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A reader can recognise □ and □ separately, then stop at □□□ . The apparent new letter is the problem—and also the clue. Nepali conjuncts become less intimidating when the task changes from memorising unfamiliar pictures to finding the consonants inside them.

For a Nepali-speaking learner abroad, reading and speaking need not progress at the same pace. This guide is for the particular moment when familiar spoken words become difficult on the page. It offers a small, reusable practice method, not a complete alphabet course or a promise of fluency. Learners who are still identifying individual consonants can keep an alphabet reference beside them.

First separate the letter from its shape

Nepali uses Devanagari. In the script’s basic model, a consonant carries an inherent vowel; the halant, also called virama, removes that inherent vowel. ICANN’s description of the Devanagari writing system explains that the halant joins consonants into conjuncts. This is a description of the script, not a rule that every written vowel is pronounced in exactly the same way in every language using it.

Start with a visible sequence: □ + □ + □ . When those elements are put together in ordinary text, they produce □□□ . The small mark in the middle is doing grammatical work even when it is no longer separately visible in the finished shape. The useful question is therefore “Which consonants are joined?” rather than “Which completely new alphabet letter is this?”

That distinction also prevents an unnecessary argument between a printed workbook and a phone. Letters are the underlying elements; glyphs are the shapes used to display them. A different-looking join may be a different rendering of the same sequence, not evidence that somebody has spelt the word incorrectly.

Learn three kinds of visual change

The Tokyo University of Foreign Studies’ conjunct classification provides a useful visual starting point: some combinations sit horizontally, some stack vertically, and others become a more

independent-looking shape. Its examples include □□□ , □□□ and □□□ . These categories are a way to organise observation, not three new alphabets to learn.

For the first practice page, use just three lines:

- □ + □ + □ → □□□
- □ + □ + □ → □□□
- □ + □ + □ → □□□

Copy each full consonant separately before copying the finished combination. Then cover the left side and try to recover the ingredients from the right. Finally cover the right side and form the combination again. The exercise checks two different things: recognising a printed shape and remembering how it is built.

Do not make speed the first goal. If the learner can explain the combination while referring to the model, the page is already doing useful work. A neat copy without recognition is less useful for the next unfamiliar word. Conversely, a learner who recognises the parts but writes unevenly has a handwriting task, not necessarily a reading failure.

Move quickly from isolated shapes to words

A full page of conjuncts can feel remote from actual Nepali. Pair a small selection with words that the learner encounters. In

□□□□□□ , look for □□□ , built from □□ and □ . In □□□□□□ , find the same □□□ combination in a different place. In □□□□□ , focus on □□□ , built from □□ and □ . In □□□□□ , identify □□□ and then notice the attached □ sign.

These examples are written-word exercises, not an English pronunciation key. Ask a fluent Nepali reader or teacher to say the whole word naturally, then say it together while pointing to the relevant written section. Avoid forcing an English spelling to carry every distinction in Nepali sound. The purpose is to connect a known word with its written structure, rather than replace the script with another layer of memorisation.

For a family practice sheet, make three columns headed “word”, “joined consonants” and “where I found it”. The last column might say a book title, a message or a school worksheet. Leave it blank until the learner actually finds an example. That keeps the activity grounded in the language being read rather than an invented story about someone’s progress.

Give □ its own practice page

Conjuncts involving □ deserve separate attention because their appearance can obscure the order of the underlying letters. The Unicode Standard’s Devanagari examples show □□ + □ becoming □□□ , with the initial □ represented by a mark above. The standard also discusses language-specific forms used in

Nepali and Marathi. A learner should not assume that every small mark above a word has the same function.

Contrast □□□ with □□□. Write the ingredients of each underneath: □ + □ + □, and □ + □ + □. The order is different even though the same two consonants are involved. Point first to the written sequence and only then to the compact form. If a workbook uses a slightly different shape, compare the ingredients before deciding that one version must be wrong.

There is no need to master every possible □ combination in one sitting. Keep a separate list of the examples that actually interrupt reading. A short list with reliable explanations is more useful than a large copied chart whose components remain mysterious.

Typing is another way to test understanding

Digital text offers a practical check. Unicode’s Indic-script FAQ explains that half-forms are not generally encoded as separate letters: a consonant, virama and another consonant are entered as a sequence, and the font and display system determine the visible result. This is why hunting for a separate “half-letter” character can be the wrong task.

In a Nepali keyboard or input system, try producing one familiar word, then compare it with a trusted printed or digital model. Keyboard layouts and transliteration tools differ, so the exact

keystrokes depend on the system being used. Check the tool’s own instructions rather than assuming that a key sequence from somebody else’s phone will work everywhere.

When a result looks odd, examine one issue at a time. Is the intended consonant present? Is there an unwanted space? Has a vowel sign been attached to the wrong place? Does the same text look different in another app? A screenshot records appearance, but copying the actual text into another suitable app can help distinguish a typing problem from a display problem.

A short practice routine, without a performance test

Here is an editorially proposed routine that can be adapted to the learner, not a research-validated timetable. Begin with one word the learner wants to read. Identify its ordinary consonants and vowel signs. Isolate one conjunct. Write its components with a visible halant. Rebuild the word, then find or compose a short phrase containing it with a fluent reader’s help.

On the next practice occasion, start with the previous word before adding another. Record the kind of help needed: recognising the shape, remembering the component letters, knowing the spoken word or controlling the pen. Those are different obstacles. Recording them separately makes it easier to choose the next exercise instead of repeating an entire alphabet lesson.

If an adult is learning alongside a child, both can keep an “ask later” list. A difficult item need not become an improvised rule. Bring it to a teacher or a reliable Nepali reference, particularly when spelling and pronunciation appear not to match. Scripts shared across languages do not make those languages interchangeable; a Hindi pronunciation explanation is not automatically a Nepali one.

For another low-pressure activity, compare this exercise with reading the numbers and small lettering on Nepali banknotes. The aim in both cases is to turn a familiar object into a specific reading task, rather than demand that every mark be understood at once.

Before finishing, return to the first combination: □ + □ + □ → □□□ . If the learner can now find the parts, the shape has stopped being an unexplained obstacle. The next conjunct may still be unfamiliar. There is now a method for approaching it.

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