how closely the vocative follows the nominative, making it easier to remember. The native grammarians name these seven cases − प्रथमा द्वितीया तृतीया चतुर्थी पञ्चमी षष्ठी सप्तमी i.e., 1st − 7th, see **4.26:**, abbreviated as प्र॰ द्वि॰ तृ॰ च॰ प॰ ष॰ स॰. They call the vocative सम्बोधन (सं॰). See **7.7: − 7.13:** for discussion of the cases.

3.2: Normal Case Terminations. This table forms the basis for nominal declensions of most words. Generally only in the first three cases do the neut. terms. differ from the masc. and fem., hence they are shown separately below only for those first three cases. The terminations are added to a nominal stem, called a प्रतिपादिक, to form a declined word fit to be employed in a sentence. Hyphens (−) indicate an absence of a termination, and hence, in those declined cases, there would appear no distinction from their प्रतिपादिक.

	ए॰ **Singular**		द्वि॰ **Dual**		ब॰ **Plural**	
	पुं॰ **M.** स्त्री॰ **F.**	नपुं॰ **N.**	पुं॰ **M.** स्त्री॰ **F.**	नपुं॰ **N.**	पुं॰ **M.** स्त्री॰ **F.**	नपुं॰ **N.**
प्र॰ **N.**	सु्	—	औ	ई	अस्	इ [b]
सं॰ **V.**	—					
द्वि॰ **A.**	अम्					
तृ॰ **I.**	आ		भ्याम् [a]			भिस्
च॰ **D.**	ए					भ्यस्
प॰ **Ab.**	अस्					
ष॰ **G.**			ओस्			आम्
स॰ **L.**	इ					सु

- **a.** भ्याम् भिस् भ्यस् सु are called *pada* terminations.
- **b.** N. pl. nom. voc. acc. insert न् **before** a single final mute (changing to resp. class nasal **2.95:**), sibilant or ह (**2.94:**) of a consonant-ending stem, and insert न् **after** a vowel-ending stem.

3.3: Accent. In declension, accents follow the below general rules.
1. **Vocative** case is always accented on the first syllable.
2. **Monosyllabic stems** have their accent move to the weak (**3.17:**) or middle (*pada*) terminations.
   - Root-words in long ई ऊ (*í ú*) as final of cmpd. (**6.24:** & **6.38:**) retain their accent throughout.
3. Accent of some **polysyllabic stems ending in consonant** moves to the weak termination.
   - Present participle stems ending in accented अत् *át* (**3.12:**).
   - When the accented vowel in the final suffix is dropped, such as by syncopation (**3.20.b:**).
   - A few other sporadic instances.
4. **Polysyllabic stems ending in an accented vowel** shift the accent to a vowel-initial termination, if the accented stem vowel is lost by replacement with a semi-vowel (**2.2:**, **2.67:–2.71:**).
   - The genitive pl. term. आम् (**3.29:**, **3.30:**, **3.38:**) may also take the accent even though the nasal न् is inserted between it and the short accented इ उ ऋ (*í ú* or *ŕ*).

3.4: Consonant-ending Stems. Nouns end in either consonants or vowels. The consonant-ending declensions are more regular than the vowel-ending, so we will present them first. Consonant-ending nouns can be divided into unchangeable stems and changeable stems. Although native grammarians for memorization teach recitation across the row (sg. du. pl. nom.), the visual and logical patterns go down the column (nom. voc. acc…).

3.5: Unchangeable Stem – Dental ०त्   मरुत् (*marú-t*) m. "wind"
                                           जगत् (*jága-t*) n. "world"

मरु० जग०	ए० **Singular** पुं स्त्री० **M. F.**	नपुं० **N.**	द्वि० **Dual** पुं स्त्री० **M. F.**	नपुं० **N.**	ब० **Plural** पुं स्त्री० **M. F.**	नपुं० **N.**
प्र० **N.**	०त् (स्) ᵃ	०त् (—)	०तौ (औ)	०ती (ई)	०तः (अस्)	०न्ति (इ) ᵈ
सं० **V.**	०त् (—)					
द्वि० **A.**	०तम् (अम्)					
तृ० **I.**	०ता (आ)		०द्भ्याम् (भ्याम्) ᶜ		०द्भिः (भिस्)	
च० **D.**	०ते (ए)				०द्भ्यः (भ्यस्)	
प० **Ab.**	०तः (अस्) ᵇ					
ष० **G.**			०तोः (ओस्)		०ताम् (आम्)	
स० **L.**	०ति (इ)				०त्सु (सु)	

- **a.** Rule **2.23:**, final cons. (स्) after another cons. drops, hence मरुत् + स् = मरुत्स् becomes मरुत्.

Sanskrit Grammar – 4

Pronouns and Numerals

4.1: Pronouns. Pronouns function as a substitue for other nouns, denoting a person or thing previously specified or understood in the context. Like in English, they can be classified as personal, demonstrative, relative, and interrogative—declined in संस्कृत differently from other nouns and adjectives. Additionally, there are reflexive, possesive, and adjectival pronouns, where some decline like pronouns, others like regular nouns or adjectives, while a few are indeclinables. For the syntax of pronouns see **7.6:**.

4.2: Personal pronouns. अहम् (1st person, "I") and त्वम् (2nd person, "you"). The 3rd person (personal) pronoun, "he, she, it," is not often expressed (**7.6.B:**), but, if expressed, it is represented by the demonstrative pronouns (**4.6:–4.10:**).

		As 1st member in cmpd.		Three basic stem forms in declension		
		Sg.	Pl.	Singular	Dual	Plural
अहम्	"I, we, us, mine"	मद्	अस्मद्	**म**	**आव**	**अस्म**
त्वम्	"you, yours"	त्वद्	युष्मद्	**त्व**	**युव**	**युष्म**

अहम् and त्वम् have no gender distinctions. Both personal pronouns commonly are also represented by what are called defective (not declined in all cases), enclitic (unaccented) forms, i.e., मा, त्वा etc., only in acc., dat., and gen. (the even numbered − although there are scattered instances, prior to Panini, of their use in all the oblique [all except nom. and voc.]) cases. As with all pronouns, there is no vocative case and the sg. abl. and gen. differ. For just the personal pronouns, the pl. dat. and abl. also differ.

	ए॰ Singular				द्वि॰ Dual				ब॰ Plural			
	म stem		**त्व** stem		**आव** stem		**युव** stem		**अस्म** stem		**युष्म** stem	
प्र॰ **N.**	अहम्		त्वम्		आवाम्		युवाम्		वयम्		यूयम्	
द्वि॰ **A.**	माम्	मा	त्वाम्	त्वा		नौ		वाम्	अस्मान्	नः	युष्मान्	वः
तृ॰ **I.**	मया		त्वया		आवाभ्याम्	नौ	युवाभ्याम्	वाम्	अस्माभिः		युष्माभिः	
च॰ **D.**	मह्यम्	मे	**तुभ्यम्**	ते					**अस्मभ्यम्**	नः	**युष्मभ्यम्**	वः
प॰ **Ab.**	**मद्**		**त्वद्**						**अस्मद्**		**युष्मद्**	
ष॰ **G.**	**मम**	मे	**तव**	ते	आवयोः	नौ	युवयोः	वाम्	अस्माकम् [a]	नः	युष्माकम् [a]	वः
स॰ **L.**	मयि		त्वयि						अस्मासु		युष्मासु	

   a. The pl gen. अस्माकम् युष्माकम् are properly n. sg. possessive adjectives meaning "belonging to us/our you/your," respectively.

4.3: Enclitics, because they are unaccented (and unemphasized), **are not allowed** to be placed:

1. **At beginning of a sentence, subordinate clause, or *pāda* (1.23:)**.
2. **After vocatives** (which are unaccented, except as first word in sentence—in which case, since vocatives are treated as not part of the sentence, an enclitic could not follow, as it would then violate **4.3.1:** above).
3. **Before** unaccented particles **च** "and," **वा** "or," and **ह** (an exclamation), or the accented particle **एव** "only" – which all give emphasis to a preceding word.

4.4: Common Pronominal Terminations (except for the personal pronouns). The cases left blank tend to vary for the following pronouns, and for adjectives which decline like pronouns. The initial vowel of these terminations replaces the pronominal stem's final अ vowel, but otherwise is replaced by the stem's vowel with the stem employing its long vowel form before long term. initial vowels.

	ए॰ **Singular**			द्वि॰ **Dual**			ब॰ **Plural**		
	पुं॰ **M.**	नपुं॰ **N.**	स्त्री॰ **F.**	पुं॰ **M.**	नपुं॰ **N.**	स्त्री॰ **F.**	पुं॰ **M.**	नपुं॰ **N.**	स्त्री॰ **F.**
प्र॰ **N.**				औ	ए		ए	आनि	आस्
द्वि॰ **A.**	अम्		आम्				आन्		
तृ॰ **I.**	एन		या		आभ्याम्				आभिस्
च॰ **D.**	स्मै		स्यै					एभ्यस्	आभ्यस्
प॰ **Ab.**	स्मात्		स्यास्						
ष॰ **G.**	स्य				योस्		एषाम्		आसाम्
स॰ **L.**	स्मिन्		स्याम्					एषु	आसु

4.5: Relative proximity may be contrasted or contextually expressed by demonstrative pronouns:

एतद्	"this"	**Immediate**	(समीपतरम्)
इदम्/एनद्	"this" (sometimes, relatively, "that")	**Near**	(सन्निकृष्टम्)
अदस्	"that"	**Remote**	(विप्रकृष्टम्)
तद्	"that"	**Out of sight**	(परोक्षम्)

Sanskrit Grammar – 5

Conjugation of Verbs

Inflection of Verbal Roots by Means of Tense and Mood Terminations

5.1: The inflection of verbal roots is called conjugation. In conjugating संकृत verbal roots there are–

1. **Three persons** (पुरुष-s): **third** ("he, she, it"), **second** ("you"), **first** ("I") (In the order recited they are called प्रथम "prior," मध्यम "middle," उत्तम "last" respectively, abbrev. as प्र॰ म॰ उ॰).

2. **Three numbers** (वचन-s): **singular**, **dual**, **plural** (like for nouns, abbrev. as ए॰ द्वि॰ ब॰) (**7.4:**).

3. **Two categories of verbal terminations**: **परस्मैपद** (ति तस् अन्ति…)and **आत्मनेपद** (ते ईते अन्ते…), abbreviated as पर॰ आ॰. These signify transitive (or active, lit. "for another") and reflexive (or middle, lit. "for oneself") terminations, respectively – adhered to less in the later literature. However, causal verb forms still nearly always respect this distinction.

4. **Ten tenses and moods** divided into two groups (see **7.21: – 7.27:** for their syntax):

    a. **सार्वधातुक-लकार-s** the verbal base tenses and moods (also called the present system or the conjugational tenses and moods). Consisting of–

        - Two tenses

            - **Present tense**, वर्तमाने लट्.
            - **Imperfect** (past) **tense**, अनद्यतनभूते लङ्.

        - Two moods

            - **Imperative mood**, आज्ञायाम् लोट्.
            - **Potential mood**, विधि-लिङ्.

    b. **आर्धधातुक-लकार-s** the root tenses and moods (also called the non-conjugational tenses and moods). Consisting of–

        - Four tenses

            - **Perfect** and **Periphrastic Perfect** (past) **tense**, परोक्षभूते लिट्.
            - **Aorist** (past) **tense**, अद्यतनभूते or सामान्यभूते लुङ्.
            - **Simple future**, सामान्यभविष्यत्काले लृट्.
            - **Periphrastic future**, अनद्यतनभविष्यत्काले लुट्.

5.1.4.b: आर्धधातुक-लकार-**s** the root tenses and moods (continued)

- Two moods
  - Benedictive mood, आशीर्-लिङ्.
  - Conditional mood, क्रियातिपत्तौ लृङ्.

5. **Four derivative formations**: **Causative** (णिजन्त), **Desiderative** (सन्नन्त), **Intensive** or Frequentive (यङन्त), and **Denominative** (नामधातु).

6. **Three constructions** (प्रयोग-s): **active** (कर्तरि), **passive** (कर्मणि) and **impersonal** (भावे).

5.2: Roots. Roots are called **धातु-s**. They are the assumed basic unit of all verbs and participles, and most nominal stems. There is a listing of 2,200 roots, of which less than 500 are commonly used as verbs and participles. A root may be first made into a derivative form (**5.39:** - **5.43:**), then that form is treated as a root taking one of the ten tenses or moods.

Terminations. When a root, or a root derivative, takes one of the आर्धधातुक-लकार-s (the root tenses and moods) it undergoes a transformation unique to that tense or mood, and then takes a verbal termination. Except for the Perfect tense, which has its own set of terminations, the other tenses and moods generally take one or the other of the Present or Imperfect set of terminations from either the 1st or the 2nd conjugation. For this reason, in order to give them a generic name not tied to the Present or Imperfect tense, the Present tense terminations are also called the primary terminations, while those of the Imperfect are called the secondary terminations.

Verbal base. When a root, but not a root derivative, takes one of the सार्वधातुक-लकार-s (the four common verbal base tenses and moods) it is made into a stem – called a verbal base (अङ्ग) consisting of a root plus a sign. Most roots form their base in only one of ten different ways.

Conjugational groups. To help distinguish which ways these bases are formed, all the roots have been grouped into **ten** different **classes** (गण-s). Some roots have more than one base configuration, and therefore are placed in more than one class. These ten classes are arranged into two groups, the **1st conjugation** (comprising the 1st, 4th, 6th and 10th class), otherwise known as the "अ" गण-s or those classes whose base ends in अ, and the **2nd conjugation** (comprising the 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th class) or those classes whose base does

Sanskrit Grammar – 6

Formation of Words

6.1: Parts of Speech. As verbs are formed from roots, similarly most other words in संस्कृत are formed from roots. Built clearly from verbal roots and maintaining the verbal meaning of those roots, are **participles and infinitives**. To these may be added **prepositions**, either prefixed or unattached. These prepositions, not derived from roots, may also be added to verbs, as well as to many other words. Those prepositions that can remain unattached make up a small portion of a larger group of words called **indeclinables**. Indeclinables include some participles, infinitives, and other words used as **particles**, **connectives**, and **adverbs**, which are also not usually derived from roots. Even certain declined forms of nouns and adjectives used adverbially are considered indeclinables. A few indeclinables are also employed more like as adjectives (e.g., मिथ्या "apparent") or even as substantives (e.g., स्वर् "heaven"). Finally most **nouns** and **adjectives** are considered to be derived from roots often preceded by prefixes − some of these roots being obvious from the meaning of the word, some not so obvious. In forming many of these words, a set of suffixes (roughly distinguished into primary and secondary, see **6.22:**) have been identified, and many are presented in the following pages. Proper names are nouns that are mostly adjectives employed as names, hence most names in संस्कृत are descriptive.

Paninian grammar provides a vast set of rules and a number of technical signs attached to the suffixes and the roots for developing a word formation mechanism. This was important for protecting the integrity of the language and it regulated the bounds of its usage for future generations of authors and speakers. Being beginners to this language, though, we will learn more like the way children learn the language. We will work on identifying the suffixes as they are seen in actual usage. Like the child, our job here is to recognize these suffixes as forming a pattern of usage when joined with words in a sentence. Recognizing the suffix helps us identify the part of speech and some of the meaning of these words, then our accumulated vocabulary and grasp of syntax and context need to take over to provide the complete meaning to the sentences.

6.2: Formation of verbs, where the optional components are in normal print, the necessary components in bold.

Prefix(s)	Augment	**Root** or **verbal base**	**Tense**, **mood**, and/or **derivative suffix(es)**. Completing the verbal stem.	**Conjugation termination**

6.3: Formation of uncompounded **nouns, pronoun**, **adjectives**, **participles** and **indeclinables**, where the optional components are in normal print, the necessary components in bold.

Prefix(s)	(**Root** or **verbal stem**) + **primary suffix** / **Non-root stem**	Secondary suffix(es). Completing the nominal stem	Declension termination

Participles and Infinitives

6.4: Active (परस्मैपद) Participles

अत् Present Participle (active) (**pr. pt.**) ("_ing" for meaning see **7.16:**)

> **Strong** stem formed from **Pr. पर॰ 3ʳᵈ pl.** ॰अन्ति, **dropping** the इ → अन्त्. **3ʳᵈ class-** and some other **reduplicated** roots (**5.19.10:**) have **3ʳᵈ pl.** ॰अति (**5.6.c:**), ∴ their **strong** stem is अत्.

Future Participle (active) (**fut. pt.**) ("will be _ing")

> **Strong** stem from **Simple Fut. पर॰ 3ʳᵈ pl.** ॰अन्ति, dropping the इ → अन्त्.

Weak stem **for both** is formed by dropping, if there, the न् → अत्.

For declension see **3.12:**; those with st. stem in अत् decline like dental ॰त् (**3.5:**) with inserted n. pl. nasal (**3.5.d:**) opt. dropping. For feminine see **3.9:** & **3.9.a:**.

Examples

Root	3ʳᵈ pl.	Pr. Pt. strong	Fut. 3ʳᵈ pl.	Fut. Pt. strong
भू ₁ₛₜ "be"	भवन्ति *bháv-anti*	भवन्त् *bháv-ant*	भविष्यन्ति *bhav-iṣy-ánti*	भविष्यन्त् *bhav-iṣy-ánt*
अस् ₂ₙd "be"	सन्ति *s-ánti*	सन्त् *s-ánt*	(भू is substituted for अस् in आर्धधातुक-लकार-s)	
हु ₃ᵣd "offer"	जुह्वति *juhv-ati*	जुह्वत् *juhv-at*	होष्यन्ति *ho-ṣy-ánti*	होष्यन्त् *ho-ṣy-ánt*
ज्ञा ₉ₜₕ "know"	जानन्ति *jān-ánti*	जानन्त् *jān-ant*	ज्ञास्यन्ति *jñā-ṣy-ánti*	ज्ञाष्यन्त् *jñā-ṣy-ánt*

वस् Reduplicated Perfect Participle (active) (**redup. perf. pt.**) ("has_ or had_" **7.17:** & **7.22:**) is rare.

Weak stem from **Redup. Perf. पर॰ 3ʳᵈ pl.** ॰उस्, **replacing with** accented उष् *úṣ* (**2.101:** in declension).

Middle & **strong** stem from weak by **dropping उष्**.

> **Final vowel** of root, if any, is **restored** from semivowel (due to उष्),
> **if** resulting stem is **monosyllabic**, **insert इ**, then–
> > **Middle** stem adds accented **वत्** *vát* (वस् → वत् b/4 *pada* terms. **2.97:**).
> > **Strong** stem adds accented **वांस्** *vā́ṃs*.

For declension see **3.19:**; for feminine see **3.9:**.

Examples

Root	3ʳᵈ pl.	Weak Stem	Middle Stem	Strong Stem
कृ "do"	चक्रुः *cakr-úḥ*	चक्रुष् *cakr-úṣ*	चक्रवत् *cakṛ-vát*	चक्रवांस् *cakṛ-vā́ṃs*
भू "be"	बभूवुः *babhūv-úḥ*	बभूवुष् *babhūv-úṣ* (**2.73:**)	बभूवत् *babhū-vát*	बभूवांस् *babhū-vā́ṃs*
तन् "stretch"	तेनुः *ten-úḥ*	तेनुष् *ten-úṣ* (**3.19.b:**)	तेनिवत् *ten-i-vát*	तेनिवांस् *ten-i-vā́ṃs*
यज् "worship"	ईजुः *īj-úḥ*	ईजुष् *īj-úṣ*	ईजिवत् *īj-i-vát*	ईजिवांस् *īj-i-vā́ṃs*

Irregular

विद् "know"	विदुः *vid-úḥ*	विदुष् *vid-úṣ*	विद्वत् *vid-vát*	विद्वांस् (no इ inserted)

Sanskrit Grammar – 7

Syntax

7.1: Forming words into sentences. Due in large part to the medium of oral transmission and the importance placed on memorizing texts, the संस्कृत literature is often in verse form. This brings the charm to the language, as well as the challenge to the student of the language. As much of the syntax is built into the sense of the inflections of the words themselves, a comparatively great freedom is allowed the author to arrange the order of the words to best fit the harmony of the sounds and meter of a verse. Additionally, there is a rich store of vocabulary and technical expressions—developed over thousands of years and addressed to a very savvy audience able to understand the author's nuances and allusions. So understanding these texts requires a methodical approach, of which not just vocabulary but also syntax plays a crucial role.

7.2: संस्कृत अन्वय

To properly understand a verse, the student should reorder the words into written संस्कृत prose order, called अन्वय. The following is the typical अन्वय of a संस्कृत prose sentence.

1–Vocatives – The first vocative, or another word, heading a sentence should be accented (**4.3:**).

2–Relative clause – A correlative word heads the clause, which follows the same order as a main clause.

3–Connective to previous sentence – If enclitic, it follows first non-enclitic word of the sentence or clause.

Main clause

    4–Correlative, if employed, heads the clause.

    Subject

        5–Subject pronoun.

        6–Subject adjective – Including noun in genitive case related to the subject noun.

        7–Subject noun (or passive voice Agent in instrumental).

    Predicate

        8–Predicate pronoun.

        Predicate adjective/noun (**7.7.1:**) – May proceed the subject if the copula "is" is omitted.

            Or

        9–Adjective of the predicate object – And nouns in oblique cases related to the predicate object.

         Predicate object (or passive voice object in nom.) – Indirect-obj. then direct-obj.

        10–Adverb – Sometimes (including interrogatives) placed at or near the beginning of the sentence.

        11–Verb.

7.2: संस्कृत अन्वय (continued)

For Example (using the English words in the *Saṃskṛta* order, to better show the ordering)

English	→	"The subject is a predicate-adjective."
Saṃskṛta	→	"Predicate-adjective[7] subject[6] [is]."
English	→	"And, *Subu*, that smart boy studies his *Saṃskṛta* lessons thoroughly."
Saṃskṛta	→	"*Subu*[1], that[5] and[3] smart[6] boy[7] his *Saṃskṛta* lessons[9] thoroughly[10] studies[11]."
English	→	"The cat will eat the food, if the door is closed."
Saṃskṛta	→	"If door is closed[2], cat[7] food[9] will eat[11]."
English	→	"The food was eaten by the cat."
Saṃskṛta	→	"By cat[7] food[9] was eaten[11]." If converted to active voice, "Cat[7] food[9] eats[11]."
English	→	"He gives two cows (direct object) to the *Brāhmaṇa* (indirect object)."
Saṃskṛta	→	"To *Brāhmaṇa*[9] two cows[9] [he] gives[11]."

a. A word or phrase the author wishes to emphasize is often placed at the beginning of the sentence, or in a long sentence even at the end. The above order is only the most prevalent in occurrence. An author's style, harmony of sounds, and word emphasis will vary this order. In giving the अन्वय of verses in the *Aruna Coursebook*, the above order is generally followed, unless the meaning is better brought out in a modified order.

b. If the subject is a pronoun it may not be employed since its indication of 1st 2nd or 3rd person and the number, is inherent and understood in the finite verb form.

c. The copula अस्ति "is," unless the tense or mood has to be expressed, is generally omitted. When omitted, the predicate adjective or noun often precedes the subject, e.g., "cold [is] the night." If what is being predicated bears any emphasis, then the verb भवति "is" is actually used, instead of an omitted अस्ति.

A common complaint from native English language students is why not directly reorder the संस्कृत words into English prose order, since that is the end result they want and the संस्कृत prose order seems too foreign to be of much help at this struggling time. The answer is—what first looks like a shortcut now, will severely stunt one's progress from now on. Progress comes when the student can glimpse the meaning of the verse **as one reads it**. Even संस्कृत verse is often close to संस्कृत prose order. Usually there is also a संस्कृत commentary available that will help tremendously. But that commentary will be in prose order, so one will have to struggle reordering each of its sentences to eventually understand the original verse. The lesson, then, is to bear with it. संस्कृत अन्वय will pay-off in short order. It is also the order of all my lesson sentences in the *Aruna Coursebook*, so the student is going to get beat up with it anyway. As we work our way through those lessons, think of the master *Star Wars*™ character Yoda (the संस्कृत word for *warrior* is योध, in our case, a Sanskrit warrior) whispering, "Backwards talking I now am."

In the syntax charts of this chapter, the exemplified संस्कृत words in parentheses are translated by underlined words.

Glossary

The definitions of the following phonetic and grammar terms are generally from the prospective of the English language. Hence, expressions like "a following," etc. refer to English prose order. They define the grammatical terms used by Western grammarians to describe the attributes of language in general, and in particular English, sometimes Latin or Greek. The variation from these attributes as pertaining to the description of the Sanskrit language is to be understood instead from the preceding grammar, as there is often not a perfect fit of these terms to this language.

Ablative – A grammatical case that denotes separation, direction away from, and sometimes manner or agency.

Absolute – Designating a sentence construction that is syntactically independent of the main clause, e.g., *all things considered* in *All things considered, that's the best idea yet.*

Abstract noun – A noun referring to anything which you cannot perceive through your five physical senses. (cf. concrete noun)

Accusative – A grammatical case that denotes the direct or indirect object, the objective complement, or the object of certain prepositions.

Active – Designating a verb form or voice that indicates the subject of the sentence is performing or causing the action of the verb. (cf. passive)

Aorist – A verb tense denoting past action without indicating its completion or continuation. (cf. imperfect, perfect)

Appositive – A construction in which one noun or noun phrase is placed after another to explain it, both having the same syntactical relation to the rest of the sentence. For example in the sentence *Sammy, the cat, sat on the mat*, here *Sammy* and *the cat* are in **apposition**.

Aspirate – To follow a stop consonant with an audible puff of breath before the next sound begins, e.g., the first *p* in *peep*.

Benedictive – Bestowing blessing.

Cardinal number – A number such as 7, used to indicate quantity but not order. (cf. ordinal number)

Case – A syntactical relationship of a noun, pronoun or adjective to the other words in a phrase, clause or sentence, usually indicated in inflected languages by terminations and in noninflected languages by word order or prepositions.

Comparative – Expressing the intermediate degree of comparison. (see comparison)

Index

The index first covers Sanskrit terminology. These are grammatical terminologies, as well as the vocabulary of exceptionally formed words and of commonly used indeclinables and other word lists in this book. The English terminologies cover the grammatical forms in this book. Terminologies from the book introduction are noted with their page number, the rest of the terminologies are noted with the rule number in which they are cited.

Sanskrit Terms

English Terms
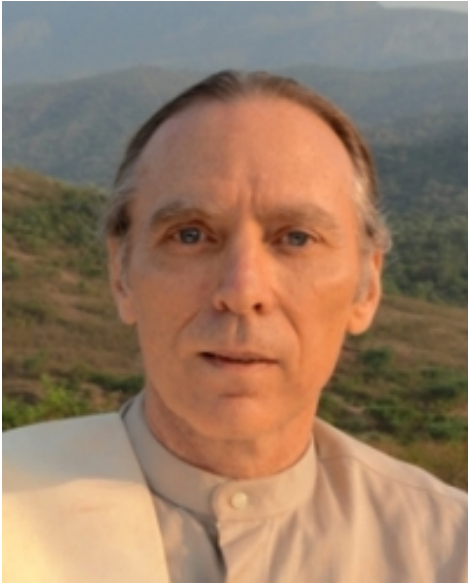
About the Author

Photo by Cassia Reis, GayatriYoga.eu

A.K. Aruna started his studies in Advaita Vedanta and the Sanskrit language in 1976 at an intensive three-year program in a traditional gurukulam, outside Bombay, India, under Shri Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati, the most renowned Sanskrit and Advaita Vedanta scholar of the past century. Stepping outside his academic background in Western philosophy, Aruna immersed himself in the deepest, oldest spiritual tradition in the world. This detailed study opened his eyes. In this ancient teaching, Aruna found a complete merging of the intellect and heart. From that point on, he dedicated his life to the inclusive vision of Vedanta.

Returning to his native United States, Aruna earned a master's degree in South Asian languages and literature from the University of Washington. Aruna later studied computer languages, becoming a programmer and manager of information technology in San Diego, California. Retiring to India in 2000, Aruna dedicated himself to studies in Advaita Vedanta and the Sanskrit Language. He created a set of tools for those students interested in a thorough study of Sanskrit to better understand the Bhagavad Gita. These tools consist of a five-book set under the title, *The Aruna Sanskrit Language Series*. They are: *The Aruna Sanskrit Grammar Reference*; *The Aruna Sanskrit Grammar Coursebook: 64 Lessons Based on the Bhagavad Gita*; *The Bhagavad Gita Dictionary*; *The Bhagavad Gita Reader: Sanskrit/English Parallel Text*; and *The Bhagavad Gita Sanskrit Key: Verse-by-Verse Grammar & Vocabulary*. Additionally, there is now a reading and pronunciation guide, *The Sanskrit Reading Tutor: Read It, Click It, Hear It!* Using these tools, Aruna has been teaching Sanskrit at the Arsha Vidya Gurukulams in both South India and in the U.S.

Aruna has lived and studied in a traditional teaching gurukulam for over nine years in India and two years in the U.S. Wishing to help yoga students ground the traditional purpose of yoga in the revered scriptures of India, Aruna releases *Patanjali Yoga Sutras: Translation and Commentary in the Light of Vedanta Scripture*. This presents the yoga discipline as its practitioners in the ancient scriptures understood and practiced. All of these works are available via his www.UpasanaYoga.org website.