

LESSON TRANSCRIPT

# How to Write in Japanese: Hiragana and Katakana #6 The Hiragana H Column

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# 6

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

You've learned these 25 hiragana characters from the previous lessons.

はばぱひびひぷふへべへほぼぼ

In this lesson, you'll learn five new characters, AND... 16 new sounds! I promise it will be easy, so stay tuned to learn all about them!

The first hiragana character for this lesson is は. は.

To remember は, imagine this part is a capital letter H and then there's a small A in front of it: HA!

は might look similar to け so it can get confusing. To differentiate between the two, remember that は has a hoop!

Did you miss the dakuten versions last lesson? Well, this column can be modified by adding a dakuten as well! Can you guess what the new sound will be after adding a dakuten to は?

It will be ば. は; ば. は; ば.

But wait! There's one more mark that can modify the H column. It's the "handakuten" or "maru" mark. It looks like a small circle and is placed in the same position as the dakuten. This mark makes the consonant of the syllable "plosive" and is unique to this column.

は with a handakuten is pronounced ぱ. は, ぱ; は, ぱ.

A consonant is plosive when there's a big burst of air coming out of your mouth when you say it. ぱ, ぱ. Try to feel the difference: は, ば, ぱ. ぱ!

は is also a popular hiragana. It's the topic-marking particle in Japanese so the word or phrase that comes before it will be the topic of the sentence.

But be careful! は is pronounced differently when it's used as a topic-marking particle. It will be pronounced as "wa."

For example: これははしです。はこはおおきいです。ははははながすき。

Many native speakers actually find it hard to read this last example if it's written just in hiragana. This is where kanji is very useful. Knowing which part is a word and which part is a particle makes it easy to read Japanese.

Hiragana は is written in 3 strokes.

The first two strokes are like that of the hiragana け. It starts with a curved vertical stroke that ends with a "hane." Then the second stroke is a short horizontal line.

The third stroke is a vertical line which crosses the second stroke and finishes off with a loop.

Ok, let's see it again.

Ok, next up is the hiragana character ひ. ひ.

Can you see a smiling mouth going HIIIIHI?

Now, let's add a dakuten to ひ. ひ with a dakuten is pronounced as び. ひ; び. ひ; び.

And, how will it sound like with a handakuten? It's going to be っひ. ひ; っひ. ひ; っひ.

Hiragana ふ is written in 1 stroke.

Start by making a short horizontal line, then trace back a bit and make a big curve that ends around here. Trace back a bit again and make a small curve.

Ok, let's see it again.

The third hiragana for this lesson is ふ. It's not "hu" or "fu" but somewhat in between: ふ. ふ.

It's a sound unique to Japanese so let's remember it with something unique to Japan - Mt. FUJI!

Let's try adding a "dakuten" to ふ as well. How do you think it will sound?

It's pronounced as ぶ. Listen carefully. ふ; ぶ. ふ; ぶ.

Now, let's try it with a handakuten. It becomes っふ. ふ; っふ. ふ; っふ.

Hiragana ふ is written in 4 strokes.

The first stroke is a short slanted stroke on the top. It ends with a "hane."

The second stroke is a medium-sized stroke that looks like a nose. Flick your pen at the end of this stroke and continue on to where the third stroke starts.

Draw a short slanted stroke. This one also ends with a "hane."

Continue on to this point, where you make a final short curved line.

It takes some time to get used to writing this character smoothly, so keep on practicing writing it.

Ok, let's see it again.

Next is the hiragana character へ. へ.

It looks like it's pointing up to HEAVEN where the sky is.

Let's modify へ with a dakuten. It is now pronounced as へ. へ; へ. へ; へ.

And when へ is modified with a handakuten, it will be pronounced as へ. へ; へ. へ; へ.

へ is the particle used to indicate the place towards which something is moving.

Just like は, へ also changes pronunciation when used as a particle. In this case we pronounce it as "e" just like the hiragana え.

Listen to some examples: がっこうへいく。えきへいく。

Hiragana へ is written in 1 stroke.

Start from the middle and draw a diagonal line upwards then turn and make a longer diagonal line towards the bottom right.

The "peak" of this character should not be in the center. Instead it's a bit to the left.

Also, the line upwards should be a little bit shorter than that of the downwards line.

Ok, let's see it again.

Our final character for this lesson is the hiragana 𐰇. 𐰇.

Try imagining a HORSE'S face with its mane on the left side in order to remember this character.

Does 𐰇 remind you of 𐰃? They both have a hoop, so how do you distinguish them? Well, 𐰇 has 2 horizontal lines and 𐰃 only has 1. So this means 𐰃 only has HALF the lines and 𐰇 has the WHOLE lot.

What does 𐰇 sound like with a dakuten?

𐰇 with a dakuten is pronounced 𐰇. 𐰇; 𐰇. 𐰇; 𐰇.

And with a handakuten? It will be 𐰇. 𐰇; 𐰇. 𐰇; 𐰇.

Hiragana 𐰇 is written in 4 strokes.

The first stroke is a curved vertical line with a "hane" at the end. Just like the first stroke of 𐰃, 𐰄, and 𐰅.

The second and third stroke are two short parallel lines on the top right.

The final stroke begins from the second stroke, goes down, and cuts through the third stroke and ends with a loop.

Make sure that the final stroke does not start above the second stroke.

Ok, let's see it again.

Let's see all the characters again. 𐰃, or if it is used as a particle, "wa"; 𐰃, 𐰃, ひ, ひ, ひ, 𐰃, 𐰃, 𐰃, 𐰃, へ, or if it is used as a particle, "e" へ, へ, 𐰇, 𐰇, 𐰇.

Quiz time!

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

𐰃. Remember that it's like Mt. FUJI!

ひ.

It has the handakuten which makes it plosive, so it's へ.

な. Remember it's the complicated KNOT, right?

Which one is the hiragana は? [pause 3 sec] It's this one with the HOOP and HALF the horizontal lines as ほ.

こ

ち

はな. This means "flower."

ひざ. It's your knee!

This could be はし meaning "chopsticks" or はし which means "bridge".

ふしぎ. ふしぎ means "strange."

はなび. This is Japanese for "fireworks". Literally it means "fire flowers."

ふくざつ. This means "complicated."

ひきだし. ひきだし is "drawer."

けっぺき. It means "perfectionist."

Great job! As you learn more characters, you'll notice that some of them look similar. Try making a chart of your own, grouping similar characters and list down a unique feature you can find for each so that when you see it, you can identify that specific character easily.

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

In this lesson, you learned は, ば and ぱ, ひ, び and ぴ, ふ, ぶ and ぷ, へ, べ and ぺ, and ほ, ぼ and ぽ.

よくできました! You've now mastered 30 characters and 56 Japanese syllables:

Are the dakuten and handakuten marks getting too complicated? Don't worry, this is the

last column you'll use them in. Next time, there's no need to use your "head" as much, but you'll learn how to say it in Japanese instead, when we move on to the M column.

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

[pause]

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See you in the next lesson! またね !