

# Reading Hindi: Novice to Intermediate



Kusum Knapczyk and Peter Knapczyk

# READING HINDI: NOVICE TO INTERMEDIATE

*Reading Hindi: Novice to Intermediate* is an innovative collection of graded readings that are both accessible in language and engaging in content, specifically designed for adult learners of Hindi.

Ideal for those just starting out in Hindi, the texts provide culturally rich content written in simple, level-appropriate language, with a range of activities to reinforce learning. The graded readings support the learner as they build their confidence with the language, gradually encountering a wider range of grammar constructions and vocabulary as the book progresses.

*Reading Hindi* can be used alongside a main textbook and is ideal for both class-use and independent study.

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*Kusum Knapczyk and Peter Knapczyk*

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# ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in this book:

adj.	adjective
adv.	adverb
caus.	causative verb
conj.	conjunction
f.	feminine
inter.	interrogative
interj.	interjection
inv.	invariable adjective
m.	masculine
phr.	phrase
pn.	pronoun
pp.	postposition
vi.	intransitive verb
vt.	transitive verb



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# INTRODUCTION

There has never been a better time to learn Hindi as a foreign language. Students today benefit from resources that were unimaginable even a generation ago, including the growing number of Hindi programs in schools and universities, the increasing variety and quality of published materials, and the immediate access to spoken and written Hindi online. But there remains a lack of materials for students that combine mature, nuanced content with simple, accessible language. We've created this book with the conviction that students – especially those who are new to Hindi – will learn more effectively from materials that appeal to their interests as adults. Learning Hindi is a fun and fascinating journey. Students who travel this path will be able to converse with over half a billion people and gain an important key for appreciating South Asian society and culture. We hope that the lessons in this book will make the initial steps of this path more enjoyable and encourage students to keep striving beyond these lessons and on to higher levels of Hindi proficiency.

*Reading Hindi: Novice to Intermediate* is a collection of readings and activities for novice, beginning, and intermediate Hindi learners. The lessons in this book aim to build the confidence of novices early on and to provide compelling material for Hindi students at each step forward as they advance through the stages of beginning and intermediate proficiency.

The approach of *Reading Hindi* is to develop students' proficiency in Hindi by interacting with a variety of written texts and engaging with a series of cultural themes, social issues, and practical tasks. Unlike traditional textbooks, this book places the presentation and analysis of grammar in the background. Yet we have arranged the progression of grammar and vocabulary that underlies these lessons to follow the sequence of standard textbooks such as *Complete Hindi* (McGraw-Hill), *Beginning Hindi* (Georgetown University Press), and *Elementary Hindi* (Tuttle). For this reason, lessons from *Reading Hindi* can readily complement a traditional grammar-based course with texts that are rich in content and culture, and activities that integrate language skills through task-based and communicative learning.

*Reading Hindi* includes 40 standalone lessons that will benefit all students, whether they are working individually with a tutor or studying in a traditional classroom setting. These lessons are organized into four ten-chapter sections with an expanding variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Each chapter focuses on a social and cultural theme, a related set of vocabulary, and a practical language task.

In terms of verb forms, Section One focuses on the present habitual tense; Section Two introduces the present continuous tense; Section Three adds the simple past, habitual past, and continuous past tenses, the future tense, and the subjunctive; and Section Four includes the perfect, past perfect, and present perfect tenses. This progression is meant to follow the order of standard Hindi textbooks such as the aforementioned titles.

The opening chapters of *Reading Hindi* offer lessons for novice learners: the first three lessons require little grammar, so students can start using this book as soon as they have finished learning the Devanagari script and have some familiarity with basic vocabulary and grammar. Some students may prefer to work through this book chapter by chapter, while others may pick and choose lessons based on their level and interests. Those who follow the sequence of this book will find that the grammar and vocabulary gradually become more complex with each chapter. Yet because each lesson is self-contained, students can create their own path through these chapters, and the glossary at the end of the book will help with vocabulary that may have been covered in earlier lessons.

The chapters in *Reading Hindi* share a common structure. The pre-reading questions at the beginning of each chapter (to be answered in English or Hindi) are intended to orient students and help them make predictions about the theme and content of the lesson. The pre-reading is followed by a glossary containing words and phrases that make their first appearance in the chapter. Students should read through the glossary so that they have a reference for new words that they encounter in the text and activities.

At the heart of each chapter is a text. Most of these are standalone stories with no connection to other chapters (although the observant reader will notice that a few characters do make repeated appearances). The “Notes on culture” section gives background on aspects of the text that may be unfamiliar to those without experience of life in India. This section is followed by a series of five activities designed to help readers check their understanding of the text, discuss ideas and opinions about its theme, practice and internalize vocabulary and grammar, and integrate new skills and knowledge to create a writing project, presentation, or role-play. To ensure that these lessons are useful for learners working with a tutor, activities require no more than one partner, but instructors can easily adapt these activities for larger groups. At the end of the book, readers will find an appendix with notes on numbers in Hindi, body parts, and a short comic, as well as a comprehensive glossary.

### A note for Hindi instructors

The five activities in each chapter are meant to prepare students step-by-step for the final activity, so they should be performed in the given sequence. If students have difficulty with any activity in the series, we recommend that you devise a similar activity for additional practice before moving on. Depending on the pace of instruction, students should be able to cover one or two chapters from *Reading Hindi* each week over the first three semesters of a program. The final chapters assume a working vocabulary of some 1500 words and an overall proficiency comparable to ACTFL intermediate-high and CEFR A2-B1.

भाग एक

क्या चल रहा है ?





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# 1

## कुछ मेरे बारे में

### Pre-reading

- 1 What personal details would you expect to find on someone's ID card or passport?
- 2 What questions would you ask to get to know a new acquaintance?




### Glossary

भारत	m.	India
सरकार	f.	government
जन्म	m.	birth
वर्ष	m.	year
पुरुष	m.	man, male
आधार	m.	foundation, the name of India's national ID card


## 6 क्या चल रहा है ?

आम	adj.	common
आदमी	m.	man, person
अधिकार	m.	right, authority
जन्मदिन	m.	birthday
उम्र	f.	age
शहर	m.	city
मकान	m.	house
पता	m.	address
महिला	f.	woman, female
लिंग	m.	gender
पूरा	adj.	full
देश	m.	country, nation
स्त्री	f.	woman, female
अम्मी-अब्बू	m.	parents (common among Urdu speakers)
गाँव	m.	village
लेकिन	conj.	but
आपसे मिलकर खुशी हुई ।	phr.	Nice to meet you.
फिर मिलेंगे ।	phr.	See you later.
माता-पिता	m.	parents


## Text



भारत सरकार  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA




मोहित सिंह  
जन्म वर्ष- 18 मार्च 1997  
पुरुष



4567 1234 0098

---

आधार - आम आदमी का अधिकार



भारत सरकार  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

मकान नं- 402, अंतरिक्ष भवन,  
सेक्टर - 11, हरियण नगर,  
उदयपुर, राजस्थान- 313001

4567 1234 0098

---

आधार - आम आदमी का अधिकार

FIGURE 1.1

## Notes on culture

Hindi boasts a rich vocabulary, thanks to the many cultures and languages that have called India home over the centuries. Hindi speakers make use of words from Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, and English, along with other South Asian languages.

As in any language, Hindi speakers use different vocabulary in formal and informal situations. You find an example of this in the identity card shown in Figure 1.1. Although the words पुरुष and आदमी both can be translated as “man,” पुरुष is a Sanskrit loanword used in formal speech, while आदमी – an Arabic word cognate with the name Adam – is used in everyday speech.

If you have watched any recent Bollywood films, you’ll be aware that Hindi speakers make frequent use of English words and phrases. In this style, known as “Hinglish,” speakers shift back and forth between these languages, often in a single sentence. This is good news if you are coming to Hindi from English, as you can often plug an English word into a Hindi sentence to get your point across.

### A) Reading questions

Answer the following questions in complete sentences based on the ID card in Figure 1.1.

- 1 आदमी का नाम क्या है ?
- 2 आदमी का जन्मदिन कब है ?
- 3 आदमी की उम्र क्या है ?
- 4 आदमी के शहर का नाम क्या है ?
- 5 आदमी का मकान नम्बर क्या है ?
- 6 आदमी के घर का पता क्या है ?
- 7 आदमी के देश का नाम क्या है ?

### B) Create your own ID card

Create your own ID card here by filling in the missing details with your own information and adding a picture.

The figure displays two versions of an Indian Aadhaar ID card. The top card is a sample with a photo and a QR code. The bottom card is a blank template for creating a new ID card.

**Top Card (Sample):**

- Emblem of India: भारत सरकार (Government of India)
- Blank space for photo
- Blank space for name: नाम -
- Blank space for birth date: जन्म वर्ष -
- Blank space for gender: लिंग -
- Blank space for address: पता -
- Blank space for Aadhaar number: 0000 0000 0000
- Blank space for signature: आधार - आम आदमी का अधिकार

**Bottom Card (Template):**

- Emblem of India: भारत सरकार (Government of India)
- Blank space for photo
- Blank space for name: नाम -
- Blank space for birth date: जन्म वर्ष -
- Blank space for gender: लिंग -
- Blank space for address: पता -
- Blank space for Aadhaar number: 0000 0000 0000
- Blank space for signature: आधार - आम आदमी का अधिकार

FIGURE 1.2

## 8 क्या चल रहा है ?

### C) Create an ID card for Shireen

Read the following passage and create an ID card for the person described by filling in the missing details.

नमस्ते जी ! मेरा नाम शिरीन आरिफ़ है और मैं हिंदुस्तानी हूँ । मेरे अम्मी-अब्बू बिहार के एक गाँव में रहते हैं, लेकिन मैं पटना में रहती हूँ । मेरा जन्मदिन दस जनवरी को है और मेरी उम्र बीस साल की है ।

मैं पटना महिला कॉलेज में पढ़ती हूँ और मैं कॉलेज के एक हॉस्टल में रहती हूँ । मेरा कमरा नम्बर तीन है । आपसे मिलकर खुशी हुई । फिर मिलेंगे ।

### D) Let's get to know you



Answer the following questions in complete sentences.


- 1 आपका नाम क्या है ?
- 2 आपका क्या हाल है ?
- 3 आप कहाँ से हैं ?
- 4 आपका घर कहाँ है ?
- 5 आप कहाँ पढ़ते / पढ़ती हैं ?
- 6 आप क्या काम करते / करती हैं ?
- 7 आपके माता-पिता क्या करते हैं ?
- 8 आपके माता-पिता कहाँ रहते हैं ?

### E) Get to know your partner

Meet with a partner and take turns asking each other the questions in the previous activity. Fill in the blanks with your partner's answers:

- 1 नाम \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 हाल क्या है ? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 देश \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 पता \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 कहाँ पढ़ते / पढ़ती हैं ? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 काम \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 माता-पिता का काम \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 माता-पिता कहाँ हैं ? \_\_\_\_\_

	भारत सरकार GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
	नाम - जन्म वर्ष - लिंग -
0000 0000 0000	
आधार - आम आदमी का अधिकार	

	भारत सरकार GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
पता -	
0000 0000 0000	
आधार - आम आदमी का अधिकार	

# 2

## स्टेशन पर

### Pre-reading

- 1 What information would you expect to find on signs in a railway station?
- 2 What details do you need to consider when buying a train ticket?



## 10 क्या चल रहा है ?

### Glossary

आगमन	m.	arrival
समय	m.	time
गाड़ी	f.	car, train
संख्या	f.	number
संभावित	adj.	expected
प्रस्थान	m.	departure
छूटना	vi.	to depart
पहुँचना	vi.	to arrive
दिन	m.	day
श्रेणी	f.	class (of a train)
किराया	m.	fare
यात्री	m.	traveler
जाना	vi.	to go
X जाने वाला	adj.	bound for X
पैसा	m.	money
X के बाद	pp.	after X
X से पहले	pp.	before X

### Text

#### आगमन

#### समय 13:02

गाड़ी संख्या	गाड़ी का नाम	संभावित समय	आगमन / प्रस्थान	प्लैटफॉर्म संख्या
11058	अमृतसर दादर एक्सप्रेस	20:20	आ०	4
12015	अजमेर शताब्दी	18:15	आ०	12
12951	मुम्बई राजधानी	14:00	प्र०	5
12138	पंजाब मेल	19:30	आ०	9
12494	दर्शन एक्सप्रेस	16:20	आ०	4

### Notes on culture

In India, trains are popular for traveling long distances. When buying a train ticket, you must decide between a few types of coaches, each with different features. For example, a sleeper coach (SL) does not have air-conditioning (AC) and seats six passengers per compartment, while a 2AC coach has AC and seats four passengers per compartment. For overnight journeys, compartments can be converted to sleeping berths with fold-down bunk beds.

Hindi students of all levels have trouble recognizing English words written in Devanagari. You'll find many such words throughout this book (including this chapter!), so when you are stumped by a seemingly unfamiliar word, consider whether it might be one that you already know from English. There are some clues for recognizing these words. For example, Hindi speakers pronounce the "t" and "d" sounds in English as retroflex and write these sounds with the letters ट and ड. Likewise, the undotted or empty चन्द्र-बिंदु is used when writing some English words to prevent readers from confusing such homonyms as काफी (enough) and कॉफी (coffee).

### A) True or false

Indicate whether the statement is true or false by circling सही (true) or गलत (false). Correct each false statement.

1	सही	गलत	The Amritsar-Dadar Express arrives at 8:20 p.m.
2	सही	गलत	The Darshan Express departs at 5:00 p.m.
3	सही	गलत	The Punjab Mail arrives on platform 9.
4	सही	गलत	Train number 12951 is expected at 2:00 p.m.
5	सही	गलत	The Ajmer Shatabdi arrives on platform 10.

### B) Reading questions

Answer the following questions based on the timetable at the beginning of this chapter.

- 1 What time does the Punjab Mail arrive?
- 2 Which trains arrive on platform 4?
- 3 Which platform does the Ajmer Shatabdi arrive on?
- 4 What time does the Mumbai Rajdhani Express depart?
- 5 It's now 1:02 p.m. Which train will depart next?
- 6 Which train arrives after the Punjab Mail?

### C) Practice reading Devanagari

The following is a list of actual trains in India. Rewrite the name of each train in English.

- 1 ब्लैक डायमंड एक्सप्रेस
- 2 गोल्डन टेम्पल मेल
- 3 ग्रैंड ट्रंक एक्सप्रेस
- 4 हिमालयन क्वीन
- 5 पर्ल सिटी एक्सप्रेस
- 6 योग एक्सप्रेस
- 7 टी गार्डन एक्सप्रेस



## 12 क्या चल रहा है ?

### D) Train timetable

Study this timetable for trains traveling from New Delhi to Varanasi and then answer the following questions:

#### नई दिल्ली से वाराणसी जाने वाली गाड़ियाँ

गाड़ी संख्या	गाड़ी का नाम	छूटने का समय	पहुँचने का समय	दिन	श्रेणी, किराया
12382	पूर्वा एक्सप्रेस	17:35	5:05	MWF	SL: ₹420.00 3AC: ₹1,115.00
12562	स्वतंत्रता एक्सप्रेस	20:40	8:25	All	3AC: ₹1,105.00 2AC: ₹1,575.00
14258	काशी विश्वनाथ एक्सप्रेस	11:35	4:35	All	SL: ₹400.00 3AC: ₹1,090.00 2AC: ₹1,575.00
19407	आदी वाराणसी एक्सप्रेस	14:03	5:40	F	SL: ₹395.00 3AC: ₹1,085.00

- 1 Which trains arrive in Varanasi before 6:00 a.m.?
- 2 Which trains run on Mondays?
- 3 Which train has the shortest travel time? Which one has the longest?
- 4 What time does the Purva Express depart from New Delhi?
- 5 What time does the Kashi Vishwanath Express arrive in Varanasi?
- 6 How much is the fare for a second-class AC ticket on the Swatantra Express?

### E) Choose the best train for each traveler

The following chart gives information about three travelers who are planning journeys from New Delhi to Varanasi. Study the preferences and budgets of these travelers and then consult the timetable in the previous activity to find the best train for each one.

यात्री का नाम	जाने का समय	पहुँचने का समय	दिन	श्रेणी	बजट
मुहम्मद रिज़वी	15:00 के बाद	6:00 से पहले	F	SL	₹500.00
श्रेयस जैन	12:30 के बाद	5:00 से पहले	F	3AC, 2AC	₹1200.00
ऋषि कुमार	13:30 के बाद	8:30 से पहले	W, F	SL, 3AC	₹400.00

# 3

## सुखदेव का ढाबा

### Pre-reading

- 1 What's your favorite Indian restaurant? Why do you like it?
- 2 What dishes do you usually order at an Indian restaurant?



## 14 क्या चल रहा है ?

### Glossary

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ढाबा	m.	roadside diner
नाश्ता	m.	snack, breakfast
रुपया	m.	rupee (India's currency)
लस्सी	f.	yogurt-based drink
पकौड़ा	m.	a fritter (batter-fried vegetable)
समोसा	m.	a dumpling stuffed with potatoes
बैंगन-भर्ता	m.	roasted eggplant
आलू	m.	potato
मटर	m.	green peas
गोभी	f.	cauliflower (फूल गोभी), cabbage (बंद गोभी)
साग	m.	green leafy vegetable
पनीर	m.	cheese
दाल-मक्खनी	f.	lentils cooked with butter
मुर्ग	m.	chicken
क्रोरमा	m.	a gravy-based meat dish
चावल	m.	rice
रोटी	f.	flatbread made on a griddle
बिरयानी	f.	rice cooked with meat or vegetables
सादा	adj.	plain
नान	m.	flatbread made in an oven
आलू-पराठा	m.	flatbread stuffed with potato
कितना	inter.	how much, how many
X कितने का है ?	phr.	How much is X?

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