JAPANESE FOR ADULT SELF-LEARNERS

Hiragana, Katakana & Kanji Workbook for Beginners

Learn to read and write all 92 kana — plus writing practice for every dakuten and handakuten form — and your first 42 kanji, with stroke-by-stroke diagrams and a review calendar that brings each row back on Day 3, Day 7 and Day 14.

あ い う え お

か き く け こ

さ し す せ そ

Printable PDF · A4 & US Letter · Print single pages again and again for review

Part 1: Hiragana · Part 2: Katakana · Part 3: First kanji · Real-world reading pages

Start here — how to use this book 使い方

What this book does: it teaches you to **read and write** the two Japanese kana alphabets (hiragana and katakana, 46 characters each), every dakuten and handakuten form built on them (25 more in each script, with full writing practice, not just reading charts), and a first set of everyday kanji. Every character is taught the same way: a stroke-by-stroke diagram, a memory picture, tracing practice, one real word, and a short test — then the review calendar brings the row back three more times, on Day 3, Day 7 and Day 14.

What it does not do: this is a writing-and-reading workbook, not a full language course — no grammar lessons, no conversation practice, no exam prep. It builds the foundation those stand on.

Part 1 — Hiragana	46 characters in 10 rows, plus the small marks that change sounds — with writing practice for all 25 marked forms.
Part 2 — Katakana	The second alphabet, used for foreign words, names and labels. Same review rhythm, faster pace.
Part 3 — First kanji	42 everyday kanji: numbers, family, the body, days of the week, food, school and time.

Start today

Learn **Row 1 (the A row) today — that is Day 0 — then stop**, even if you have time to go on. The spacing between days is what makes the characters stick. A learning day takes about 15–25 minutes. From Day 3 on, reviews and tests start arriving alongside new rows, and days that combine a new row with a review or a test are the longest — up to about 30 minutes. Days with only reviews take about 5–10 minutes. If you are slower, that is fine — a learning day may be split across two days; just shift the calendar.

Three honest rules

- **Recall first.** The tests ask you to write characters from memory, not to recognise them. Cover the answers, write, then check.
- **Score yourself honestly.** A character counts as learned only when you can write it from memory on two different days — the Day 7 test and the Day 14 check.
- **Missed a day?** Do not double up to catch up. Shift the rest of the calendar by the days you missed, and carry on.

Already know a row? Take its mini-test first. If you pass it from memory, skip its learning day and keep only the review days.

It is fine to stop after Part 1. With hiragana alone you can read children's books, many signs, and the pronunciation guides printed above kanji in stations and museums. Parts 2 and 3 are there when you want them — nothing in Part 1 is left unfinished if you stop.

What you need: a pencil and a timer (your phone is fine). Print the test and calendar pages again whenever you want a clean copy — they are marked ↻ Print this page again to retry. On a tablet, copy the page **before** you write on it, so a clean copy is waiting for the review days. This book has no audio: romaji is your guide to pronunciation, and Japanese sounds are short and even — give every kana the same length. **Printing:** print **single-sided** — every page is a page to write on.

The 46-character chart 五十音図

Every hiragana in this book, in the traditional order: rows across, vowels down the columns. Keep coming back to this chart — the calendar sends you here, and the tests ask you to find rows in it.

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

Try it now

Find the A row in the chart. Cover the romaji line with your hand and read the five characters aloud: あ い う え お. Then find the Ka row and the Sa row with your eyes only. That is all for now — Row 1 starts on p. 5.

Five kana have irregular romaji: し is shi, ち is chi, つ is tsu, ふ is fu, and を is read o today.

● Row 1 · A row あ行

↻ Print this page again for more practice — on a tablet, copy it before you write.

Hiragana is the first alphabet Japanese children learn — curvy and soft, and with it you can write any Japanese word.

Day 0 of the standard pace starts here: learn this row today, then stop, even if you have time to go on. The spacing between days is what makes the characters stick.

Can-do goals — Row 1 · A row

☐ Find the A row in the 46-character chart and read it aloud.

☐ Write all five characters from their romaji, from memory.

☐ Read あめ, いぬ and おかね aloud, with the romaji printed beside them.

Culture note — Greetings change with the time of day

Japanese greetings follow the clock: おはよう (ohayou) in the morning, こんにちは (konnichiwa) in the daytime, and こんばんは (konbanwa) in the evening. You can already read every character in the first one.

あ a 3 strokes — build it stroke by stroke:



1. A horizontal stroke across the top.
2. A vertical stroke down through it.
3. Start in the middle, sweep down-left, come back up through the middle and out to the right, then curve down and finish at the bottom.

Memory picture: An apple: the top stroke is the stem and leaf, the loop is the round fruit.



Trace the light-grey models, then write on your own:

あ	あ	あ	あ	あ					



Say it: あめ ame — rain

Writing practice — the marked kana

The G row — the K row, voiced

が ga 5 strokes — か, then the mark last, at the top right:



Trace the light-grey models, then write on your own:

が	が	が	が	が					

Say it: めがね megane — glasses

ぎ gi 6 strokes — き, then the mark last, at the top right:



Trace the light-grey models, then write on your own:

ぎ	ぎ	ぎ	ぎ	ぎ					

Say it: ぎんこう ginkou — bank

ぐ gu 3 strokes — く, then the mark last, at the top right:



Trace the light-grey models, then write on your own:

ぐ	ぐ	ぐ	ぐ	ぐ					

Say it: かぐ kagu — furniture

げ ge 5 strokes — け, then the mark last, at the top right:



Trace the light-grey models, then write on your own:

げ	げ	げ	げ	げ					

Say it: げんき genki — healthy, full of energy

ご go 4 strokes — こ, then the mark last, at the top right:



Trace the light-grey models, then write on your own:

ご	ご	ご	ご	ご					

Say it: いちご ichigo — strawberry

Part 1 review calendar — days 0–9

↻ Print this page again to retry

The standard pace: ten rows over about two weeks, with returns built in. Learning days take about 15–25 minutes; from Day 3, reviews and tests start arriving alongside new rows, and the combined days are the longest at up to about 30 minutes. Days with only reviews take about 5–10 minutes. The Day 7 and Day 14 tests live on two shared test pages — you will visit the same test page about ten times, so print a fresh copy for each test day. The marked kana have their own test page, visited the same way. The rules for missed days and for rows you already know are on the Start here page.

Day 0
Learn the A row (p. 5)

Day 1
Learn the Ka row (p. 8)

Day 2
Learn the Sa row (p. 11)

Day 3
Review the A row: 60-second review + rewrite any misses

Day 4
Review the Ka row: 60-second review + rewrite any misses

Day 5
Review the Sa row: 60-second review + rewrite any misses
Learn the Ta row (p. 14)
First day that combines a new row with a review or a test — expect a longer day.

Day 6
Learn the Na row (p. 17)

Day 7
Test the A row from memory (test page p. 42)
Learn the Ha row (p. 20)
A combined day: a new row plus a review or a test.

Day 8
Test the Ka row from memory (test page p. 42)
Review the Ta row: 60-second review + rewrite any misses

Day 9
Test the Sa row from memory (test page p. 42)
Review the Na row: 60-second review + rewrite any misses

Blended sounds in katakana — the full table

Part 1's blended sounds, in katakana dress: a small ャ, ュ or ョ after a kana ending in i blends the two into one beat. Borrowed words are full of them — here is the whole set, including the marked rows from the page before.

Size is the whole signal: ヤ (ya, full size, two beats in キヤ) against ャ (small ya, one beat in キャ). Same shape — only the size changes.

	+ ャ (ya)	+ ュ (yu)	+ ョ (yo)
キ ki	キャ kya	キュ kyu	キョ kyo
シ shi	シャ sha	シュ shu	ショ sho
チ chi	チャ cha	チュ chu	チョ cho
ニ ni	ニャ nya	ニュ nyu	ニョ nyo
ヒ hi	ヒャ hya	ヒュ hyu	ヒョ hyo
ミ mi	ミャ mya	ミュ myu	ミョ myo
リ ri	リャ rya	リュ ryu	リョ ryo
ギ gi	ギャ gya	ギュ gyu	ギョ gyo
ジ ji	ジャ ja	ジュ ju	ジョ jo
ビ bi	ビャ bya	ビュ byu	ビョ byo
ノ pi	ノャ pya	ノュ pyu	ノョ pyo

You have already traced ヤ, ユ and ヨ at full size — blends reuse those same shapes, smaller and tucked to the right, so there are no new strokes to trace here. Words to read aloud:

シャツ shatsu shirt	ジュース juusu juice	チョコ choko chocolate	キャンプ kyanpu camp, camping	ジャズ jazu jazz

Numbers and money 数字とお金

ひとつ (hitotsu) — one (thing)

1 stroke · build it stroke by stroke below: in each box, the new stroke is in colour.

一つ ひとつ (hitotsu) — one thing

In number sequences it is read イチ (ichi): 一、二、三 (1, 2, 3).



Trace the light-grey models, then write on your own:

一	一	一	一	一					

Now write the word from its reading: **hitotsu** →



ふたつ (futatsu) — two (things)

2 strokes · build it stroke by stroke below: in each box, the new stroke is in colour.

二つ ふたつ (futatsu) — two things

In number sequences: 二 (ni).



Trace the light-grey models, then write on your own:

二	二	二	二	二					

Now write the word from its reading: **futatsu** →

Flashcard fronts — Hiragana, set 1

● Row 1 · A row · Hiragana · front

あ

front

● Row 1 · A row · Hiragana · front

い

front

● Row 1 · A row · Hiragana · front

う

front

● Row 1 · A row · Hiragana · front

え

front

● Row 1 · A row · Hiragana · front

お

front

■ Row 2 · Ka row · Hiragana · front

か

front

■ Row 2 · Ka row · Hiragana · front

き

front

■ Row 2 · Ka row · Hiragana · front

く

front

↻ Print as many sets as you like.

Flashcard backs — Hiragana, set 1

Print this page on the reverse of **Hiragana fronts, set 1** (flip on the long edge), then cut along the dashed lines.

● Row 1 · A row · Hiragana · back

i



いぬ inu — dog

● Row 1 · A row · Hiragana · back

a



あめ ame — rain

● Row 1 · A row · Hiragana · back

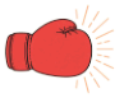
e



えき eki — station

● Row 1 · A row · Hiragana · back

u



うみ umi — sea

■ Row 2 · Ka row · Hiragana · back

ka



かぜ kaze — wind

● Row 1 · A row · Hiragana · back

o



おかね okane — money

■ Row 2 · Ka row · Hiragana · back

ku



くも kumo — cloud

■ Row 2 · Ka row · Hiragana · back

ki



き ki — tree

↻ Print as many sets as you like.