

Writing Hiragana

Be sure to use *e-Book Hiragana* on CD-ROM first, so that you can learn the following syllables with sound and animation. Then, trace over the characters printed in light gray before you write each in the blank square.

A. Basic 46 Syllables

a	ー	十	あ		あ	あ	あ	あ	あ
i	し	い			い	い	い	い	い
u	う	う			う	う	う	う	う
e	え	え			え	え	え	え	え
o	ー	あ	お		お	お	お	お	お

D. Writing Words Horizontally, from Left to Right.

thank you

あ	り	が	と	う

student

が	く	せ	い

lunch

ひ	る	ご	は	ん

school

が	っ	こ	う

tea

お	ち	ゃ

baseball

や	き	ゅ	う

second day of the month

ふ	つ	か

stroll; walking

さ	ん	ぽ

friend

と	も	だ	ち

teacher

せ	ん	せ	い

sky

そ	ら

Japanese language

に	ほ	ん	ご

postage stamp

き	っ	て

classroom

き	ょ	う	し	つ

this morning

け	さ

name

な	ま	え

hello

こ	ん	に	ち	は

I; myself

わ	た	し

glove

て	ぶ	く	ろ

store

み	せ

refrigerator

れ	い	ぞ	う	こ

E. Writing Words Vertically, from Top to Bottom and from Right to Left.

	れ
	い
	ぞ
	う
	こ

	こ
	ん
	に
	ち
	は

	き
	っ
	て

	と
	も
	だ
	ち

	お
	ち
	や

	あ
	り
	が
	と
	う

	わ
	た
	し

	き
	よ
	う
	し
	つ

	せ
	ん
	せ
	い

	や
	き
	ゆ
	う

	が
	く
	せ
	い

	て
	ぶ
	く
	ろ

	け
	さ

	そ
	ら

	ふ
	つ
	か

	ひ
	る
	ご
	は
	ん

	み
	せ

	な
	ま
	え

	に
	ほ
	ん
	ご

	さ
	ん
	ぽ

	が
	っ
	こ
	う

Notes on reading words written in hiragana

Long Vowels:

- 1 A long (or double) vowel is pronounced as a prolonged vowel.

[aa] おかあさん o-kaa-sa-N (mother)

[ii] すずしい su-zu-shii(nice and cool)

[uu] じゅう juu (ten)

[ee] せんせい se-N-see (teacher)

ええ ee (yes)

[oo] きのう ki-noo (yesterday)

とおい too-i (distant)

- 2 The “ee” sound is usually transcribed by adding い to an “e”-vowel character like せ (se), as in せんせい (se-N-see). ええ is an exception.
- 3 The “oo” sound is usually transcribed by adding う to an “o”-vowel character like の (no), as in きのう (ki-noo). とおい is an exception.

Devoiced Vowels:

- 1 The vowels “i” and “u” often become voiceless or sound whispered when they fall between any two of the voiceless consonants of [k], [h], [p], [s] or [t].

くつ k(u)-tsu

けしき ke-sh(i)-ki

- 2 The devoicing of “i” or “u” also occurs when it follows a voiceless consonant and comes at the end of a word. In standard Japanese, this devoicing is more likely to take place when a word is spoken at a normal or fast speed than otherwise.

くつ k(u)-ts(u)

けしき ke-sh(i)-k(i)

- 3 The vowel “u” in です (de-su) and ます (ma-su) is usually voiceless in standard Japanese.

Double Consonants:

When pronouncing a word containing the small つ, hold your breath for the つ for the length of a full syllable. In romaji, double consonants such as [kk], [pp], [ss] and [tt] are used when transcribing a word that includes the small つ.

きって ki-T-te (KITTE) (postage stamp)
 がっこう ga-K-koo (GAKKOU) (school)

Syllabic Consonant ん:

- 1 ん should be pronounced with the length of a full syllable.
- 2 When following [d], [j], [n], [s], [r], [t], or [z], ん is pronounced like English “n” as in “name.”

おんな	o-N-na (woman)
れんしゅう	re-N-shuu (n. practice)
- 3 When following [g] or [k], ん is pronounced “n[g]” as in “sing.”

まんが	ma-N-ga (manga)
べんきょう	be-N-kyoo (studying)
- 4 When following [b], [m], or [p], ん is pronounced “m” as in “moon.”

えんぴつ	e-M-pi-tsu (pencil)
さんぽ	sa-M-po (n. stroll)
- 5 When following a vowel or coming at the end of a word, ん is pronounced as a nasal sound by keeping the tongue from touching the palate.

にほん	ni-ho-N (Japan)
てんいん	te-N-i-N (clerk)

ぢ [ji] and づ [zu]:

ぢ or づ tends to be used in a word when the following rare occasions occur:

- (1) Two “chi” sounds occur in a row, and the second “chi” becomes the voiced sound “ji.” The same transformation applies to づ.

chi- chi -mu	→	ちぢむ	chi- ji -mu (to shrink)
tsu- tsu -ku	→	つづく	tsu- zu -ku (to continue)
- (2) “Chi” becomes the voiced sound “ji” in a word that is originally made up of two words. The same transformation applies to づ.

はな (nose)	+	ち (blood)	→	はなぢ (nosebleed)
ha-na		chi		ha-na- ji
かん (can)	+	つめ (packing)	→	かんづめ (canned food)
ka-N		tsu-me		ka-N- zu-me