

LESSON TRANSCRIPT

How to Write in Japanese: Hiragana and Katakana #3 The Hiragana S Column

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Hi everyone! Welcome to BASIC JAPANESE WRITING. The fastest, easiest, and most fun way to master the Japanese alphabet!

You've learned these 10 Hiragana characters from the previous lessons.

In this lesson, you'll learn five new characters and again, 10 NEW sounds.

The first Hiragana character for this lesson is さ. さ.

This one looks like a SAD, SIGHING face.

Did you notice that さ and き looks similar? A good tip to remember the difference is that さ is so extra SAD that it gets one less line.

All of the characters in this column can also be altered by a "dakuten." Can you try and guess what the new sound will be?

It will be ざ. Do you notice the difference? さ; ざ. さ; ざ.

Hiragana さ is written in 3 strokes.

It's written the same way as き but without the first stroke.

So it starts with this line written at an angle. Then the second stroke cuts through it and ends with a "hane." And finally, draw half a smile.

Remember, it looks connected in fonts but the right way to write it is to lift up your pen first before drawing the last stroke.

Ok, let's see it again.

Ok, next up is the Hiragana character し. し.

It looks like a FISHING hook.

Let's add a dakuten to し. How do you think it will sound like now?

Did you think it was "ZI"? Actually, し with a dakuten is pronounced as じ. し; じ. し; じ.

Hiragana し is written in 1 stroke.

Start with a vertical line going down then at the bottom make it curve up. Flick your pen at the end of this stroke.

Ok, let's see it again.

The third one is the Hiragana す. す.

す looks like a SUPRAL SUTRA in a glass.

Let's add a "dakuten" to す as well. What do you think it will sound like?

It's pronounced as す. す; す. す; す.

Hiragana す is written in 2 strokes.

The first stroke is a horizontal line going from left to right.

The second stroke starts from the top, goes down, makes a loop around here, continues going down, then finishes by curving to the left. Flick your pen at the end of this stroke.

To have a good balance for this character, intersect the first stroke a bit right of the center when drawing the second stroke. This will give space for the loop.

Also, try to draw the same line before and after making the loop to make your writing neat.

Make sure there is a gap between the first stroke and the loop as well.

Ok, let's see it again.

This is the Hiragana character せ. せ.

Imagine せ as a mouth facing sideways. It's about to SAY something!

Let's modify せ with a dakuten.

It is now pronounced as ぜ. ぜ; ぜ. ぜ; ぜ.

Hiragana せ is written in 3 strokes.

This first stroke is a long horizontal stroke at the center.

The second stroke is a short vertical line that ends with a "hane" going towards the upper left corner.

Since the previous stroke ends with a "hane," continue the motion of your pen to this point and start drawing a vertical line that curves to the right at the bottom. Do not Flick your pen.

Keep in mind that the third stroke should not be longer than the first stroke. Also, try to keep a balance where the 2nd and 3rd stroke intersect the first stroke.

Ok, let's see it again.

And our final character for this lesson is the Hiragana ゴ. ゴ.

To remember ゴ, just imagine a zigzag SEWING stitch.

Now, can you go and say what ゴ sounds like with a dakuten?

It will be ゴ. ゴ; ゴ. ゴ; ゴ.

Hiragana ゴ is written in 1 stroke.

The first stroke is kind of a zigzag line. First try writing a letter Z on the top half and then continue by writing a letter C on the bottom half without raising your pen.

However don't make it curl up like a normal letter C.

One thing to keep in mind is that this line in the middle should be longer than this line on top.

Ok, let's see it again.

Hiragana ゴ actually has another way of writing, but this time with 2 strokes. This is used less often than the one before.

The first stroke is a short slanted line. The second stroke is exactly the same as the more common way of writing it but without this part.

Ok, let's see it again.

Let's see all the characters again. さ, ざ, し, じ, す, ず, せ, ぜ, そ, ぞ.

Quiz time!

Now, let's review what you've learned. I'll show you a character or group of characters and give you time to say them. Ready?

せ.

Which one is the Hiragana さ? [pause 3 sec] It's this one with one less horizontal line.

ず. The word ず actually means "diagram."

Did you remember this one? It's お.

This one is け.

すし. It's the famous Japanese dish!

じこ. This means "accident".

すき. すき means "like"!

さく. This means "to bloom."

ぞう. ぞう is "elephant."

おかし. This means "sweets".

おさけ. おさけ means "alcohol."

さいご. It means "last."

そうぞう. そうぞう means "imagination."

Try saying this long one: (pause 3 sec) こうこうせい. A こうこうせい is a high school student.

Great job! Do you want to get better at pronunciation? Try listening to Japanese blogs and podcasts. If you don't know where to look, we have a huge library at

JapanesePod101.com! Remember, mnemonics help you associate English words with the characters so they do not necessarily teach you the right pronunciation.

Ok, let's wrap up this lesson by recapping what you've learned.

In this lesson, you learned さ and ざ, し and じ, す and ず, せ and ぜ, and そ and ぞ.

よくできました ! You've now mastered 15 characters and 25 Japanese syllables:

Did you know that Japanese has a word for "the day after tomorrow?" You'll get to know it in the next lesson when we tackle the T column.

Before you go, practice writing the following words on your own!

[pause]

And to learn MORE Japanese, go to JapanesePod101.com.

Hey guys, what's your number one reason for learning a language? We asked our other listeners this question and compiled a list from their answers! You might be surprised to hear what a few of them said! Check out the list in the link below – you'll even learn a little Japanese while you're at it!

See you in the next lesson! またね !