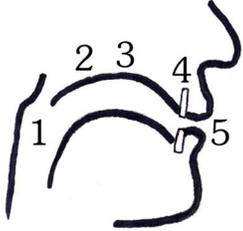


# Pronouncing the Devanagari Alphabet

The Five Mouth Positions

1. Guttural
2. Palatal
3. Cerebral
4. Dental
5. Labial



Simple Vowels ~ positions 1, 2, 5

Position 1

short [one beat]	long [two beats]
<b>अ a</b>	<b>आ ā</b>
cola	father

Position 2

short	long
<b>इ i</b>	<b>ई ī</b>
kin	elite

Position 5

short	long
<b>उ u</b>	<b>ऊ ū</b>
put	truth

Diphthongs ~ vowel sounds produced by gliding from one position to another

Position 1 to 2

अ→इ a→i	अ→ए a→e
<b>ए e</b>	<b>ऐ ai</b>
state	write

Position 1 to 5

अ→उ a→u	अ→ओ a→o
<b>ओ o</b>	<b>औ au</b>
so	cow

Simple Vowels ~ positions 3, 4

Position 3

short	long [rare usage]
<b>ऋ ṛ</b>	<b>ॠ ṝ</b>
similar to <b>trick</b>	similar to <b>tree</b>

Position 4

short [rare usage]	long [very rare usage]
<b>ऌ ḷ</b>	<b>ॡ ḹ</b>
similar to <b>slip</b>	similar to <b>sleet</b>

## Modifiers

**Anusvāra** ~ nasalizes the vowel **अं am̐**

The anusvāra is a dot above a Devanagari letter that represents the “closing” or nasalization of the vowel sound. When found at the end of a word, this results in a final “m” sound. When found within a word, the sound used is that of the nasal consonant at the position of the letter that follows the mark.

The anusvāra can be transliterated as *m̐* or as the appropriate nasal consonant: *ñ - ñ̃ - ṅ - ṅ̃ - m* depending upon the mouth position of the following consonant.

Examples: अहिंसा *ahimsā* or *ahinsā*      संकल्प *saṅkalpa* or *saṅkalpa*

**Visarga** ~ adds a breath after the vowel **अः aḥ** Adds an extra breath that emphasizes the preceding vowel, pronounce as “*huh*” or “*hih*”

Examples: शान्तिः *śāntiḥ*      नमः *namah*

## Consonants

To experience the difference between the aspirated and unaspirated consonants: position a hand about two or three inches from the face with the palm facing the mouth ~ the breath should be felt on the palm when an aspirated consonant is spoken and not felt when an unaspirated consonant is spoken.

	Hard		Soft		
	Unaspirated	Aspirated	Unaspirated	Aspirated	Nasal
Position 1 Guttural	क <i>ka</i> kite	ख <i>kha</i> elkhorn	ग <i>ga</i> goat	घ <i>gha</i> doghouse	ङ <i>ṅa</i> bongo
Position 2 Palatal	च <i>ca</i> chart	छ <i>cha</i> church hall	ज <i>ja</i> jump	झ <i>jha</i> hedgehog	ञ <i>ña</i> inch
Position 3 Cerebral	ट <i>ṭa</i> art	ठ <i>ṭha</i> warthog	ड <i>ḍa</i> guard	ढ <i>ḍha</i> hardhat	ण <i>ṇa</i> bond
Position 4 Dental	त <i>ta</i> test	थ <i>tha</i> anthill	द <i>da</i> den	ध <i>dha</i> madhouse	न <i>na</i> nine
Position 5 Labial	प <i>pa</i> pat	फ <i>pha</i> tophat	ब <i>ba</i> bat	भ <i>bha</i> abhor	म <i>ma</i> map

Semivowels ~ consonants that are produced by combining vowel sounds

Position 2 to 1 इ→अ i→a य ya yes	Position 3 to 1 ऋ→अ r→a र ra run	Position 4 to 1 ऌ→अ l→a ल la let	Position 5 to 1 उ→अ u→a व va verse
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Sibilants ~ consonants that are produced with a hissing sound by allowing air to pass through a small space created by the tongue at each of three mouth positions.

Position 2 श śa lakeshore	Position 3 ष ṣa earshot	Position 4 स sa set
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Aspirate ~ sound is produced in the throat at Position 1 and then pushed out the lips at Position 5.

ह ha have
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