

TRANSCRIPTION GUIDELINES

Transcription or transliteration is the practice of representing a written letter or a word from one script to another. It is also the system of rules for that practice. Simply put transcription and transliteration attempt to accurately capture the sound values across writing systems.

Transliteration attempts to be exact. With the help of transliteration, an informed reader should be able to recreate the original spelling of the transliterated words. Transliteration is commonly employed in situations where high precision is required. It is necessary when using words or concepts expressed in a language with a script other than one's own.

Transcription is slightly different in that it takes into account the sound values represented by the writing systems. Transcription assists in speech and pronunciation, rather than the exact written representation. For example:

- ਪਰਮਦਭੁਤੰ – paramadabhutaṅa (transliteration)
- ਪਰਮਦਭੁਤੰ – parmabhutaṅ (transcription)
- Psychology - ਪਸਯਕੋਲੋਜੀ (transliteration)
- Psychology - ਸਾਈਕੋਲੋਜੀ (transcription)

If relations between letters and sounds are similar in both languages, transliteration may be nearly identical to its transcription. Transcription has a superficial attraction in that it is generally more readable, primarily because it expresses sounds associated with one script using another script.

In regards to Gurmukhi, transcription proves utilitarian because the script is highly phonetic. Because this project concerns the spoken aspects of the script, transcription is utilized throughout this volume. When writing proper nouns outside of the context of line meanings and footnotes, common spellings will be used instead of transcription-accurate spellings.

Example: Duni Cand → Duni Chand
Shekh Ibrahim → Sheikh Ibrahim

Considering that the pronunciation of Guru Granth Sahib is closely related to its interpretation, an accurate and standardized transcription system assumes a very important role since meanings tend to change with even a slight variation in tone or nasalization. An accurate transcription would thus supplement the correct articulation of phones.

Developing a standardized transcription would aid both the Sikh Diaspora and the western scholars, who wish to better grasp the language of Guru Granth Sahib. A universally accepted system will go a long way in advancing the language and its understanding. Due to shortcomings in the English language in general, and the Roman script in particular, it has proved challenging to develop a technique for transcription with the capacity to consistently and accurately transfer text from Gurmukhi characters to Roman characters. Numerous attempts have been made in the past, and gratefully, modern linguistic standards and thorough research have finally made Gurmukhi-Roman transcription a reality.

A majority of the characters used to transcribe Gurmukhi into English have been derived from a universally recognized system of linguistics. For those Gurmukhi letters lacking an equivalent representation in the Roman alphabet, a symbol comparable to a character with an associable sound has been generated to represent those alphabets. As each Gurmukhi letter represents a unique audible sound, it has been assigned its own symbol for transcription into the Roman script.

TRANSCRIPTION GUIDELINES

Since speech precedes writing, identifying speech sounds is vital for establishing correct pronunciation of a word. The sound being produced while uttering a word is more important than the rules in establishing the correct transcription output. Hence the pronunciation precedes the transcription rules. Transcription rules only help in understanding and establishing commonly identifiable patterns.

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5
R1	Vowels			ਸ (s)	ਹ (h)
	ੳ (-)	ਅ (a)	ੲ (-)		
R2	ਕ (k)	ਖ (kh)	ਗ (g)	ਘ (gh)	ਙ (ṅ)
R3	ਚ (c)	ਛ (ch)	ਜ (j)	ਝ (jh)	ਞ (ñ)
R4	ਟ (t)	ਠ (th)	ਡ (ḍ)	ਢ (ḍh)	ਣ (ṇ)
R5	ਤ (t)	ਥ (th)	ਦ (d)	ਧ (dh)	ਨ (n)
R6	ਪ (p)	ਫ (ph)	ਬ (b)	ਭ (bh)	ਮ (m)
R7	ਯ (y)	ਰ (r)	ਲ (l)	ਵ (v)	ੜ (ṛ)

Gurmukhi Consonants

CONSONANTS

1. The consonants begin from s (ਸ), and continue through ṛ (ੜ).
2. In pronunciation, a consonant that stands independent of a vowel character will be followed by an implicit "a" (*muktā*).
 - a. The above statement is only true for consonants devoid of vowel characters. However, if the consonant is the final letter of the word, then the implicit "a" is omitted in transcription.
Example 1: ਨਦਰ (na + da + ra = nadar)
Example 2: ਸਤ (sa + ta = sat)
 - b. The implicit "a" is applicable at the end of a single character word.
Example 1: ਨ (na)
Example 2: ਤ (ta)
3. There are instances where the implicit "a" is overlooked. In these cases, the "a" can be omitted as it aids in pronunciation. The inclusion of the implicit "a" is not inaccurate, but more functional.
Example 1: ਦਰਸਨ (da + ra + sa + na = darsan)
Example 2: ਕਰਤਾ (ka + ra + tā = kartā)

4. When a consonant with a short “a” is followed by a vowel character supported by a vowel base (specifically ਊ and ਈ), then the vowel symbol will be indicated by a corresponding dieresis (i or ü) vowel.

Example 1: ਸਉ (sa + u = saü)

Example 2: ਗਇ (ga + i = gai)

Vowels	Transcription
ਅ	a
ਐ	ā
ਇ	i
ਈ	ī
ਉ	u
ਊ	ū
ਏ	e
ਐ	ai
ਓ	o
ਔ	au

Gurmukhi Vowels

VOWELS

1. There are three vowel bases (ਊ, ਅ, ਏ).
2. In addition to the implicit “a” that follows consonants independent of vowels, there are ten vowel characters (see vowel chart).
3. Of the three vowel bases, only ਅ can stand independent of another vowel character.

Example 1: ਅਗਨ (a + ga + na = agan)

Example 2: ਅਕਾਲ (a + kā + la = akāl)

4. If a vowel character is directly followed by another vowel base and character, then the implicit “a” will be omitted.

Example 1: ਜਾਇ (jā + i = jāi)

Example 2: ਕੀਓ (kī + o = kīo)

5. If a vowel character combines with a vowel base to produce the first letter in the word, there will be no “a” preceding the vowel.

Example 1: ਉਪਰਹੁ (ū + pa + ra + hu = ūparahu)

Example 2: ਆਸਣੁ (ā + sa + ṇu = āsaṇu)

5. If a vowel character is present with a consonant rather than a vowel base, then there will be no “a” between the consonant and the vowel.

Example 1: ਸੂਰਾ (sū + rā = sūrā)

Example 2: ਮੋਹਿ (mo + hi = mohi)

ṬIPPĪ (ṭ)

1. When a *ṭippī* is representing one of the five sounds (ṇ, ṅ, ñ, n, m), it will not be followed by an implicit “a.”

Example 1: ਖੰਡ (kha + ṇ + ḍa = khaṇḍ)

Example 2: ਚੰਗਾ (ca + ṅ + gā = caṅgā)

2. If a *ṭippī* is representing one of the five sounds (ṇ, ṅ, ñ, n, m), and the letter following the *ṭippī* falls within rows 2-6 (consonant chart), then the *ṭippī* will make the sound of the last letter in the corresponding row.

Example 1: ਅੰਤ (a + n + ta = ant)

Example 2: ਸੰਗਤਿ (sa + ṅ + ga + ti = saṅgati)

- a. If a letter following the *ṭippī* falls in row 1 or 7 (consonant chart), then the *ṭippī* predominantly makes a “n” sound (consonant nasalization) and occasionally a “ṁ” sound (vowel nasalization).

Example 1: ਸੰਸਾ (sa + n + sā = sansā)

Example 2: ਮੁੰਲਾ (mu + ṁ + lā = muṁlā)

- b. When a *ṭippī* represents one of the five sounds (ṇ, ṅ, ñ, n, m), and the letter emphasized by the *ṭippī* represents the same sound (ṇ, ṅ, ñ, n, m), then it will create a double sound (compound), and should be transcribed accordingly.

Example 1: ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ (a + mma + ri + ta = ammr̥it)

Example 2: ਮੰਨੀਐ (ma + nnī + ai = mannīai)

3. If a *ṭippī* is at the end of the word, and therefore unsupported by another consonant, then the default sound is “aṅ.”

Example 1: ਸੈਭੰ (sai + bhaṅ = saibhaṅ)

Example 2: ਕਰਮੰ (ka + ra + maṅ = karmaṅ)

- a. If a *ṭippī* concludes a term in a compound word, then the *ṭippī* will create the “ṅ” sound.

Example 1: ਅਹੰਕਾਰ (a + ha + ṅ + kā + ra = ahaṅkār)

Example 2: ਅਹੰਬੁਧਿ (a + ha + ṅ + bu + dhi = ahaṅbudhi)

4. All vowel nasalization are denoted by “ṁ.”

Example: ਤੂੰ (tū + ṁ = tūṁ)

5. The *ṭippī* has two possible connotations. It commonly symbolizes an additional sound incorporating one of five characters (ṇ, ṅ, ñ, n, m), and sometimes denotes a nasalization (ṁ). Identification of correct usage in various instances can only be determined with the knowledge of the language.

BINDĪ (ਲ਼)

1. The *bindī* can play two different roles. Predominantly, it calls for vowel nasalization (and in a few instances, consonant nasalization) that produces a “m̃” sound. It occasionally forms a “n” sound. One can know the role of *bindī* only with an understanding of the language.
2. When creating a “n” sound, there will be no implicit “a” sound following the “n” sound.
Example: ਸਾਂਤਿ (sā + m̃ + ti = sām̃ti)
3. All vowel nasalizations are denoted by “m̃.”
Example 1: ਤੂਹੈ (tū + ha + aim̃ = tūhaim̃)
Example 2: ਹਾਂ (ha + ām̃ = hām̃)

VISARG (ਃ)

1. The Visarg is represented by a “ḥ.” It is pronounced as a softer “h,” and an implicit “a” precedes the “ḥ.”
Example 1: ਦ੍ਰਿੜੰਤਣਃ (dri + ṛa + n + ta + ṇa + ḥa = driṛantaṇḥ)
Example 2: ਲਿਖਣਃ (li + kha + ya + ṇa + ḥa = likhyaṇḥ)

SUBSCRIPTS

1. There are eight subscripts used within Guru Granth Sahib.
2. The subscript appears below the consonant.
3. The subscript is pronounced directly after the consonant above it; there is no implicit “a” between the two.
Example 1: ਅਸੁਰਜ (ascaraj)
Example 2: ਦਸੁਗੀਰੀ (dastagīrī)
4. If a vowel supports a consonant and the subscript, then the subscript will follow the consonant but precede the vowel in pronunciation.
Example 1: ਬਿਸੁ (bisṭā)
Example 2: ਸੁਹੈ (snehaṅ)

Subscript	Origin	Example	Transcription
ੳ	ਹ	ਵਰਿਹਾ *	varhiā
ੲ	ਚ	ਅਸੁਰਜ	ascaraj
ੳ	ਟ	ਬਿਸੁ	bisṭā
ੲ	ਤ	ਅਸੁ	ast
ੳ	ਨ	ਕ੍ਰਿਸੁ	krisn
ੲ	ਯ	ਦੁਖੰ	dukhyaṅ
ੲ	ਰ	ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ	prāṇī
ੲ	ਵ	ਜਗਦੀਸੁਰਹ	jagdīsvarah

Subscripts

* Due to technological limitations in the Gurmukhi Unicode font, certain letters cannot be placed under other letters as subscripts where they actually belong. As a temporary measure, images of the words have been used as placeholders for representational purposes.

HALANT-LIKE SYMBOL (ੴ)

1. Appearance of this symbol in Guru Granth Sahib is represented through the same in the roman script as well.

Example 1: ਜਿਨੀ (ji + ਨੀ = jinī)

Example 2: ਧਿਆਵਨਿ (dhi + ਆ + ਵਾ + ਨਿ = dhiāvāṇi)

PROLONGATION (ਅ)

1. When appearing at the end of a word and directly following a vowel character, the A represents a prolongation of the sound preceding it.

Example 1: ਜੀਅ (jī + a = jīa)

Example 2: ਲੋਅ (lo + a = loa)

Cardinal Numbers

Roman	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Gurmukhi	੦	੧	੨	੩	੪	੫	੬	੭	੮	੯

NUMERALS

1. Gurmukhi numerals are transcribed through the respective Roman digits as per the table above. However, a number may be properly spelt in the transcription if the original in the Gurmukhi script indicates so.

Example 1: ੧ (1)

Example 2: ਇਕੁ (i + ku = iku)

ADOPTIONS

1. Farsi

a. If an equivalent sound for a Farsi inspired letter exists in the Roman script, then that Roman letter is used in the transcription.

Example 1: ਫ਼ (f)

Example 2: ਜ਼ (z)

b. If there is no corresponding sound already inscribed in the Roman alphabet, then the sound will be indicated with a line underneath the corresponding Roman letters.

Example 1: ਗ਼ (gh)

Example 2: ਖ਼ (kh)

c. The contemporary version of the Gurmukhi script has adopted five new sounds that are indicated with a dot under the corresponding Gurmukhi letter: ਗ਼ (gh), ਜ਼ (z), ਫ਼ (f), ਖ਼ (kh), ਸ਼ (sh).

- d. Beside these five, the Gurmukhi script has later adopted another sound represented by ਲ਼ (!).

2. **Adhak (ੲ)**

- a. The *adhak* conveys which syllable should be stressed. Though used within secondary writings of the Sikhs, the *adhak* came into use after the Guru Granth Sahib was compiled. Therefore, it does not appear within the text of the Guru Granth Sahib.
- b. Gurmukhi characters emphasized by the *adhak* will be written twice in the Roman script.

Example: ਵਡਮੁੱਲਾ (va + ḍa + mu + llā = vaḍmullā)

- c. If more than one Roman alphabet is utilized to represent a Gurmukhi letter that is emphasized by the *adhak*, then only the first letter will be doubled.

Example: ਭੱਠੀ (bha + ṭṭhī = bhattṭhī)