Table of Contents

1. **Added Cards.**

When the user adds a card, the Serious Language Student first tests it translating from Japanese, written in kana, to English. If other words are due to be tested also going from Japanese, written in kana, to English, then the user's added word may not be seen immediately, i.e., not until those words with earlier due dates have been tested.

2. **Adjective and Adverbs with の, な and に.**

Many Japanese adjectives and adverbs are nouns followed by の or な for adjectives and for some words に for adverbs. Generally the Serious Language Student treats these words as nouns, since the adjectival meaning, when の or な follows, or the adverbial meaning, when に follows, is usually then obvious. Since not all nouns can take な to make an adjective, that fact is identified on that word's card, and the user, when that noun is the answer to a prompt, must also check the grammar box stating that the construction with な is possible.

Some nouns can take の or な, usually with some fairly subtle difference in meaning. The Serious Language Student treats such a word as a な adjective, if it is commonly used that way, but users should not be surprised to encounter occasionally such a な adjective used with の.

There are some nouns that are very commonly used as adjectives or adverbs but are never or almost never used as nouns. For example, 立派 (りっぱ) な is an extremely common adjective meaning "great," "excellent," etc., but one never sees the noun 立派 . Also, it can happen that an adjectival or adverbial construction is very common, but its meaning cannot be easily associated with the meaning of the noun alone. For example, 非常 (ひじょう) as a noun means "emergency, but 非常 (ひじょう) に, which is very common, means "exceedingly," "greatly," "very," etc. In these few cases the な, の or に is treated as part of the word itself, and should be entered by the user into the answer box accordingly. The cases where this is necessary are signaled by the fact that the prompt is an English adjective or adverb and not an English noun.

In summary, if the prompt is an English noun, a possible の or な should be omitted, but a grammar note check may be required. If the prompt is an adjective, either の or な should be included in the response. If the prompt is an adverb, に is needed in the user's response only if the

relevant word has the adverbial meaning only when に is present. All of the above is given in the case of each word on its card.

3. Case: Is the Serious Language Student case-sensitive?

Yes. There are a few proper nouns in the vocabulary, e.g., 昭和 しょうわ Showa and 東京 とうきょう Tokyo. The English must be entered with capitalization. (Note: the English does not reflect the Japanese long vowels, but of course the かな does.) All English translations which are not proper nouns are written lower case.

4. Kana: How does one type かな？

If the cursor is in an entry box where かな is needed, the user does not need to install a special keyboard. The Serious Language Student program automatically converts Latin alphabet to かな. For example, if the user types t-e, the box will show て. Very fast typists my occasionally type more quickly than the program can convert to かな. Such users my need to pause very briefly after each sequence of keys that corresponds to one かな. If the user types too quickly and the Latin letters are not converted, the user should backspace over them to erase them and re-enter, typing slightly more slowly. the Serious Language Student uses the Hepburn system of romanization. For example, し is typed s-h-i and ふ is typed f-u. The user should note that ず is typed z-u, づ is typed d-z-u, じ is typed j-i, and ぢ is typed d-j-i. ん is always typed n, even when pronounced m, e.g., しんぶん is typed s-h-i, n, b-u, n. ん followed by a vowel is typed with an apostrophe ('), e.g., かんあん is typed k-a-n'-a-n.

5. Radicals: How do I choose between visually identical radicals?

Before reading the answer to this question, the user should be familiar with the information in "Radicals: How do I know which part of a character is the radical?" A further simplification of the Nelson system of radical assignment is the way it handles pairs of radicals that are currently impossible to distinguish, even in print and certainly not in handwriting. Such pairs include:

(i) 月, which as a character component can be either 130 肉, にく, "meat" or 74 月, つき, "moon";

(ii) 土 which as a character component can be either 32 土, つち, "earth" or 33 士, さむらい, "samurai"; and

(iii) 日, which as a character component can be either 72 日, にちのひ, "day" or 73 曰, いわく, "flat sun."

The Nelson system resolves these ambiguities by always choosing the former in each of the above pairs, even if historically, and dictated by the meaning, the second of the pair is the traditional radical. The user should note this especially when the result is an apparently incongruous choice. For example, the character 期 as in the word 時期, じき, "era," is assigned the radical 肉, にく, "meat," rather than the radical 月, つき, "moon," even though the character itself has to do with periods of time, which would make "moon" more obvious or natural. Nonetheless, the advantage of always knowing which radical to use outweighs such incongruities.

6. Radicals: How do I know which part of a character is the radical?

the Serious Language Student follows the system of radical assignment devised and used in *The Modern Reader's Japanese-English Character Dictionary* by Andrew N. Nelson, (The current edition is *The New Nelson Japanese-English Character Dictionary*, revised by John Haig.) The details of Nelson's system are laid out carefully in his dictionary, which all students of Japanese need to own, or at least with which they should be familiar. Perhaps the most basic principles are that a radical on the left is always given precedence over a radical on the right, and a radical on top is always given precedence over a radical on the bottom. Regardless of how familiar or unfamiliar the user is with Nelson's system, the radical and the number of additional strokes is provided on each the Serious Language Student card when it is first introduced and is repeated any time the user makes a mistake with that vocabulary item. It should be noted that the traditional radical assignment as a general rule reflects the meaning of the character, which it is historically correct to do, since most characters were originally invented with a meaning component, which became the radical, and a second component, which provided the pronunciation. Thus, [example taken from school talk]. This method of assigning the radical makes sense for people who already know and can read the characters and simply want to organize that knowledge. But for the person who is encountering the character for the first time and learning it, one often can't tell which part is the meaning significator, i.e., the traditional radical, and which part is giving the pronunciation. Nelson's system avoids that confusion by using a system of assigning the radical that is independent of the character's meaning or pronunciation.

7. Radicals: What list of radicals does the Serious Language Student use?

the Serious Language Student uses the traditional list of 214 radicals, the so-called 康熙(こうき) (Chinese: Kāngxī) list. This 214 radical list was the one used in China in the Ming Dynasty dictionary of 1615, i.e., over 400 years ago. It is part of the common heritage not only of Japan, but of the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Korea, and Viet Nam. Wherever Chinese characters are part of the history or of the modern culture, the 214 Kāngxī radicals are known and constitute the shared, traditional list.

In Japan the Kāngxī list is essentially the only list used. In reference works used by foreigners, various attempts have been made to "improve" on the Kāngxī list, but no such list has established itself sufficiently to justify using any list other than the one with which Japanese themselves are familiar.

8. Radicals: Nicknames and saving time :

[Revise for Japanese manual.]

9. Parenthetical information: Can the parenthetical part of a definition be omitted?

Yes. In fact, it is better to omit it. It is included only to give the user a better sense of the word or to distinguish the word from other words. Also, the parenthetical information is important going from English to Japanese in order to specify the Japanese word wanted. Going from Japanese to English, if users do want to include the parenthetical information in their answer, they must do so precisely as it appears, i.e., with the parentheses and with the spacing as shown on the card.

In particle, Japanese particles are difficult if not impossible to translate. Thus, going from Japanese to English they are all be translated simply as "particle." In order to go from English to Japanese, each has a parenthetical mnemonic, which should be thought of by the user as only a means of indicating which particle is desired and not as a "translation." E.g., が should be translated simply as "particle" the English "particle (subject)" should elicit が.

The user should also note that the initial "to" of all verbs may be omitted.

10. **Word Frequency: Are the words in the first box of the Serious Language Student's flashcards the 1,000 most common words in Japanese?**

Users need to recognize that there is no such collection of *the* 1,000 most common words in Japanese or in any living language. The most commons words will always depend on the underlying corpus. If one takes the vocabulary of English as an example, the 1,000 most common words used in The New York Times in 2017 will not be the same set as the 1,000 most common words of every day American speech, and the latter set will vary depending on whether one is talking about informal speech among friends or more formal speech in business and work settings. For one example, "get," meaning "to obtain" or "to become" is probably among the 100 most common words of informal spoken American English, but well might not be used at all with those meanings in The New York Times. Also, The New York Times versus informal speech are not the only two corpora one might consider. The vocabulary of current American fiction would be yet a different corpus, as would the vocabulary of scientific journals.

The 1,000 words chosen for the Serious Language Student's first box of flashcards reflect frequency studies of a variety of different corpora. However, the choice was also shaped by the decision to include at least one use of each of the 1006 *Kyōiku kanji* (教育漢字), established by the Japanese Ministry of Education, *Monbu-kagaku-shō* (文部科学省). For example, the relatively uncommon word, 土星 (どせい), "Saturn" is included, because it gives the student the common on-reading ど for 土, and the common on-reading せい for 星 This knowledge, together with the common

Note on Table of Contents.

To add an item, highlight the part that should appear in the T of C, click on Format, then Styles, then Heading 1 and then Apply. Then right click on the Table of Content, choose Table of Contents, and then choose Update.