

# Elementary Sanskrit Grammar

## प्रारम्भिक संस्कृत व्याकरण

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## Introduction

Sanskṛita is a very advanced and highly structured language. In most languages a noun can take only two forms, singular or plural. However, Sanskṛita has three transformations for the nouns singular (ekavachana), dual (dvivachana) and plural (bahuvachana). Also each noun can be handled in eight different ways (seven vibhaktis and one in form of addressing). Hence each noun can have 24 forms. One may consider that a lot to memorize, but with understanding of the rules, it gets very easy after some initial learning curve.

This book is an attempt to help the students get over the initial hurdles in learning Sanskṛita. I hope it be beneficial for everyone.

Sincerely,

**Sanjay Mohan Mittal**

# 1

## Vibhakti विभक्ति

Before we embark on our journey of learning Sanskrit, let's understand the basic structure of *vibhakti* that forms the core of this language. In Hindi the *vibhakti* can be described as

- १ कर्ता ने
  - २ कर्म को
  - ३ करण से, के द्वारा
  - ४ सम्प्रदान को, के लिए
  - ५ अपादान से (पृथक् होना)
  - ६ सम्बन्ध का, के, की
  - ७ अधिकरण में, पर
- सम्बोधन हे, अरे, भो, रे आदि

Since Hindi has been derived from Sanskrit, it is easy to understand this structure. Let's try to understand this structure in English with the following two sentences.

1. O teacher! Ram is showing Hari, India's map which is kept on a table, pointing with a stick, in order to show him the location of New Delhi.
2. The leaves are falling from the tree.

In this sentences, there are multiple nouns used in different capacities. Let's see how these differences can help us understand the forms (*vibhakti*)

**First *vibhakti*:** *karttaa* कर्ता (subject) is the main entity responsible for the action. "Ram" in the first sentence and "leaves" in the second sentence, are the subjects of these sentences. In a sentence normally the noun word that precedes "is, are, do, does etc." is the first *vibhakti*.

**Second *vibhakti*:** *karma* कर्म (beneficiary) is the entity for whom the action is being performed. "Hari" in the first sentence is the beneficiary.

**Third *vibhakti*:** *karaṇa* करण (facilitator) is the entity through which the action is performed. "Stick" in the first sentence the tool that facilitated the action of showing.

**Fourth *vibhakti*:** *sampradaana* सम्प्रदान (causal force) is the entity that defines the reason of the action performed. "Location of New Delhi" in the first sentence is the causal force prompting "Ram" to act. These entities can be identified by "for, in order to".

**Fifth vibhakti:** *apaadaana* अपादान (separation from) is the entity from which the action is causing a separation of the subject. “Tree” in the second sentence is the entity from which the separation is occurring. An entity that succeeds “from” in a sentence would fall in this category.

**Sixth vibhakti:** *sambandha* सम्बन्ध (relationship) is the entity that has relation with other entities. “India” and “New Delhi” in the first sentence are linked to “map” and “location” respectively. An entity that succeeds “of” or precedes the possessive “’s” in a sentence would fall in this category.

**Seventh vibhakti:** *adhikaraṇa* अधिकरण (supporting) is the entity providing physical support. “Table” in the first sentence is providing support to the map. An entity that succeeds words like “on, upon” would fall into this category.

**Last vibhakti:** *sambodhana* सम्बोधन (addressing) is the entity being addressed in a sentence. “Teacher” in the first sentence is being addressed to. This normally is a repetition of the first *vibhakti* and hence is not considered a true *vibhakti*. Hence as a standard, we only count seven *vibhakti* in Sanskrit.

After understanding the basic structure of *vibhakti* let’s look at some examples of nouns with their *vibhakti*.

## 2

### Noun संज्ञा

In Sanskrit the nouns are classified in two different ways, by gender and by the ending sound of the noun. The transformation of a noun into various *vibhakti* depends on both of these categories.

**Gender:** Nouns are divided into three genders, masculine *pulliṅga* पुल्लिङ्ग, neutral *napunsakaliṅga* नपुंसकलिङ्ग and feminine *streeliṅga* स्त्रीलिङ्ग.

**Ending sound:** Most nouns end in a vowel sound. These nouns are classified based on the vowel that produced the ending sound. Some nouns that do not end in a vowel sound and end in a *halanta* हलन्त (ः); these are classified separately. Here are the possible classifications in this category

| Ending sound | Classification       | Examples |
|--------------|----------------------|----------|
| अ a          | akaaraanta अकारान्त  |          |
| आ aa         | aakaaraanta आकारान्त |          |
| इ i          | ikaaraanta इकारान्त  |          |
| ई ee         | eekaaraanta ईकारान्त |          |
| उ u          | ukaaraanta उकारान्त  |          |
| ऊ oo         | ookaaraanta ऊकारान्त |          |
| ऋ ri         | ṛikaaraanta ऋकारान्त |          |

We will now look at various combinations of gender and ending sounds and learn the various *vibhakti* for each of these combinations

The table below provided the suffixes used for modify a **masculine** noun ending with **vowel a**.

| <b>Masculine <i>pulliṅga</i> पुल्लिङ्ग and <i>akaaraanta</i> अकारान्त General Suffix</b> |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
|  | <b>Singular<br/><i>ekavachana</i><br/>एकवचन</b> | <b>Dual<br/><i>dvivachana</i><br/>द्विवचन</b> | <b>Plural<br/><i>bahuvachana</i><br/>बहुवचन</b> |
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> प्रथमा: Subject कर्ता</b>  | aḥ अः   | au औ  | aaḥ आः  |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup> द्वितीया: Beneficiary कर्म</b>   | am अम्  | au औ  | aan आन्   |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup> तृतीया: Facilitator करण</b>  | ena एन  | aabhyaam<br>आभ्याम्                           | aiḥ ऐः  |
| <b>4<sup>th</sup> चतुर्थी: Causal सम्प्रदान</b>  | aaya आय   | aabhyaam<br>आभ्याम्                           | ebhyaḥ एभ्यः                                    |
| <b>5<sup>th</sup> पंचमी: Separation अपादान</b>   | aat आत्   | aabhyaam<br>आभ्याम्                           | ebhyaḥ एभ्यः                                    |
| <b>6<sup>th</sup> षष्ठी: Possessive सम्बन्ध</b>  | sya स्य   | ayoh अयोः                                     | aanaam आनाम्                                    |
| <b>7<sup>th</sup> सप्तमी: Support अधिकरण</b>   | e ए   | ayoh अयोः                                     | eṣhu एषु  |
| <b>Address सम्बोधन</b>   |   | au औ  | aaḥ आः  |

Application of the above suffixes to a noun *baalaka* बालक (a boy) results in following table

| <b>Masculine <i>pulliṅga</i> पुल्लिङ्ग and <i>akaaraanta</i> अकारान्त Noun: <i>baalaka</i> बालक</b> |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
|   | <b>Singular<br/><i>ekavachana</i><br/>एकवचन</b> | <b>Dual<br/><i>dvivachana</i><br/>द्विवचन</b> | <b>Plural<br/><i>bahuvachana</i><br/>बहुवचन</b> |
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> प्रथमा: Subject कर्ता</b>   | baalakaḥ बालकः                                  | baalakau बालकौ                                | baalakaah बालकाः                                |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup> द्वितीया: Beneficiary कर्म</b>  | baalakam<br>बालकम्                              | baalakau बालकौ                                | baalakaan बालकान्                               |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup> तृतीया: Facilitator करण</b>   | baalakena<br>बालकेन                             | baalakaabhyaam<br>बालकाभ्याम्                 | baalakaiḥ बालकैः                                |
| <b>4<sup>th</sup> चतुर्थी: Causal सम्प्रदान</b>   | baalakaaya<br>बालकाय                            | baalakaabhyaam<br>बालकाभ्याम्                 | baalakebhyaḥ<br>बालकेभ्यः                       |
| <b>5<sup>th</sup> पंचमी: Separation अपादान</b>  | baalakaat<br>बालकात्                            | baalakaabhyaam<br>बालकाभ्याम्                 | baalakebhyaḥ<br>बालकेभ्यः                       |
| <b>6<sup>th</sup> षष्ठी: Possessive सम्बन्ध</b>   | baalakasya<br>बालकस्य                           | baalakayoh<br>बालकयोः                         | baalakaanaam<br>बालकानाम्                       |
| <b>7<sup>th</sup> सप्तमी: Support अधिकरण</b>  | baalake बालके                                   | baalakayoh<br>बालकयोः                         | baalakeshu बालकेषु                              |
| <b>Address सम्बोधन</b>  | he baalaka!<br>हे बालक!                         | he baalakau!<br>हे बालकौ!                     | he baalakaah!<br>हे बालकाः!                     |

The table below provided the suffixes used for modify a **neutral gender** noun ending with **vowel a**. The 3<sup>rd</sup> *vibhakti* onwards is same as the masculine *akaaraanta*.

| <b>Neutral gender <i>napunsakalinga</i> नपुंसकलिंग and <i>akaaraanta</i> अकारान्त General Suffix</b> |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
|  | <b>Singular<br/><i>ekavachana</i><br/>एकवचन</b> | <b>Dual<br/><i>dvivachana</i><br/>द्विवचन</b> | <b>Plural<br/><i>bahuvachana</i><br/>बहुवचन</b> |
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> प्रथमा: Subject कर्ता</b>  | am अम्  | e ए   | aani आनि  |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup> द्वितीया: Beneficiary कर्म</b>   | am अम्  | e ए   | aani आनि  |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup> तृतीया: Facilitator करण</b>  | ena एन  | aabhyaam<br>आभ्याम्                           | aiḥ ऐः  |
| <b>4<sup>th</sup> चतुर्थी: Causal सम्प्रदान</b>  | aaya आय   | aabhyaam<br>आभ्याम्                           | ebhyaḥ एभ्यः                                    |
| <b>5<sup>th</sup> पंचमी: Separation अपादान</b>   | aat आत्   | aabhyaam<br>आभ्याम्                           | ebhyaḥ एभ्यः                                    |
| <b>6<sup>th</sup> षष्ठी: Possessive सम्बन्ध</b>  | sya स्य   | ayoḥ अयोः                                     | aanaam आनाम्                                    |
| <b>7<sup>th</sup> सप्तमी: Support अधिकरण</b>   | e ए   | ayoḥ अयोः                                     | eṣhu एषु  |
| <b>Address सम्बोधन</b>   |   | au औ  | aah आः  |

Application of the above suffixes to a noun *phala* फल (a fruit) results in following table

| <b>Neutral gender <i>napunsakalinga</i> नपुंसकलिंग and <i>akaaraanta</i> अकारान्त Noun: <i>phala</i> फल</b> |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
|   | <b>Singular<br/><i>ekavachana</i><br/>एकवचन</b> | <b>Dual<br/><i>dvivachana</i><br/>द्विवचन</b> | <b>Plural<br/><i>bahuvachana</i><br/>बहुवचन</b> |
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> प्रथमा: Subject कर्ता</b>   | phalam फलम्                                     | phale फले                                     | phalaani फलानि                                  |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup> द्वितीया: Beneficiary कर्म</b>  | phalam फलम्                                     | phale फले                                     | phalaani फलानि                                  |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup> तृतीया: Facilitator करण</b>   | phalena फलेन                                    | phalaabhyaam<br>फलाभ्याम्                     | phalaiḥ फलैः                                    |
| <b>4<sup>th</sup> चतुर्थी: Causal सम्प्रदान</b>   | phalaaya फलाय                                   | phalaabhyaam<br>फलाभ्याम्                     | phalebhyaḥ फलेभ्यः                              |
| <b>5<sup>th</sup> पंचमी: Separation अपादान</b>  | phalaat फलात्                                   | phalaabhyaam<br>फलाभ्याम्                     | phalebhyaḥ फलेभ्यः                              |
| <b>6<sup>th</sup> षष्ठी: Possessive सम्बन्ध</b>   | phalasya फलस्य                                  | phalayōḥ फलयोः                                | phalaanaam<br>फलानाम्                           |
| <b>7<sup>th</sup> सप्तमी: Support अधिकरण</b>  | phale फले                                       | phalayōḥ फलयोः                                | phaleṣhu फलेषु                                  |
| <b>Address सम्बोधन</b>  | he phala! हे फल!                                | he phalau!<br>हे फलौ!                         | he phalaah!<br>हे फलाः!                         |