

LESSON TRANSCRIPT

Ultimate Japanese Pronunciation Guide #4

Perfect Pronunciation of Japanese Consonants – Group 1

4

Hi everyone! I'm Michelle Yamamoto.

Welcome back to The Ultimate Japanese Pronunciation Guide at JapanesePod101.com.

In this lesson, you'll master the first of 2 consonant groups.

Each group is broken down into rows, following traditional Japanese practice. The first of these is the k-row.

か、き、く、け、こ

Can you recognize the "k" sound in き is a little different to the k sound in か、く、け、こ?

When pronouncing か、く、け、こ, raise the tongue to the back of the mouth, block the breath flow completely with the tongue, then release the sound. Try it!

か

く

け

こ

For "き", raise the tongue to the roof of your mouth, release "k" and make a sharp い sound.

き

Repeat after me.

か

き

く

け

こ

Next is the "s" row.

さ、し、す、せ、そ

Did you notice that "し" is different from the English pronunciation of "si" in "signal"? In Japanese, し is romanized as "s/h/i". So, it's not "si" but, し.

し

Also, be careful, because it's a little different from the English pronunciation of "sh" in "sheep." Don't round the lips like you do in English.

し

し

Repeat after

me.

さ

し

す

せ

そ

Next is the "t" row.

た、ち、つ、て、と

When you pronounce these three sounds, た、て、と、 you can pronounce the "t" sound like an English letter T, but softer

Repeat after me.

た

て

と

The next sound is ち. The first consonant sound is just like the "ch" in "chicken".

ち

ち

"The next sound is つ. Be careful to pronounce it like "tsu" and not "tu" or "stu."

When you say "cats" in English, hear the "ts" sound at the end?"

つ

Repeat after me.

つ

つ

Tighten up the front edge of the tongue, unlike "す". Repeat after me again.

つ

つ

Great! Are you getting the hang of it now?

Next up is the "n" row.

な、に、ぬ、ね、の

Place the tip of your tongue on your teethridge and pronounce the "n" like in English. Put the front edge of the tongue between the back of the teeth and the teethridge. It's also nasal. You know you're making a nasal sound when you feel your voice vibrating up through your nose.

Repeat after

me.

な

に

ぬ

ね

の

Next is the "h" row.

は、ひ、ふ、へ、ほ

Let's try these three sounds

は、へ、ほ

Repeat after me.

は

へ

ほ

Don't make the "h" sound too soft, otherwise these syllables will just sound like "あ、え、お".

Let's try again.

は

へ

ほ

Okay, moving on to the next two sounds, ひ and ふ.

These sounds don't exist in English, so practice these the most!

When you say ひ, your tongue position and mouth shape is similar to when you say い.

So, try to say い first and say ひ.

いーひー,

いーひー

ひ"

Repeat after me.

ひ

ひ

Let's practice some words now!

ひも string、ひ・も、ひも

Repeat after me.

ひも

The next one is ふ. This sound is unique to Japanese.

ふ is like a soft, free-flowing "f" sound. Bring the lips together but don't let the lips or teeth touch. Imagine you're getting ready to blow out a candle, but you're just allowing the air to escape. ふ

Repeat after

me.

ふ

ふ

Let's practice ふ in some words!

ふね ship、ふ・ね、ふね

Repeat after me.

ふね

Okay! Let's review some more sounds in words.

Repeat after me.

かさ, umbrella, か・さ、かさ

かさ

しお, salt, し・お、しお

しお

つき, moon, つ・き、つき

つき

くち, mouth, く・ち、くち

くち

なつ summer, な・つ、なつ

なつ

ほし star, ほ・し、ほし

ほし

You heard a lot of sounds in this lesson. Some are similar to English sounds, while others may sound new to you. Keep listening and practicing to tune your ears to the sounds.

You're more than halfway through the consonant groups. In the next lesson, you'll master the remaining consonant groups.

What was the most difficult sound for you to pronounce? Tell us about it in the comments!

See you in the next Ultimate Japanese Pronunciation Guide lesson!