Devanagari देवनागरी

The trick: Nepali uses the same Devanagari script as Hindi, written left to right, with the letters hanging from a line on top and no capitals. Each consonant carries a built-in a: क ka. A vowel sign changes it, and the sign can sit after, before, above or below the letter: का kaa, कि ki, के ke, कु ku.

11 vowels: a letter at the start of a word, a sign after a consonant

अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ
no sign	ा	ि	ी	ु	ू	ृ	े	ै	ो	ौ
क ka	का kaa	कि ki	की ki	कु ku	कू ku	कृ kri	के ke	कै kai	को ko	कौ kau

Consonants, row by row

	plain	with a puff	voiced	voiced, puff	nasal
back of the mouth	क k	ख kh	ग g	घ gh	ङ ng
roof of the mouth	च ch	छ chh	ज j	झ jh	ञ ny
tongue curled back	ट t	ठ th	ड d	ढ dh	ण n
tongue on the teeth	त t	थ th	द d	ध dh	न n
lips	प p	फ ph	ब b	भ bh	म m
y, r, l, b	य y	र r	ल l	व b	
s, h	श s	ष s	स s	ह h	

A puff of air: say क ka, then ख kha with a breath, as if blowing out a candle; th and ph are never the English th or f. **The shaded row** is said with the tongue curled back; this sheet writes both rows as t and d. **Pale letters** are rare: ण na is said like न na, ष sa like स sa, and ञ nya mostly joins onto another letter.

The built-in a

It's said short, like the o in hot: म ma, I. At the end of a word it's usually silent: घर ghar, house. In many verb endings you hear it: छ chha, is.

Halanta

This stroke under a letter takes the a away: क् k. It ends words like गर्नुहोस् garnuhos, please do; inside a word, letters usually join instead.

Through the nose

The moon and dot, as in अँ an, sends a vowel through the nose: गाउँ gaun, village. The dot alone is a nasal too: तपाईं tapaain, you.

Joined letters: the first one loses its a and leans on the next

क्ष	त्र	ज्ञ	श्र	स्त	न्य	द्य	र्न
क + ष	त + र	ज + ञ	श + र	स + त	न + य	द + य	र + न
chh	tr	gy	sr	st	ny	dy	rn, r on top
क्षमा	मित्र	ज्ञान	श्रीमती	नमस्ते	धन्यवाद	विद्यार्थी	गर्नु
chhamaa forgiveness	mitra friend	gyaan knowledge	srimati wife	namaste hello	dhanyabaad thank you	bidyaarthi student	garnu to do

र changes shape

रु	रू	प्र	क्र	ट्र	ह्र	र्क	द्र
ru	ru	pra	kra	tra	hra	rka	dra

Nepali digits

०	१	२	३	४	५	६	७	८	९
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

How words work व्याकरण

Romanization on this sheet: plain letters, written the way it's said. The built-in a is written where you hear it and left out where it's silent; aa is the long a.

a	the o in hot, short	म ma I
aa	a in father, long	आमा aamaa mum
i	see: इ and ई sound the same	दिदी didi big sister
u	food: उ and ऊ sound the same	दूध dudh milk
e, o, ai, au	café, go, eye, now	पैसा paisaa money

kh, bh...	h is a puff of air	खाना khaanaa food
t, d	teeth or curled back *(page 1)*	टिकट tikat ticket
s	श, ष and स are all s	देश des country
b, w	व is b; w after a consonant	स्वागत swaagat welcome
n	after a vowel: through the nose	तपाईं tapaain you

The verb goes last

म
ma
I

भात
bhaat
rice

खान्छु
khaanchhu
eat

No a or the: किताब kitaab is a book or the book. For a, say एउटा eutaa, one: एउटा किताब eutaa kitaab. -haru makes many: साथीहरू saathiharu, friends. Things have no gender. In careful speech a verb changes for a woman, ऊ खान्छे u khaanchhe, she eats; many people just say खान्छ khaanchha.

Little words go after the noun

घरमा
gharmaa
in the house

घरबाट
gharbaata
from the house

घरको ढोका
gharko dhokaa
the door of the house

आमालाई
aamaalaai
to mum, for mum

Four ways to say you, and the verb changes with each

Who	Use it for	eat	is, are
म ma	I	खान्छु khaanchhu	छु chhu
तँ tan	you: a small child, a very close friend. Rude to anyone else.	खान्छस् khaanchhas	छस् chhas
तिमी timi	you: friends, family your age, anyone younger	खान्छौ khaanchhau	छौ chhau
तपाईं tapaain	you: strangers, elders, at work. Always safe.	खानुहुन्छ khaanuhunchha	हुनुहुन्छ hunuhunchha
हजुर hajur	you: the most respectful, for grandparents and honoured guests	खानुहुन्छ khaanuhunchha	हुनुहुन्छ hunuhunchha
ऊ u	he or she *(familiar)*	खान्छ khaanchha	छ chha
उहाँ uhaan	he or she *(polite)*	खानुहुन्छ khaanuhunchha	हुनुहुन्छ hunuhunchha

Two words for to be: छ chha says where or what it's like: घर ठूलो छ ghar thulo chha, the house is big; किताब यहाँ छ kitaab yahaan chha, the book is here; मसँग पैसा छ masanga paisaa chha, I have money. हो ho says what or who it is: यो मेरो घर हो yo mero ghar ho, this is my house; with I, हुँ hun: म विद्यार्थी हुँ ma bidyaarthi hun, I'm a student.

No: छ chha turns into छैन chhaina: पानी छैन paani chhaina, there's no water. हो ho turns into होइन hoina: यो मेरो होइन yo mero hoina, it's not mine. A verb gets a no ending: ऊ खाँदैन u khaandaina, he doesn't eat; म खाँदिनँ ma khaandina, I don't eat; तपाईं खानुहुन्न tapaain khaanuhunna, you don't eat. **Questions:** just raise your voice at the end, or start with के ke: के तपाईं नेपाली बोल्नुहुन्छ? ke tapaain nepaali bolnuhunchha?, do you speak Nepali?

The first 263 words शब्दहरू

How: learn five a day, then hunt for them in Kitsumi subtitles. *(Notes in brackets)* say how a word is used.

Hello and goodbye: नमस्ते namaste works any time of day, with anyone, often with palms together. हजुर hajur is the polite way to answer when someone calls your name.

Greetings and survival

नमस्ते namaste
hello; also goodbye *(any time of day)*

नमस्कार namaskaar
hello *(a little more formal)*

धन्यवाद dhanyabaad
thank you

सन्चै हुनुहुन्छ? sanchai hunuhunchha?
how are you? *(polite)*

सन्चै छु sanchai chhu
I'm fine

ठीक छ thik chha
OK, fine

हो ho
yes, that's right *(it means it is)*

होइन hoina
no *(it means it isn't)*

हजुर hajur
yes? pardon? *(the polite answer when someone calls you)*

माफ गर्नुहोस् maaf garnuhos
sorry; excuse me

कृपया kripayaa
please *(formal, on signs)*

फेरि भेटौंला pheri bhetaunlaa
see you again

तपाईंको नाम के हो?
tapaainko naam ke ho?
what's your name?

मैले बुझिनँ maile bujhina
I didn't understand

थाहा छैन thaahaa chhaina
I don't know *(it means no idea)*

एकछिन ekchhin
just a moment

केही छैन kehi chhaina
never mind, it's nothing

स्वागत छ swaagat chha
welcome

Question words

के ke
what

को ko
who

कहाँ kahaan
where

कहिले kahile
when

किन kina
why

कसरी kasari
how

कति kati
how much, how many

कुन kun
which

Me, you, this

म ma
I

हामी haami
we

तिमी timi
you *(friends, anyone younger)*

तपाईं tapaain
you *(polite, always safe)*

ऊ u
he, she *(familiar)*

उहाँ uhaan
he, she *(polite)*

उनीहरू uniharu
they

मेरो mero
my

तिम्रो timro
your *(friends)*

तपाईंको tapaainko
your *(polite)*

यो yo
this

त्यो tyo
that

यहाँ yahaan
here

त्यहाँ tyahaan
there

Days of the week

आइतबार aaitabaar
Sunday

सोमबार sombaar
Monday

मङ्गलबार mangalbaar
Tuesday

बुधबार budhabaar
Wednesday

बिहीबार bihibaar
Thursday

शुक्रबार sukrabaar
Friday

शनिबार sanibaar
Saturday

Numbers

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
शून्य	एक	दुई	तीन	चार	पाँच	छ	सात	आठ
sunya	ek	dui	tin	chaar	paanch	chha	saat	aath

9	10	11	12	20	50	100	1,000	1,00,000
नौ	दस	एघार	बाह्र	बीस	पचास	सय	हजार	लाख
nau	das	eghaara	baahra	bis	pachaas	saya	hajaar	laakh

Nepal writes numbers both ways: १२ and 12 mean the same, and you'll see both on prices and buses. छ chha is six, and also is. Up to 99, every number is its own word: 21 is एक्काइस ekkaais. Prices come in रुपैयाँ rupaiyaan, rupees.

Time, people, food समय, मान्छे, खाना

Time

अहिले ahile
now

आज aaja
today

भोलि bholi
tomorrow

हिजो hijo
yesterday

बिहान bihaan
morning

दिउँसो diunso
afternoon

बेलुका belukaa
evening

राति raati
night, at night

दिन din
day

हप्ता haptaa
week

महिना mahinaa
month

वर्ष barsa
year

घण्टा ghantaa
hour

समय samaya
time

पछि pachhi
later, after

Family

आमा aamaa
mother, mum

बुबा bubaa
father, dad

दाइ daai
big brother; also any man a bit older

दिदी didi
big sister; also any woman a bit older

भाइ bhaai
little brother

बहिनी bahini
little sister

छोरा chhoraa
son

छोरी chhori
daughter

श्रीमान् srimaan
husband

श्रीमती srimati
wife

बच्चा bachchaa
child, baby

परिवार pariwaar
family

हजुरबुबा hajurbubaa
grandad

हजुरआमा hajuraamaa
grandma

People

साथी saathi
friend

केटा ketaa
boy

केटी keti
girl

मान्छे maanchhe
person

विद्यार्थी bidyaarthi
student

डाक्टर daaktar
doctor

पाहुना paahunaa
guest

छिमेकी chhimeki
neighbour

Food and drink

पानी paani
water

चिया chiyaa
tea

कफी kafi
coffee

दूध dudh
milk

दही dahi
yogurt

भात bhaat
rice, cooked; also a meal

चामल chaamal
rice, uncooked

दाल daal
lentil soup, dal

तरकारी tarkaari
vegetables; a vegetable curry

रोटी roti
flatbread

अचार achaar
pickle, chutney

मासु maasu
meat

कुखुराको मासु kukhuraako maasu
chicken

माछा maachhaa
fish

फुल phul
egg

आलु aalu
potato

फलफूल phalphul
fruit

केरा keraa
banana

आँप aanp
mango

स्याउ syaau
apple

नुन nun
salt

चिनी chini
sugar

खुर्सानी khursaani
chilli

खाना khaanaa
food; a meal

पिरो piro
spicy, hot

भोक लाग्यो bhok laagyo
I'm hungry

तिर्खा लाग्यो tirkhaa laagyo
I'm thirsty

बिल ल्याउनुहोस् bil lyaaunuhos
the bill, please

Ask with -nuhos: पानी दिनुहोस् paani dinuhos, water, please. The -nuhos ending makes a polite ask; in speech it's often cut to -nus.

Hungry is something that happens to you: भोक लाग्यो bhok laagyo means hunger struck. Say it as मलाई भोक लाग्यो malaai bhok laagyo, I'm hungry.

Places and verbs ठाउँ र क्रिया

Places

घर ghar
home, house

कोठा kothaa
room

स्कुल skul
school

पसल pasal
shop

बजार bajaar
market

अस्पताल aspataal
hospital

शौचालय sauchaalaya
toilet

होटल hotal
hotel; also a place to eat

बैंक baink
bank

विमानस्थल bimaansthal
airport

बाटो baato
road, way

सहर sahar
town, city

गाउँ gaaun
village

देश des
country

नदी nadi
river

ताल taal
lake

पहाड pahaad
hills

हिमाल himaal
snowy mountains

Getting around, things

दायाँ / बायाँ daayaan / baayaan
right / left

सिधा sidhaa
straight on

गाडी gaadi
car; any vehicle

बस bas
bus

ट्याक्सी tyaaksi
taxi

टिकट tikat
ticket

पैसा paisaa
money

रुपैयाँ rupaiyaan
rupees

फोन fon
phone

किताब kitaab
book

साँचो saancho
key

ढोका dhokaa
door

झ्याल jhyaal
window

छाता chhaataa
umbrella

झोला jholaa
bag

लुगा lugaa
clothes

फोटो foto
photo

गीत git
song

Verbs

खानु khaanu
eat; also have tea *(चिया खानु)*

पिउनु piunu
drink

जानु jaanu
go

आउनु aaunu
come

हेर्नु hernu
look, watch

सुन्नु sunnu
listen, hear

पढ्नु padhnu
read; also study

लेख्नु lekhnu
write

बोल्नु bolnu
speak

भन्नु bhannu
say, tell

गर्नु garnu
do, make

काम गर्नु kaam garnu
work *(it means do work)*

बुझ्नु bujhnu
understand

जान्नु jaannu
know

सिक्नु siknu
learn

किन्नु kinnu
buy

दिनु dinu
give

लिनु linu
take

खोज्नु khojnu
look for

बस्नु basnu
sit; also live, stay

सुत्नु sutnu
sleep

पकाउनु pakaaunu
cook

खेल्नु khelnu
play

हाँस्नु haansnu
laugh

रुनु runu
cry

सोच्नु sochnu
think

माया गर्नु maayaa garnu
love

भेट्नु bhetnu
meet

फर्कनु pharkanu
come back, go back

खोल्नु kholnu
open

बन्द गर्नु banda garnu
close, shut

हिँड्नु hindnu
walk

पर्खनु parkhanu
wait

चाहनु chaahanu
want

नुहाउनु nuhaaunu
have a wash, bathe

Verbs end in -nu: that's the dictionary form. Take off नु nu and add an ending: गर्नु garnu, do; म गर्छु ma garchhu, I do; तपाईं गर्नुहुन्छ tapaain garnuhunchha, you do.

To like or need, start with malaai: मलाई चिया मन पर्छ malaai chiyaa man parchha, I like tea; मलाई पानी चाहिन्छ malaai paani chaahinchha, I need water.

Feelings and show words फिल्मका शब्दहरू

Describing words

ठूलो / सानो thulo / saano
big / small

तातो / चिसो taato / chiso
hot / cold

राम्रो / नराम्रो raamro / naraamro
good, nice / bad

नयाँ / पुरानो nayaan / puraano
new / old *(things)*

सजिलो / गाह्रो sajilo / gaahro
easy / hard

सस्तो / महँगो sasto / mahango
cheap / expensive

नजिक / टाढा najik / taadhaa
near / far

छिटो / बिस्तारै chhito / bistaarai
quickly / slowly

सुन्दर sundar
beautiful

खुसी khusi
happy

उदास udaas
sad

थाकेको thaakeko
tired

बिरामी biraami
ill; also a patient

डराएको daraaeko
scared

Little words

र ra
and

अनि ani
and then

तर tara
but

कि ki
or *(चिया कि कफी? tea or coffee?)*

पनि pani
also, too *(म पनि, me too)*

धेरै dherai
a lot; also very

अलिकति alikati
a little

मात्र maatra
only

सँग sanga
with *(after the word)*

लागि laagi
for *(मेरो लागि, for me)*

किनभने kinabhane
because

मन पर्छ man parchha
like *(मलाई ... मन पर्छ)*

चाहिन्छ chaahinchha
need *(मलाई ... चाहिन्छ)*

Reactions

मीठो छ! mitho chha!
it's tasty!

हो र? ho ra?
really? is that so?

साँच्चै? saanchchai?
really? honestly?

हुन्छ hunchha
OK, sure *(yes, I'll do it)*

ल la
OK then; also here, take it

स्याबास! syaabaas!
well done! bravo!

आहा! aahaa!
ooh, lovely!

आम्मै! aammai!
oh my! *(a fright or a surprise)*

कस्तो राम्रो! kasto raamro!
how lovely!

भयो! bhayo!
enough! that's it

पर्ख! parkha!
wait! *(to a friend)*

चुप! chup!
quiet!

बचाऊ! bachaau!
help!

The big scenes

म तिमीलाई माया गर्छु
ma timilaai maayaa garchhu
I love you

नजाऊ! najaau!
don't go!

मलाई माफ गर malaai maaf gara
forgive me

तिम्रो याद आउँछ timro yaad aaunchha
I miss you *(it means your memory comes)*

नडराऊ nadaraau
don't be afraid

Useful phrases

यो के हो? yo ke ho?
what's this?

यो कति हो? yo kati ho?
how much is this?

शौचालय कहाँ छ?
sauchaalaya kahaan chha?
where's the toilet?

बिस्तारै बोल्नुहोस् bistaarai bolnuhos
please speak slowly

फेरि भन्नुहोस् pheri bhannuhos
say it again, please

म अलिकति नेपाली बोल्छु
ma alikati nepaali bolchhu
I speak a little Nepali

मलाई यो मन पर्छ
malaai yo man parchha
I like this

खाना खानुभयो?
khaanaa khaanubhayo?
have you eaten? *(a friendly hello)*

Describe with छ: खाना मीठो छ khaanaa mitho chha, the food is tasty; म खुसी छु ma khusi chhu, I'm happy. A describing word ending in -o turns -aa for many: राम्रा घरहरू raamraa gharharu, nice houses.

Big brother, big sister: call a driver or a shopkeeper दाइ daai, or दिदी didi if she's a woman. It's warm and polite, and you'll hear it in every series.

Practice अभ्यास

How: cover the romanization and the grey lines with a strip of paper. Read the Nepali out loud, then slide it down to check. Can you read every line without peeking? You've got it.

Look at the end of each line first: that's where the verb is, छ chha or हो ho, and छैन chhaina or होइन hoina for no. The line at the end, ।, is a full stop.

Read these sentences

1. नमस्ते! मेरो नाम अनिता हो। तपाईंको नाम के हो?
   namaste! mero naam anitaa ho. tapaainko naam ke ho?
   Hello! My name is Anita. What's your name?

2. सन्चै हुनुहुन्छ? म सन्चै छु, धन्यवाद।
   sanchai hunuhunchha? ma sanchai chhu, dhanyabaad.
   How are you? I'm fine, thanks.

3. बजार कहाँ छ?
   bajaar kahaan chha?
   Where's the market?

4. एक कप चिया दिनुहोस्।
   ek kap chiyaa dinuhos.
   A cup of tea, please.

5. आज मौसम धेरै राम्रो छ।
   aaja mausam dherai raamro chha.
   The weather's really nice today.

6. म माछा खाँदिनँ।
   ma maachhaa khaandina.
   I don't eat fish.

7. तपाईं भोलि आउनुहुन्छ?
   tapaain bholi aaunuhunchha?
   Are you coming tomorrow?

8. उहाँ मेरो दाइ हुनुहुन्छ।
   uhaan mero daai hunuhunchha.
   He's my big brother.

9. यो मेरो घर होइन।
   yo mero ghar hoina.
   This isn't my house.

10. म नेपाली सिक्दै छु।
    ma nepaali sikdai chhu.
    I'm learning Nepali.

Meet a word you don't know? In Kitsumi, hover any word in subtitles to see what it means.