

LESSON NOTES

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

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VOCABULARY

Kanji	Kana	Romaji	English	Class
旗	はた	hata	flag	noun
ほね	ほね	hone	bone	
八	はち	hachi	eight	noun
一つ	ひとつ	hitotsu	one thing	
二つ	ふたつ	futatsu	two things	
ほうき	ほうき	hōki	broom	noun
肘	ひじ	hiji	elbow	noun
膝	ひざ	hiza	knees	

SAMPLE SENTENCES

八本のボールペンがテーブルの上にあります。 <i>Happon no bōru pen ga tēburu no ue ni arimasu.</i> There are eight pens on the table.	バッグが一つあります。 <i>Baggu ga hitotsu arimasu.</i> I have one bag.
妹に飴を二つあげました。 <i>Imōto ni ame o futatsu agemashita.</i> I gave two candies to my younger sister.	肘を曲げる。 <i>Hiji wo mageru.</i> I bend my elbow.
膝が震えています。 <i>Hiza ga furuete imasu.</i> My knees are shaking.	

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Mastering the Hiragana H Column

In this lesson, you'll learn five new characters, and 16 new sounds.

1. は (*ha*), ば (*ba*), ぱ (*pa*)
2. ひ (*hi*), び (*bi*), ぴ (*pi*)
3. ふ (*fu*), ぶ (*bu*), ぷ (*pu*)
4. へ (*he*), べ (*be*), ぺ (*pe*)
5. ほ (*ho*), ぼ (*bo*), ぽ (*po*)

は (*ha*)

This column can be modified by adding a *dakuten* as well! *Ha* with a *dakuten* is pronounced *ba*, 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. *Ha* with a *handakuten* is pronounced *pa*, ぱ.

A consonant is plosive when there's a big burst of air coming out of your mouth when you say it.

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*.

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.

ひ (*hi*)

Hi with a *dakuten* is pronounced as *bi*, び, and with a *handakuten* *pi*, ぴ.

Hiragana ひ 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.

ふ (*fu*)

It's not *hu* or *fu* but somewhat in between: ふ. It's a sound unique to Japanese.

Fu with a *dakuten* is pronounced as *bu*, ぶ, and with a *handakuten* as *pu*, ぷ.

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.

へ (*he*)

He with a *dakuten* is pronounced as *be*, べ, and with a *handakuten* *pe*, ぺ.

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.

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.

ほ (*ho*)

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

Ho with a *dakuten* is pronounced *bo*, ぼ and with a *handakuten* *po* ぽ.

Hiragana ほ 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 は, に, and け. 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.