## **Intro #1: About Hindi**

So then, what is Hindi? Well it’s one of the widest spoken languages in the world with around 500 million speakers. In fact that’s only outnumbered only by Mandarin Chinese, English and Spanish! It is mainly spoken in and around the areas of northern India but, of course, it is spoken by communities all over the world. Hindi is also a very powerful language in terms of global politics, with India being one the fastest growing economies in the world. It is also the main language of Bollywood, the billion dollar film industry.

Hindi has evolved from a language called Sanskrit, much in the same way languages like Spanish and French evolved from Latin. Hindi is very closely related to the language of Pakistan, Urdu. They’re so close in fact that some linguist say they *are* the same language!

**SCRIPT (लिपि) for HINDI language is DEVANAGIRI (देवनागरी).**

Devanagari is also used to write other languages, like Sanskrit, Nepali, Marathi and so on. Each language has it’s own slight modification to the alphabet - this is just like how the Latin alphabet (the one we’re using here!) is used for other languages like Spanish and French, which have their own modifications - like the letter é in French and ñ in Spanish.

Grammar wise, Hindi is very regular and most of the time everything follows the rules - which makes our lives learning it a lot easier!

## **Lesson #1: Saying Hello**

So let’s look at our very first word in Hindi; the word for hello which is… नमस्ते *namaste*.

Compared to English, Hindi is *much much* easier to read! See I told you you wouldn’t believe me. So let me tell you why. This about the words ‘cat’ and 'city’, these both start with the letter 'c’, but they start with different sounds! Cat starts with a 'k’ sound and city and ’s’ sound. Confusing hey! In Hindi every letters *always* has the same pronunciation\*.

So let’s learn a few things about Devanagari. Firstly the most distinctive look about it is the horizontal line that’s above almost all the letters, it looks like a washing line with the letters hanging from it!

image

*namaste aap kaise hain?* - Hello, how are you?

Notice how the letters hang from the red 'washing line’

There are no capital letters in Devanagari - which makes our life a lot easier!

Punctuation marks are exactly the same as English ones but sometimes you’ll see a । which means exactly the same as a full stop (/period).

## **Lesson #2: Vowels Part 1; अ a and आ aa**

One big difference between Hindi and English is that Hindi vowels have two forms, one form for when they stand alone and another for when the vowel joins to a consonant.

So are you ready to learn a word that starts with **अ *a***? The Hindi word अच्छा *acchaa* means ‘good’.

Now अ *a* is a very special vowel because it doesn’t change the consonant at all. Whenever you see a consonant with no modification at all then it should have the अ *a* sound. Can you remember this from Lesson #1 Saying Hello, we saw the letters न *na* and म *ma* which make up the word नमस्ते *namaste -* Hello. Well these letters, न *na* and म *ma*, have no modifications so they are both pronounced with an अ *a.* Following? The greeting नमस्ते*namaste* has two अ *a* ’s in it!

Do you think you’re ready for the next vowel? Well here it is;

This is the letter आ *aa*. What does it look like? Well it’s very similar to अ *a* but आ *aa* has an extra vertical line on the right hand side. We pronounce **आ *aa*** as a long 'a’ sound, this is like the 'a’ in father. F-*aa-*ther. Listen to it several times. Say it out loud a few times; आ *aa.* Write it out a few times; आ *aa* Got it? आ *aa.* Are you ready to learn a word that uses आ *aa*?

two sample words with the letter आ *aa*; आग *aag* - Fire and नाम *naam* - Name

Now when we want to add an आ to a consonant we add this symbol, ा at the end of the consonant. Remember the letter न *na* from नमस्ते *namaste -* Hello? Well when we add आ *aa* to न *na* it becomes ना *naa.* Can you see the extra line here; न *na* and ना *naa* Got it? न *na* should have a very short 'a’ sound and ना *naa* has a long 'aa’ sound. Great!

## **Lesson #3: Vowels Part 2; इ i and ई ee**