日本語

Japanese Language

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# Release: 2025年10月

## What’s New

* 9月7日 - Initial Release of this book.
* 9月7日 - Added What’s 日本語.
* 9月7日 - Added Hiragana
* 9月8日 - Added Katakana.
* 9月9日 - Added ‘Numbers’ in ‘Vocabulary’ Section.
* 9月9日 - Added the extended katakanas
* 9月10日 - Added ‘Family’ in ‘Vocabulary’ Section.

# What is 日本語？

Japanese (日本語 Nihongo) is the language spoken by about 125 million people, mainly in Japan. It uses a unique writing system that combines three scripts: kanji (Chinese-origin characters that represent meaning), hiragana (a syllabary for grammar and native words), and katakana (a syllabary mainly for foreign words and emphasis). In everyday writing, all three scripts are mixed together. The language follows a subject–object–verb word order, meaning the verb usually comes at the end of the sentence, and it relies heavily on particles (like wa, o, ni) to mark the role of words in a sentence. Japanese also has several levels of politeness, ranging from casual to very formal, which change the way words are used depending on the situation. Unlike English, it doesn’t use plural forms or distinct future tense verb conjugations; instead, context and markers give meaning.

# Alphabets in 日本語

There are 3 main alphabets in Japanese Language.

1. Hiragana (ひらがな)
   * syllabary, used for grammar endings and native words. Example: たべる (taberu, to eat).
2. Katakana (カタカナ)
   * syllabary, used for foreign words, emphasis, sounds. Example: コンピュータ (konpyūta, computer)
3. Kanji (漢字)
   * characters borrowed from Chinese, carry meaning (e.g., 山 = mountain).

These three alphabets are mixed together in day-to-day written communication in Japanese.

(Hiragana and Katakana Alphabets will be shown in next pages)

## Hiragana (ひらがな)

### Base characters

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| あ (a) | い (i) | う (u) | え (e) | お (o) |
| か (ka) | き (ki) | く (ku) | け (ke) | こ (ko) |
| さ (sa) | し (shi) | す (su) | せ (se) | そ (so) |
| た (ta) | ち (chi) | つ (tsu) | て (te) | と (to) |
| な (na) | に (ni) | ぬ (nu) | ね (ne) | の (no) |
| は (ha) | ひ (hi) | ふ (fu) | へ (he) | ほ (ho) |
| ま (ma) | み (mi) | む (mu) | め (me) | も (mo) |
| や (ya) |  | ゆ (yu) |  | よ (yo) |
| ら (ra) | り (ri) | る (ru) | れ (re) | ろ (ro) |
| わ (wa) |  | を (wo) |  |  |
| ん (n) |  |  |  |  |

#### Things to consider:

* は is used as ‘wa’ when used as a topic particle
* を is used as ‘o’ when used as a topic particle

### Dakuten characters

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| が (ga) | ぎ (ga) | ぐ (gi) | げ (gu) | ご (go) |
| ざ (za) | じ (ji) | ず (zu) | ぜ (ze) | ぞ (zo) |
| だ (da) | ぢ (ji) | づ (zu) | で (de) | ど (do) |
| ば (ba) | び (bi) | ぶ (bu) | べ (be) | ぼ (bo) |

#### Things to consider:

* ぢ is typed out as di in computer IMEs
* づ is typed out as du in computer IMEs

### Handakuten characters

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ぱ (pa) | ぴ (pi) | ぷ (pu) | ぺ (pe) | ぽ (po) |

### Compound characters

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| きゃ (kya) | きゅ (kyu) | きょ (kyo) |
| ぎゃ (gya) | ぎゅ (gyu) | ぎょ (gyo) |
| しゃ (sha) | しゅ (shu) | しょ (sho) |
| じゃ (ja) | じゅ (ju) | じょ (jo) |
| ちゃ (cha) | ちゅ (chu) | ちょ (cho) |
| ぢゃ (dya) | ぢゅ (dyu) | ぢょ (dyo) |
| にゃ (nya) | にゅ (nyu) | にょ (nyo) |
| ひゃ (hya) | ひゅ (hyu) | ひょ (hyo) |
| びゃ (bya) | びゅ (byu) | びょ (byo) |
| ぴゃ (pya) | ぴゅ (pyu) | ぴょ (pyo) |
| みゃ (mya) | みゅ (myu) | みょ (myo) |
| りゃ (rya) | りゅ (ryu) | りょ (ryo) |

#### Things to consider:

* The ゃ,ゅ,ょ used here are smaller than their standard sized kana, which are や,ゆ,よ.

### Consonant Repeating

In japanese, you can use っ (small tsu) to repeat the next consonant.

Examples:-

* っか - kka
* った - tta
* っち - cchi

## Katakana (カタカナ)

### Base characters

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ア (a) | イ (i) | ウ (u) | エ (e) | オ (o) |
| カ (ka) | キ (ki) | ク (ku) | ケ (ke) | コ (ko) |
| サ (sa) | シ (shi) | ス (su) | セ (se) | ソ (so) |
| タ (ta) | チ (chi) | ツ (tsu) | テ (te) | ト (to) |
| ナ (na) | ニ (ni) | ヌ (nu) | ネ (ne) | ノ (no) |
| ハ (ha) | ヒ (hi) | フ (fu) | ヘ (he) | ホ (ho) |
| マ (ma) | ミ (mi) | ム (mu) | メ (me) | モ (mo) |
| ヤ (ya) |  | ユ (yu) |  | ヨ (yo) |
| ラ (ra) | リ (ri) | ル (ru) | レ (re) | ロ (ro) |
| ワ (wa) |  | ヲ (wo) |  |  |
| ン (n) |  |  |  |  |

### Dakuten characters

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ガ (ga) | ガ (ga) | ギ (gi) | グ (gu) | ゴ (go) |
| ザ (za) | ジ (ji) | ズ (zu) | ゼ (ze) | ゾ (zo) |
| ダ (da) | ヂ (ji) | ヅ (zu) | デ (de) | ド (do) |
| バ (ba) | ビ (bi) | ブ (bu) | ベ (be) | ボ (bo) |

#### Things to consider:

* ヂ is typed out as di in computer IMEs
* ヅ is typed out as du in computer IMEs

### Handakuten characters

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| パ (pa) | ピ (pi) | プ (pu) | ペ (pe) | ポ (po) |

### Compound characters

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| キャ (kya) | キュ (kyu) | キョ (kyo) |
| ギャ (gya) | ギュ (gyu) | ギョ (gyo) |
| シャ (sha) | シュ (shu) | ショ (sho) |
| ジャ (ja) | ジュ (ju) | ジョ (jo) |
| チャ (cha) | チュ (chu) | チョ (cho) |
| ヂャ (dya) | ヂャ (dyu) | ヂョ (dyo) |
| ニャ (nya) | ニュ (nyu) | ニョ (nyo) |
| ヒャ (hya) | ヒウ (hyu) | ヒョ (hyo) |
| ビャ (bya) | ビュ (byu) | ビョ (byo) |
| ピャ (pya) | ピュ (pyu) | ピョ (pyo) |
| ミャ (mya) | ミュ (myu) | ミョ (myo) |
| リャ (rya) | リュ (ryu) | リョ (ryo) |

#### Things to consider:

* The ャ,ュ,ョ used here are smaller than their standard sized kana, which are ヤ,ユ,ヨ.

### Extended katakana

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | イィ (yi) |  | イェ (ye) |  |
| ウァ (wa) | ウィ (wi) | ウゥ (wu) | ウェ (we) | ウォ (wo) |
| ヴァ (va) | ヴィ (vi) | ヴ (vu) | ヴェ (ve) | ヴォ (vo) |
|  |  |  | ヴィェ (vye) |  |
|  |  |  | キェ (kye) |  |
|  |  |  | ギェ (gye) |  |
| クァ (kwa) | クィ(kwi) |  | クェ (kwe) | クォ (kwo) |
| グァ (gwa) | グィ (gwi) |  | グェ (gwe) | グォ (gwo) |
|  |  |  | シェ (she) |  |
|  |  |  | ジェ (je) |  |
|  | スィ (si) |  |  |  |
|  | ズィ (zi) |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | チェ (che) |  |
| ツァ (tsa) | ツィ (tsi) |  | ツェ (tse) | ツォ (tso) |
|  | ティ (ti) | テゥ (tu) |  |  |
|  | ディ (di) | デゥ (du) |  |  |
|  |  |  | ニェ (nye) |  |
|  |  |  | ヒェ (hye) |  |
|  |  |  | ビェ (bye) |  |
|  |  |  | ピェ (pye) |  |
| ファ (fa) | フィ (fi) |  | フェ (fe) | フォ (fo) |
|  |  |  | フィェ (fye) |  |
|  |  | ホゥ (hu) |  |  |
|  |  |  | ミェ (mye) |  |
|  |  |  | リェ (rye) |  |

# Vocabulary

## Numbers

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 一 | いち | ichi | one |
| 二 | に | ni | two |
| 三 | さん | san | three |
| 四 | よん/し | yon/shi | four |
| 五 | ご | go | five |
| 六 | ろく | roku | six |
| 七 | なな/しち | nana | seven |
| 八 | はち | hachi | eight |
| 九 | きゅう | kyuu | nine |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 十 | じゅう | juu | 10 (101) |
| 百 | ひゃく | hyaku | 100 (102) |
| 千 | せん | sen | 1,000 (103) |
| 万 | まん | man | 10,000 (104) |
| 十万 | じゅうまん | juu man | 100,000 (105) |
| 百万 | ひゃくまん | hyaku man | 1,000,000 (106) |
| 千万 | せんまん | sen man | 10,000,000 (107) |
| 億 | おく | oku | 100,000,000 (108) |

We can combine these to write numbers in japanese.

Examples:-

* 百 十 三 - 113 (100 + 10 + 3)
* 七百 二十 七 - 727 (7\*100 + 2\*10 + 7)
* 五万 三千 四百 六十 三 - 63,463 (6\*10,000 + 3\*1000 + 4\*100 + 6\*10 + 3)

Note: Japanese doesn’t use spaces in the words or sentences. The spaces were added for easier reading and learning.

## Family

### Immediate Family

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 家族 | かぞく | kazoku | family |
| 私 | わたし | Watashi | I/Me |
| 妻 | つま | Tsuma | Wife (Humble) |
| 奥さん | おくさん | Okusama | Wife (Honorific) |
| 奥様 | おくさま | Okusan | Wife (Honorific) |
| 夫 | おっと | Otto | Husband (Humble) |
| ご主人 | ごしゅじん | goshujin | Husband (Honorific) |
| 配偶者 | はいぐうしゃ | haiguusha | Spouse (Neutral) |
| 連れ合い | つれあい | tsureai | Spouse (Humble) |
| 父 | ちち | chichi | father (Humble) |
| お父さん | おとうさん | otousan | father (Honorific) |
| 母 | はは | haha | mother (Humble) |
| お母さん | おかあさん | okaasan | mother (Honorific) |
| 兄弟 | きょうだい | kyoudai | Siblings (Neutral) |
| 兄 | あに | Ani | elder brother (Humble) |
| お兄さん | おにいさん | Oniisan | elder brother (Honorific) |
| 姉 | あね | Ane | Elder sister (Humble) |
| お姉さん | おねえさん | Oneesan | elder sister (Honorific) |
| 弟 | おとうと | Otouto | Younger brother (Humble) |
| 妹 | いもうと | imouto | Younger sister (Humble) |
| 息子 | むすこ | musuko | Son (Humble) |
| 娘 | むすめ | musume | Daughter (Humble) |

### Extended Family

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 祖父 | そふ | sofu | grandfather (Humble) |
| お祖父さん | おじいさん | ojiisan | Grandfather (Honorific) |
| 祖母 | そぼ | sobo | Grandmother (Humble) |
| お祖母さん | おばあさん | Obaasan | Grandmother (Honorific) |
| 叔父さん / 伯父さん | おじさん | Ojisan | Uncle (Honorific) |
| 叔母さん / 伯母さん | おばさん | Obasan | Aunt (Honorific) |
| 叔父 / 伯父 | おじ | Oji | Uncle (Humble) |
| 叔母 / 伯母 | おば | Oba | Aunt (Humble) |
| いとこ | いとこ | Itoko | Cousin (Neutral) |
| 孫 | まご | Mago | Grandchild (Humble) |
| 孫息子 | まごむすこ | Magomusuko | Grandson (Humble) |
| 孫娘 | まごむすめ | Magomusume | Granddaughter (Humble) |

#### Note:

* In uncle and aunt, using 叔 indicates that he/she is younger, while using 伯 indicates he/she is older. Even if the words are different, the pronunciation is kept the same. In casual conversations and such, you can use the hiragana version without a problem unless you want to be precise.
  + 叔父さん - younger uncle
  + 伯父さん - older uncle
  + 叔母さん - younger aunt
  + 伯母さん - older aunt
* You should use honorific forms when you are talking directly to them and humble forms when introducing to someone. Also, if you referring to speaker’s someone, you should use honorific form. Examples below.
  + Introducing your wife to someone:
    - 奥さんです。 ☒ - Sounds odd; “okusan” is used for someone else’s wife.
    - 妻です。 ☑ - humble and formal, correct.

# References

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