Informal Description of Telugu Grammar

-Malik, 2021

I've been studying Telugu for about a year, and there aren't many good English resources, so I've decided to compile all my notes for other learners. I'll try to make it easy to understand for non-linguists, but I will leave some linguistic notes here and there for other linguists. There are probably mistakes, leave a comment if you have any corrections.

This is not a "rule book", this is an *explainer* meant to help understand what is going on because Telugu grammar can be complicated.

This is focused on modern Telugu. I've omitted/ignored many aspects of Telugu grammar which are more literary, so this is not comprehensive.
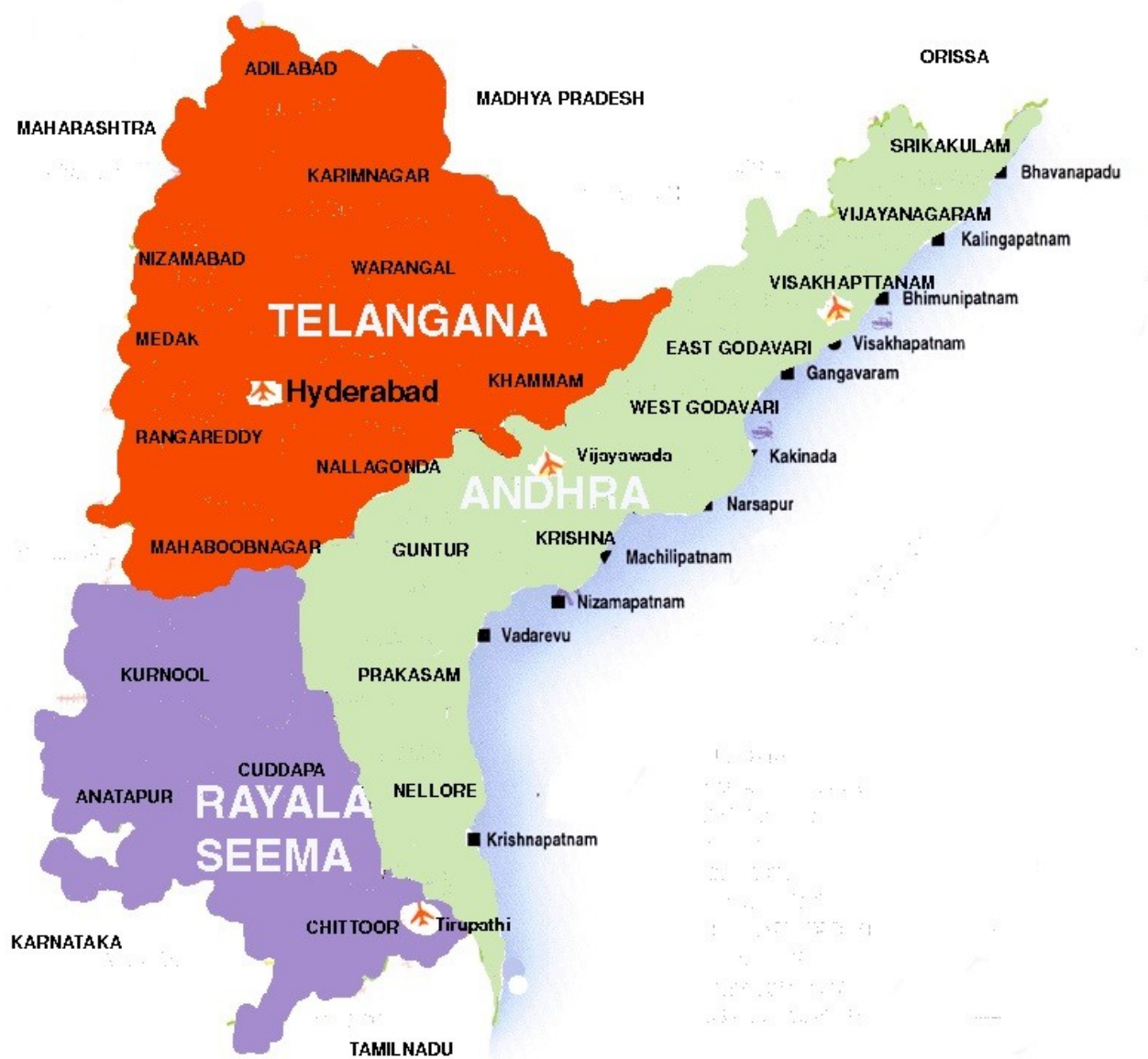
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dialects

There are three main dialect groups. For lack of good data about dialects, I am guilty of mixing and matching.

Script and Phonology

The Telugu script is a Brahmic abugida.

Vowels

Full vowels are only used at the beginning of a word. In all other cases, half vowels are combined with consonants. Consonants inherently have the vowel "a" /ɐ/, which can be cancelled by adding a *pollu* symbol.

Full vowel	Half vowel	Consonant (k) + vowel	ISO	IPA	Notes
ಅ	none	ಕ (default)	a	/ɐ/	
ಆ	ಾ	ಕಾ	ā	/äː/	also represents marginal phoneme /æː/
ಇ	ಿ	ಕಿ	i	/i/	often [ji] word- initially
ಈ	ೀ	ಕೀ	ī	/iː/	often [jiː] word- initially
ಉ	ು	ಕು	u	/u/	often [ʋu] word- initially
ಊ	ೂ	ಕೂ	ū	/uː/	often [ʋuː] word- initially
ಋ	ೃ	ಕೃ	r̥	/ru/	
ಎ	ೆ	ಕೆ	e	/e/	often [je] word- initially
ಏ	ೇ	ಕೇ	ē	/eː/	often [jeː] word- initially
ಐ	ೈ	ಕೈ	ai	/ɐɪ̯/	
ಒ	ೊ	ಕೊ	o	/o/	often [ʋo] word- initially
ಓ	ೋ	ಕೋ	ō	/oː/	often [ʋoː] word- initially
ಔ	ೌ	ಕೌ	au	/ɐʊ̯/	
none	ಂ	ಕಂ	ṁ	/m/	"anusvāram": Assimilating

				(/n/, /ŋ/, [ŋ])	nasal consonant. Default /m/
none	ఁ	క్	none	∅	"pollu": nullifies inherent vowel

Additional rare or outdated vowels:					
ౠ	ీ	క్ణూ	r̥̄	/ruː/	
ఌ	ీ	క్ఌ	l̥	/lu/	
ౡ	ీ	క్ఌ	l̥̄	/luː/	
none	ఁ	కఁ	n̆	/◌̃/	"ardhanusvāram": nasal vowel
none	ః	కః	ḥ	/h/	"visargam": breathy vowel

Consonants

Half consonants are used for consonant clusters. The first consonant in the cluster is represented with full consonant, and the rest of the cluster is represented with half consonants placed below.

Examples: త + ర = త్ర *tra*

 క + ష + య = క్ష్య *kṣya*

Full consonant	Half consonant	ISO	IPA	Notes
క	్క	k	/k/	
ఖ	్ఖ	kh	/kʰ/	
గ	్గ	g	/g/	
ఘ	్ఘ	gh	/gʰ/	

చ	◌్చ	ch	/t͡ʃ/	
ఛ	◌్ఛ	chh	/t͡ʃʰ/	
జ	◌్జ	j	/d͡ʒ/	Represents /z/ in loanwords
ఝ	◌్ఝ	jh	/d͡ʒʰ/	
ఞ	◌్ఞ	ñ	/ɲ/	"iñi": mainly appears in the ఙ్ఞ cluster pronounced /gɲ/
ట	◌్ట	ṭ	/ʈ/	
ఠ	◌్ఠ	ṭh	/ʈʰ/	
డ	◌్డ	ḍ	/ɖ/	
ఢ	◌్ఢ	ḍh	/ɖʰ/	
ణ	◌్ణ	ṇ	/ɳ/	
త	◌్త	t	/t̪/	
థ	◌్థ	th	/t̪ʰ/	Often pronounced [d̪ʰ]
ద	◌్ద	d	/d̪/	
ధ	◌్ధ	dh	/d̪ʰ/	
న	◌్న	n	/n/	
ప	◌్ప	p	/p/	
ఫ	◌్ఫ	ph	/pʰ/	Represents /f/ in loanwords
బ	◌్బ	b	/b/	

భ	◌్భ	bh	/bʰ/	
మ	◌్మ	m	/m/	
య	◌్య	y	/j/	Half "y" + "ā" is used to represent /æː/ in English loans, eg: బ్యాగ్ *bæg* "bag"
ర	◌్	r	/r/	
ల	◌్ల	l	/l/	
ళ	◌్ళ	ḷ	/ɭ/	◌్ is often used as the half version instead
వ	◌్వ	v	/ʊ/	"va" alternates with the vowel "o" in speech
శ	◌్శ	ś	/ʂ/	"melika śæ" శా is pronounced /ʂæː/ not */ʂaː/. To pronounce this sound, point your tongue towards your lower teeth.
ష	◌్ష	ṣ	/ʂ/	
స	◌్స	s	/ʂ/	
హ	◌్హ	h	/h/	
Additional rare or outdated consonants:				
ఙ	◌్ఙ	ṅ	/ŋ/	"ña"
ఱ	◌్ఱ	ṟ	/r/	"baṇḍi ra"

చ	none	ts	/t͡s/	
జ	none	dz	/d͡z/	

More about consonant+vowel ligatures

- The letters that don't connect to their check mark, get extended *above* the vowel when combined with some of the top vowels: ా ి ీ ౄ .

Example: ప + ా = పా *pā*

compare: వ + ా = వా *vā*

- ి often looks like a half circle.

Example: ద + ి = ది *di*

- When ప ఫ వ combine with ు , the vowel is written lower to distinguish from మ and ఘ.

Example: వ + ు = వు *vu*

compare: మ *ma*

Irregular ligatures

జ + ు = జు *ju*

జ + ూ = జూ *jū*

మ + ొ = మొ *mo*

మ + ో = మో *mō*

య + ొ = యొ *yo*

య + ో = యో *yō*

య + ి = యి *yi*

య + ీ = యీ *yī*

హ + ా = హా *hā*

Phonemic Inventory

This is for the linguists.

Consonants

	Labial	Labio-dental	Lamino-dental	Apico-alveolar	Post-alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Glottal

Stop/ Affricate	p b		t̪ d̪		t͡ʃ d͡ʒ	ʈ ɖ		k g		
Aspirated Stop/ Affricate	pʰ bʰ		(t̪ʰ) d̪ʰ		t͡ʃʰ d͡ʒʰ	ʈʰ ɖʰ		kʰ gʰ		
Nasal	m			n		ɳ	(ɲ)			
Fricative		(f)	s̪	s̠ (z)	ʃ					h
Tap/Trill				r~ɾ						
Approximant		ʋ					j			
Lateral Approximant				l		ɭ				

Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
High	i iː		u uː
Mid-High	e eː		o oː
Mid-Low	æː (dialectal)	ɐ	
Low		äː	

Diphthongs: /ɐɪ̯/ and /ɐʊ̯/

Stress
Telugu isochrony (stress pattern) is generally considered mora-timed. Short unstressed vowels are often elided, though.

Syntax and Morphology

Word Order
Telugu word order is primarily SOV (Subject-Object-Verb), but not strictly. It is also strongly head-final in general.

Dative Subjects

Some phrases that may have a nominative subject in English, may be [dative](#) in Telugu. This is a common feature of Indian languages. Wants, needs, possession, etc. are often expressed this way.

Examples:

నాన్నకి సహాయం కావాలి *nānnaki sahāyam kāvāli* = "Dad needs help." (literally: to-dad help is-needed)

శ్రుతికి పాలు ఇష్టం *śrutiki pālu iṣṭam* = "Sruti likes milk." (literally: to-Sruti milk is-liked)

నాకు ముగ్గురు కూతుళ్ళు ఉన్నారు *nāku mugguru kūtuḷḷu vunnāru* = "I have three daughters." (literally: to-me three daughters are)

Morphology

Telugu is a strongly suffixing agglutinative language. That means that all inflections, conjugations, and derivations are formed by adding and compounding suffixes to the *end* of the word.

Sandhi and Elision

In the process of combining words and suffixes, vowels and approximants are often elided or changed at boundaries.

Vowel Harmony

The short high vowels "i" and "u", undergo vowel harmony. It is more of a tendency than a consistent pattern but conceptually it is easy. Simply put, the last few syllables of any word generally avoid having a combination of "i" and "u" vowels. Instead, they all turn into "i" or they all turn into "u". Usually vowel harmony is regressive, meaning the last vowel is usually the one that determines whether the previous vowels will be "i" or "u".

Example: చెవి *chevi* = ear ; చెవులు *chevulu* = ears

Because the plural suffix *-lu* ends with "u", the last vowel in *chevi* also becomes "u".

Vowel harmony seems to have been much more clear and consistent in older forms of Telugu, but in modern Telugu it is no longer as consistent.

Dictionaries

I recommend these two online dictionaries:
https://andhrabharati.com/dictionary/
https://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/brown/

Demonstrative Determiners

There is no single word for "the" in Telugu, instead, the determiners distinguish distance like "this" and "that" *Note*: These are only determiners. They must modify a noun. They can't stand alone, can't replace a noun in a sentence.

This = ఈ *ī*

That = ఆ *ā*

Example: ఈ అబ్బాయి *ī abbāyi* = this boy

Nouns

Gender

Telugu has three grammatical genders, but unlike other languages where it's arbitrary, Telugu genders are almost completely predictable:

Masculine
- All nouns referring to male humans are masculine.
- Masculine nouns often have the suffix -*uḍu* (e.g. రాముడు *rāmuḍu* = "Ram")

Feminine
- All nouns referring to female humans are feminine.
- Feminine nouns often have the suffix -*ālu, -rālu,* or *ni* (e.g. విద్యార్థిని *vidhyārthini* = "female student")

Neuter
- All* non-humans are neuter.
- Neuter nouns often have the suffix -*am* or -*amu*
- *Exceptions:* objects which are associated with gods may be masculine or feminine, for example, the "sun" సూర్యుడు *sūryuḍu* and "moon" చంద్రుడు *chandruḍu* are masculine grammatically as can be seen by the masculine suffix.

Plurals
- Plurals are usually formed by just adding the suffix లు -*lu.*

Example: ఆట *āṭa* = game ; ఆటలు *āṭalu* = games

- If the word ends with "i", it harmonizes to "u".

Example: పని *pani* = job ; పనులు *panulu* = jobs

- [Masculine](#) and [feminine](#) suffixes are dropped.

Example: స్నేహితుడు *snēhituḍu* = friend (m) ; స్నేహితురాలు *snēhiturālu* = friend (f) ;
స్నేహితులు *snēhitulu* = friends

- The [neuter](#) suffix is replaced with *ā*

Example: పదం *padam* = word ; పదాలు *padālu* = words

- Nouns ending with *-ḍu, -ḍi, -lu,* usually drop the ending and add *-ḷḷu*

Examples: పండు *paṇḍu* = fruit ; పండ్లు *paṇḍlu* or పళ్ళు *paḷḷu* = fruits

   గుడి *guḍi* = temple ; గుళ్ళు *guḷḷu* = temples

   కాలు *kālu* = leg ; కాళ్ళు *kāḷḷu* = legs

- Some plurals are irregular, but they will always have *-lu* or *-ḷḷu* at the end:

Examples: కన్ను *kannu* = eye ; కళ్ళు *kaḷḷu* = eyes

   చేయి *chēyi* = hand ; చేతులు *chētulu* = hands

   వేయి *vēyi* = thousand ; వేలు *vēlu* = thousands

Cases
The exact number of noun cases in Telugu is debatable. My analysis of modern Telugu has 5 cases, the first 4 being the most important.

Nominative
The nominative case is the default case, the subject case.

Note: What is a nominative subject in English, may be a [dative](#) in Telugu. See: [Dative Subjects](#)

Genitive/Oblique
Genitive is also known as Possessive. In English you would use the word "*of*" or add *'s* to the end of the word. In compound nouns, the first element is always genitive.
Oblique is the form the noun takes when taking any other case suffix or [postposition](#). The genitive and oblique are identical in Telugu.

- For most singular nouns, the genitive is the same as the [nominative](#)

Example: తెలుగు *telugu* = Telugu ; తెలుగు వ్యాకరణం *telugu vyākaraṇam* = Telugu grammar

- But, many everyday nouns do have distinct genitive/oblique forms. There are no clear patterns, but they often end with *-ṇṭi, -ṭi* or *-ti.*

Examples: ఇల్లు *illu* = house ; ఇంటి యజమాని *iṇṭi yajamāni* = master/man of the house

   కన్ను *kannu* = eye ; కంటిచూపు *kaṇṭi chūpu* = eyesight

   ఇప్పుడు *ippuḍu* = now ; ఇప్పటి ఫ్యాషన్ *ippaṭi fæṣan* = current fashion

చేయి *chēyi* = hand ; చేతిపని *chēti pani* = handicrafts

- For [plurals](), the last vowel changes to *a*.

Examples: బట్టలు *baṭṭalu* = clothes ; బట్టల దుకాణం *baṭṭala dukāṇam* = clothing store

Accusative
Accusative marks the direct object. The object which is directly affected by the action.

- Add the accusative suffix ను *-nu* or ని *-ni* to the [oblique]() stem. Historically, this is because of vowel harmony, but in spoken Telugu, the suffix is usually *-ni*.

Example: చెల్లి *chelli* = little sister ; నీ చెల్లిని కనుక్కో *nī chellini kanukkō* = "Find your little sister."

- If the word ends with the [neuter]() suffix, replace it with *-ānni*

Example: కుటుంబం *kuṭumbam* = family ; నా కుటుంబాన్ని ప్రేమిస్తున్నాను *nā kuṭumbānni prēmistunnānu* = "I love my family."

- The accusative suffix is not necessary for inanimate objects.

Example: పుచ్చకాయ *pucchakāya* = watermelon ; పుచ్చకాయ తిన్నాం *pucchakāya tinnæm* = "We ate watermelon."

Dative
Dative primarily marks the indirect object, but it has a variety of other functions as well. It's closest translation in English is "to", but it is not a direct equivalent. Situations which use the dative case include (but not limited to):
1. the person receiving the benefit the action
2. the place you are going to
3. the reason for your action
4. since/until some time
5. or even the [subject]() in some cases

- Add the dative suffix కు *-ku* or కి *-ki* to the [oblique]() stem. Historically, this is because of vowel harmony, but in spoken Telugu, the suffix is usually *-ki*.

Example: పిల్లలు *pillalu* = kids ; పిల్లలకి ఆహారం ఇవ్వండి *pillalaki āhāram ivvaṇḍi* = "Please give the kids food." (Usage 1)

- If the word ends with the [neuter]() suffix, it is replaced with *-āniki*

Example: దుకాణం *dukāṇam* = store ; దుకాణానికి వెళ్తోంది *dukāṇāniki veḷtōndi* = "She is going to the store." (Usage 2)

- Usage 3: This is like "in order to" or "so that" in English. When the reason is another verb, the <u>verbal noun</u> is used in the dative case.

Example: సంపాదించు *sampādinchu* = to earn ; జీవనం సంపాదించడానికి పనిచేస్తాం *jīvanam sampādinchaḍāniki panichēstām* = "We work to earn a living."
Here *sampādinchaḍam* is a <u>verbal noun</u> which becomes *sampādinchaḍāniki* in the dative case, because of the neuter suffix rule mentioned above.

- Usage 4: When talking about time, this doesn't translate as clearly from English, because it can be used as both "since" and "until".

Example: మొదటి రోజుకు ఇప్పటికి తేడా చాలా ఉంది *modaṭi rōjuku ippāṭiki tēḍā chālā undi* = "The difference since the first day until now is a lot." (Literally: to the first day, to now, the difference is a lot)
 In this sentence, "since" and "until" are the same in the Telugu *ku/ki*, the dative suffix, is used for both.

- Usage 5: What is a <u>nominative</u> subject in English, may be a dative in Telugu. See: <u>Dative Subjects</u>

Locative
This case is marginal, only used in some circumstances. It may no longer be productive.
Generally the <u>postposition</u> లో *lō* is used instead, but this case is still used in some circumstances:

This case marks a specific place or a point in time, particularly times of day. Similar to "at" in English

- Add the temporal suffix న *-na* to the <u>oblique</u> stem.

Examples: పొద్దు *poddu* = dawn ; పొద్దున లేస్తాడు *podduna lēstāḍu* = "He wakes at dawn."
    పక్క *pakka* = side ; నా పక్కన కూర్చో *nā pakkana kūrchō* = "Sit beside me." (Literally: sit at my side)

- If the word ends with the <u>neuter</u> suffix, replace it with *-āna* or *-ānna*

Example: ఉదయం *udayam* = morning ; ఉదయాన బైల్దేరుతారు *udayāna baildērutāru* = "They leave in the morning"

<u>Pronouns</u>

Telugu is a pro-drop language. That means that pronouns are not necessary when the verb is conjugated clearly.

1st person

	Nominative	Genitive/Oblique	Accusative
Singular: I/me	నేను nēnu	నా nā	నన్ను nannu
Plural exclusive: We/us *but not you*	మేం/ మేము mēm/ mēmu	మా mā	మమ్మల్ని mammalni
Plural inclusive: We/us *including you*	మనం/ మనము manam/ manamu	మన mana	మనల్ని manalni

2nd person

	Nominative	Genitive/Oblique	Accusative
You (informal)	నువ్వ nuvvu	నీ nī	నిన్ను ninnu
You (formal or plural)	మీరు mīru	మీ mī	మిమ్మల్ని mimmalni

3rd person
This gets a little more complex…

Third person pronouns vary by formality, and also distinguish between someone/something *here* vs. *there.* Like "this" vs "that" except it applies to all 3rd person pronouns in Telugu. You will notice that the "i" vs "a" distance distinction in the demonstratives is similar in the 3rd person pronouns.

There are a lot of 3rd person pronouns, so I've highlighted the most common pronouns in spoken Telugu in green.

Singular Masculine

	Nominative		Genitive/Oblique		Accusative	
	Here	There	Here	There	Here	There
Very informal: he/him	వీడు vīḍu	వాడు vāḍu	వీడి vīḍi	వాడి vāḍi	వీడిని vīḍini	వాడిని vāḍini
Informal: he/him	ఇతను/ ఇతడు itanu/ itaḍu	అతను/ అతడు atanu/	ఇతని/ ఇతడి itani/ itaḍi	అతని/ అతడి atani/ ataḍi	ఇతన్ని/ ఇతడిని itanni/	అతన్ని/ అతడిని atanni/

		ataḍu			itaḍini	ataḍini
Formal: he/him	ఈయన īyana	ఆయన āyana	ఈయన īyana	ఆయన āyana	ఈయనను īyananu	ఆయనను āyananu

Singular Feminine

	Nominative		Genitive/Oblique		Accusative	
	Here	There	Here	There	Here	There
Very Informal: she/her/**it**	ఇది idi	అది adi	దీని dīni	దాని dāni	దీన్ని dīnni	దాన్ని dānni
Informal: she/her	ఈమె īme	ఆమె āme	ఈమె īme	ఆమె āme	ఈమెను īmenu	ఆమెను āmenu
Formal: she/her	ఈవిడ īviḍa	ఆవిడ āviḍa	ఈవిడ īviḍa	ఆవిడ āviḍa	ఈవిడను īviḍanu	ఆవిడను āviḍanu

Singular Masculine and Feminine
In spoken Telugu, gender-neutral pronouns are commonly used.

	Nominative	Genitive/Oblique	Accusative
Informal: he/ she	తను tanu	తన tana	తనను tananu
Formal: he/ she	See: Plural Masculine and Feminine		

Singular Neuter

it/ this/ that	Use the *Very Informal Feminine* pronouns. See: Singular Feminine

Plural Masculine and Feminine
This is also commonly used as a *Formal* gender-neutral singular pronoun

	Nominative		Genitive/Oblique		Accusative	
	Here	There	Here	There	Here	There
he/ him/ she/ her/ they/ them	వీరు/ వీళ్ళు vīru/ vīḷḷu	వారు/ వాళ్ళు vāru/ vāḷḷu	వీరి/ వీళ్ళ vīri/ vīḷḷa	వారి/ వాళ్ళ vāri/ vāḷḷa	వీరిని/ వీళ్ళని vīrini/ vīḷḷani	వారిని/ వాళ్ళని vārini/ vāḷḷani

Plural Neuter

	Nominative		Genitive/Oblique		Accusative	
	Here	There	Here	There	Here	There
these/those	ఇవి ivi	అవి avi	వీటి vīṭi	వాటి vāṭi	వీటిని vīṭini	వాటిని vāṭini

Verbs

Telugu verbs are pretty complicated, so this is a long section and may not be complete. Let me know what I missed.

Naturally there are some irregular verbs, and I won't be able to mention them all. But even irregular verbs generally follow the same patterns described here with a few modifications.

Verb types

Compound verbs are very common in Telugu, and there are some common verb endings which have specific grammatical uses. Compound verbs are formed with many verbs, these are just a few important ones with specific grammatical functions.

Inchu verbs

- ఇచ్చు *icchu* = to give ; many verbs end with a variation of that: *-inchu*. Usually these are causatives.

Example: నవ్వు *navvu* = to laugh ; నవ్వించు *navvinchu* = to make someone laugh

- It is also used to turn nouns into verbs.

Example: కత్తి *katti* = knife ; కత్తిరించు *kattirinchu* = to cut (with a knife)

Konu verbs

కొను *konu* = to get ; many verbs end with *-konu*. Usually it indicates a reflexive meaning: something which is done to yourself or for yourself.

Example: కప్పు *kappu* = to cover ; కప్పుకొను *kappukonu* = to cover yourself

Paḍu verbs

- పడు *paḍu* = to fall, to feel ; many verbs end with *-paḍu*. Usually it indicates a feeling or perception, or something that happened involuntarily or accidentally. It is also used for passives.

Example: భయం *bhayam* = fear ; భయపడు *bhayapaḍu* = to fear, to be afraid

Pōvu verbs

- పోవు *pōvu* = to go ; many verbs end with -*pōvu*. Usually it indicates an ablative meaning, some change of state or movement away from somewhere.

Example: వెళ్ళు *veḷḷu* = to go ; వెళ్ళిపోవు *veḷḷipōvu* = to leave

- It is also used for some negative constructions, for example the negative conditional.

Vēyu verbs

- వేయు *vēyu* = to cast/throw away ; many verbs end with -*vēyu*. Indicates an action directed away from yourself or emphasizes the completeness of the action.

Example: ఇచ్చు *icchu* = to give ; ఇచ్చివేయు *icchivēyu* = to give away

- The ending often gets elided into just -*ēyu* in spoken Telugu.

Example: ఇచ్చివేయు *icchivēyu* → ఇచ్చేయు *icchēyu*

Alternate Stems

Some irregular verbs have alternate stems which are used for certain conjugations. These alternate stems are mostly used for negatives and imperatives.

- Many verbs that end with -*chu* alternate with -*v.* But this is not a general rule: Inchu Verbs and others do not follow this pattern.

Examples: ఇచ్చు *icchu* "to give" → ఇవ్వు *ivvu*

పిలుచు *piluchu* "to call" → పిలువు *piluvu*

- Konu and Pōvu verbs drop the last syllable and lengthen the vowel.

Examples: నేర్చుకొను *nērchukonu* "to learn" → నేర్చుకో *nērchukō*

మండిపోవు *maṇḍipōvu* "to burn" → మండిపో *maṇḍipō*

- Here are a few more irregular alternate stems:

అగు *agu* → కా *kā* (though this verb is extra irregular and has other stems as well)

వచ్చు *vacchu* "to come" → రా *rā*

చూచు *chūchu* = to look → చూడు *chūḍu*

Personal Endings (PE)

Telugu verb endings agree with the subject of the sentence. They are pretty easy to remember if you know the pronouns, because they match the endings of the pronouns.

Pers	Number/Gender	Corresponding Pronoun	Verb Ending	Alternate

on				Ending *
1st	singular	నేను nēnu	ను -nu **	same
	plural	మేము/మనం mēmu/manam	○ం/ము -m/-mu	ము -mu
2nd	singular	నువ్వ nuvvu	వు -vu	same
	plural / formal	మీరు mīru	రు -ru	same
3rd	sing. masculine	వాడు vāḍu	డు -ḍu	same
	sing. feminine/neuter	అది adi	ది -di ***	దు -du
	plural / sing. formal human	వారు vāru	రు -ru	same
	plural non-human	అవి avi	యి -yi	వు -vu
	unknown subject	ఎవరు evaru (who)	రు -ru	same

* Some contexts like [negatives](#) use alternative endings for some pronouns.

** The first person singular ending *-nu* can be dropped in spoken Telugu.
Example: పనిచేస్తున్నాను *panichēstunnānu* = పనిచేస్తున్నా *panichēstunnā* = "I am working."

*** Feminine/neuter conjugations often don't follow the usual patterns

To Be (Copulae)
Unlike English, there is not one single word for "to be".

Zero Copula
For permanent aspects (like "ser" in Spanish), Telugu is zero-copula in the past and present tense, meaning there is no word needed for "be".
Example: తను తెలివైనది *tanu telivainadi* = "She is smart." (literally: she smart-woman)

- Zero copula is negated using [kā-](#).

Uṇḍu
ఉండు *vuṇḍu* is the main verb for "to be". In spoken Telugu it comes in two tenses: future and non-future. It is used for temporary aspects like moods, feelings, locations (like "estar" in Spanish).

Example: ఇంట్లో ఉన్నాడు *iṇṭlō vunnāḍu* = "He is/was at home." (literally: in-house he-is)

- The past/present conjugation is *vunnā* + PE.
- The habitual/future conjugation is *vuṇṭā* + PE.
- Except for "adi" (singular feminine/neuter) which is irregular in both tenses.

Since this verb is important, here is a table for those two main tenses.

Person	Number/Gender	Corresponding Pronoun	Past/Present	Habitual/ Future
1st	singular	నేను nēnu	ఉన్నాను vunnānu	ఉంటాను vuṇṭānu
	plural	మేము/మనం mēmu/manam	ఉన్నాం/ ము vunnām(u)	ఉంటాం/ ము vuṇṭām(u)
2nd	singular	నువ్వ nuvvu	ఉన్నావు vunnāvu	ఉంటావు vuṇṭāvu
	plural / formal	మీరు mīru	ఉన్నారు vunnāru	ఉంటారు vuṇṭāru
3rd	sing. masculine	వాడు vāḍu	ఉన్నాడు vunnāḍu	ఉంటాడు vuṇṭāḍu
	sing. feminine/neuter	అది adi	ఉంది vundi	ఉంటుంది vuṇṭundi
	plural / sing. formal human	వారు vāru	ఉన్నారు vunnāru	ఉంటారు vuṇṭāru
	plural non-human	అవి avi	ఉన్నాయి vunnāyi	ఉంటాయి vuṇṭāyi
	unknown subject	ఎవరు evaru	ఉన్నారు vunnāru	ఉంటారు vuṇṭāru

- It also comes in most other conjugations, and conjugates like a normal verb, for example the adjective form: ఉన్న *unna* and the conditional participle: ఉంటే *uṇṭē.*
- *Uṇḍu* is negated using Lē-.

Agu

అగు *agu* is another word for "to be". However, it is more along the lines of "to become/happen". This is often used as "to be" in the future tense, especially for permanent aspects, and it is also used for negation of permanent aspects (using [Kā](#)). It is pretty important to know and will be mentioned a lot in the rest of this section. It is highly irregular in terms of conjugation.

Sample Conjugation Table

Here is a full table of all the conjugations for the verb చేయు *chēyu* "to do". All verbs roughly follow the same patterns. For more details and examples about each of the tenses and conjugations, read below.

[Pronouns](#) →	1st		2nd		3rd			
	sing.	pl.	sing./inf.	pl./form.	sing. m.	sing. f./n.	hum. pl./unknown	non-hum. pl.
	నేను nēnu	మేము/మనం mēmu/manam	నువ్వు nuvvu	మీరు mīru	వాడు vāḍu	అది adi	వారు vāru/ ఎవరు [evaru](#)	అవి avi
[Verbal Noun](#)	చేయడం *chēyaḍam*							
[Past Part.](#)	చేసి *chēsi*							
[Perf. Past Part.](#)	చేసేసి *chēsēsi*							
[Pres. Part.](#)	చేస్తూ *chēstū*							
[Neg. Part.](#)	(చేయక *chēyaka*) చేయకుండా *chēyakuṇḍā*							
[Conditional Part.](#)	చేస్తే *chēstē*							
[Neg.Conditional](#)	చేయకపోతే *chēyakapōtē*							

Past Tense	చేశా(ను) chēśǣ(nu)	చేశాం chēśǣm	చేశావు chēśǣvu	చేశారు chēśǣru	చేశాడు chēśǣḍu	చేసింది chēsindi	చేశారు chēśǣru	చేశాయి chēśǣyi
Neg. Past Tense	చేయలే(దు) chēyalē(du)							
Past Habitual Tense	చేసేవాడిని chēsēvāḍini (m); చేసేదాన్ని chēsēdānni (f)	చేసేవాళ్లం chēsēvāḷḷam	చేసేవాడివి chēsēvāḍivi (m); చేసేదానివి chēsēdānivi (f)	చేసేవారు chēsēvāru	చేసేవాడు chēsēvāḍu	చేసేది chēsēdi	చేసేవారు chēsēvāru	చేసేవి chēsēvi
Non-past Tense	చేస్తా(ను) chēstā(nu)	చేస్తాం chēstām	చేస్తావు chēstāvu	చేస్తారు chēstāru	చేస్తాడు chēstāḍu	చేస్తుంది chēstundi	చేస్తారు chēstāru	చేస్తాయి chēstāyi
Neg. Non-past Tense	చేయను chēyanu	చేయము chēyamu	చేయవు chēyavu	చేయరు chēyaru	చేయడు chēyaḍu	చేయదు chēyadu	చేయరు chēyaru	చేయవు chēyavu
Progressive	చేస్తున్నా(ను) chēstunnā(nu)	చేస్తున్నాం chēstunnām	చేస్తున్నావు chēstunnāvu	చేస్తున్నారు chēstunnāru	చేస్తున్నాడు chēstunnāḍu	చేస్తోంది chēstōndi	చేస్తున్నారు chēstunnāru	చేస్తున్నాయి chēstunnāyi
Neg.Progressive	చేయట్లే(దు) chēyaṭlē(du)							
Imperative	none	none	చేయి chēyi	చేయండి chēyaṇ	none	none	చేయం chēyam	none

				ḍi				
Neg.Imperative	none	none	(చేయకు) chēyaku)	చేయకండి chēyakaṇḍi	none	none	చేయొద్దు chēyoddu	none
Necessitative	చేయాలి chēyāli							
Neg. Necessitative	చేయకూడదు chēyakūḍadu							
Passive	చేయబడ- chēyabaḍ- + tense							
Ability	చేయగలను chēyagalanu	చేయగలము chēyagalamu	చేయగలవు chēyagalavu	చేయగలరు chēyagalaru	చేయగలడు chēyagalaḍu	చేయగలదు chēyagaladu	చేయగలరు chēyagalaru	చేయగలవు chēyagalavu
Neg. Ability	చేయలే(ను) chēyālē(nu)	చేయలేము chēyālēmu	చేయలేవు chēyālēvu	చేయలేరు chēyālēru	చేయలేడు chēyālēḍu	చేయలేదు chēyālēdu	చేయలేరు chēyālēru	చేయలేవు chēyālēvu
Permission/Possibility	చేయొచ్చు chēyocchu							
Neg.Permission/Possibility	చేయకపోవచ్చు chēyākapōvacchu							
Want/Need	చేయాలనుకొన- chēyālanukon- + tense							

Verbal Noun

Verbal nouns (aka gerunds) are [neuter gender](#) nouns, and act like them grammatically.

- It is formed by adding the suffix *-aḍam*.

Example: చదువు *chaduvu* = to read ; చదవడం *chadavaḍam* = the act of reading

- The verbal noun uses the [alternate stem](#) for verbs that have them

Examples: ఏడ్చు *yēḍchu* = to cry ; ఏడవడం *yēḍavaḍam* = crying

అగు *agu* → అవ్వడం *avvaḍam* or కావడం *kāvaḍam*.

- For Konu verbs, the last consonant changes to "v" so the ending becomes *-kōvaḍam.*

Example: తీస్కొను *tīskonu* = to take ; తీస్కోవడం *tīskōvaḍam* = the act of taking

- For verbs where the last consonant is "ḍ", then the suffix often becomes *-aṭam.*

Example: మాట్లాడు *māṭlāḍu* = to speak ; మాట్లాడటం *māṭlāḍaṭam* = the act of speaking

Past Participle

The past participle indicates something which "has been done". As in English it is used for the perfect aspect, but in Telugu it is also often used to indicate sequential acts (like "kar/ke" in Hindi-Urdu). Just like in Hindi-Urdu, all verbs performed in a sequence with the same subject** take this form except the last one which takes the appropriate conjugations for tense etc.

- Usually this participle is exactly the same as the verb stem with the last vowel changed to "i"

Example: పడుకొను *paḍukonu* = to sleep ; చాలా సేపటి నుంచి పడుకొని ఉంది *chālā sēpaṭi nunchi paḍukoni undi* = "She has been sleeping for a long time."

- అగు *agu* becomes అయి *ayi.*

- For verbs ending with *-yu,* the ending becomes *-si.* Some other verbs also irregularly change the ending to *-si.*

Examples: రాయు *rāyu* = to write ; జాబు రాసి పంపిస్తా *jābu rāsi pampistā* = "I'll write a letter and send it." (Hindi-Urdu: *chiṭṭhi likh kar bhej dūngā/ī*)

చూచు *chūchu* = to see ; ఫిలిం చూసి నవ్వæడు *filim chūsi navvæḍu* = "He watched the film and laughed." (Hindi-Urdu: *film dekh kar hãsā*)

- For Pōvu verbs the ending changes to *-pōyi.*

Example: పారిపోవు *pāripōvu* = to flee ; కుందేలు పారిపోయి కనబడకపోయింది *kundēlu pāripōyi kanabaḍakapōyindi* = "The bunny ran away and disappeared."

- The past participle is also used for the first element of compounds including compound verbs (but not Inchu verbs) as well as compound nouns.

Example: అగు *agu* + పోవు *pōvu* = ఐపోవు *aipōvu* "to finish, come to an end"

అమ్ము *ammu* "to sell" + వాడు *vāḍu* "guy" = అమ్మేవాడు *ammēvāḍu* "vendor"

- ^^ As in the last example, the past participle is often used in the emphatic form.

- The past participle is also used to form [adjectives](#).

*** Advanced topic:**
Unlike in Hindi-Urdu, there are some cases where they are not required to have the same subject if at least one of them is inanimate and non-volitional, like time passing or rain falling.

Example: వచ్చు *vachhu* = to come ; మేము ఇక్కడికి వచ్చి పది ఏళ్ళు అయ్యింది *mēmu ikkaḍiki vacchi padi yēḷḷu ayyindi* = "It has been ten years since we came here." (literally: we to-here have-come ten years happened.)
The subject of the first verb *vacchi* "come" is *mēmu* "we", but the subject of the second verb *ayyindi* "[happen](#)" is unspecified, just like in English the "it" in "it has been ten years" is unspecified and refers to nothing in particular. Note: *ēḷḷu* "years" is not the subject of *ayyindi*, because *ēḷḷu* is plural, while *ayyindi* is singular.

Perfective Past Participle
- The completeness of the past participle (and [past tense](#)) can be emphasized by compounding it with *-ēsi* (which is from the [past participle](#) of వేయు *vēyu*: *vēsi*)

Example: తిను *tinu* = to eat ; తినేసి రా *tinēsi rā* = "Finish eating and come."

Present Participle
The present participle is like "-ing" in English, but unlike English there is a difference between present participles and [verbal nouns](#) (or gerunds). This present participle is usually used like an adverb, adding some info about the main verb in the sentence.

- It is formed with the suffix *-tū*.

Examples: చెప్పు *cheppu* = to tell ; అబద్ధాలు చెబుతూ తిరుగుతాడు *abaddhālu chebutū tirugutāḍu* = "He goes around telling lies."

- [అగు *agu*](#) becomes అవుతూ *autū*.

- For verbs ending with *-yu* or *-chu* (including [Inchu verbs](#)), the ending becomes *-stū*.
Example: చేయు *chēyu* = to do ; చేస్తూ *chēstū* = doing

- For verbs ending with *-nu* (including [Konu verbs](#)), the ending becomes *-ṇṭū*.
Example: పడుకోను *paḍukonu* = to sleep ; పడుకుంటూ *paḍukuṇṭū* = lying down, sleeping

- For [Pōvu verbs](#), drop the last syllable before adding the suffix.
Example: మారిపోవు *māripōvu* = to change ; మారిపోతూ *māripōtū* = changing

Negative Participle
This is like "not having done", "not doing" or "without doing".

- This stem is formed by dropping the last vowel and adding *-aka*

Example: కట్టు *kaṭṭu* = to tie ; కట్టక *kaṭṭaka* = not having tied

- But this form is **rarely** used on its own. Instead, it is usually used by adding *-uṇḍā* (which is a form of <u>undu</u>).

Example: తప్పు *tappu* = to fail ; తప్పకుండా ప్రయత్నిస్తాం *tappakuṇḍā prayatnistām* = "Of course we'll try." (literally: we will try without fail.)

- The negative participle uses the <u>alternate stem</u> for verbs that have them

Examples: పిలుచు *piluchu* = to call ; పిలవకుండా *pilavakuṇḍā* = without calling

దాచుకొను *dāchukonu* = to hide ; దాచుకోకుండా *dāchukōkuṇḍā* = without hiding

<u>అగు *agu*</u> → అవ్వక *avvaka* or కాక *kāka*.

Conditional Participle
The conditional is like "if" in English.

- It is formed by taking the <u>present participle</u> and <u>emphasizing</u> it (changing the last vowel to "ē"). It does not take <u>personal endings</u> or tense.

Examples: చేయు *chēyu* = to do ; చేస్తే *chēstē* = if (somebody) did/does

విను *vinu* = to hear ; ఏదైన వింటే మీకు తెలియజేస్తా *ēdaina viṇṭē mīku teliyajēstā* = "If I hear anything, I'll let you know."

- There is a special usage of అంటే *aṇṭē* which is the conditional participle of అను *anu* "to say". It is used like "that is to say", "in other words", "that means", or simply as a filler word.

Example: వివాహం అంటే పెళ్లి *vivāham aṇṭē peḷḷi* = "Vivaham means pelli" (two synonyms meaning "wedding"; Literally: If you say vivaham, it is pelli.)

Negative Conditional Participle
Like "if not" in English.

- It is formed with the <u>negative participle</u> + పోతే *pōtē* (the <u>conditional</u> form of <u>పోవు *pōvu*</u>). It *does not* conjugate for <u>personal endings</u> or tense.

Example: గెలుచు *geluchu* = to win ; నువ్వ గెలవకపోతే… *nuvvu gelavakapōtē* = "If you don't win…"

Past Tense
- It is formed by taking the <u>past participle</u>, doubling the last consonant, changing the last vowel to "æ", and adding the <u>personal ending</u>.

Examples: అను *anu* = to say ; అన్నావు *annævu* = you said

చెప్పు *cheppu* = to say ; చెప్పావు *cheppævu* = you said

చేయు *chēyu* = to do ; చేశాం *chēśæm* = we did

పడుకొను *paḍukonu* = to sleep ; పడుకున్నావు *paḍukunnævu* = you slept

కోల్పోవు *kōlpōvu* = to get lost ; కోల్పోయాడు *kōlpōyæḍu* = he got lost

అగు *agu* → అయ్యాయి *ayyæyi* = those things became/happened

- Except the feminine/neuter, which ends with *-ndi*

Examples: అంది *andi* = she said

చెప్పింది *cheppindi* = she said

చేసింది *chēsindi* = she did

పడుకుంది *paḍukundi* = she slept

కోల్పోయింది *kōlpōyindi* = she/it got lost

అయ్యింది *ayyindi* = she/it became/happened

Negative Past

- It is formed by changing the last vowel to "a" and add లే(దు) *-lē(du)*) to the end. It *does not* conjugate for personal endings.

Example: చేయు *chēyu* = to do ; నేను చేయలే(దు) *nēnu chēyalē(du)* = I didn't do

- The negative past uses the alternate stem for verbs that have them

Examples: ఐపోవు *aipōvu* = to finish ; అది ఐపోలే(దు) *adi aipōlē(du)* = it didn't finish

అగు *agu* → పండినవి కాలేదు *paṇḍinavi kālēdu* = "Those weren't ripe."

Past Habitual Tense
The past habitual is like "used to" in English.

- In the third person, it is formed by taking the emphatic past participle and combining it with the relevant third person pronoun
- In the first and second person, it is formed by taking the emphatic past participle and combining it with the relevant oblique third person pronoun (by gender and number) and personal endings are also added to the end with vowel harmony
- This makes it one of the only cases where a verb conjugates for gender in the first and second person (usually the gender is only apparent in the third person)

Since this tense works a little differently than the rest, here is the full chart of ఉండు *vuṇḍu* in the past habitual: "used to be"

Person	Number/Gender	Formation	Conjugated Verb

1st	sing. masculine	ఉండే *uṇḍē* + వాడి *vāḍi* + ను *nu*	ఉండేవాడిని *uṇḍēvāḍini*
	sing. feminine/neuter	ఉండే *uṇḍē* + దాని *dāni* + ను *nu*	ఉండేదాన్ని *uṇḍēdānni*
	plural	ఉండే *uṇḍē* + వాళ్ల *vāḷḷa* + ◌ం *m*	ఉండేవాళ్ళం *uṇḍēvāḷḷam*
2nd	sing. masculine	ఉండే *uṇḍē* + వాడి *vāḍi* + వు *vu*	ఉండేవాడివి *uṇḍēvāḍivi*
	sing. feminine/neuter	ఉండే *uṇḍē* + దాని *dāni* + వు *vu*	ఉండేదానివి *uṇḍēdānivi*
	plural / formal	ఉండే *uṇḍē* + వారు *vāru*	ఉండేవారు *uṇḍēvāru*
3rd	sing. masculine	ఉండే *uṇḍē* + వాడు *vāḍu*	ఉండేవాడు *uṇḍēvāḍu*
	sing. feminine/neuter	ఉండే *uṇḍē* + అది *adi*	ఉండేది *uṇḍēdi*
	plural / sing. formal human / unknown	ఉండే *uṇḍē* + వారు *vāru*	ఉండేవారు *uṇḍēvāru*
	plural non-human	ఉండే *uṇḍē* + అవి *avi*	ఉండేవి *uṇḍēvi*

Example: అనిపించు *anipinchu* = to seem ; గణితం నాకు కష్టం అనిపించేది *gaṇitam nāku kashṭam anipinchēdi* = "Math used to be difficult for me." (Math used to seem difficult to me)

Non-Past Tense
The present and future tense (aka non-past tense) are the same in Telugu.

- It is formed by taking the present participle, changing the last vowel to "ā", and adding PE.

Example: తాగు *tāgu* = to drink ; తాగుతావు *tāgutāvu* = you drink
- Except the feminine/neuter, which ends with *-tundi*

Example: తాగుతుంది *tāgutundi* = she drinks

Negative Non-Past
- It is formed by changing the last vowel to "a", and adding alternate PE.

Example: చేయు *chēyu* = to do ; చేయదు *chēyadu* = she doesn't do

- The negative non-past uses the alternate stem for verbs that have them

Examples: పట్టుకొను *paṭṭukonu* = to hold ; తాడు పట్టుకోను *tāḍu paṭṭukōnu* = "I won't hold the rope."

> అగు *agu* → వేసవి కాలం కాదు *vēsavi kālam kādu* = "It is not summertime."
>
> అగు *agu* → పండినవి కావు *paṇḍinavi kāvu* = "Those aren't ripe."

Progressive

Just like in English, the progressive is formed by combining "to be" with the present participle like "He is sleeping". It is tenseless, for example "I was eating", "I am eating", and "I will be eating" are all the same, the tense is understood by context.

- This is formed by taking the present participle of the verb and combining it with the non-future form of "to be" conjugated for PE. That sounds complicated, but it's really not that bad, here's what it means:

Example: Verb: చేయు *chēyu* = to do ;

      Present participle: చేస్తూ *chēstū* = doing ;

      + To be conjugated for PE: ఉన్నాం *unnām* = we are ;

చేస్తూ *chēstū* + ఉన్నాం *unnām* = చేస్తున్నాం *chēstunnām* = **we are doing**

- Except the feminine/neuter, which ends with *-ōndi*

Example: చేస్తోంది *chēstōndi* = she is doing

Negative Progressive

- The negative progressive is formed by saying the verbal noun and లే(దు) *lē(du)*). It *does not* conjugate for personal endings.

Example: నేర్చుకొను *nērchukonu* = to learn ; వారు నేర్చుకోవడం లే(దు) *vāru nērchukōvaḍam lē(du)* = they are not learning.

- But in spoken Telugu it gets condensed to *-aṭlē(du).* This is especially true in the Telangana dialect.

Example: వారు నేర్చుకోవట్లే(దు) *vāru nērchukōvaṭlē(du)* = they are not learning.

Imperative

Commands in Telugu have two levels of formality: *nuvvu* and *mīru*, as well as an undirected imperative.

Informal
- Informal (*nuvvu)* imperatives are the same as the verb stem, but colloquially the last vowel often changes to "i".

Example: మూయు *mūyu* = to close ; తలుపు మూయి *talupu mūyi* = "Close the door."

- Imperatives use the alternate stem for verbs that have them.

Examples: ఇచ్చు *icchu* = to give ; ఇవ్వు *ivvu* = "Give it."

వెళ్ళిపోవు *veḷḷipōvu* = to leave ; వెళ్ళిపో *veḷḷipō* = "Go away."

Formal/Plural
- Formal/plural (*mīru)* imperatives are formed by taking the informal imperative, dropping the last vowel and adding the honorific *andi*.

Example: పెట్టు *peṭṭu* = to put ; ఇక్కడ పెట్టండి *ikkaḍa peṭṭaṇḍi* = "Put it here please."

తెచ్చుకొను *tecchukonu* = to bring ; అన్నం తెచ్చుకోండి *annam tecchukōṇḍi* = "Please bring rice."

అగు *agu* → అవ్వండి *avvaṇḍi*.

Undirected
There is a third form of the imperative that is used when the command is not directly addressed at someone. For example, if when quoting a command somebody else gave.

- This is formed by taking the informal imperative, dropping the last vowel and adding -*am*.

Example: తిను *tinu* = to eat ; నన్ను తినం అని అన్నాడు *nannu tinam ani annæḍu* = "He told me to eat."

Negative Informal
This form is mentioned for completeness, however, it is more common to use the negative undirected form instead.

- The negative informal is formed by take the negative participle and changing the last vowel to "u".

Example: భయపడు *bhayapaḍu* = to fear ; భయపడకు *bhayapaḍaku* = "Don't be afraid."

Negative Formal/Plural
- This is formed by take the negative participle and adding the honorific *andi*.

Example: చింతించు *chintinchu* = to worry ; చింతించకండి *chintinchakaṇḍi* = "Please, don't worry."

అగు *agu* → అవ్వకండి *avvakaṇḍi* or కాకండి *kākaṇḍi*

Negative [Undirected](#)
- This is formed by taking the [informal](#) imperative, changing the last vowel to "a", and adding [*-vaddu*](#).

Example: తాకు *tāku* = to touch ; తాకవద్దు *tākavaddu* = "Don't touch."

కొట్టుకొను *koṭṭukonu* = to quarrel ; కొట్టుకోవద్దు *koṭṭukōvaddu* = "Don't quarrel."

[అగు *agu*](#) → కావద్దు *kāvaddu*.

- In spoken Telugu this often gets shortened to *-oddu*

Example: తాకవద్దు *tākavaddu* → తాకొద్దు *tākoddu*

Necessitative
- To express obligation, like "should" or "must" in English, the last vowel is replaced with *-āli.* (which comes from a special form of the verb వలయు *valayu* "to be wanted/needed"). It *does not* conjugate for [personal endings](#).

Example: తిను *tinu* = to eat ; నువ్వు తినాలి *tināli* = "You have to eat."

- Necessitatives uses the [alternate stem](#) for verbs that have them. And if the stem ends with a long vowel then the suffix is *-vāli*.

Examples: వేస్కొను *vēskonu* = to put on ; వాడు చొక్కా వేస్కోవాలి *vāḍu chokkā vēskōvāli* = "He should put on a shirt."

[అగు *agu*](#) → మీరు డాక్టర్ కావాలి *mīru ḍākṭar kāvāli* = "You should be/become a doctor."

- కావాలి *kāvāli* (the necessitative of [అగు *agu*](#)) is also used to express wants or needs for objects, similar to *chahiye* in Hindi. Use a [dative subject](#).

Example: నాకు పిల్లి కావాలి *nāku pilli kāvāli* = "I want a cat." (literally: to-me cat should-be)

Negative Necessitative
To express obligation not to do something, like "shouldn't" or "mustn't" in English.

- The last vowel is changed to "a" + *-kūḍadu* ("it is not proper", a [negative](#) form కూడు *kūḍu* = to be proper, suitable). It *does not* conjugate for [personal endings](#).

Example: పోట్లాడు *pōṭlāḍu* = to fight ; మీరందరు పోట్లాడకూడదు *mīrandaru pōṭlāḍakūḍadu* = "You all shouldn't fight.""

- Negative necessitatives uses the [alternate stem](#) for verbs that have them

Examples: అరుచు *aruchu* = "to shout" ; నువ్వు అరవకూడదు *nuvvu aravakūḍadu* = "You must not shout."

[అగు *agu*](#) → కాకూడదు *kākūḍadu*

Passive

- The passive is formed by changing the last vowel to "a" and బడు -*baḍu* is added and conjugated appropriately. (It is a form of the verb పడు *paḍu* "to feel, to fall".) The passive voice is fairly rare in modern Telugu, mostly used "to translate English expressions in which the passive is used" or in formal contexts (source: pg. 225 of *A Grammar of Modern Telugu*)

Example: తిప్పు *tippu* = to turn ; కారు తిప్పబడింది *kāru tippabaḍindi* = "The car was turned."

- Passives uses the alternate stem for verbs that have them

Examples: తీస్కొను *tīskonu* = to take ; విరాళాలు తీస్కోబడుతాయి *virāḷālu tīskōbaḍatāyi* = "Donations will be taken."

Ability

To express ability, like "can" in English, there are two ways:

Method 1

- The first way is to change the last vowel to "a", add -*gala* + alternate PE. It is tenseless. (*gala* is a form of కలుగు *kalugu* another word for "to be", similar to అగు *agu*)

Example: రాయు *rāyu* = to write ; రాయగలదు *rāyagaladu* = she can write

- This construction uses the alternate stem for verbs that have them

Example: చూచు *chūchu* = to see ; చూడగలను *chūḍagalanu* = I can see

Method 2

Alternately, take the verbal noun and వచ్చు *vacchu* (to come) conjugated appropriately. For this one, a dative subject is used.

Example: నడుచు *naḍuchu* = to walk ; నాకు నడవడం వస్తుంది *nāku naḍavaḍam vastundi* = "I can walk." (literally: to-me walking comes)

Negative Ability

To express inability, like "cannot" in English.

- The last vowel changes to "a" + *lē* + alternate PE. It is tenseless.

Example: విను *vinu* = to hear ; వినలేరు *vinalēru* = they can't hear ;

- This construction uses the alternate stem for verbs that have them

Example: అగు *agu* → డాక్టర్ కాలేను *ḍākṭar kālēnu* = "I couldn't be a doctor."

Permission/Possibility

To express permission or possibility, like "may" in English.

- The last vowel changes to "a" + వచ్చు -*vacchu* (to come). It *does not* conjugate for [personal endings] or tense.

Example: వెళ్ళు *veḷḷu* = to go ; మీరు వెళ్ళవచ్చు *mīru veḷḷavacchu* = "You may go."

- In spoken Telugu this often gets shortened to -*occhu*

Example: వెళ్ళవచ్చు *veḷḷavacchu* → వెళ్ళొచ్చు *veḷḷocchu*

- This construction uses the [alternate stem] for verbs that have them

Example: తెచ్చుకొను *tecchukonu* = to bring ; వారు రొట్టె తెచ్చుకోవచ్చు *vāru roṭṭe tecchukōvacchu* = "They may bring bread."

Negative Permission/Possibility

To express lack of permission/possibility, like "may not" or "not" in English.

- The [negative perfective participle] + పోవచ్చు *pōvacchu* (the [possible] form of పోవు *pōvu*). It *does not* conjugate for [personal endings] or tense.

Example: వెళ్ళు *veḷḷu* = to go ; మీరు వెళ్ళకపోవచ్చు *mīru veḷḷakapōvacchu* = "You may not go."

Wants/Needs

- To express a want or need for some *object* , see the [necessitative] form of అగు *agu*.

- To express a want or need to do some *action*. The [necessitative] form of the verb is combined with అనుకొను *anukonu* "to think", conjugated appropriately.

Example: Verb: ఆడు *āḍu* = to play ;

   [Necessitative]:   ఆడాలి *āḍāli* = should play ;

   + *anukonu* conjugated: అనుకుంటున్నారు *anukuṇṭunnāru* = they are thinking

ఆడాలి *āḍāli* + అనుకుంటున్నారు *anukuṇṭunnāru* = ఆడాలనుకుంటున్నారు

***āḍālanukuṇṭunnāru* = they want to play** (literally*:* they are thinking they should play). The final vowel of the first word (in this case, the "i" in *āḍāli*) is deleted and replaced with "a", resulting in "āḍāla"; this is a common *sandhi* process.

<u>Negatives</u>

Negatives are not as simple as "no" and "not" in English. There are three words for "no" in Telugu, and they are used in different circumstances. Grammatically they are similar to verbs, but not exactly the same.

Lē- (lēdu)

లే- *lē-* is the inverse of ఉండు *vuṇḍu*, it expresses the *lack* of something. In cases where *vuṇḍu* would be used in the positive, *lē-* is used in the negative. It roughly means "is not" or "don't have". In a sentence, it is conjugated as *lē* + alternate PE matching the subject. Otherwise, the default is the neuter conjugation: లేదు *lēdu* or sometimes colloquially with no suffix at all: లే *lē.*

Examples: తిండి లేదు *tiṇḍi lēdu* = "There's no food."

మాకు ఇళ్ళు లేవు *māku iḷḷu lēvu* = "We don't have houses."

ఇంట్లో లేరు *iṇṭlō lēru* = "They aren't home."

Conversation:

Q: నీకు అక్కచెల్లెళ్ళు ఉన్నారా? *nīku akkachelleḷḷu vunnārā?* = "Do you have sisters."

A: లేదు *lēdu* = "No."

Other forms

Lē- is a defective verb, because it does not come in all the conjugations. It only comes in a handful of negative forms, for example:

- The negative adjective form లేని *lēni.*

Example: పేరులేని పుస్తకం *pērulēni pustakam* = untitled book.

పేరు *pēru* "name" + లేని *lēni* "not having" = "untitled"

- The negative participle form లేక *lēka* or లేకుండా *lēkuṇḍā* to mean "without". (Used like a postposition.)

Example: బహుమతులు లేకుండా వచ్చాడు *bahumatulu lēkuṇḍā vacchæḍu* = "He came without gifts."

- The negative conditional form లేకపోతే *lēkapōtē.*

Example: నీకు డబ్బు లేకపోతే… *nīku ḍabbu lēkapōtē* = "If you don't have money..."

Kā- (kādu)

The negative from of అగు *agu* uses the stem కా- *kā-*. In cases where *agu* or zero-copula would be used in the positive, *kā-* is used in the negative. It roughly means "hasn't happened" or "hasn't become". However, unlike *lēdu*, it is a full verb and has tense.

Alone

As a stand-alone word for "no", the default is the neuter conjugation: కాదు *kādu.*

Conversation:

Q: తను డాక్టరా? *tanu ḍākṭarā?* = "Is he/she a doctor?"

A: కాదు *kādu* = "No."

In sentences
In sentences, it is a full verb, with conjugation and tense, etc. Generally it follows the usual conjugation patterns with *kā-* as the [stem](#). But for more detail about how అగు *agu* is negated in the various tenses and used in sentences: see [Verbs](#).

Vaddu
వద్దు *vaddu* roughly means "don't want" or "don't do it". It is a contraction of వలదు *valadu* which is the [negative](#) form of వలయు *valayu* "to be wanted/needed". It does not take [personal endings](#).
Conversation:
Q: నీళ్ళు కావాలా? *nīḷḷu kāvālā?* = "Do you want water?"
A: వద్దు *vaddu* = "No."
Conversation:
A: పార్టీకి వెళ్తున్నాను *pārṭīki veḷtunnānu* = "I'm going to the party."
B: వద్దు *vaddu* = "Don't."

Questions and Answers

Yes/No Questions
  ● In order to change a statement into question, the last vowel of the phrase is changed to "ā".
Examples: అలిసిపోయింది *alisipōyindi* = "She got tired." ; అలిసిపోయిందా? *alisipōyindā?* = "Did she get tired?"

  ● If the last word is a noun, the last consonant sometimes changes to "l" or "n" or those consonants are added between the last vowel and "ā".
Example: వాడు నీ తమ్ముడు *vāḍu nī tammuḍu* = "He's your younger brother." ; వాడు నీ తమ్ములా? *vāḍu nī tammulā?* = "Is he your younger brother?"

  ● To ask if something is correct, కదా *kadā* is added at the end of the sentence, like "right?" in English.
Example: నీకు పదిహేను ఏళ్ళు కదా? *nīku padihēnu yēḷḷu kadā?* = "You are 15 years old, right?" (Literally: to-you fifteen years, right?")

  ● To reply "yes" say అవును *aunu*
  ● To reply "no", it depends on context. See: [Negatives](#).

Doubts/Uncertainties

- In order to indicate that a statement is uncertain, the last vowel of the phrase is changed to "ō".

Example: వస్తారు *vastāru* = they will come ; ఎప్పుడు వస్తారో నాకు తెలియదు *Eppuḍu vastārō nāku teliyadu* = "I don't know when they will come" (Literally: when they-come-<uncertain> to-me unknown"

- ఏమో *ēmō* means "maybe" (from *ēm* + the uncertainty suffix) and can be suffixed to the end of a verb.

Example: పడుకుంటాను *paḍukuṇṭānu* = I will sleep ; పడుకుంటానేమో *paḍukuṇṭānēmō* = "Maybe I will sleep."

Question words

Question words in Telugu start with "e". Some of these words are just third person pronouns with the "e" prefix attached. To turn some of them into their respective answers, replace the "e" with the demonstrative determiners "a" and "i". In zero-copula sentences, the question word must come at the end, otherwise it is before the verb.

What?

- The word for what is ఏమి *ēmi* but in spoken Telugu this often gets shortened to ఏం *ēm*.

Example: Q: ఏం చేస్తున్నావు? *ēm chēstunnāvu*? = "What are you doing?"

A: వంట చేస్తున్నా *vaṇṭa chēstunnā* = "I am cooking."

- But in a zero-copula sentence you have to add -*ṭi* : ఏమిటి *ēmiṭi* and in spoken Telugu this often gets shortened to ఏంటి *ēnṭi*.

Example: Q: మీ పేరు ఏంటి? *mī pēru ēnṭi*? = "What is your name?"

A: నా పేరు రోహన్ *nā pēru rōhan* = "My name is Rohan."

Who?

The word for who is ఎవరు *evaru*.

Examples: కిటికీని ఎవరు పగలగొట్టారు? *kiṭikīni yevaru pagalagoṭṭæru*? = "Who broke the window?"

ఆ గాయకురాలు ఎవరు? *ā gāyakurālu yevaru*? = "Who is that singer (f.)?"

Which?

- The word for which is ఏ *ē*. This is the direct counterpart of the demonstrative determiners and just like them it must modify a noun.

Example: Q: మీకు ఏ టోపీ ఇష్టం? *mīku ē ṭōpī iṣṭam?* = "Which hat do you like?"

    A: ఆ టోపీ. *ā ṭōpī.* = "That hat."

    or you could say:

    A: అది. *adi.* = "That one."

- Just like the demonstrative determiners, in order to use it in place of a noun, you have to use a pronoun version. These are just the interrogative forms of the neuter pronouns.

	Question	Answer: Proximal	Answer: Distal
singular	Which one? = ఏది *ēdi*	This = ఇది *idi*	That = అది *adi*
plural	Which ones? = ఏవి *ēvi*	These = ఇవి *ivi*	Those = అవి *avi*

Example: Q: మీ షూలు ఏవి? *mī shūlu yēvi?* = "Which shoes are yours?" (literally: your shoes which-ones?)

    A: ఇవి. *ivi.* = "These."

When?

Question	Answer: Proximal	Answer: Distal
When? = ఎప్పుడు *yeppuḍu*	Now = ఇప్పుడు *ippuḍu*	Then = అప్పుడు *appuḍu*

Example: Q: ఈవెంట్ ఎప్పుడు మొదలౌతుంది? *īveṇṭ yeppuḍu modalautundi?* = "When does the event start?"

    A: ఇప్పుడు. *ippuḍu.* = "Now."

When referring to a time when a specific occurrence happens use the past participle + "n" + *appuḍu*.

Example: Q: ఎప్పుడు వెళ్తారు? *yeppuḍu veḷtāru?* = "When will you go?"

    A: ఫోన్ మోగినప్పుడు. *fōn mōginappuḍu.* = "When the phone rings."

    (మోగు *mōgu* "to ring" → past participle: మోగి *mōgi* + న *n* + అప్పుడు *appuḍu*)

How?

Question	Answer: Proximal	Answer: Distal
How? = ఎలా *yelā*	Like this = ఇలా *ilā*	Like that = అలా *alā*

The [adverbial](#) suffix *-gā* is often added to the answer, because it is describing *how* you do an action.

Example: Q: బేరం ఎలా ఆడుతారు? *bēram elā āḍutāru?* = "How do you bargain?"

A: ఇలాగా చేస్తారు *ilāgā chēstāru* = "You do it like this."

Example: Q: ఎలా ఉన్నారు? *yelā unnāru?* = "How are you?"

A: బాగున్నాను *bāgunnānu* = "I'm good."

(బా *bā* "good" → [adverbial](#): బాగా *bāgā* + [to be](#) ఉన్నాను *unnānu* "I am")

Why?

Question	Answer: Proximal	Answer: Distal
Why? = ఎందుకు *yenduku*	Because of this = ఇందుకు *induku*	Because of that = అందుకు *anduku*

Example: Q: ఎందుకు విచారంగా ఉన్నావు? *yenduku vichāramgā vunnāvu?* = "Why are you sad?"

A1: ఎందుకంటే నా కుందేలు చనిపోయింది. *yendukaṇṭē nā kundēlu chanipōyindi.* = "Because my bunny died."

A2: నా కుందేలు చనిపోయినందుకు విచారంగా ఉన్నా *nā kundēlu chanipōyinanduku vichārangā vunnā.* = "I'm sad because my bunny died."

Explanation:
1. In the first answer, we say *endukaṇṭē* which is *yenduku* + *aṇṭē* (the emphatic [present participle](#) of *anu* "to say"). It is kind of like saying "because of the fact that".
2. In the second answer, it is a more complete sentence with two clauses, so we can state the reason using the [past participle](#) + *anduku* and lastly state the result. It is like saying "My bunny died *and for that reason* I am sad."

Where?

Question	Answer: Proximal	Answer: Distal
Where? = ఎక్కడ *yekkaḍa*	Here = ఇక్కడ *ikkaḍa*	There = అక్కడ *akkaḍa*

Example: Q: కుక్కలు ఎక్కడ ఉన్నాయి? *kukkalu yekkaḍa vunnāyi?* = "Where are the dogs?"

A: అక్కడ ఉన్నాయి *akkaḍa vunnāyi* = "They are over there."

Which direction?

Unlike English, Telugu differentiates "where" and "which way" (like Hindi: *kahāṁ* vs *kidhar*)

Question	Answer: Proximal	Answer: Distal
Which way? = ఎటు *yeṭu*	This way = ఇటు *iṭu*	That way? = అటు *aṭu*

It's usage is more general than it would be in English though. For example:

Example: Q: ఇటు రా *iṭu rā* = "Come here." (literally: this-way come)

How much?

Question	Answer: Proximal	Answer: Distal
How much? = ఎంతా *yentā*	This much = ఇంతా *intā*	That much/ all = అంతా *antā*

Example: Q: ఎంతా రసం కావాలి? *entā rasam kāvāli?* = "How much juice do you want?"

A: కొంచెం కొంచెం *konchem konchem* = "Just a little."

See also: Quantifiers

How many?

Question	Answer: Proximal	Answer: Distal
How many? = ఎన్ని *yenni*	This many = ఇన్ని *inni*	That many/ every = అన్ని *anni*

Example: Q: ఎన్ని పుస్తకాలు ఉన్నాయి? *yenni pustakālu vunnāyi?* = "How many books are there?"

A: ఇరవై ఏడు *iravai yēḍu* = "Twenty-seven."

See also: Quantifiers

Adjectives and Adverbs

Adjectives

Adjectives in Telugu come before the noun. Adjectives must modify a noun, they cannot stand alone, unlike in English. More on that here and here. There are a few types of adjectives:

Simple Adjectives

Simple adjectives. These are words that can be used as adjectives simply as they are without any suffixes.

Example: మంచి *manchi* = good ; మంచి మనుషులు *manchi manuṣulu* = good people

Verbal Adjectives

Take the [past participle](#) and add -na. This can describe either 1. the object of the action (like English), or 2. the subject of the action (unlike English). In other words, there is no difference between passive and active verbal adjectives in Telugu, the difference is understood by context.

Case 1:

Examples: వేయించు *vēyinchu* = to fry ; వేయించిన ఉల్లిపాయలు *vēyinchina ullipāyalu* = fried onions

తెలియు *teliyu* = to be known ; నాకు తెలిసిన భాషలు *nāku telisina bhāṣalu* = the languages that I know (literally: to-me known languages)

అనుకొను *anukonu* = to think, suppose ; అనుకున్న కష్టం *anukunna kaṣṭam* = supposed hardship

కుళ్ళిపోవు *kuḷḷipōvu* = to rot ; కుళ్ళిపోయిన మామిడిపండు *kuḷḷipōyina māmiḍipaṇḍu* = rotten mango

చదువు *chaduvu* = to read ; చదివిన పుస్తకం *chadivina pustakam* = the book that was read

Case 2:

Examples: చదువు *chaduvu* = to read ; పుస్తకం చదివిన విద్యార్థులు *pustakam chadivina vidyārthulu* = the students that had read the book (compare with previous example)

పడుకొను *paḍukonu* = to sleep ; పడుకున్న బిడ్డ *paḍukunna biḍḍa* = sleeping baby

Negative Verbal Adjectives

- This is roughly equivalent to the "un" in "unsaid", "untitled", etc. Drop the last vowel and add -ani.

Example: చేప్పు *cheppu* = to say ; చేప్పని మాటలు *cheppani māṭalu* = unsaid words

- The negative past participle of [అగు *agu*](#) is కాని *kāni.* This is used as a conjunction: "but".

- For [Konu](#) and [Pōvu](#) verbs drop the last syllable before adding -ni.

Example: సరిపోవు *saripōvu* = to fit ; సరిపోని బట్టలు *saripōni baṭṭalu* = clothes that don't fit

Nominal Adjectives

These are adjectives formed from nouns. To do this, combine the noun with the adjective form of [అగు *agu*](#) : *aina.*

Examples: పొడువు *poḍuvu* = height/length ; పొడవైన తాడు *poḍavaina tāḍu* = long rope

అందం *andam* = beauty ; అందమైన కళ *andamaina kaḷa* = beautiful art

[Zero-Copula](#) Predicate Adjectives

These are predicate adjectives that refer to permanent qualities like the adjectives at the end of "He is tall", or "The rock is hard." In Telugu, adjectives cannot stand alone, so these must be phrased as nouns.

- You do this by smashing the relevant [3rd person pronoun](#) onto the end.

Example 1: చిన్న *chinna* = small ; ఆ ఊళ్ళు చిన్నవి *ā vūḷḷu chinnavi* = "Those villages are small."

  (చిన్న *chinna* + అవి *[avi](#)* = చిన్నవి *chinnavi*)

Example 2: ముఖ్యం *mukhyam* = importance ; వీరు ముఖ్యమైనవాళ్ళు *vīru mukhyamainavāḷḷu* = "These people are important."

  (ముఖ్యం *mukhyam* + ఐన *[aina](#)* + వాళ్ళు *[vāḷḷu](#)* = ముఖ్యమైనవాళ్ళు *mukhyamainavāḷḷu*)

- In [dative](#) sentences, just use the noun itself as an adjective.

Example: ముఖ్యం *mukhyam* = importance ; ఈ పుస్తకం ముఖ్యం నాకు *ī pustakam mukhyam nāku* = "This book is important to me."

Adverbs

Adverbs in Telugu come before the verb. Adverbs in Telugu are much more generalized than in English, and include any predicate adjectives that do not use [zero-copula](#) (describing <u>temporary</u> states). Adverbs end with the suffix గా *-gā* (which is a form of [అగు *agu*](#)).

- As in English, adverbs can be used to describe how an action is done.

Examples: బిగ్గర *biggara* = loud ; బిగ్గరగా నవ్వాడు *biggaragā navvæḍu* = "He laughed out loud."

- But unlike in English, predicate adjectives which do not use [zero-copula](#) are phrased as adverbs. Predicate adjectives are adjectives at the end of sentences like "She is angry", "They are worried", etc.

Examples: కోపం *kōpam* = anger ; కోపంగా ఉంది *kōpamgā vundi* = "She is angry."

<u>Numbers and Quantifiers</u>

Quantifiers

- Countable nouns are things which you would ask "[how many](#)", they are words which take the [plural](#) suffix.
- Uncountable nouns, you would ask "[how much](#)" and have no plural.
- Some uncountable nouns in English, are countable in Telugu, like "water".

- Unlike other [adjectives](#) and [determiners](#), these quantifiers *can* stand alone as full words in place of a noun.

Some
- For countable nouns, you use కొన్ని *konni*

Examples: కొన్ని రాళ్ళు *konni rāḷḷu* = some rocks

కొన్ని గోధుమలు *konni gōdhumalu* = some wheat
(wheat is countable in Telugu, because it takes the plural suffix)

- For uncountable nouns, you use కొంత *konta*

Example: కొంత సమయం *konta samayam* = some time

- For [humans](#): కొంతమంది *kontamandi*

Example: కొంతమంది ముసలివాళ్ళు *kontamandi musalivāḷḷu* = some elders

All/Every
These come from the words for [that much](#) and [that many](#). They are special because, unlike all other noun modifiers which come before the noun, "all" and "every" are suffixed to the <u>end</u> of the noun.

- For countable nouns, you use అన్ని *anni*

Example: పదం *padam* = word ; ఈ పదాలన్ని తెలుగు *ī padālanni telugu* = "All of these words are Telugu."

- For uncountable nouns, you use అంతా *antā*

Examples: వారికి అంతా తెలుసు *vāriki antā telusu* = "He knows everything."

ఊరంతా నడిచాం *ūrantā naḍichæm* = "We walked across the village." (literally: entire-village we-walked)

- For [humans](#): అందరు *andaru*.

Examples: మీరు *mīru* = [you](#) ; మీరందరు *mīrandaru* = all of you

అందరికి నమస్కారం *andariki namaskāram* = "Greetings, everybody."

విద్యార్థి *vijyārthi* = student ; విద్యార్థులందరు వింటున్నారు *vijyārthulandaru viṇṭunnāru* ="All the students are listening."

Many/Much/Very
- The word for "many", "much" or "very" is చాలా *chālā*.

Examples: చాలా సమస్యలు ఉన్నాయి *chālā samasyalu unnāyi* = "There are many problems"

చాలా ఆకలితో ఉన్నాడు *chālā ākalitō unnāḍu* = "He is very hungry" (literally: he is with much hunger)

చాలా సంతోష్షంగా ఉంది *chālā santōshangā undi* = "She is very happy"

- For [humans]: చాలామంది *chālāmandi*

Examples: పెళ్ళికి చాలామంది వస్తారు *peḷḷiki chālāmandi vastāru* = "Lots of people will come to the wedding."

Numbers
Explanation below.

Arabic Numeral	Telugu Numeral	Cardinal	Genitive (non-human)	Genitive (human)	Ordinal
0	౦	సున్నా *sunnā*	same	same	same
1	౧	ఒకటి *vokaṭi*	ఒక *voka*	ఒక *voka*	మొదటి *modaṭi*
2	౨	రెండు *reṇḍu*	same	ఇద్దరు *iddaru*	రెండో *reṇḍō*
3	౩	మూడు *mūḍu*	same	ముగ్గురు *mugguru*	మూడో *mūḍō*
4	౪	నాలుగు *nālugu*	same	నాలుగురు *nāluguru*	నాలుగో *nālugō*
5	౫	ఐదు *aidu*	same	ఐదుగురు *aiduguru*	ఐదో *aidō*
6	౬	ఆరు *āru*	same	ఆరుగురు *āruguru*	ఆరో *ārō*
7	౭	ఏడు *yēḍu*	same	ఏడుగురు *yēḍuguru*	ఏడో *yēḍō*
8	౮	ఎనిమిది *yenimidi*	same	ఎనిమిదిమంది *yenimidimandi*	ఎనిమిదో *yenimidō*
9	౯	తొమ్మిది *tommidi*	same	తొమ్మిదిమంది *tommidimandi*	తొమ్మిదో *tommidō*
10	౧౦	పది *padi*	same	పదిమంది *padimandi*	పదో *padō*

More numbers

Arabic Numeral	Telugu Numeral	Cardinal
11	౧౧	పదకొండు *padakoṇḍu*
12	౧౨	పన్నెండు *panneṇḍu*
13	౧౩	పదమూడు *padamūḍu*
14	౧౪	పద్నాలుగు *padnālugu*
15	౧౫	పదిహేను *padihēnu*
16	౧౬	పదహారు *padahāru*
17	౧౭	పదిహేడు *padihēḍu*
18	౧౮	పద్దెనిమిది *paddenimidi*
19	౧౯	పంతొమ్మిది *pantommidi*
20	౨౦	ఇరవై *iravai*
30	౩౦	ముప్పై *muppai*
40	౪౦	నలభై *nalabhai*
50	౫౦	యాభై *yābhai*
60	౬౦	అరవై *aravai*
70	౭౦	డెబ్బై *ḍebbai*
80	౮౦	ఎనభై *enabhai*
90	౯౦	తొంబై *tombhai*
100	౧౦౦	వంద *vanda*
1000	౧౦౦౦	వేయి *vēyi* (plural: వేలు *vēlu*)
100,000 (lakh)	౧౦౦౦౦౦	లక్ష *lakṣa*

10,000,000 (crore)	౧౦౦౦౦౦౦౦	కోటి *kōṭi*

Parsing numbers
- Numbers are parsed very similarly to English, and it translates literally:

Example:

నాలుగు	వేల	మూడు	వందల	ఇరవై	ఒకటి
nālugu	*vēla*	*mūḍu*	*vandala*	*iravai*	*okaṭi*
Four	thousand	three	hundred	twenty-one	

- The main difference is that all numbers must be genitive except the last digit (usually doesn't make a difference since genitive is usually the same)

Examples: ఒకటి *okaṭi* = one ; ఒక లక్ష *oka lakṣa* = one lakh

రెండు వందలు *reṇḍu vandalu* = two hundred ; రెండు వందల రెండు *reṇḍu vandala reṇḍu* = two hundred two

Cardinal vs Genitive
The cardinal numbers are full numbers that can stand on their own. But when counting *something* you must use the genitive form. Counting humans uses a different set of numbers.

Example: మూడు వేలు *mūḍu vēlu* = three thousand ; మూడు వేల చీమలు *mūḍu vēla chīmalu* = three thousand ants

Number 1 (indefinite article)
- On its own the number one is ఒకటి *vokaṭi*
- But when counting something or someone it is shortened to the genitive form ఒక *voka*

Example: ఒక దీపం *voka dīpam* = a lamp (one lamp)
- ^^As seen in the last example, this is also used as an indefinite article like "a" in English
- It is also combined with third person pronouns to mean "somebody". Usually used in the plural form: ఒక *voka* + రు *ru* = ఒకరు *okaru* "somebody"

Counting (human)
To count humans, Telugu uses a different set of numbers.

- These have special forms until the number seven.

Example: ఇద్దరు అన్నదమ్ములు *iddaru annadammulu* = two brothers

- From the number eight onwards just add మంది *mandi* "people" to the end of the number when counting humans.

Example: నలభై మంది చోరులు *nalabhai mandi chōrulu* = forty thieves.

Ordinal
Ordinal numbers are used for ordering. Like "first, second, third" in English.

- This is formed by adding *-ava*

Example: ఐదు *aidu* = five ; ఐదవ *aidava* = fifth

- But in spoken Telugu it is usually shortened to *-ō*

Example: ఐదవ *aidava* → ఐదో *aidō* = fifth

Postpositions

Before reading about postpositions, you should understand Cases.
Postpositions are like prepositions in English, but they come *after* the noun. If a noun has a postposition, it must be in the oblique form.

Some common postpositions:

లో	lō	in
లోకి	lōki	into
తో	tō	with
లేకుండా	lēkuṇḍā	without
నుంచి	nunchi	from
గురించి	gurinchi	about
కోసం	kōsam	for
బదులు	badulu	instead of
గుండా	guṇḍā	through
మధ్య	majya	between, in the middle of
మీద	mīda	on
పై	pai	above, over

కింద	kinda	below, under
పక్కన	pakkana	besides, next to
ముందు	mundu	before, ahead, in front of
తర్వాత	tarvāta	after
వెనక	venaka	behind
వరకు	varaku	until
వల్ల	valla	due to
చేత	chēta	by means of
దగ్గర	daggara	"having"
వైపు	vaipu	towards, in the direction of
కన్న	kanna	than

Quotations

When describing something that someone "said" or "thought", even if it is something thought to oneself, Telugu uses the quotative particle అని *ani* (which is the past participle of అను *anu* "to say"). This is used for both direct and indirect quotations. Direct: "He said 'My name is Paul,'" vs Indirect: "He said his name is Paul."

- This comes at the end of the quotation, you could think of it like an end quotation mark in English <">.

Examples: ఇది నా తాళంచెవి అని అనుకుంటున్నా *idi nā tāḷamchevi ani anukuṇṭunnā* = "I think this is my key."

- If the last word in an indirect quotation is a verb, then *ani* is suffixed onto the verb.

Examples: తీస్కుంటారు *tīskuṇṭāru* = he/she will take ; ఒక రోజు సెలవు తీస్కుంటారని అని రామణ అన్నారు *oka rōzu selavu tīskuṇṭārani rāmaṇa annæru* = "Ramana said he will take a day off."

Emphasis

Emphasis is like "hi" in Hindi. Emphasis is very common in Telugu but not all words can be emphasized this way. Usually the stress falls on an [adverb](#), [postposition](#) or [past participle](#).

- To emphasize, the last vowel is changed to "ē".

Examples: నిన్న *ninna* = yesterday ; నిన్నే చేరా *ninnē chēræ* = "I arrived *yesterday*!"

ముందు *mundu* = before ; చాలా నలలు ముందే నిన్ను అడిగింది *chālā nelalu mundē ninnu aḍigindi* = "She asked you *months ago*!"

పట్టుకొను *paṭṭukonu* = to grab ; పర్సు పట్టుకునే పారిపోయాడు *parsu paṭṭukonē pāripōyæḍu* = "He *grabbed* the purse and ran away!"

- [Adverbs](#) end with *-nē.*

   బాగా *bāgā* = well ; బాగానే జరుగుతుంది *bāgānē jarugutundi* = "It's going *well*!"

- Occasionally, emphasis ends with *-ṇṭē.*

Examples: కన్న *kanna* = than ; తన కంటే తెలివైనవు *tana kaṇṭē telivainavu* = "You're smarter *than him/her*!"

- The [present participle](#) with emphasis is used as the [conditional](#).

Respect

When addressing somebody with respect, the honorific particles are used. These are similar to "jī" in Hindi-Urdu. Note that it is much more common to use honorifics in Indian languages like Telugu, than it would be in English, since it is a very important part of the culture.

Aṇḍi

అండి *aṇḍi* roughly means "sir" or "madam" and is used to *address* somebody respectfully, for example in [imperatives](#).

Example: ధన్యవాదములు అండి *dhanyavādamulu aṇḍi* = "Thank you <respect>."

Gāru

గారు *gāru* is used to put respect on somebody's name or title.

Example: రామకృష్ణ గారు దర్శనానికి వస్తున్నారు *rāmakr̥ṣṇa gāru darśanāniki vastunnāru* = "Ramakrishna <respect> is coming to visit"