# An Introduction to Telugu Grammar

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**Preface**

I prepared this manuscript with a two-fold purpose: First, to provide a concise presentation of the essential grammar of modern Telugu, with exercises. The goal is to bring the beginner , as quickly as possible, to the point where he/she can read and understand modern prose and speak elementary sentences.  Second, to serve as a reference  for persons consolidating their grasp of the language. It will thus be of interest both to students beginning courses in the language, and those who have already learned some Telugu. Persons planning to visit India for business or travel will also find this useful, as colloquial vocabulary and style received detailed attention along side with the more formal written style.

In the course of my own writings I realized the terrible lack of standardization in Telugu, its usage, its spelling and its grammar. I also realized how out-dated Telugu grammar books are and how far removed spoken Telugu is from the rules of grammar. Well, I thought it is time to address these issues.

I am neither a linguist nor a poet. By no means am I a Telugu scholar.  I am trained as an Engineer. I am simply interested in Telugu, particularly in the use of Telugu to express  modern science.  To fulfill this ambition, I wrote several popular science  books, essays and short stories based  on science facts and science fiction.

Once, I tried to teach Telugu to my children who were born and raised in the United States.  It was more failure on my part than their unwillingness to learn.  Soon I realized that there were no books to formally teach Telugu to someone who does not already know how to speak in Telugu. The grammar books I used in my childhood were written for those who already know Telugu, most probably as a mother tongue. Furthermore these grammar books were aimed at teaching how to write literary Telugu, a 'dialect'  different from spoken Telugu. This was good enough reason for me to try my hand on this topic.

I decided to write this in English because I have several types of audience in my mind: people who did not learn Telugu as a first language, such as those born and raised outside India; people who can speak Telugu, but cannot read and write, such as those living  outside the borders of Andhra Pradesh, but within India; and finally western people who express a desire to learn Telugu, such as those going to India on business or missionary work. In addition, I also felt that by writing this in English, I might succeed in bringing Telugu onto the International stage - an honor it long deserved and never received.

One decision I had to make on the very first day is about a scheme of transliterating Telugu using English script. Standardized phonetic symbols do exist and they are widely used in dictionaries to indicate pronunciation. Sanskrit has been written using these symbols. For various reasons these symbols did not gain popularity beyond the vaulted halls of universities. With the advent of computers and the Internet, a group of enthusiastic graduate students introduced the Rice University Transliteration System (RTS) and it has become reasonably popular with the Web community. There is one practical advantage with the RTS system. It allows one to type in Telugu using standard English characters using a standard keyboard. A context sensitive software translator, called RIT, translates the input file into equivalent Telugu and displays the Telugu characters on the monitor screen and allows the characters to be printed on a laser printer. One such tool, Padma, developed by Nagarjuna Venna, made it possible to process my original files and produce the PDF output. This easy to learn scheme is explained in the Appendix.

I tried to present this material in small modules, each about 10 pages in length. The material is presented in Roman transliteration as well as in Telugu script, so that the beginner can work through the book unimpeded by script problems, yet enjoying the advantage of contact with script from the outset. A small section with an English-Telugu and Telugu-English glossary is also included as a source of ready reference as well as a source for vocabulary.

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