

TEACHER'S GUIDE

FOUNDATION PROGRAMME FOR LITERACY
NUMERACY AND SKILLS

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

GRADE 7

TITLE : INTRODUCTION TO MUSICAL NOTES

**MOE
MAHATMA GANDHI INSTITUTE
2025**

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GRADE 7

GUIDE TO EDUCATORS

**TITLE :
MEET THE SWARAS: YOUR FIRST
MUSICAL TOOLKIT**



Competency

C6 - : Understanding and
Application

Element

Demonstrate understanding
of fundamental music theory
concepts.

Performance Criteria

Level 2: Definition and explanation of basic technical terms related to music and their application.

Purpose of Activity

This lesson introduces students to the **seven basic musical notes (swaras)** used in Indian classical music. Students learn their names, sequence, and sound through guided listening, singing, and simple notation tasks. The activity builds the foundation needed for future lessons on alankaars, melodies, and instrumental work. Students begin to recognise pitch movement, develop aural sensitivity, and become familiar with the concept of ascending (Aroha) and descending (Avaroha) patterns.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify and reproduce simple melodic or rhythmic patterns demonstrated by the teacher.
- Perform short musical phrases on sitar or tabla using correct hand technique.
- Maintain a steady pulse and consistent tempo during practice and performance.
- Listen attentively and respond to musical cues in call-and-response activities.
- Demonstrate good posture, instrument handling, and develop regular practice habits.

Resources & Materials

- Whiteboard and marker
- Student workbook
- Keyboard or Tanpura app for reference pitch (Optional)

Introduction

This lesson introduces students to **swaras**, the basic musical tones that form the foundation of Indian classical music. Students learn that each swara has a distinct pitch and follows a logical sequence, helping them build early skills in pitch recognition, melodic movement, and musical vocabulary. Understanding swaras is essential because it supports accurate singing, strengthens appreciation of Indian classical music, and prepares learners for more advanced concepts such as alankaars, ragas, and instrumental work.

TEACHING TRAJECTORIES/ IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

Part 1

What is a Swara? (Introduction)








- Explain the meaning of Swara in Indian Classical Music

Swara is the hindi word for a musical note. Swara consists of two syllables; swa and ra. 'Swa' means self and 'ra' is derived from the word ranjayati which means pleasing. Therefore, a swara is a musical note which can generate a pleasing expression by itself.

Swa	+	Ra	=	Swara
<i>Swayam</i>		<i>Ranjayati</i>		
(self)		(pleasing)		

A swara is defined as the tone of a definite pitch which conveys an expression. It needs to be pleasant and soothing to the listener. The following is the **seven shuddha swara-s** of Indian Classical Music.

The swara-s and their full form names:

						
Shadja (Sa)	Rishabh (Re)	Gandhara (Ga)	Madhyama (Ma)	Panchama (Pa)	Dhaivata (Dha)	Nishada (Ni)

Part 2

Connecting Indian and Western Notes

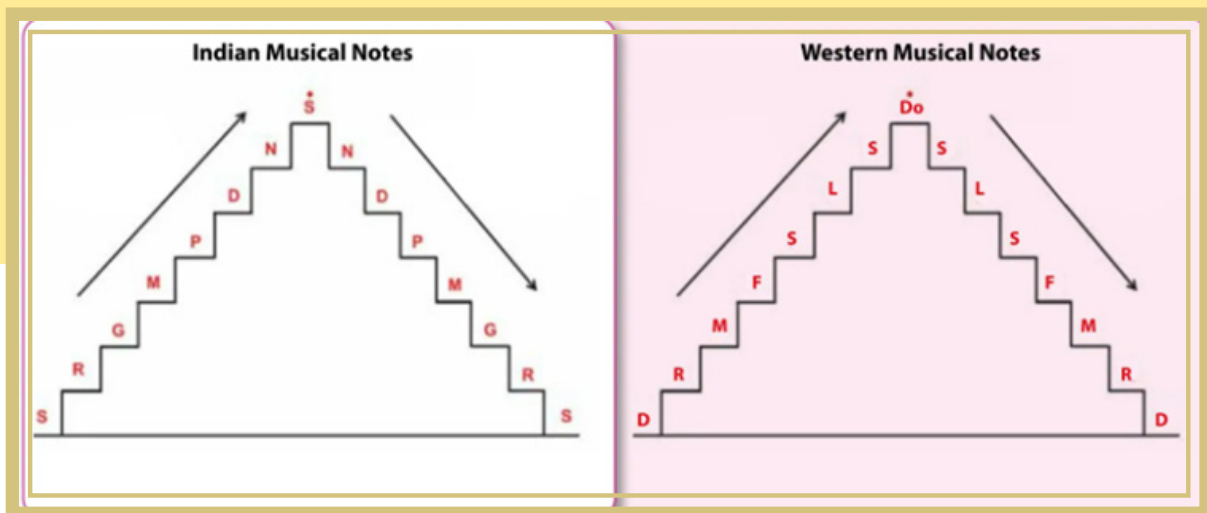
- Compare the Swaras and Western Solfege and explain how the Indian and Western Musical notes match.

Did you know?

MUSICAL NOTES		
Indian Notation	Western Notation	
S(Sa)	Do	C
R(Re)	Re	D
G(Ga)	Mi	E
M(Ma)	Fa	F
P(Pa)	Sol	G
D(Dha)	La	A
N(Ni)	Si	B

In Indian classical music, we use the swaras **Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni**, and in Western music, the notes are **Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Si**. Even though the words are different, both systems work in the same way. They help

us name the steps of a scale and show how the notes move from low to high. For example, **Sa Re Ga Ma Pa** rises in the same pattern as **Do Re Mi Fa Sol**. Both are just two ways of naming the same idea: a musical staircase where each step has a specific pitch. When you understand this connection, it becomes easier to sing correctly, recognise patterns, and learn music from different traditions.






Part 3
Saptak

Saptak is a scale of seven *shuddha swara-s* / natural notes in succession. Each one of the notes is higher in pitch than the preceding one.

Saptak: S R G M P D N



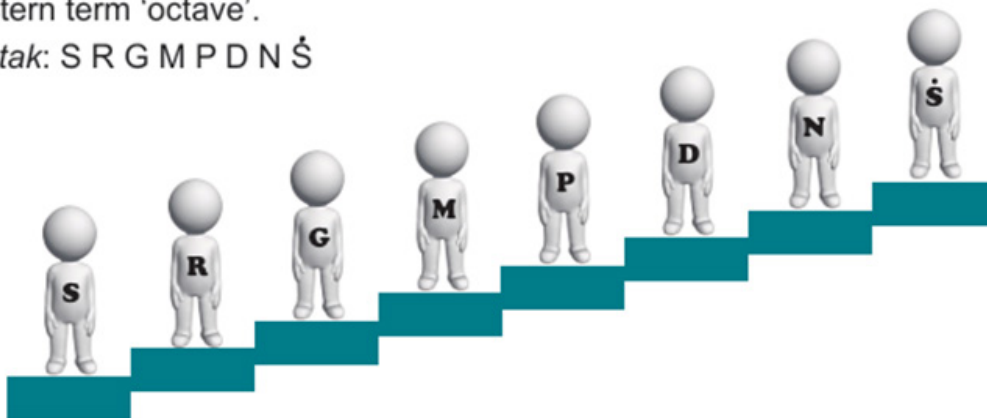
The three main *saptak*-s in Indian music are:

<i>Saptak</i>	Description	
Mandra	The <i>swara</i> -s which are sung or played in the lower pitch are grouped under the <i>mandra saptak</i> . They are notated with a dot below. For example: ङ, ञ, ...	
Madhya	The <i>swara</i> -s which are sung or played in the normal pitch are grouped under the <i>madhya saptak</i> . They are notated without any dot, that is, neither above nor below. For example: S, R, ...	
Taar	The <i>swara</i> -s which are sung or played in the higher pitch are grouped under the <i>taar saptak</i> . They are notated with a dot above. For example: ठ, ड, ...	

Part 4 Ashtak

An *ashtak* is an extension of the *saptak* by adding the higher scale note *Sa* to it. It is a scale of eight notes in succession which may be compared to the western term 'octave'.

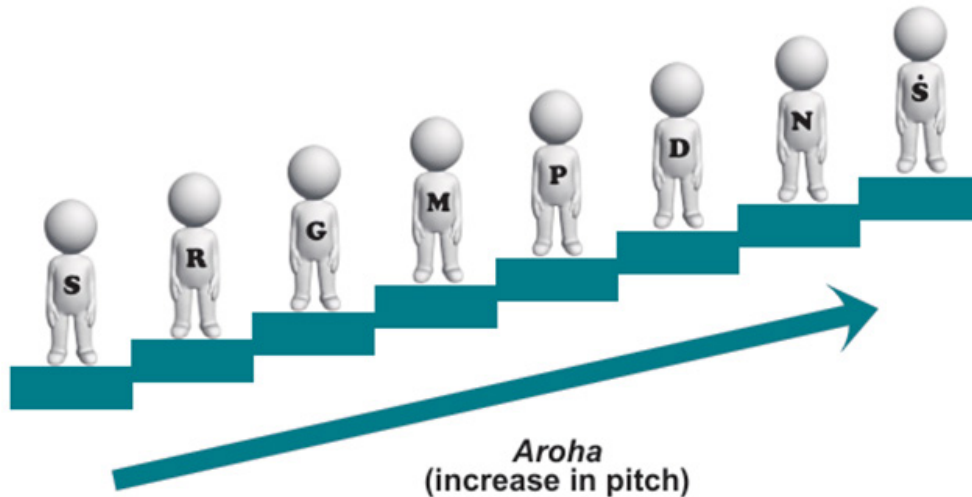
Ashtak: S R G M P D N ठ



Aroha & Avaroha

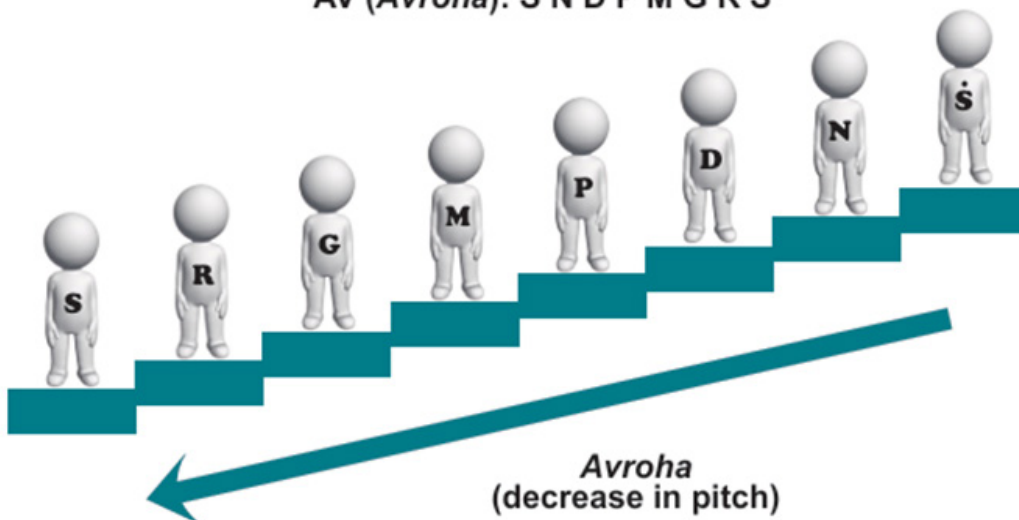
Aroha is the sequence of *swara*-s in which they are sung or played in an ascending order of their pitch, that is, starting from a low pitch and ending to a higher one.

AR (*Aroha*): S R G M P D N Ś



Avroha is the sequence of *swara*-s in which they are sung or played in a descending order of their pitch, that is, starting from a high pitch and ending to a lower one.

AV (*Avroha*): Ś N D P M G R S



Exercise 1

Rearrange the following musical dices in the appropriate order:



Hint: Observe the dots of the musical dices with that given below:



Exercise 2

Match the following swara-s to their corresponding full-form names.

S

Panchama

R

Gandhara

G

Dhaivata

M

Rishabh

P

Shadja

D

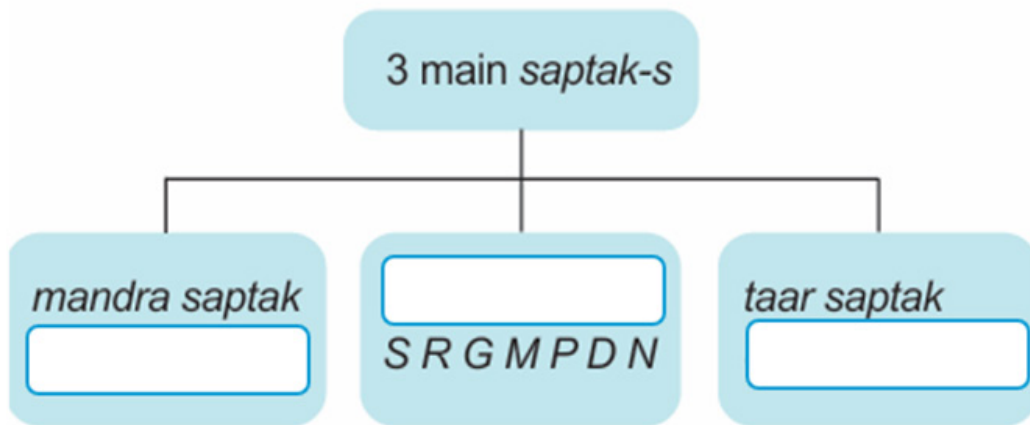
Nishada

N

Madhyama

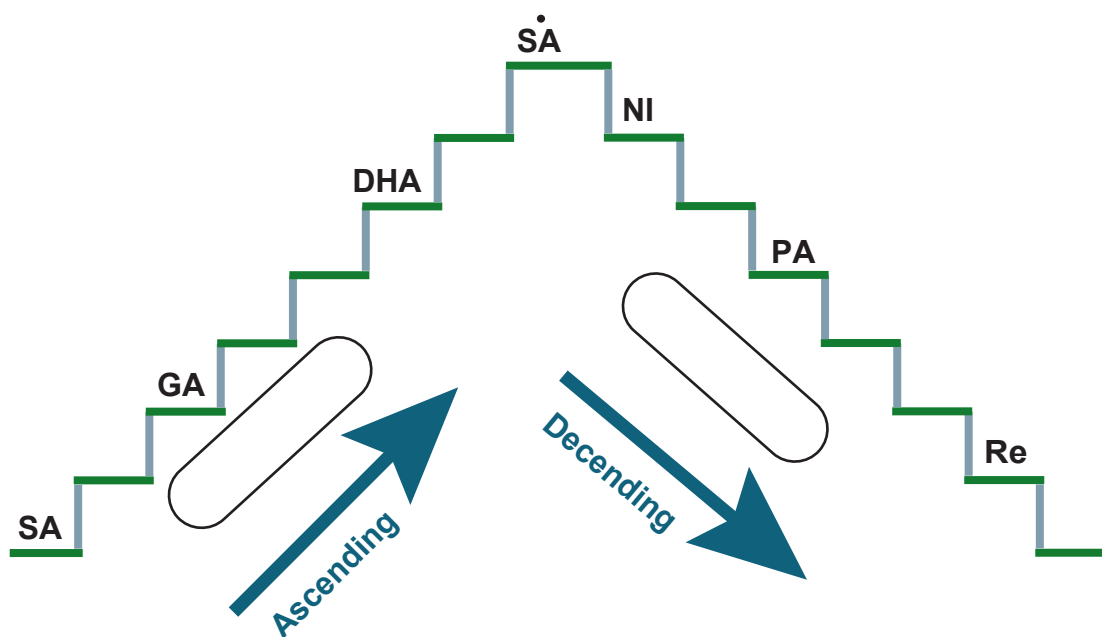
Exercise 3

Fill in the missing details about the 3 Main Saptaks.



Exercise 4

Complete the Aroha and Avaroha by inserting the correct Swara on the empty steps. Fill in the blank boxes to indicate the Aroha and Avaroha.



Assessment Criteria

Through oral questions and exercises in student workbook, learners will be assessed on their ability to:

1. Understanding of Concepts

- Define *swara*, *saptak*, and *ashtak* accurately.
- Explain the connection between Indian (Sa Re Ga Ma...) and Western (Do Re Mi Fa...) musical note systems.

2. Identification & Notation Skills

- Correctly identify and write the seven swaras in sequence.
- Complete swara sequences and patterns with correct notation.
- Identify the 3 main saptaks (Mandra, Madhya, Taar).

3. Aroha-Avaroha Recognition

- Recognise whether a musical pattern is ascending or descending.
- Insert the correct notes into incomplete aroha/avarohas.

Assessment Rubric

Criterion	Basic	Intermediate	Proficient
Definition of Swara / Saptak / Ashtak	Gives unclear or incomplete definitions.	Defines terms with partial accuracy.	Gives clear, accurate definitions with confident understanding.
Relate Indian Musical notes with Western Musical Notes	Struggles to relate the two systems.	Explains with minor gaps.	Clearly explains how Sa-Re-Ga matches Do-Re-Mi with pitch understanding.
Writing the Seven Swaras	Incorrect order; several errors.	Mostly correct with few mistakes.	Writes all seven swaras correctly and neatly.
Completing Swara Sequences	Needs support; many errors.	Completes sequences with minor mistakes.	Completes all sequences accurately and confidently.
Listing the Three Saptaks	Incorrect or incomplete.	Identifies all 3 with minor gaps.	Correctly lists and describes Mandra, Madhya, Taar.
Recognising Aroha/ Avaroha	Frequently confuses ascending/ descending.	Identifies most patterns correctly	Consistently identifies Aroha and Avaroha accurately.
Completing Aroha/ Avaroha	Needs support; several incorrect notes.	Completes with minor errors.	Accurately completes full Aroha/Avaroha patterns.



Extension Activity

- **“Swara Hopscotch” – Movement-Based Game**

Create a hopscotch grid on the floor with each box labelled:

Sa – Re – Ga – Ma – Pa – Dha – Ni – Sȧ

The teacher sings or plays a sequence, and students must **hop through the boxes** in the correct order. For Aroha–Avaroha patterns, they hop forward then back. It is a fun task especially for kinesthetic learners.



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