

ひらがな

Hiragana Cheat Sheet

The 46 basic characters — learn these first

a	i	u	e	o
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 o

Plus one:

ん
n

The nasal ん — its sound shifts with the next consonant.

Pronunciation tips

- し = "she" • ち = "chee" • つ = "tsoo" (tongue behind teeth — no English equivalent)
- ふ = blow air softly, don't bite your lip like "fu"
- を is pronounced "o" • は is "wa" when used as a particle

だくてん

Dakuten — Voiced Sounds

Add ゛ and the sound "voices": k→g, s→z, t→d, h→b • ° makes p

a	i	u	e	o
が ga	ぎ gi	ぐ gu	げ ge	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
ぱ pa	ぴ pi	ぷ pu	ぺ pe	ぽ po

How it works

- がぎぐげご • ざじずぜぞ • だぢづでど • ばびぶべぼ — all follow the same voicing pattern.
- ぱぴぷぺぽ uses ° (handakuten, the little circle) for p sounds.
- ぢ and づ sound exactly like じ and ず — the difference is spelling only.

ようおん

Yoon — Contracted Sounds

Small や ゆ よ glides the sound: one beat, not two (きや = kya, not ki-ya)

ya	yu	yo
きや kya	きゅ kyu	きよ kyo
しゃ sha	しゅ shu	しよ sho
ちゃ cha	ちゅ chu	ちょ cho
にや nya	にゅ nyu	によ nyo
ひや hya	ひゅ hyu	ひよ hyo
みや mya	みゅ myu	みよ myo
りや rya	りゅ ryu	りよ ryo
ぎや gya	ぎゅ gyu	ぎよ gyo
じゃ ja	じゅ ju	じよ jo
びや bya	びゅ byu	びよ byo
ぴや pya	ぴゅ pyu	ぴよ pyo

You can read hiragana — now learn to speak it.

1-on-1 lessons with Mako, native Japanese teacher.

Book a trial lesson: myjapaneseacademia.com/registration