

LESSON NOTES

Ultimate Japanese Pronunciation Guide #5

Perfect Pronunciation of Japanese Consonants – Group 2

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2 Grammar

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of the Lesson is Mastering Japanese Consonants Part II

In this lesson we look at the remaining Japanese consonants.

MA	MI	MU	ME	MO
ま	み	む	め	も

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

YA	YU	YO
や	ゆ	よ

We pronounce the "y" syllables the same as in English. Note that there are no "yi" and "ye" sounds in modern Japanese.

RA	RI	RU	RE	RO
ら	り	る	れ	ろ

When you make an "r" sound in English, you roll your tongue, but it doesn't touch the roof of your mouth. In Japanese, however, you lightly tap the roof of your mouth with your tongue to create an "r" sound. It is similar to a rolling "r," except that it is only done once. It might be easier to make this sound if you think of it like making a light "d" sound. For example, to correctly pronounce the Japanese name Eri, try saying the name "Eddy" quickly and you will get a sound that comes very close to the Japanese "r."

WA	WO
わ	を

We pronounce the "w" in wa the same as in English, but we pronounce wo simply as "o" in Japanese.

N
ん

The pronunciation of the "n" changes slightly depending on what kind of sound comes after it. Before "b," "p," and "m," it sounds more like an "m," as in shimbun("newspaper"). Before "k" or "g," it sounds like "ng," as in genki ("energetic"). However, these differences are so slight that most Japanese people aren't even aware of them, so do not worry too much about trying to remember these rules. These sound changes occur naturally as you pronounce these words, but if you pronounce them a bit differently, people will still understand you.