

SANDHI

(Numbers indicate chapter of introduction.)

1) EXTERNAL SANDHI (11, 13, 16)

Sanskrit words regularly change their pronunciation when they stand together with other words. Sanskrit spelling marks all these changes. This process is called external *sandhi*, and its general principles are quite simple:

- 1) The last sound of a word changes, depending on the first sound of the next word. Sometimes, that first sound also changes.
- 2) A consonant at the end of a word becomes more similar to the first sound of the next word.
- 3) A vowel at the end of a word interacts (and often merges) with a following vowel, but remains the same when a consonant follows.

Overview of external *sandhi* (fields before voiced initial sounds are shaded).

F I N A L S O U N D											I N I T I A L S O U N D O F F O L L O W I N G
k	ṭ	t	p	ñ	n	m	ḥ	āḥ	aḥ		
k	ṭ	t	p	ñ	n	m	ḥ	āḥ	aḥ	zero	
g	ḍ	d	b	ñ/ññ ¹	n/nn ¹	m	r	ā	a ²	vowels	
k	ṭ	t	p	ñ	n	ṃ	ḥ	āḥ	aḥ	k/kh	
g	ḍ	d	b	ñ	n	ṃ	r	ā	o	g/gh	
k	ṭ	c	p	ñ	ṃś ³	ṃ	ś	ās	as	c/ch	
g	ḍ	j	b	ñ	ñ	ṃ	r	ā	o	j/jh	
k	ṭ	ṭ	p	ñ	ṃṣ ³	ṃ	ṣ	ās	aṣ	t/th	
g	ḍ	ḍ	b	ñ	ṇ	ṃ	r	ā	o	ḍ/ḍh	
k	ṭ	t	p	ñ	ṃs ³	ṃ	s	ās	as	t/th	
g	ḍ	d	b	ñ	n	ṃ	r	ā	o	d/dh	
k	ṭ	t	p	ñ	n	ṃ	ḥ	āḥ	aḥ	p/ph	
g	ḍ	d	b	ñ	n	ṃ	r	ā	o	b/bh	
ñ	ṇ	n	m	ñ	n	ṃ	r	ā	o	n/m	
g	ḍ	d	b	ñ	n	ṃ	r	ā	o	y/v	
g	ḍ	d	b	ñ	n	ṃ	∅ ⁶	ā	o	r	
g	ḍ	l	b	ñ	l̥ ⁷	ṃ	r	ā	o	l	
k	ṭ	c (ch) ⁴	p	ñ	ñ (ś/ch) ⁴	ṃ	ḥ	āḥ	aḥ	ś	
k	ṭ	t	p	ñ	n	ṃ	ḥ	āḥ	aḥ	ṣ/s	
g (gh) ⁴	ḍ (ḍh) ⁴	d (dh) ⁴	b (bh) ⁴	ñ	n	ṃ	r	ā	o	h	

¹ When word-final *-n* (or more rarely, *-ñ*) is preceded by a short vowel and the next word begins with a vowel, the *-n/ñ* doubles: *smayan iva* → *smayann iva*. ² Exception: *-aḥ + a-* → *-o ṣ-*: *naraḥ asti* → *naro ṣti* (नरो ऽस्ति). ³ Between a word-final *-n* and any initial sound that is formed using the tongue (*c-/ch-*, *ṭ-/ṭh-*, *t-/th-*), an *s*-sound is inserted. Before the palatal *c/ch*, the palatal *ś* is added; before the retroflex *ṭ/ṭh*, a retroflex *ṣ*, and before dental *t/th*, a dental *s*. Before the *s*-sound, the *n* turns into *anusvāra ṃ*: *kasmin cit* → *kasmimś cit*. ⁴ While *sandhi* primarily affects the word-final sounds, there are a few cases in which the initial sound of the next word is also affected: *agacchat hi* → *agacchad dhi*. The new forms of these word-initial sounds are given in brackets after the sandhied word-final consonants in the grid. ⁵ If a short vowel precedes, that vowel is lengthened. E.g. बुद्धिः रक्षति → बुद्धी रक्षति ‘Wisdom protects.’ ⁶ The sign used above the *l* is the *anunāsika*. Its *devanāgarī* representation is ँ, and it is pronounced like an *anusvāra*, yet it nasalises consonants, not vowels. (Pronounce it by pronouncing an *l* while at the same time producing the hum-like nasalised sound of the *anusvāra*.)

Summary of external *visarga sandhi*

Final sound	Initial Sound		
	a) voiced	b) unvoiced, except c)	c) palatal, retroflex or dental stop
-ḥ	-r	-ḥ	(palatal) -ś, (retroflex) -ṣ, (dental) -s
-āḥ	-ā		-āś, -āṣ, -ās
-aḥ	-o, except before vowels: -a		-aś, -aṣ, -as
Exception 1: <i>-aḥ + a-</i> → <i>-o ṣ-</i>		Exception 2: <i>-iḥ/-uḥ + r-</i> → <i>-ī/-ū r-</i>	
Exception 3: Original final <i>-r</i> remains as <i>-r</i> in front of all initial voiced sounds except <i>r-</i> : e.g. <i>punaratra</i>			

Overview of vowel *sandhi*

FINAL VOWELS								INITIAL VOWELS	
ā	ī	ū	ṛ	e	ai	o	au		
ā	ya	va	ra	e ’	ā a	o ’	āva		a
ā	yā	vā	rā	a ā	ā ā	a ā	āvā		ā
e	ī	vī	rī	a ī	ā ī	a ī	āvī		ī
o	yū	ū	rū	a ū	ā ū	a ū	āvū		ū
ar	yṛ	vṛ	ṛ	a ṛ	ā ṛ	a ṛ	āvṛ		ṛ
ai	ye	ve	re	a e	ā e	a e	āve		e
ai	yai	vai	rai	a ai	ā ai	a ai	āvai		ai
au	yo	vo	ro	a o	ā o	a o	āvo	o	
au	yau	vau	rau	a au	ā au	a au	āvau	au	

ā ī ū indicate that the short and long vowels (e.g. short *ā* and long *ā*) behave in the same way here.

Shaded columns: complex vowels whose original second element is dropped before a following vowel.

Note: After final *-e* and *-o*, initial *a-* drops out. To avoid confusion, the former presence of the *a-* is marked in writing with the avagraha ṣ/an apostrophe ’ in transliteration:

वने अस्ति *vane asti* → वने ऽस्ति *vane 'sti*.