

Basic Primer

1. Words for Love/Heart

Heart: dil

Love: pyaar, ishk, mohabat,

2. Greetings

Muslim: khudaafiz/allahafiz, adab

Hindu: touching feet to show respect, "Namaskar/Namaste" plus folding hands together

Religion

Muslim God: Allah

Generic god: Khuda

Holy Man of the Singhs: Guru Nanak

3. One can generally tell the caste/tribe/religion just by the last name. Examples:

Butt/Bhatt: Kashmiri,

Khan: Pathan (Afghani)

Bottlewala: Parsi

Singh: Sikh

Chatterjee: Bengali

4. Basic Sentence Structure

Basic sentence structure is SOV. There is fairly free word order (more than in German).

(1) mai=ne tume dekHaa

I saw you

The differences in word order express differences in topic/focus.

(2) tume dekHaa mai=ne

you saw I

'I saw you' Here "you" is in focus, i.e. is the most important part of the sentence. 'I' is after the verb and is almost like an afterthought. The focus is intonationally prominent.

Also, one can drop all NPs.

(3) dekHaa = 'saw' ('I' and 'you' have to be reconstructed from context.)

5. Pronouns

I: maiN,
you: tu (rude/familiar), tum (normal/familiar), aap (polite, used
for elders, parents, elder siblings, persons of respect)
he/she/it: vo
we: hum
you (pl.): aap
they:vo

6. Politeness

It is very important to be polite and there are many forms/layers of politeness. Choice of pronouns is important. But also, one doesn't simply say `yes' (haaN) to persons of respect, but "haaN jii", or just "jii", whereby "jii" is a marker of respect.

7. Case

Hindi case: ne, ko, se
Punjabi, other dialects: vich, koloN

8. Verbs

There are not more than 500 simple verbs, so complex verbs are made up of simple ones.

go: jaanaa (to go), jao (imperative), gayaa/gayii (=went)
come: aanaa, ao (imperative), ayaa/ayii (=came)
aatii huN (= 'just coming'), Punjabi version "aaNdiaaN"
arrive/come over: come+go
aa jaanaa, aa jao (imperative)
give: denaa (to give), do (imperative), diyaa (=gave)
take: lenaa (to take), lo (imperative), liyaa (=took)
take away: take+go
le jaanaa (to take away), le jao (imperative),
le jaenge (will take away)

Hindi makes no differences with respect to gender in pronouns, but there are some gender based differences in the language. Verbs and adjectives inflect according to gender.

Gender is either masculine or feminine.

Verbs inflect according to the gender of the things/people being referred to.

I (Fem.) went = maiN gayii

I (Masc.) went = maiN gayaa

chair is F., computer is M., so:

kursii gir-ii
chair.F. fell-F.Sg
'The chair fell.'

kamputar gir-aa
computer.M. fell-M.Sg.
'The computer fell.'

Adjectives inflect to show agreement with the head noun.

baR-ii kursii gir-ii
big-F.Sg. chair.F. fell-F.Sg
'The big chair fell.'

baR-aa kamputar gir-aa
big-M.Sg. computer.M. fell-M.Sg.
'The big computer fell.'

If I (F.) am talking about my brother or sister, it would look like this:

mer-aa bHai gir-aa
my-M.Sg brother.M fell-M.Sg
'My brother fell.'

mer-ii bahan gir-ii
my-F.Sg brother.M fell-F.Sg
'My sister fell.'

9. Some Basic Vocabulary

zindagii 'life'
duniya 'world'
kurbaanii 'sacrifice'
chup, chup karo 'shut up'
dekHo 'see'
samjHo 'understand'
nahiiN, na, mat 'no'
maaro 'hit/kill'
pagal, diivaanaa 'crazy'

Question words: koN `who', kyaa 'what', kahaan/kidar 'where', kyuN 'why'
kis=ko 'to whom'

10. Reduplication

this is used a lot in Hindi, even with English words

Examples: shop-top (=some kind of shop), crazy-wazy (=some
sort of craziness),