

Rag or Raga	Melodic 'scale', sometimes different ascending and descending, associated with a particular mood or time of day. Presented during alap and provides basis for improvisation
Rasa	Moods of a raga
Rag Desh	(translated as country) Late evening raga associated with monsoon season. Principle moods devotion, romance, longing.
Thumri	Courtly love song
Tal or Tala	Cycles of beats or rhythm
Tintal	Common tala of 16 beats 4+4+4+4
Jhaptal	Tala of 10 beats 2+3+2+3
Kehewatal	Tala of 8 beats 2+2+2+2
Rupaktal	Tala of 7 beats 3+2+2
Ektal	Tala of 12 beats 2+2+2+2+2+2
Sam	First beat of cycle or tala
Bols	Rhythm parts which play over tala for added interest
Matras	Separate beats of a tala
vibhagas	Group of beats within tala
khali	Silent beat (wave) just before sam
theka	Syllables to express beats and timbre caused by playing techniques on tabla
Chand	Triplet rhythms
Drone	Accompanying notes a fifth apart (often tonic, dominant, upper tonic, dominant etc) on tambura or drone strings of sitar
Alap	Introduction section: slow, improvisation introducing notes and mood of raga. No regular pulse - unmetred. Often decorated
Jhor	Second section of performance – metrical but still quite slow. More embellished. Still often melody and drone with no tabla
Jhala	The main rhythmic section of a raga performance which speeds up as tabla are added. Virtuoso with exciting rhythms.
Gat	Main fixed part of performance where regular pulse is established
Bandish	Equivalent of Gat in a vocal composition
Bhajan	Hindu devotional song from Rajasthan
Sargam	System for naming notes eg sa re ma pa ni
Sa	Tonic note
Tihai	Short melodic and rhythmic phrase played three times at end of each improvisation, often across the beat, and ending on sam (first beat of cycle or tala)

Chakkradar Tihai	Three times three repetitions of phrase (towards end) Like a cadenza in western music – chance to show off virtuosity
drut	Fast (usually later part of gat)
madhyalaya	Medium tempo
tabla	Pair of hand drums dayan (right) tuned to sa, bayan (left) deeper. Drumskins made of skin with central black paste of iron filings and flour
Tanpura or tampura	Drone instrument. Like sitar without frets and only 4-6 strings
sitar	Long necked plucked string instrument with moveable frets, hollow body, gourd resonator. Usually 6 or 7 plucked strings and 12 or more sympathetic strings. Notes can be ‘bent’ by pulling to the side. It can also have two drone strings. Main strings plucked with wire plectrum
Sympathetic strings	Strings which are not plucked but vibrate ‘in sympathy’ with the plucked strings to give resonant buzz
frets	Cross pieces under strings of plucked instrument like guitar
Chikari	The drone strings of the sitar
Meend or mind	Melodic decorations – microtonal sliding between notes
melisma	Vocal spreading of syllable over several notes
Tan	Fast improvised scale passages
sarod	Smaller plucked instrument with main and sympathetic strings. Has metal fingerboard to allow player to slide more easily
sarangi	Fretless bowed instrument held in lap, with 3 thick strings and as many as 36 sympathetic strings. Pitch changed by pressing base of left hand fingernails against string and sliding up and down! Sounds like small violin
pakhawaj	Large double-headed drum played with both hands
bansuri	Bamboo flute with simple holes – no keys. Notes bent by gradually covering holes
shehnai	Oboe with holes only
esraj	Bowed string instrument with frets and sympathetic and drone strings
Swarmandel	Strummed string instrument like zither on a flat board
Shruti box	Originally mechanical box with reeds like accordion and bellows to play long drones – now electrical
gharana	North Indian school of players run by a master, with its own traditions and style of playing
Aural tradition	Traditional music passed on through generations by listening and imitating the masters