

LESSON NOTES

Ultimate Japanese Pronunciation Guide #4

Perfect Pronunciation of Japanese Consonants – Group 1

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of the Lesson is Mastering Japanese Consonants Part I

As we mentioned before, Japanese has the following set of fourteen consonants: k, s, t, n, h, m, y, r, w, g, z, d, b, and p. Each one is paired with a vowel to create a syllable. In this lesson, we will cover consonants "k" through "w."

KA	KI	KU	KE	KO
か	き	く	け	こ

We pronounce the "k" syllables the same as in English.

SA	SHI	SU	SE	SO
さ	し	す	せ	そ

Note how si becomes shi. We pronounce the "s" syllables the same as in English.

TA	CHI	TSU	TE	TO
た	ち	つ	て	と

Note how ti becomes chi and tu becomes tsu. We pronounce most "t" syllables the same as in English, with the exception of tsu. While this sound does exist in English, it never comes at the beginning of a word as it often does in Japanese. This sound is the same as the "ts" in the word "cats." Try saying "cats" without the "ca" to make this sound.

NA	NI	NU	NE	NO
な	に	ぬ	ね	の

We pronounce the "n" syllables the same as in English.

HA	HI	FU	HE	HO
は	ひ	ふ	へ	ほ

Note how hu becomes fu. We pronounce most "h" syllables the same as in English, with the exception of fu. The "f" sound in Japanese is a lot lighter than in English. When making this sound, blow air between the lips, and not between the lips and teeth. Imagine this sound as being a combination of both "h" and "f."

We pronounce the characters は and へ as "wa" and "e" when used as particles. Refer to the paragraph below for more information.