

TEACHER'S GUIDE

FOUNDATION PROGRAMME FOR LITERACY
NUMERACY AND SKILLS

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

GRADE 7

TITLE : INTRODUCTION TO MUSICAL NOTES

**MOE
MAHATMA GANDHI INSTITUTE
2026**

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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 concepts music theory .

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 (swara-s)** used in Indian Classical Music. Students learn their names, sequence, and sound through guided listening, singing, and simple notation tasks. This activity builds the foundation needed for future lessons on **alankaar-s**, melodies, and instrumental work. Students begin to recognise pitch movement, develop aural sensitivity, and become familiar with the concept of melodic patterns in both **Aroha** (ascending order) and **Avroha** (descending order).

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 the sitar or tabla using the 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 pitch reference (Optional).

Introduction

This lesson introduces the students to **swara-s**, 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 *swara-s* is essential because it supports accurate singing, strengthens appreciation of Indian Classical Music, and prepares learners for more advanced concepts such as *alankaar-s*, *raga-s*, and instrumental work.

Teaching Trajectories/ Implementation Guideline

Part 1

What is a *Swara*? (Introduction)








- Explain the meaning of *Swara* in Indian Classical Music

Swara can be defined as a 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

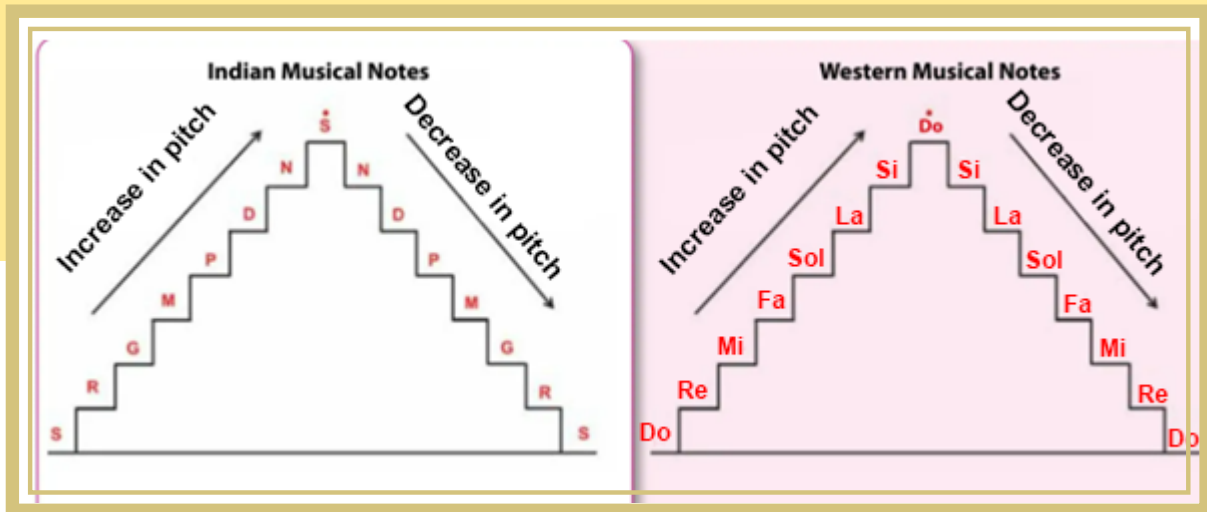
- Compare the *Swara-s* and Western solfege. Explain how the Indian and Western Musical notes match.

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 pitch. 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



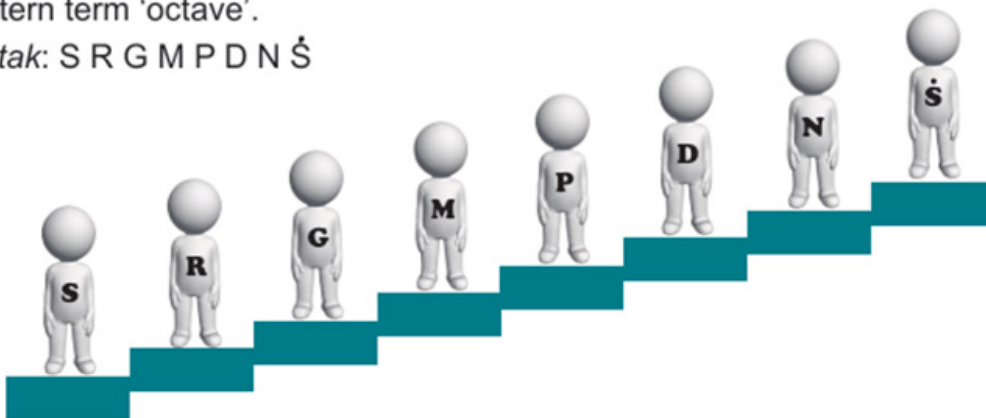
The three main *saptak*-s in Indian music are:

| <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: ऌ, ऍ, ... |  |
| 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: ऎ, ए, ... |  |

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'.

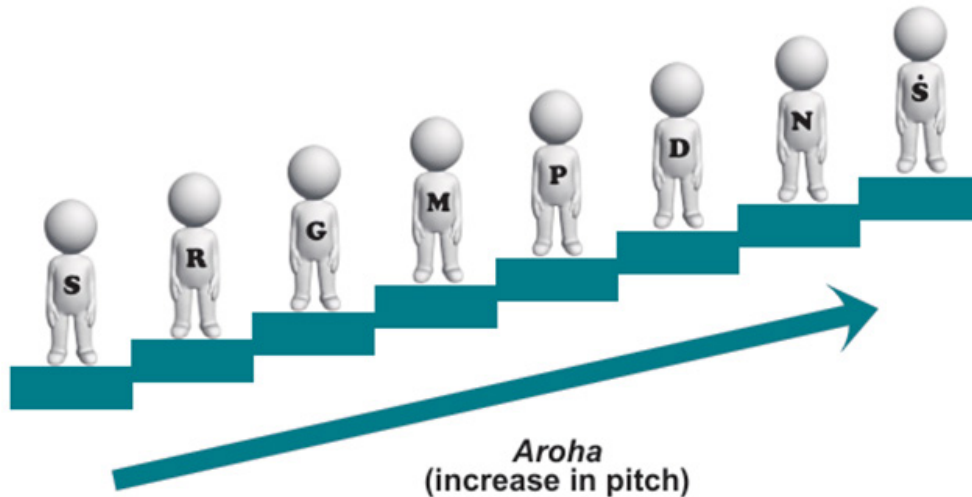
Ashtak: S R G M P D N ऌ



Aroha & Avroha

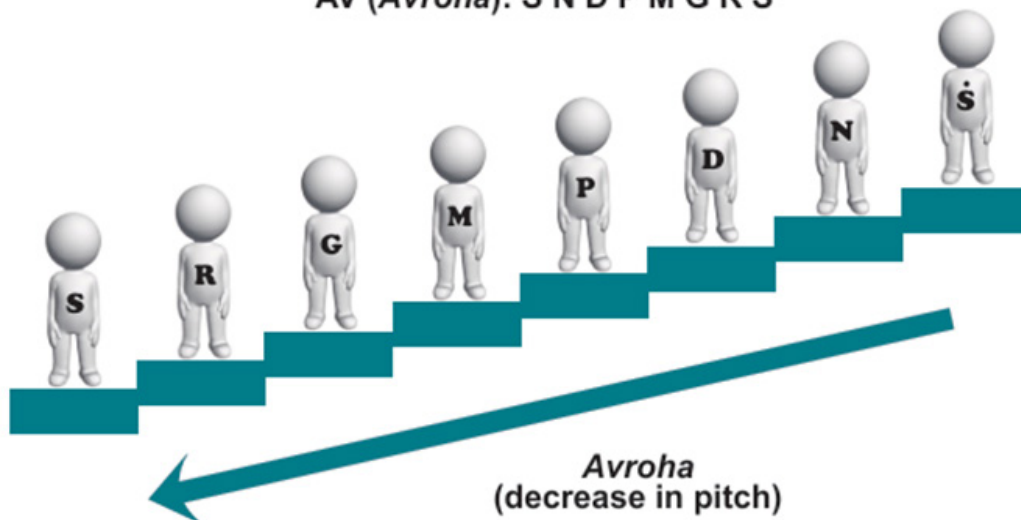
Aroha is the sequence of *swara*-s in which they are sung or played in an ascending order of their pitch, that is, starting from a low pitch and ending to a higher one.

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

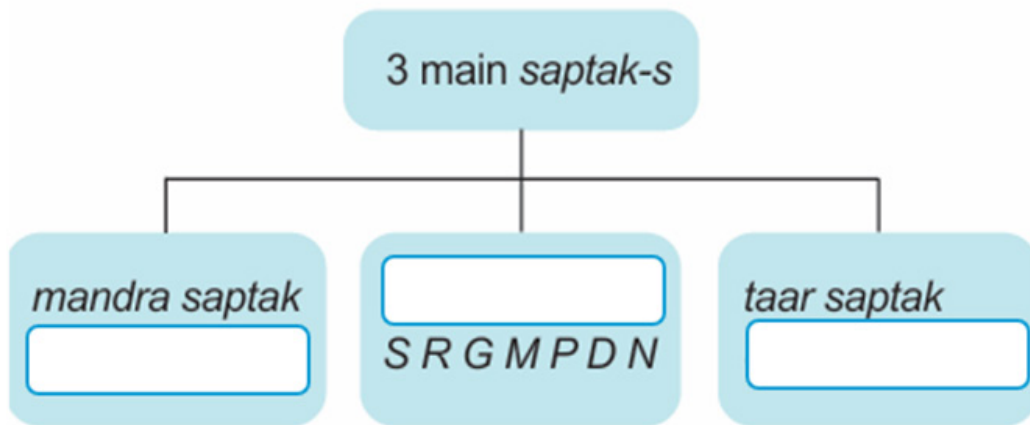
Nishada

N

Madhyama

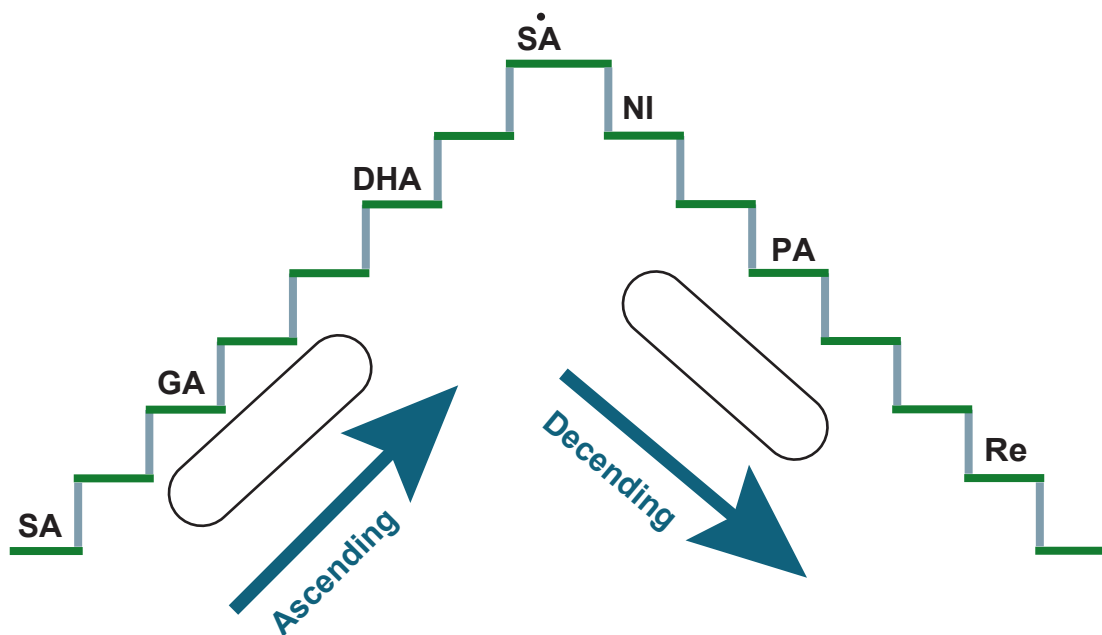
Exercise 3

Fill in the blank in the diagram given below:



Exercise 4

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



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 *swara*-s in sequence.
- Complete *swara* sequences and patterns with correct notation.
- Identify the 3 main *saptak*-s (*Mandra*, *Madhya*, *Taar*).

3. Aroha-Avroha Recognition

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

Assessment Rubric

| Criteria | Basic | Intermediate | Proficient |
|--|--|--|---|
| Definition of <i>Swara</i> / <i>Saptak</i> / <i>Ashtak</i> | 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 <i>Swara-s</i> | Incorrect order; several errors. | Mostly correct with few mistakes. | Writes all seven <i>swara-s</i> correctly and neatly. |
| Completing <i>Swara</i> Sequences | Needs support; many errors. | Completes sequences with minor mistakes. | Completes all sequences accurately and confidently. |
| Listing the Three <i>Saptak-s</i> | Incorrect or incomplete. | Identifies all 3 with minor gaps. | Correctly lists and describes <i>Mandra</i> , <i>Madhya</i> , <i>Taar</i> . |
| Recognising <i>Aroha/Avroha</i> | Frequently confuses ascending/ descending. | Identifies most patterns correctly | Consistently identifies <i>Aroha</i> and <i>Avroha</i> accurately. |
| Completing <i>Aroha/Avroha</i> | Needs support; several incorrect notes. | Completes with minor errors. | Accurately completes full <i>Aroha/Avroha</i> 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 – Śa

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



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