

LESSON NOTES

How to Write in Japanese: Hiragana and Katakana #9 The Hiragana Y Column and Digraphs

CONTENTS

- 2 Vocabulary
- 2 Sample Sentences
- 2 Grammar

9

VOCABULARY

Kanji	Kana	Romaji	English	Class
お湯	おゆ	o-yu	hot water	
夜	よる	yoru	night	noun
屋根	やね	yane	roof	
予約	よやく	yoyaku	reservation, booking	
龍	りゅう	ryū	dragon	
理由	りゆう	riyū	reason	

SAMPLE SENTENCES

お湯が出ません <i>O-yu ga demasen.</i> I can't get the hot water to come out.	今週の金曜日の予定は何ですか。 <i>Konshū no kin-yōbi no yotei wa nan desu ka.</i> What's your plan for this Friday night?
平日の夜、私はジムに行きます。 <i>Heijitsu no yoru, watashi wa jimu ni ikimasu.</i> I go to the gym on weeknights.	弘之は三歳のとき屋根から落ちた。 <i>Hiroyuki wa 3-sai no toki yane kara ochita.</i> Hiroyuki fell off the roof when he was three years old.
昨日、予約をしました。 <i>Kinō, yoyaku o shimashita.</i> I made a reservation yesterday.	理由を教えてください。 <i>Riyū o oshiete kudasai.</i> Tell me the reason why.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Mastering the Hiragana Y Column and Digraphs

In this lesson, you'll learn three new characters,

1. や (ya)
2. ゆ (yu)
3. よ (yo)

...and 33 new syllable sounds!

や (ya)

Hiragana や is written in 3 strokes.

The first stroke is a long diagonal line going up which ends with a curve. It looks like a small and slim ㄣ. The second stroke is a short slanted stroke at the top center. The third stroke is a tall diagonal line which cuts through the first stroke around 1/3 from the left.

ゆ (yu)

ゆ is a popular *hiragana* character, because it is used as mark for おんせん or "hot spring baths." ゆ actually stands for おゆ (o-yu) meaning "hot water."

Hiragana ゆ is written in 2 strokes. The first stroke starts as a vertical line going down. Then it retraces back a bit, then forms a huge curve that almost turns into a circle. The second stroke is a curved vertical stroke that cuts through the curved part of the first stroke. It finishes up with a flick of your pen.

よ (yo)

Hiragana よ is written in 2 strokes. The first stroke is a short horizontal stroke starting from the center, going to the right. The second stroke starts as a vertical line going down, then it makes a loop towards the bottom.

Japanese digraphs

There's another set of syllables in Japanese which is formed by adding the や, ゆ, or よ sound to a consonant + an "i" sound.

This time the や, ゆ, and よ characters are written smaller.

These are the Japanese digraphs called ようおん. Even though they look longer, they're

still said for the same duration as the previous syllables that you've learned.

	き	ぎ	し	じ	ち	に	ひ	び	ぴ	み	り
や	きゃ	ぎゃ	しゃ	じゃ	ちゃ	にゃ	ひゃ	びゃ	ぴゃ	みゃ	りゃ
ゆ	きゅ	ぎゅ	しゅ	じゅ	ちゅ	にゅ	ひゅ	びゅ	ぴゅ	みゅ	りゅ
よ	きょ	ぎょ	しよ	じょ	ちょ	にょ	ひょ	びょ	ぴょ	みょ	りょ

Technically, you could also make a digraph with ぢ but it is not in use any more.

One thing to note is that you need to be careful when writing or pronouncing them. They are written smaller and they are pronounced by gliding to the Y-sound and not pronouncing the "i" sound. Doing it otherwise might get you a completely different word. Here's an example: りゅう means "dragon," but りゅう means "reason."

Another one is きょう meaning "today." However, when you pronounce the "i" sound and say きよう, it means "handy" or "skilled."