

DESHKABASHA

Learn Indian Languages

తెలుగు

Telugu Starter Pack

The script, your first words and ten survival phrases

Ten pages · Free, always

- 12 vowels + 20 consonants
- 60+ words with pronunciation
- QR codes that play the audio
- A path into 122 free lessons



Scan for the full free course — 122 lessons with audio

deshkabasha.in · @deshkabasha

How to use this pack

DESHKABASHA

Five minutes a day is enough

This pack covers what a complete beginner needs in the first two weeks of Telugu: how the script works, the greetings you will use daily, family words, numbers, and ten phrases that carry you through real situations. Every section has a QR code. Scan it and the matching lesson opens on our site, where you can tap any word to hear a native pronunciation. Paper teaches you the shape of the language; audio teaches you the sound. You need both.

Suggested pace: one page a day, read aloud. Speaking is what makes it stick.

A note on the transliteration. We use standard diacritics: ā is a long a, ḍ and ṭ are retroflex (tongue curled back to the roof of the mouth), ṁ is a soft nasal hum. These marks are not decoration. Vowel length changes meaning in Telugu, and a flat English d sounds noticeably wrong to a native ear.

Do not try to memorise the whole alphabet before you start speaking. Learn six letters, learn six words, then use them on someone. Progress comes from use, not from completeness.

తెలుగు నేర్చుకుందాం — let us learn Telugu.

What is inside: the vowels and consonants you meet first, twelve greetings, twelve family terms, numbers with the pattern that builds every number to a thousand, everyday food words, and ten phrases worth memorising before you travel.



Scan to hear it
The full free course
on deshkabasha.in

The Script — Vowels (అచ్చులు)

DESHKABASHA

12 vowels, learned in two sittings

Telugu is almost perfectly phonetic. Each letter makes one sound, every time. There are no silent letters and no spelling exceptions to memorise — once you know a letter, you can read it anywhere.

అ a as in america	ఆ ā as in father
ఇ i as in sit	ఈ ī as in see
ఉ u as in put	ఊ ū as in boot
ఎ e as in get	ఏ ē as in they
ఐ ai as in aisle	ఒ o as in top
ఓ ō as in go	ఔ au as in owl

Long vowels (ā ī ū ē ō) are held for two beats. This changes meaning.

Notice the pairs. Every short vowel has a long partner, and the written forms are related, so you are really learning six shapes rather than twelve. Say each pair aloud one after the other — a / ā, i / ī, u / ū — until the difference in length is obvious to your own ear.



Scan to hear it
Hear every letter
on deshkabasha.in

The Script — Consonants (హల్లులు)

DESHKABASHA

Your first twenty

Every consonant carries a built-in "a". క is not "k" but "ka". To change that vowel you attach a small mark called a *gunṇantaṁ*, which is why one consonant can appear in many shapes.

క ka as in kite	ఖ kha aspirated k
గ ga as in gate	చ ca as in chat
జ ja as in jug	ట ṭa retroflex t
డ ḍa retroflex d	ణ ṇa retroflex n
త ta soft dental t	ద da soft dental d
న na as in net	ప pa as in put
బ ba as in bat	మ ma as in map
య ya as in yes	ర ra a light tap
ల la as in let	వ va as in van
శ śa as in shoe	స sa as in sun

ట డ ణ are retroflex — curl the tongue back. This is the sound English lacks.



Scan to hear it
Practice grid
on deshkabasha.in

నమస్కారం works at any hour, with anyone — the safest word in the language and the one you will use most. Spoken with palms together, it covers hello, good morning and goodbye all at once.

నమస్కారం

namaskāraṁ

Hello / greetings

నమస్కే

namastē

Hello (shorter)

శుభోదయం

śubhōdayaṁ

Good morning

శుభ రాత్రీ

śubha rātri

Good night

బాగున్నారా

bāgunnāra

How are you?

బాగున్నాను

bāgunnānu

I am well

ధన్యవాదాలు

dhanyavādālu

Thank you

కొప్పమించండి

kṣamin̄caṇḍi

Sorry / excuse me

దయచేసి

dayacēsi

Please

పరోలేదు

parlēdu

No problem

వెళ్ళోన్తాను

veḷḷostānu

Goodbye

జాగ్రత్త

jāgratta

Take care

Telugu has no plain "bye" — saying you are leaving is considered inauspicious.

వెళ్ళోన్తాను literally means "I will go and come back". The reply is వెళ్ళిరాండి, "go and come". It is a small promise of return, and once you notice it you will hear it everywhere.



Scan to hear it
Hear these spoken
on deshkaBasha.in

Telugu distinguishes elder from younger, and your side of the family from your spouse's. There is no single word for uncle, aunt or cousin — each relation has its own term, which tells you a lot about how families are organised.

అమ్మ amma Mother	నాన్న nanna Father
అన్నయ్య annayya Elder brother	తమ్ముడు tammuḍu Younger brother
అక్కయ్య akkayya Elder sister	చెల్లెలు cellelu Younger sister
తాతయ్య tātayya Grandfather	అమ్మమ్మ amma Grandmother (maternal)
నానమ్మ nānamma Grandmother (paternal)	మామయ్య māmayya Maternal uncle
అత్తయ్య attayya Aunt	కుటుంబం kuṭumbaṁ Family

Call a slightly older stranger అన్నయ్య or అక్కయ్య. It warms any interaction.

అమ్మమ్మ stacks amma + amma — mother's mother. నానమ్మ is father's mother. English has no equivalent distinction, and Telugu speakers find its absence genuinely confusing.



Scan to hear it
Full family tree
on deshkabasha.in

Numbers (సంఖ్యలు)

DESHKABASHA

Learn twenty, build a hundred

Learn one to twenty and you can build every number to a hundred: tens word plus units word, with no irregular forms to memorise anywhere in the system.

ఒకటి okaṭi 1	రెండు reṇḍu 2
మూడు mūḍu 3	నాలుగు nālugu 4
ఐదు aidu 5	ఆరు āru 6
ఏడు ēḍu 7	ఎనిమిది enimidi 8
తొమ్మిది tommidi 9	పది padi 10
పదకొండు padakoṇḍu 11	పన్నెండు panneṇḍu 12
పదిహేను padihēnu 15	ఇరవై iravai 20
ముప్పై muppai 30	యాభై yābhai 50
వంద vanda 100	వేయ్యి veyyi 1,000

ఇరవై ఒకటి = 21. నలభై ఐదు = 45. The pattern never breaks.



Scan to hear it
Count to 100
on deshkabasha.in

అన్నం means both rice and food. A Telugu meal without rice barely counts as a meal, and the word itself carries that assumption.

అన్నం annaṁ Rice / food	పప్పు pappu Dal
కూర kūra Curry	మలుసు pulusu Tamarind stew
పెరుగు perugu Curd	ఆవకాయ āvakāya Mango pickle
నీళ్లు nīḷḷu Water	హాలు pālu Milk
కారం kāraṁ Chilli hot	తీపి tīpi Sweet
ఇల్లు illu House	పుస్తకం pustakaṁ Book
డబ్బు ḍabbu Money	సమయం samayaṁ Time

తక్కువ కారం (takkuva kāraṁ) — "less spicy". Say it before you order.

The plate has an order: rice first, then పప్పు with ghee, then కూర, then మలుసు, and always finishing with curd rice. Knowing that sequence will make a Telugu host smile.



Scan to hear it
Food vocabulary
on deshkabasha.in

Ten Survival Phrases

DESHKABASHA

Enough to get through a real day

ఇదీ ఎంత

idi enta

How much is this?

నాకు తెలియదు

nāku teliyadu

I do not know

అర్థం కాలేదు

artham kālēdu

I did not understand

నెమ్మదిగా చెప్పండి

nemmadigā ceppaṇḍi

Please speak slowly

ఎక్కడ ఉంది

ekkaḍa undi

Where is it?

సహాయం కావాలి

sahāyaṁ kāvāli

I need help

తక్కువ కారం

takkuva kāraṁ

Less spicy, please

నీళ్ళు ఇవ్వండి

nīl̥lu ivvaṇḍi

Please give water

మీ పేరు ఏమిటి

mī pēru ēmiti

What is your name?

నేను నేర్చుకుంటున్నాను

nēnu nērcukunṭunnānu

I am learning

End requests with -అండి. It is the difference between asking and ordering.



Scan to hear it
More phrases
on deshkabasha.in

Where to go next

DESHKABASHA

The full course is free on the site

This pack is your first two weeks. The complete Telugu course on deshkabasha.in has 122 lessons covering vocabulary, phrases, grammar, real-life situations, stories and quizzes — with audio on every word and a 30-day guided path that tells you exactly what to study each day.

It costs nothing, and it always will.

Start at deshkabasha.in/learn-te — Day 1 is the script you just learned.

A printed edition is in preparation for learners who prefer paper: the whole course from the alphabet to fluent conversation, with QR audio throughout. Write to us through the contact page and we will tell you the day it is ready.

If this pack helped you, the kindest thing you can do is send it to one person who wants to learn Telugu — a friend, a partner, a cousin abroad who never got the chance.



Scan to hear it
Begin Day 1
on deshkabasha.in

— thank you for learning with us.