

カ タ カ ナ
カ タ カ ナ
カ タ カ ナ
カ タ カ ナ
カ タ カ ナ

Learn Katakana

by TOFUGU



WHAT IS KATAKANA ?

Katakana are a type of Japanese character. Just like hiragana, each katakana character is used to represent a sound. In fact, they represent the exact same sounds as hiragana. So how are they different, you ask? The difference is in when you use them. Katakana are used for various purposes, but they're mostly used to transcribe foreign words (often English). Sometimes, katakana are used for stylistic purposes as well.

In this book, we assume that you already know how to read hiragana. If you haven't studied hiragana, please check out [Tofugu's Learn Hiragana page](#) first and come back later.

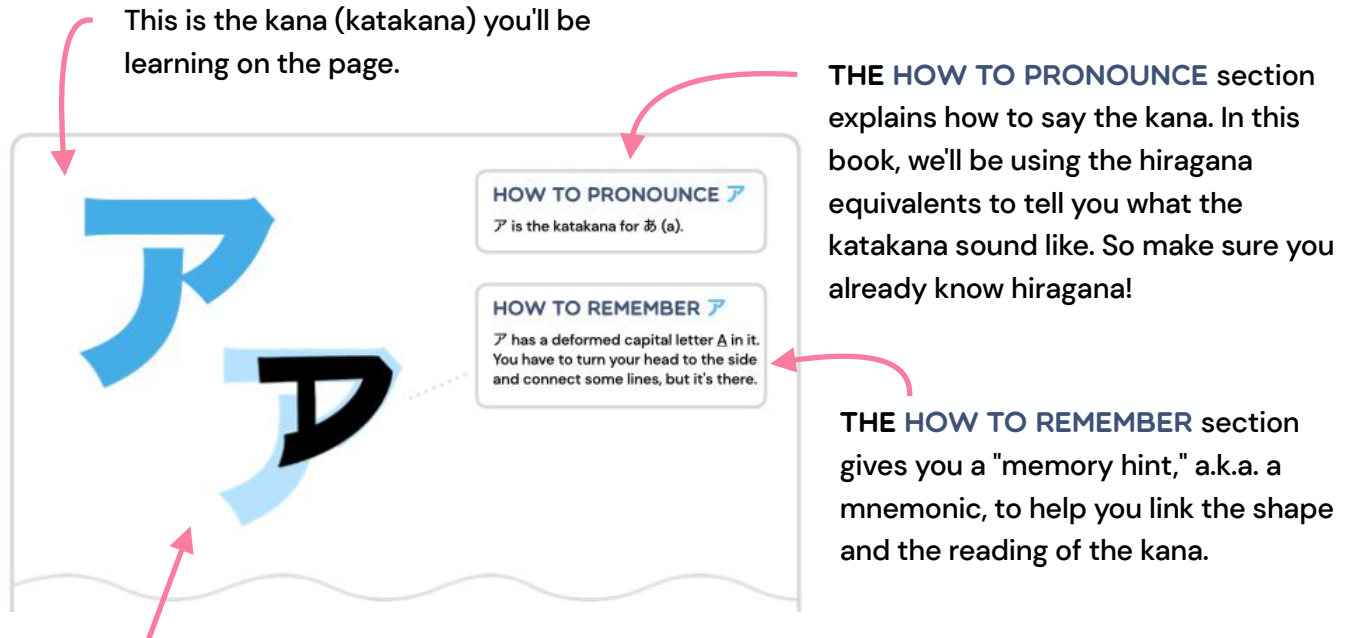
AN OVERVIEW OF KATAKANA

Just like hiragana, katakana start with the vowel column (A - I - U - E - O). The others are a combination of a consonant and a vowel sound, with an exception of ん (N).

	K	S	T	N	H	M	Y	R	W
ア A	カ KA	サ SA	タ TA	ナ NA	ハ HA	マ MA	ヤ YA	ラ RA	ワ WA
イ I	キ KI	シ SHI	チ CHI	ニ NI	ヒ HI	ミ MI		リ RI	
ウ U	ク KU	ス SU	ツ TSU	ヌ NU	フ FU	ム MU	ユ YU	ル RU	ヲ O
エ E	ケ KE	セ SE	テ TE	ネ NE	ヘ HE	メ ME		レ RE	
オ O	コ KO	ソ SO	ト TO	ノ NO	ホ HO	モ MO	ヨ YO	ロ RO	ン N

HOW TO USE THE LEARN KATAKANA BOOK

PAGE FOR EACH KATAKANA

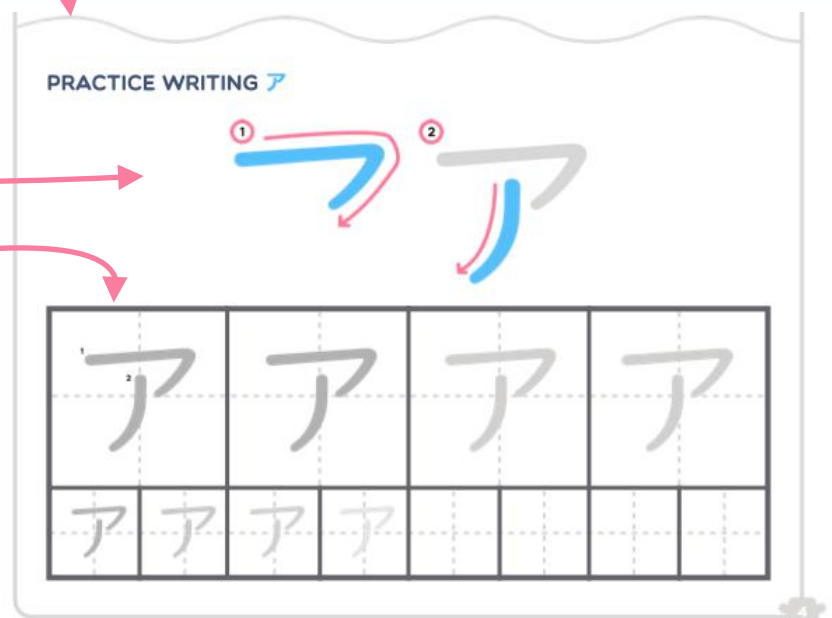


This is a supplemental image to the **HOW TO REMEMBER** section. It visually illustrates how the memory hint works.

This shows the stroke order for writing the kana. As for stroke direction, keep in mind that the basic rule is left to right, top to bottom.

Do some practice writing the kana, tracing over the lines first, then filling in the blank boxes! At this stage, writing is not as important as being able to read, but moving your hand and practicing writing will help you remember the kana.

The bottom half of the page is the **PRACTICE WRITING** section.




REVIEW PAGE FOR EACH COLUMN

After you learn a set/column of kana, you'll see a page called **LET'S PRACTICE READING!** where you can review what you've learned. You'll see this kind of exercise once in a while throughout the book so that you can repeatedly review your katakana knowledge and solidify it in your memory.


LET'S PRACTICE READING!
What's the reading? Write in romaji.

エ	ア	イ	エ	オ	ウ	ア	イ	オ	ウ




ア

ア! means ah! — something you say when you come to a realization.



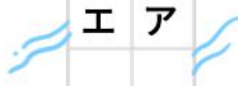
ア	イ

アイ is eye.



ウ	イ


ウイ is "Oui" ("Yes" in French).



エ	ア

エア is air.

オ	ア



オア is "or."

Here in the boxes below each kana, just fill in the romaji reading of the corresponding kana.

This helps you self-assess and see how much you have (or haven't) retained.

If you find yourself having a hard time remembering a specific kana, you can always go back to that kana's page to review.

You can also try to come up with memory hints of your own if that works better for you!

The reading quiz continues! Keep filling in the kana readings in romaji.

What's different (and kind of cool) in this part is that the kana are used for transcribing non-Japanese words (and sometimes Japanese words that are just commonly written in katakana). You might notice that a lot of katakana words don't actually sound like the way they do in their original language. This is because of the lack of sounds available in Japanese compared to other languages. But it's cool to know that you can say some foreign words using Japanese sounds, right?

Each word contains at least one kana from the column you're reviewing, but keep in mind that you may see some kana from previous columns being used as well.

So when you're using this book, try to follow the order it's in to get the most out of it.

ア

ア

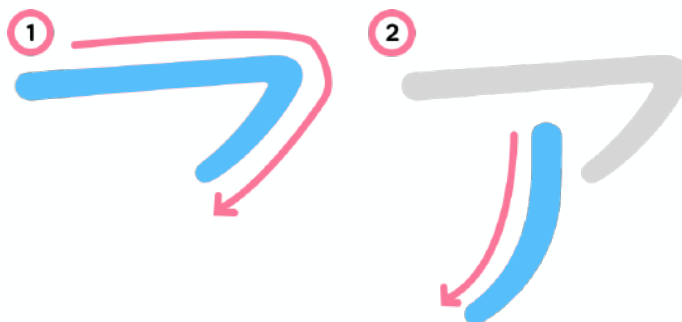
HOW TO PRONOUNCE ア

ア is the katakana for あ (a).

HOW TO REMEMBER ア

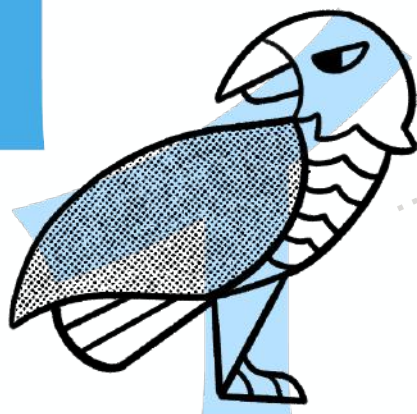
ア has a deformed capital letter A in it. You have to turn your head to the side and connect some lines, but it's there.

PRACTICE WRITING ア



1 ア	ア	ア	ア				
ア	ア	ア	ア				

イ



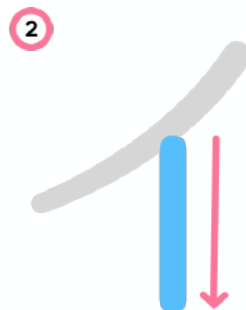
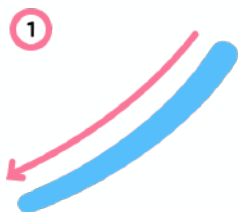
HOW TO PRONOUNCE イ

イ is the katakana for い (i).

HOW TO REMEMBER イ

イ looks like an eagle standing on the ground, or on a branch, or wherever. See its legs and its back, curved down like an eagle's?

PRACTICE WRITING イ



ウ

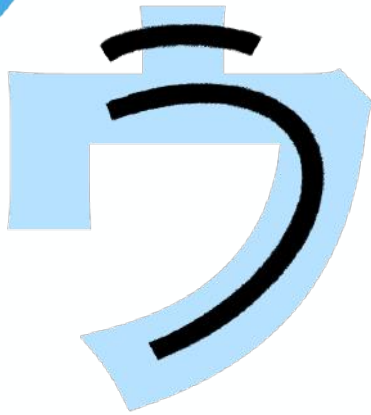
HOW TO PRONOUNCE ウ

ウ is the katakana for う (u).

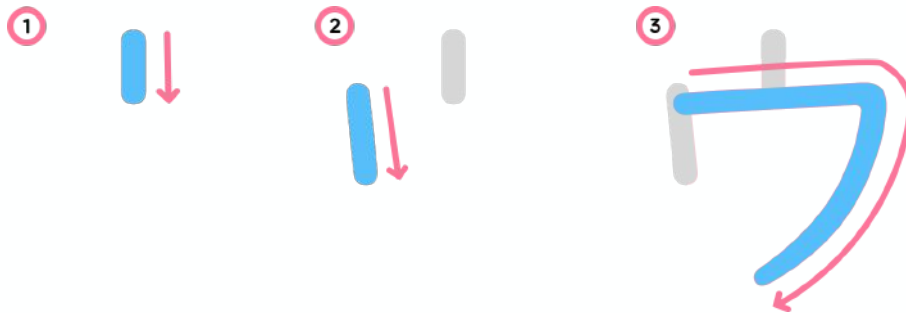
HOW TO REMEMBER ウ

This katakana character looks a lot like its hiragana counterpart: う.

It should be similar enough to use as a mnemonic to remember what it is.



PRACTICE WRITING ウ



ウ	ウ	ウ	ウ				
ウ	ウ	ウ	ウ				

工

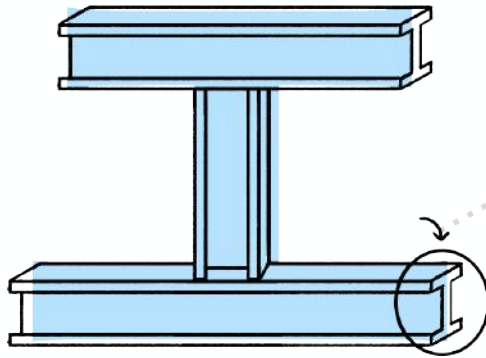
HOW TO PRONOUNCE 工

工 is the katakana for え (e).

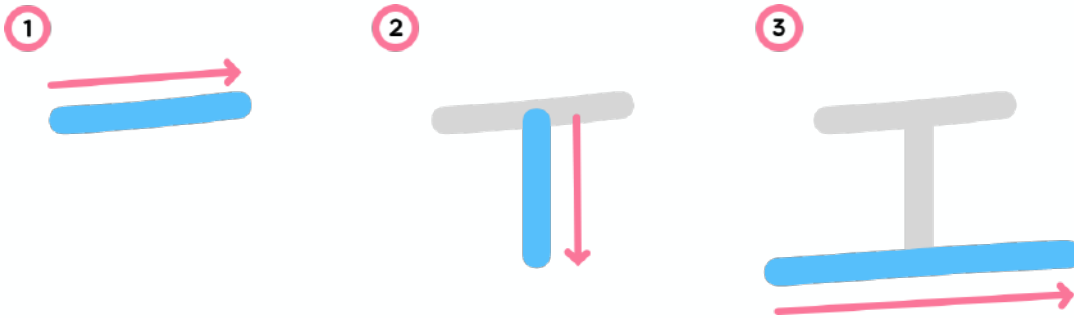
HOW TO REMEMBER 工

Imagine this is a girder an engineer would use to build buildings. This character is in the shape of the end of a girder, and it's made up of them too.

Or you can think of it like an elevator with its doors closed.



PRACTICE WRITING 工



オ



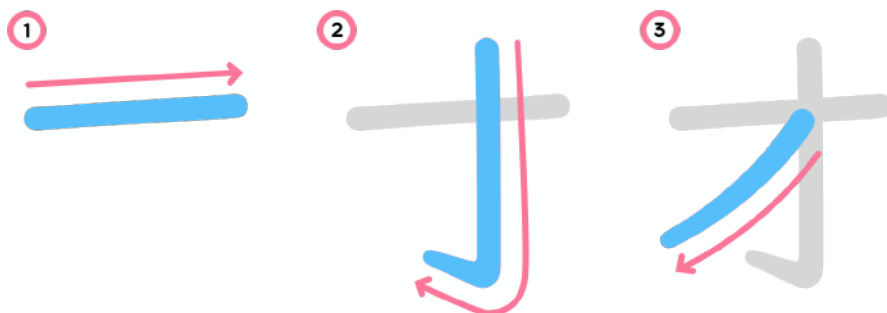
HOW TO PRONOUNCE オ

オ is the katakana for お (o).

HOW TO REMEMBER オ

This kana looks like an opera singer. His mouth is shaped like an o and he's singing "Ohhhh!"

PRACTICE WRITING オ



オ	オ	オ	オ				
オ	オ	オ	オ				

LET'S PRACTICE READING!

What's the reading? Write in romaji.

エ	ア	イ	エ	オ	ウ	ア	イ	オ	ウ



ア

ア! means ah! — something you say when you come to a realization.



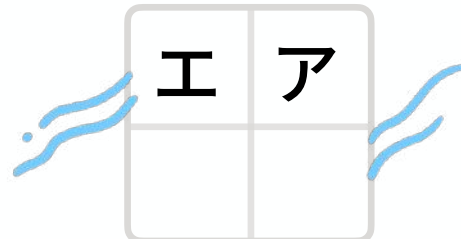
ア	イ

アイ is eye.



ウ	イ

ウイ is "Oui" ("Yes" in French).



エア is air.

オ	ア



オア is "or."

カ



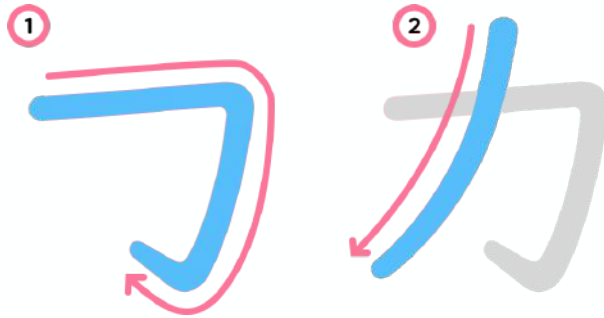
HOW TO PRONOUNCE カ

カ is the katakana for か (ka).

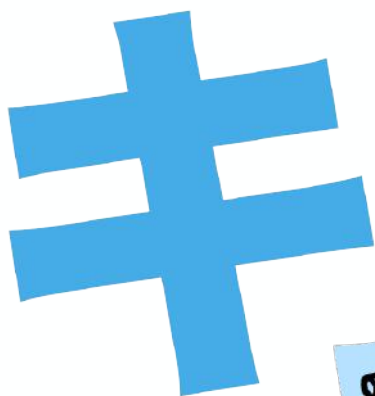
HOW TO REMEMBER カ

It looks just like the hiragana か, though it's missing that little extra line. Close enough to make it easy to remember, though.

PRACTICE WRITING カ



カ	カ	カ	カ
カ	カ	カ	カ



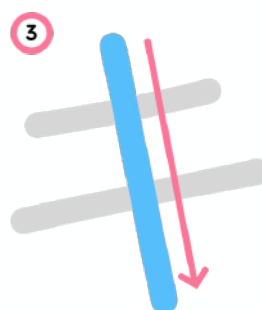
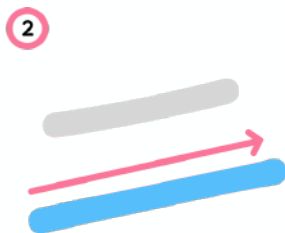
HOW TO PRONOUNCE

is the katakana for き (ki).

HOW TO REMEMBER

It looks like the hiragana き (the top part at least) and also looks like part of a weird key.

PRACTICE WRITING



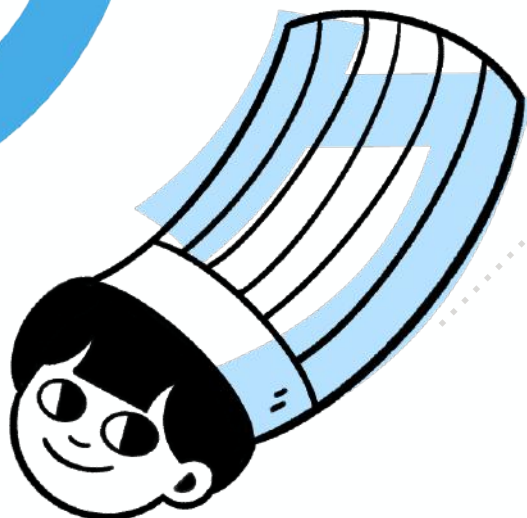
ク

HOW TO PRONOUNCE ク

ク is the katakana for く (ku).

HOW TO REMEMBER ク

This looks like a long cook's hat. What are they hiding under there?!



PRACTICE WRITING ク

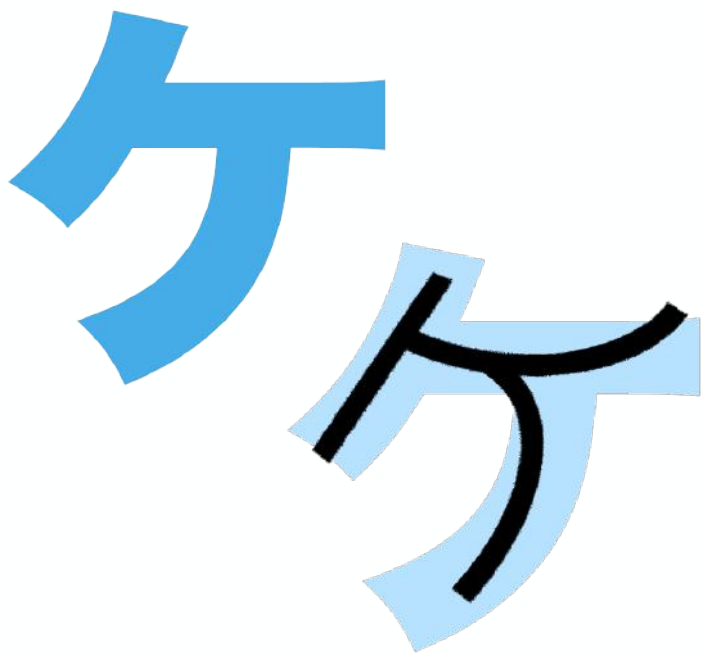
①



②



ケ



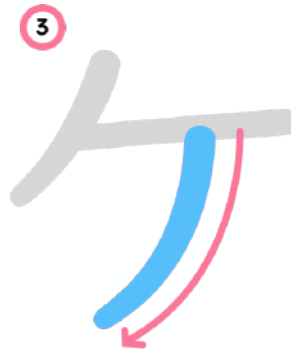
HOW TO PRONOUNCE ケ

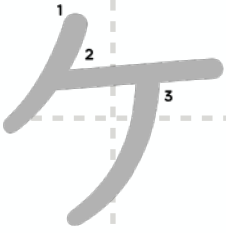







ケ is the katakana for け (ke).

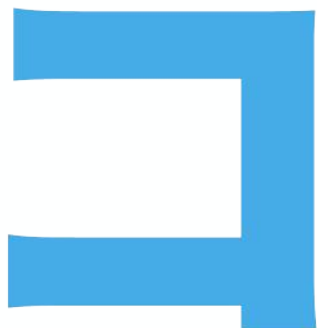
HOW TO REMEMBER ケ

It looks like the letter K!

PRACTICE WRITING ケ



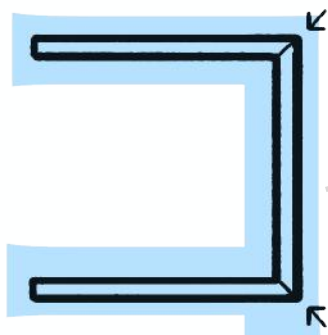


HOW TO PRONOUNCE コ

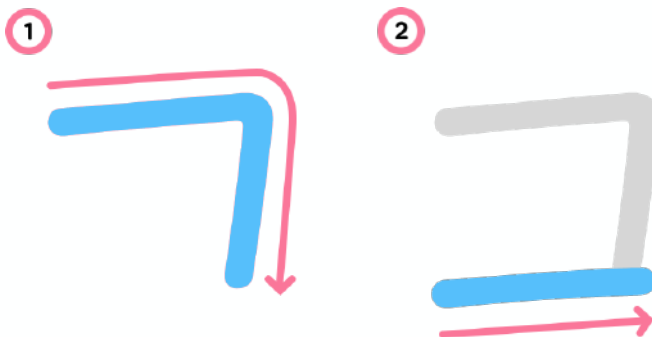
コ is the katakana for コ (ko).

HOW TO REMEMBER コ

See the two 90 degree corners? The two corners are what help you to remember that this is "ko."



PRACTICE WRITING コ



LET'S PRACTICE READING!

What's the reading? Write in romaji.

キ	カ	ク	コ	ケ	ク	キ	カ	コ	ケ

What's This Dash? : This dash extends the vowel that comes before it.

For example, カー is "kaa." (More on this later! p.64)



カ	カ	オ

カカオ is cacao.



キ	ー

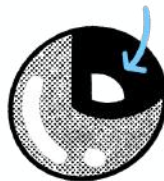
キー is key.

ア	ク	ア

アクア is aqua.

ケ	ア

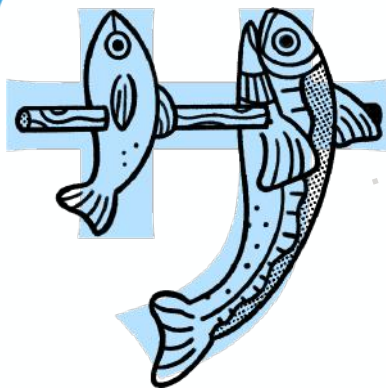
ケア is care.



コ	ア

コア is core.

サ



HOW TO PRONOUNCE サ

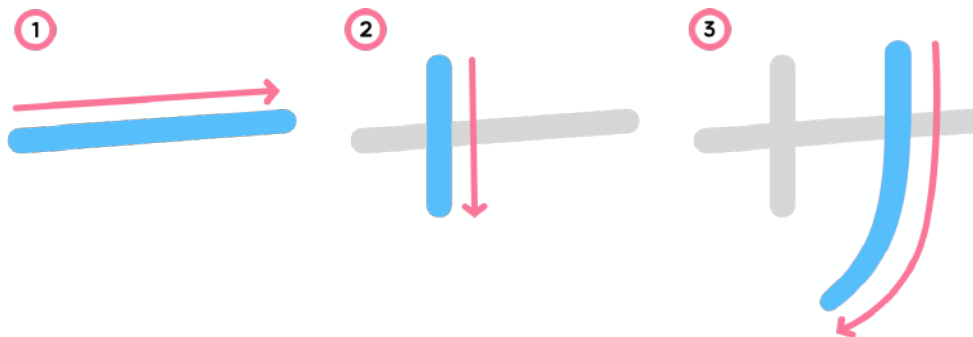
サ is the katakana for さ (sa).

HOW TO REMEMBER サ

Look at these two fish that are hanging on a skewer. The small one is a sardine and the bigger one is a salmon. You can tell that by the size difference.

You can also remember this is sa because fish are called さかな (sakana) in Japanese.

PRACTICE WRITING サ



サ	サ	サ	サ				
サ	サ	サ	サ				



HOW TO PRONOUNCE シ

シ is the katakana for し (shi).

HOW TO REMEMBER シ

This kana looks like a smiley face, but something is wrong with it. Both eyes are sideways and stacked on top of each other like some deep sea fish. She has a very weird face.

PRACTICE WRITING シ



ス

HOW TO PRONOUNCE ス

ス is the katakana for す (su).

HOW TO REMEMBER ス

ス is the katakana for す (su).

What's that up there? It's Superman walking in the sky!

Wait — upon closer inspection, it's just his disembodied supersuit. ...W-Where the heck did he go naked?



PRACTICE WRITING ス



ス	ス	ス	ス
ス	ス	ス	ス

セ

せ

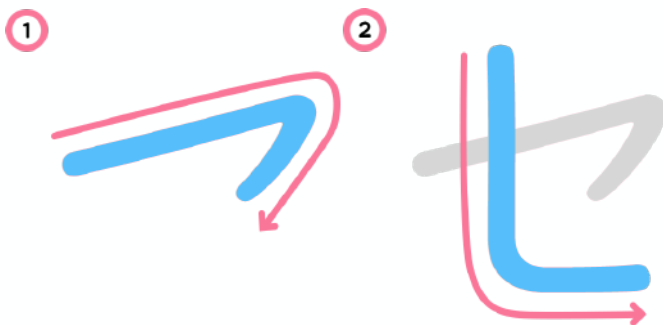
HOW TO PRONOUNCE セ

セ is the katakana for せ (se).

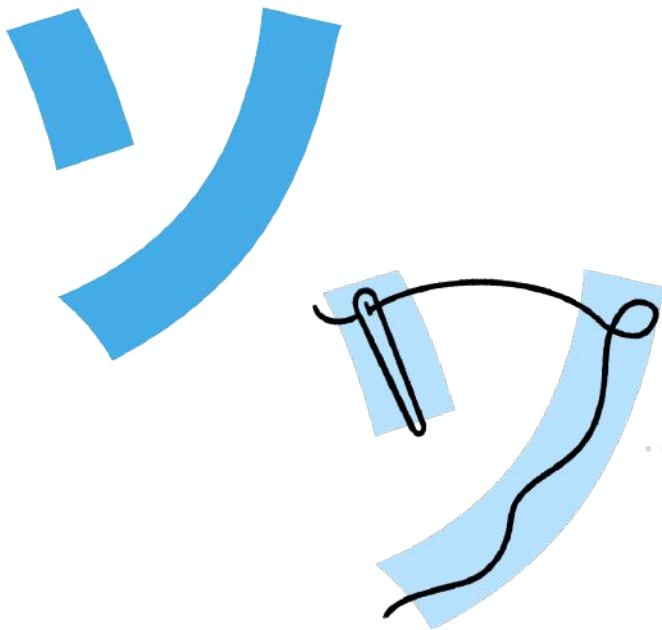
HOW TO REMEMBER セ

It looks really similar to the hiragana せ, so you should be able to use that to remember this kana.

PRACTICE WRITING セ



セ	セ	セ	セ				
セ	セ	セ	セ				



HOW TO PRONOUNCE ソ

ソ is the katakana for "so."

HOW TO REMEMBER ソ

It is one needle and a long thread, which you use to sew.

Remember, needles are always vertical like this needle, because you need to stab it through something, straight down. This will help you to differentiate this one and the very similar シ, the katakana for "n."

PRACTICE WRITING ソ

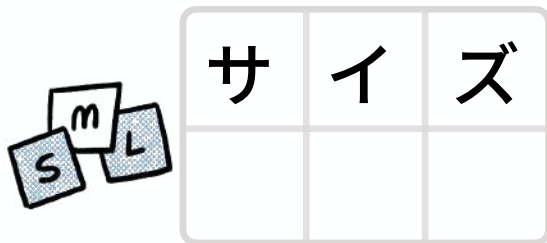


1 2							
ソ	ソ	ソ	ソ				

LET'S PRACTICE READING!

What's the reading? Write in romaji.

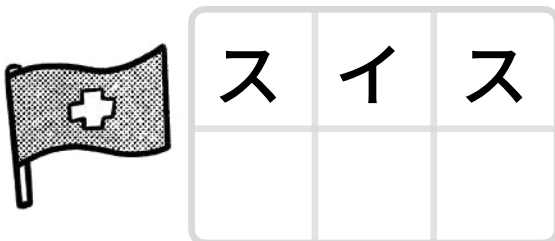
ソ	シ	サ	ス	セ	ソ	サ	シ	セ	ス



サイズ is size.



シアー is sheer.



スイス is Swiss.



セクシー is sexy.



ソイ is soy.

LET'S PRACTICE READING KATAKANA FROM A - K - S ROWS!

What's the reading? Write in romaji.

サ	ス	オ	ケ	ス	カ	ウ	ク	ア	キ

シ	イ	コ	エ	ア	サ	オ	ス	ソ	イ

キ	セ	ク	エ	セ	ウ	ケ	オ	シ	ソ

ア	ス	ク	イ	キ	ク	ウ	ク	コ	セ

ス	イ	カ	ケ	ク	ウ	エ	サ	オ	シ

ウ	ソ	ス	シ	イ	キ	ク	カ	エ	ケ

タ



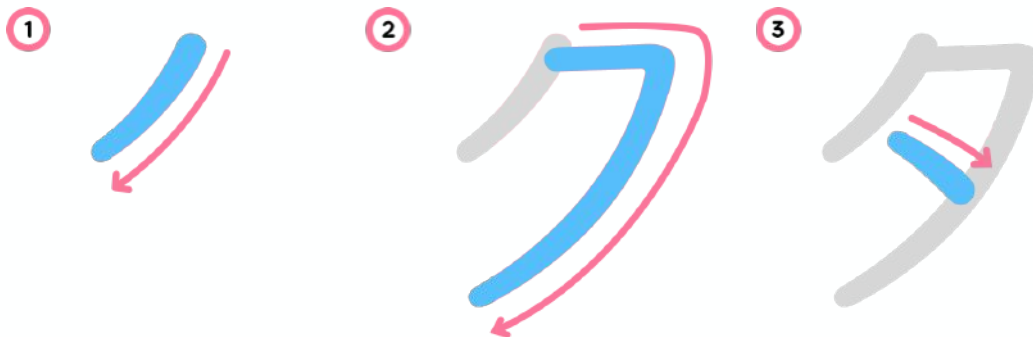
HOW TO PRONOUNCE タ

タ is the katakana for た (ta).

HOW TO REMEMBER タ

タ looks like a kite. Kites are called たこ (tako) in Japanese. This is actually a taco kite, too. It looks exactly like a giant taco flying high in the sky. Tacos are all the rage these days!

PRACTICE WRITING タ



タ	タ	タ	タ				
タ	タ	タ	タ				

チ



HOW TO PRONOUNCE チ

チ is the katakana for ち (chi).

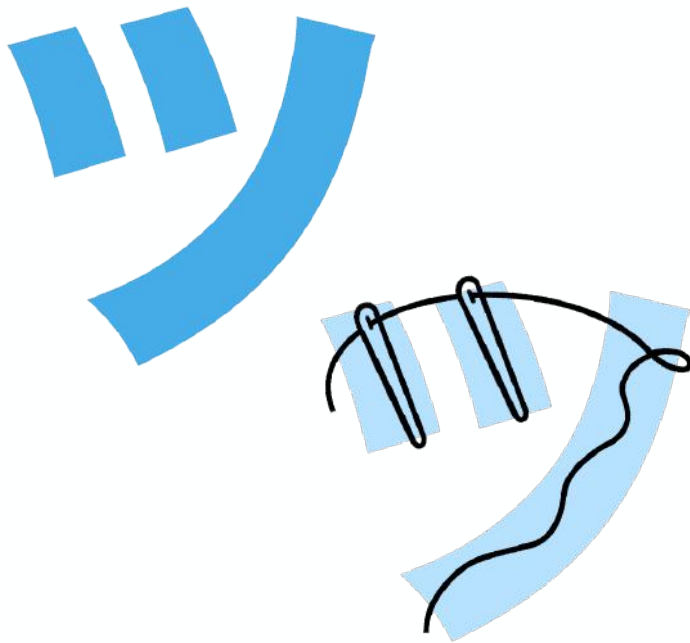
HOW TO REMEMBER チ

Doesn't this look like a cheerleader doing a cheer? Hope they don't fall over...

PRACTICE WRITING チ



チ	チ	チ	チ
チ	チ	チ	チ



HOW TO PRONOUNCE ツ

ツ is the katakana for つ (tsu).

HOW TO REMEMBER ツ

While ソ (so) had one needle and thread, ツ has two needles and thread.

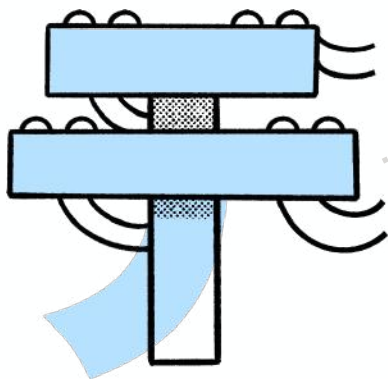
Remember, needles are vertical because you use them to stab into cloth, straight down. This will help you to differentiate this one from シ (shi), which has more horizontal lines. Horizontal lines means it's a face, vertical means it's needles. So this one has two needles.

PRACTICE WRITING ツ



1 2 3							
ツ	ツ	ツ	ツ				

テ



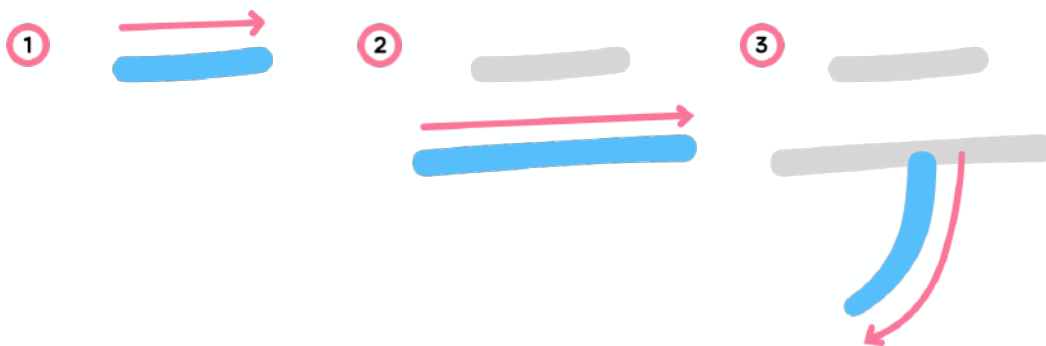
HOW TO PRONOUNCE テ

テ is the katakana for て (te).

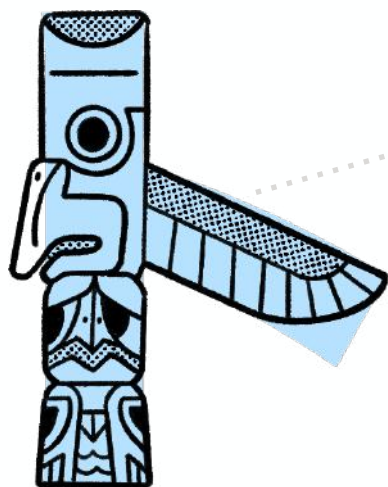
HOW TO REMEMBER テ

This kana looks like a telephone pole.

PRACTICE WRITING テ



ト



HOW TO PRONOUNCE ト

ト is the katakana for と (to).

HOW TO REMEMBER ト

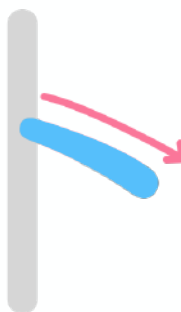
It looks just like a totem pole.

PRACTICE WRITING ト

1



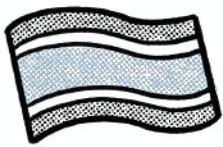
2



LET'S PRACTICE READING!

What's the reading? Write in romaji.

チ	タ	ツ	テ	ト	チ	タ	ツ	テ	ト



タ	イ

タイ is Thai
("Thailand" in Japanese).



チ	ア

チア is cheer.



タ	イ	ツ

タイツ is tights.



ソ	テ	ー

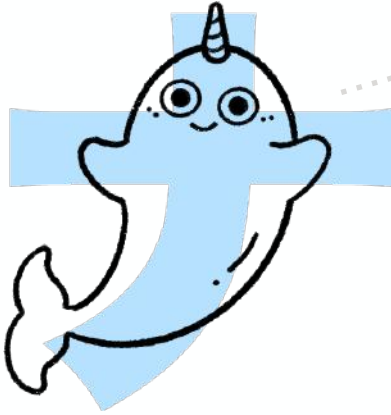
ソテー is sauté.



テ	ス	ト

テスト is test.

ナ



HOW TO PRONOUNCE ナ

ナ is the katakana for な (na).

HOW TO REMEMBER ナ

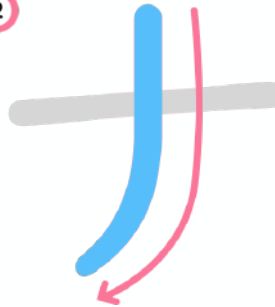
See the majestic narwhal, swimming up to the surface? What a beautiful creature.

PRACTICE WRITING ナ

①



②



ナ	ナ	ナ	ナ				
ナ	ナ	ナ	ナ				



HOW TO PRONOUNCE ニ

ニ is the katakana for に (ni).



HOW TO REMEMBER ニ

This is two needles, laying on their side. Now, don't get confused about how I said that needles are always vertical... that's only with the katakana that have the slope in them (ㇿ and ㇾ). When they're on their own, resting, and not being used to sew anything (no thread), they're just two needles lying on their side.

PRACTICE WRITING ニ

①

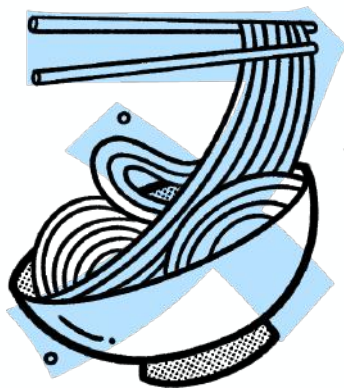


②



1 2			

ヌ



HOW TO PRONOUNCE ヌ

ヌ is the katakana for む (nu).

HOW TO REMEMBER ヌ

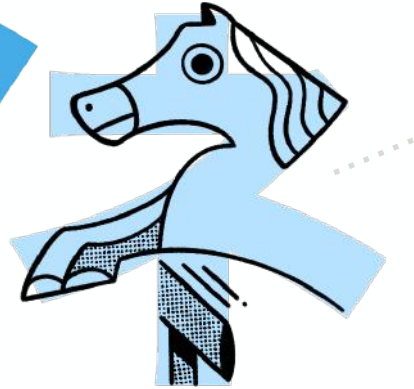
The chopsticks are grabbing some noodles and pulling them out of a bowl.

PRACTICE WRITING ヌ



ヌ	ヌ	ヌ	ヌ
ヌ	ヌ	ヌ	ヌ

ネ



HOW TO PRONOUNCE ネ

ネ is the katakana for ね (ne).

HOW TO REMEMBER ネ

Look, this kana looks like a horse (neigh!) jumping over a hurdle. Never gamble, kids!

PRACTICE WRITING ネ

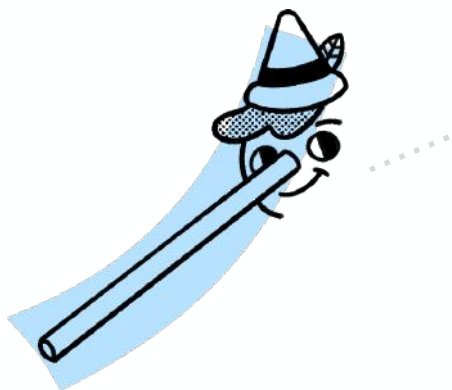


ネ	ネ	ネ	ネ
ネ	ネ	ネ	ネ



HOW TO PRONOUNCE ノ

ノ is the katakana for の (no).



HOW TO REMEMBER ノ

It looks like a really long nose.

PRACTICE WRITING ノ

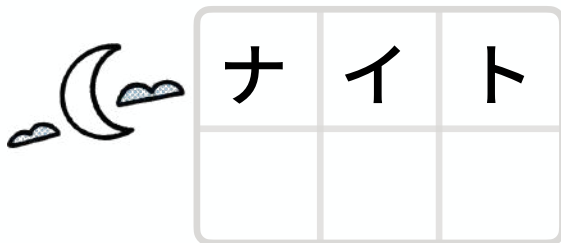
1



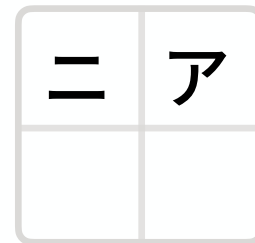
LET'S PRACTICE READING!

What's the reading? Write in romaji.

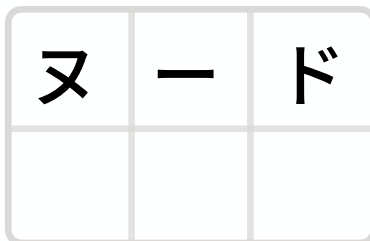
ナ	ニ	ノ	ネ	ヌ	ニ	ノ	ナ	ヌ	ネ



ナイト is night.



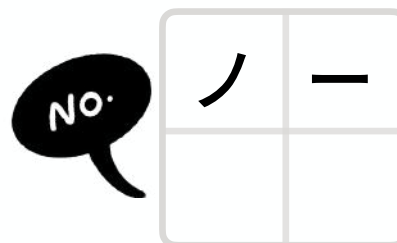
ニア is near.



ヌード is nude.



ネクスト is next.



ノー is "No."



HOW TO PRONOUNCE ハ

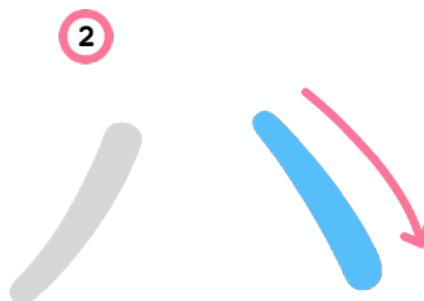
ハ is the katakana for は (ha).

HOW TO REMEMBER ハ

This is shaped like one of those rice paddy hats. You'll have to connect the pieces, but you can see it, right?



PRACTICE WRITING ハ



1	2						

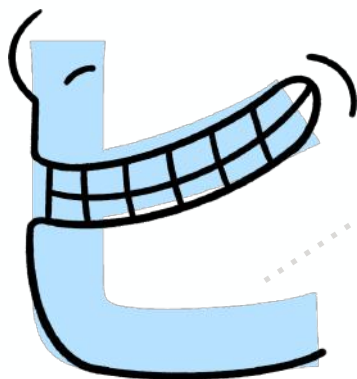
ヒ

HOW TO PRONOUNCE ヒ

ヒ is the katakana for ひ (hi).

HOW TO REMEMBER ヒ

He is saying "heehee." Can you see his cheeky grin?

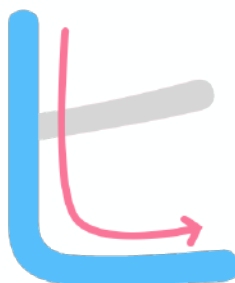


PRACTICE WRITING ヒ

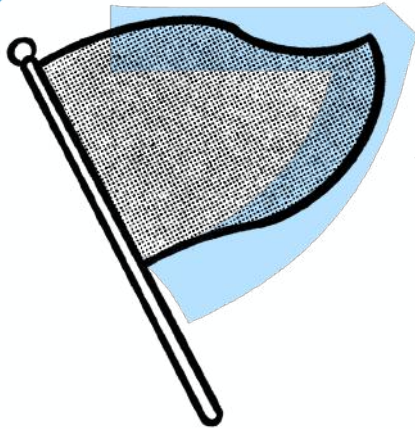
①



②



フ



HOW TO PRONOUNCE フ

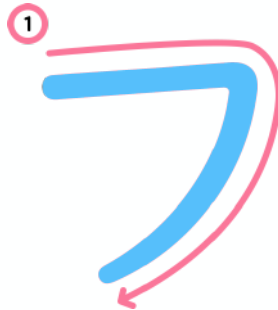
フ is the katakana for ふ (fu).

HOW TO REMEMBER フ

フ looks like a flag that's triangle-shaped. Hooray for the triangle flag!

You'll need to use your imagination to add the stick/flagpole, but you'll know フ is a flag waving in the wind when you see that triangle shape.

PRACTICE WRITING フ

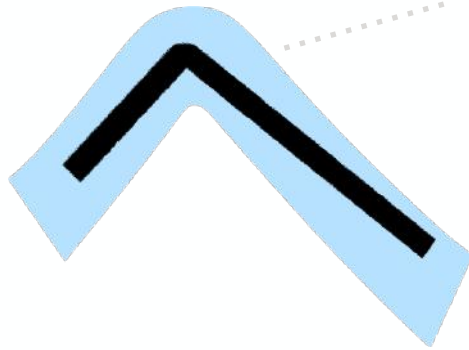


フ	フ	フ	フ				
フ	フ	フ	フ				



HOW TO PRONOUNCE ^

^ is the katakana for ^ (he).



HOW TO REMEMBER ^

This katakana looks just like the hiragana ^. If you know one, you know them both!

PRACTICE WRITING ^

1



ホ

HOW TO PRONOUNCE ホ

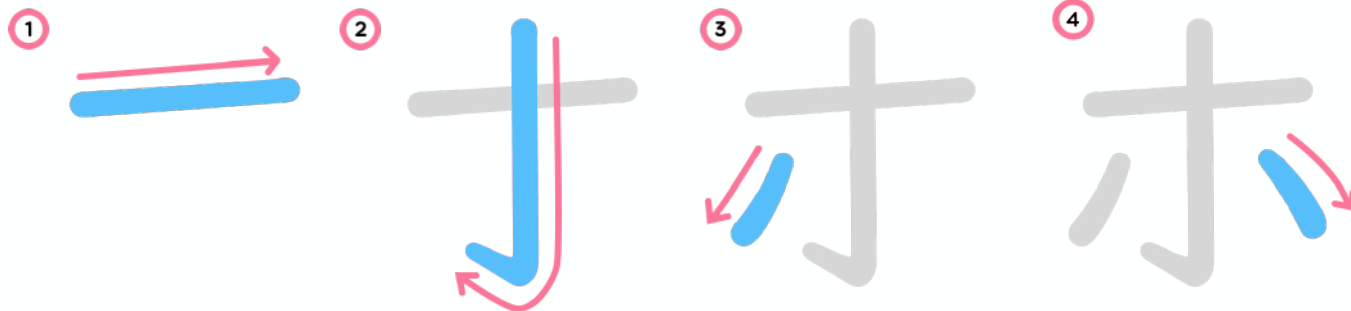
ホ is the katakana for ほ (ho).

HOW TO REMEMBER ホ

This is a holy cross. You can even see holy light coming off of it. So holy.



PRACTICE WRITING ホ



ホ	ホ	ホ	ホ				
ホ	ホ	ホ	ホ				

LET'S PRACTICE READING!

What's the reading? Write in romaji.

ヘ	フ	ヒ	ホ	ハ	ヒ	ヘ	フ	ホ	ハ



ハ	エ

ハエ means fly in Japanese.



コ	ー	ヒ	ー

コーヒー is coffee.



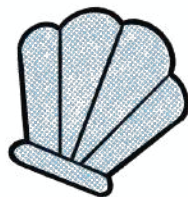
タ	フ

タフ is tough.



ヘ	イ

ヘイ is "hey".



ホ	タ	テ

ホタテ means scallop in Japanese.

LET'S PRACTICE READING KATAKANA FROM T - N - H ROWS!

What's the reading? Write in romaji.

ナ	ツ	ト	フ	ニ	チ	ホ	ネ	タ	テ

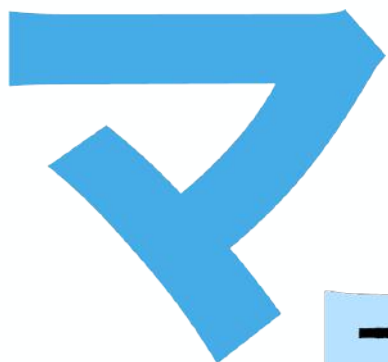
ヌ	ノ	ヒ	ハ	ナ	ホ	チ	テ	ニ	フ

タ	ヌ	テ	ト	ツ	ニ	ヘ	ナ	フ	ネ

ツ	ノ	ナ	ネ	ハ	ニ	ト	ヌ	ホ	ヒ

ヘ	ヒ	チ	ヌ	フ	ナ	ホ	タ	ニ	ネ

ト	ナ	ヒ	フ	ハ	ネ	ツ	ニ	ネ	ノ

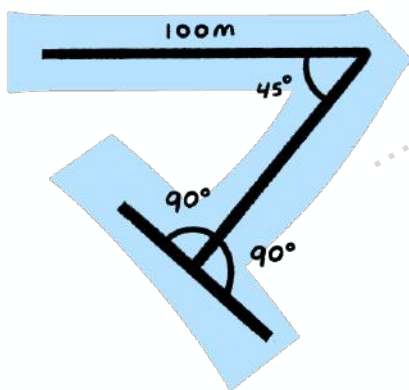


HOW TO PRONOUNCE マ

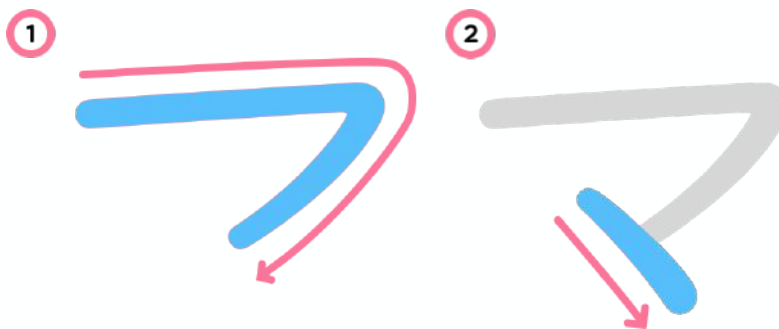
マ is the katakana for ま (ma).

HOW TO REMEMBER マ

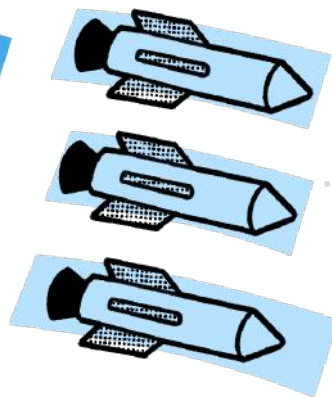
Look at all those angles! Those lengths! Those measurements! All that math!



PRACTICE WRITING マ



マ	マ	マ	マ				
マ	マ	マ	マ				



HOW TO PRONOUNCE め

め is the katakana for み (mi).

HOW TO REMEMBER め

Three missiles, flying towards you.
Be careful!

PRACTICE WRITING め

1



2



3



ム

HOW TO PRONOUNCE ム

ム is the katakana for む (mu).



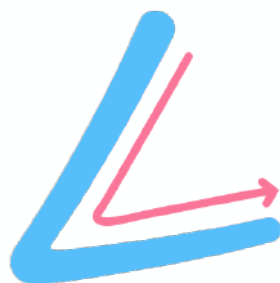
HOW TO REMEMBER ム

It is shaped like a cow's friendly face.

Look at that snout! Moo!

PRACTICE WRITING ム

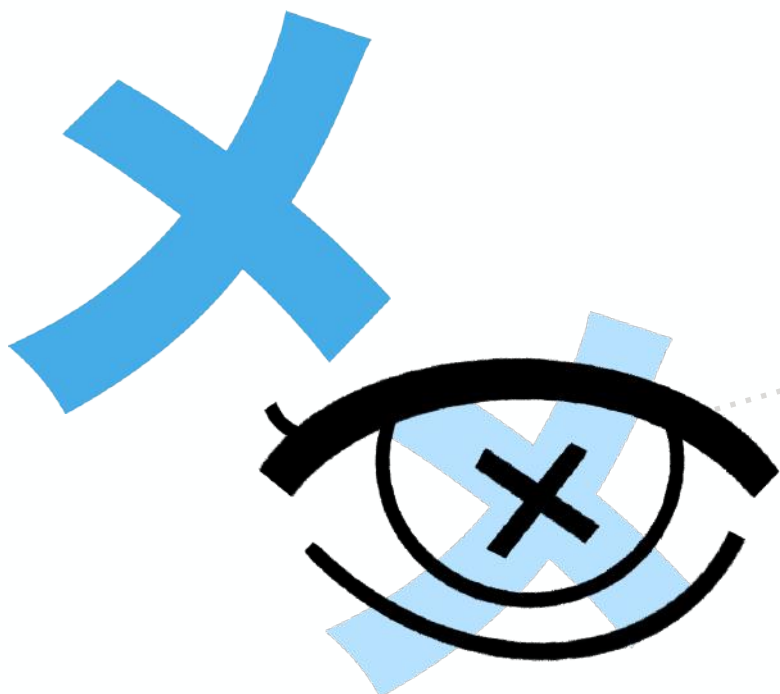
①



②



ム	ム	ム	ム				
ム	ム	ム	ム				



HOW TO PRONOUNCE X

X is the katakana for め (me).

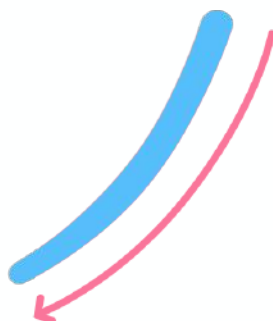
HOW TO REMEMBER X

This looks like an "X" over someone's 目 (め) – "eye" in Japanese.

Meh, I guess they're dead now.

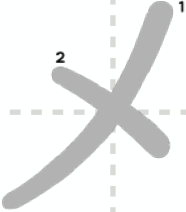


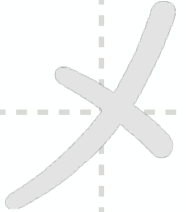




PRACTICE WRITING X

1



2



モ

モ

HOW TO PRONOUNCE モ

モ is the katakana for も (mo).

HOW TO REMEMBER モ

This looks very similar to the hiragana も, so you should be able to make that connection and remember both of these.

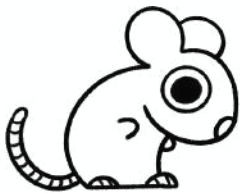
PRACTICE WRITING モ



LET'S PRACTICE READING!

What's the reading? Write in romaji.

メ	マ	ミ	モ	ム	ミ	メ	ム	モ	マ



マ	ウ	ス

マウス is mouse.



ミ	ミ	ズ

ミミズ means earthworm in Japanese.



ム	ー	ビ	ー

ムービー is movie.

メ	モ



メモ is memo.

モ	イ	ス	ト

モイスト is moist.



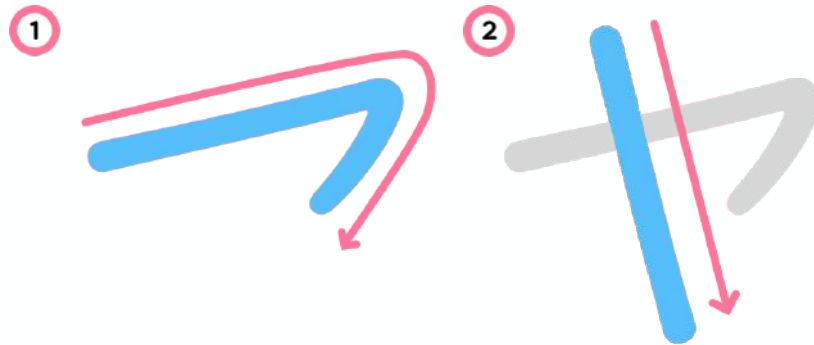
HOW TO PRONOUNCE ヤ

ヤ is the katakana for や (ya).

HOW TO REMEMBER ヤ

This looks just like the hiragana や, minus a little line.

PRACTICE WRITING ヤ



ヤ	ヤ	ヤ	ヤ
ヤ	ヤ	ヤ	ヤ

ユ

HOW TO PRONOUNCE ュ

ユ is the katakana for ュ (yu).

HOW TO REMEMBER ュ

You have a hook for a hand. What are you, a pirate?

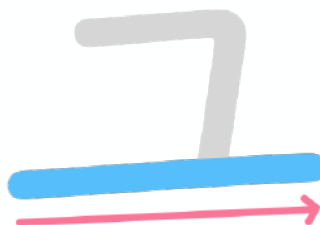


PRACTICE WRITING ュ

①



②



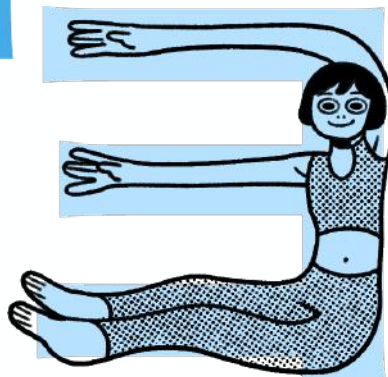
E

HOW TO PRONOUNCE E

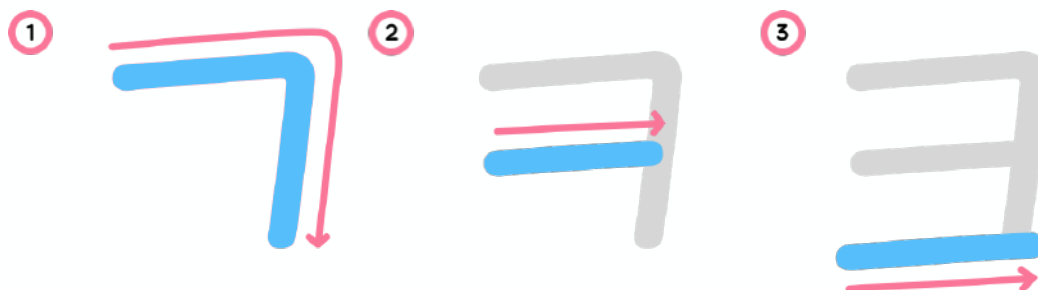
E is the katakana for ヱ (yo).

HOW TO REMEMBER E

See how this kana looks like someone doing yoga? Only a yogi could bend into such a boxy position.



PRACTICE WRITING E



<div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>3</div>			

LET'S PRACTICE READING!

What's the reading? Write in romaji.

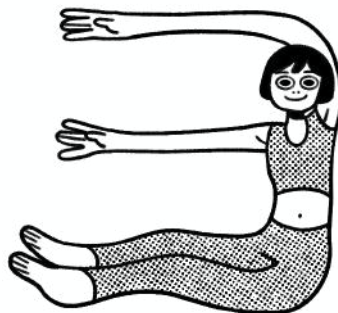
ヨ	ユ	ヤ	ヨ	ヤ	ユ	ヨ	ヤ	ユ	ヤ

ヤ	ク	ザ

ヤクザ is yakuza
(Japanese gangs).

ユ	ニ	ー	ク

ユニーク is unique.



ヨ	ガ

ヨガ is yoga.

ラ

HOW TO PRONOUNCE ラ

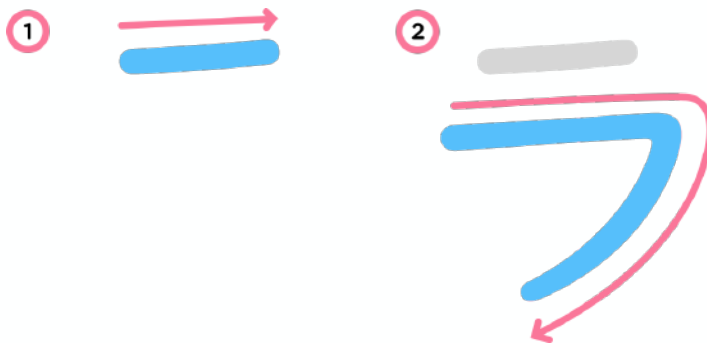
ラ is the katakana for ら (ra).

HOW TO REMEMBER ラ

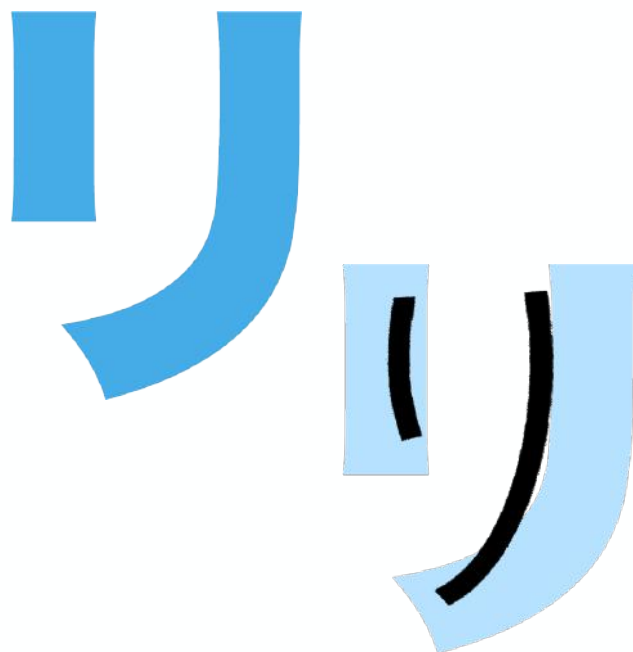
It is a raptor wearing some sweet sunglasses like a rapper.



PRACTICE WRITING ラ



ラ	ラ	ラ	ラ				
ラ	ラ	ラ	ラ				



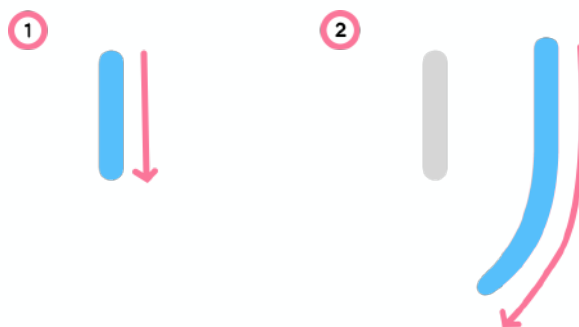
HOW TO PRONOUNCE リ

リ is the katakana for り (ri).

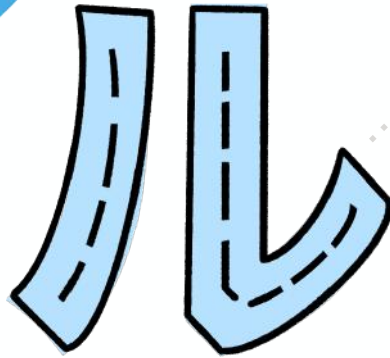
HOW TO REMEMBER リ

It looks just like the hiragana り, or at least very, very similar.

PRACTICE WRITING リ



ル



HOW TO PRONOUNCE ル

ル is the katakana for る (ru).

HOW TO REMEMBER ル

There are two routes you can take:
Route One and Route Two.

PRACTICE WRITING ル

①



②



ル	ル	ル	ル				
ル	ル	ル	ル				

レ

HOW TO PRONOUNCE レ

レ is the katakana for れ (re).

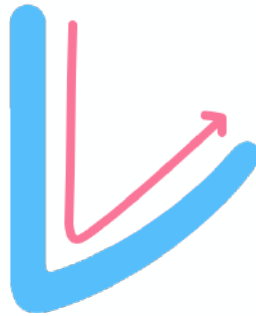
HOW TO REMEMBER レ

Look at that beautiful red hair that Rei has! It's so flowy!

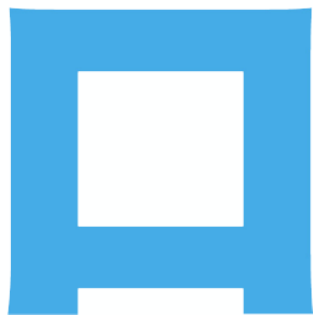


PRACTICE WRITING レ

1



レ	レ	レ	レ				
レ	レ	レ	レ				

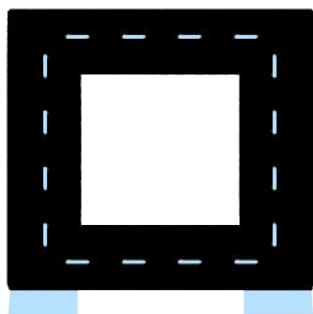


HOW TO PRONOUNCE □

□ is the katakana for ゾ (ro).

HOW TO REMEMBER □

This road goes around in a square, never ending. What a terrible road this is. What are you, a twelve-year-old playing Sim City?



PRACTICE WRITING □

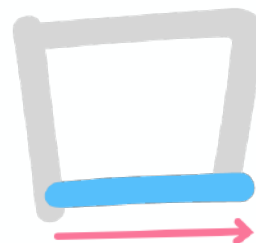
1



2



3



LET'S PRACTICE READING!

What's the reading? Write in romaji.

リ	ラ	ロ	ル	レ	リ	ロ	ル	ラ	レ

ラ	ッ	キ	ー

ラッキー is lucky.

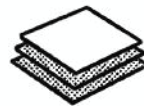
リ	サ	イ	ク	ル

リサイクル is recycle.



ル	ア	ー

ルアー is lure (fake bait).



レ	イ	ヤ	ー

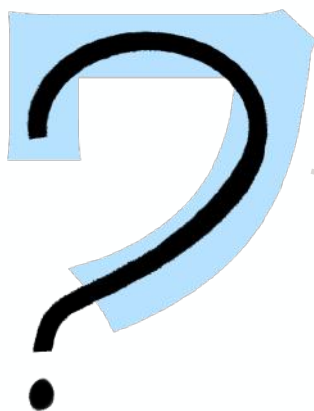
レイヤー is layer.



ロ	イ	ヤ	ル

ロイヤル is royal.

ワ



HOW TO PRONOUNCE ワ

ワ is the katakana for わ (wa).

HOW TO REMEMBER ワ

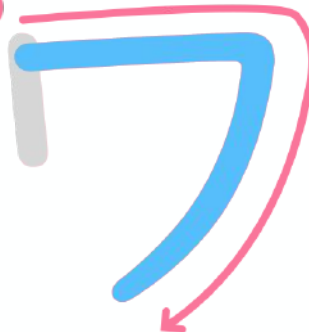
This kana looks like a question mark. When you ask a question, you often begin with the word what. What are you doing? What are you wearing? What are you not wearing?

PRACTICE WRITING ワ

1

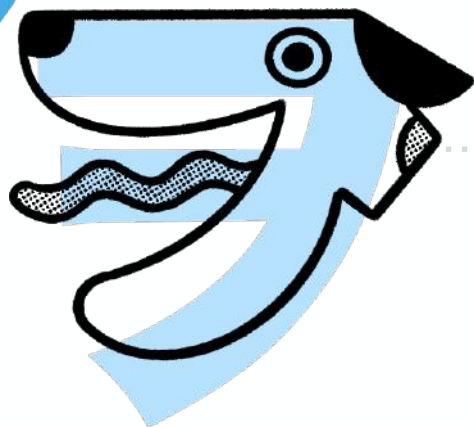


2



ワ	ワ	ワ	ワ				
ワ	ワ	ワ	ワ				

ヲ



HOW TO PRONOUNCE ヲ

ヲ is the katakana for を (wo). That means, it's pronounced like お (o)!

HOW TO REMEMBER ヲ

To remember ヲ is "wo," think of a dog woofing so hard its tongue is flying out. "Oh!" you exclaim, taken aback by this dog's tongue.

PRACTICE WRITING ヲ



<div>1 3</div> <div>2</div>			



HOW TO PRONOUNCE ッ

ッ is the katakana for ん (n).
Sometimes, when it comes before
certain sounds, it's pronounced like m
too.

HOW TO REMEMBER ッ

Do you remember how シ is a lady
with a weird face? The two little
dashes are more horizontal than
vertical, which helps us to know it's a
face.

So, what about ッ? It's a man who has
only one eye. Mnnnnnnn, but why
only one eye, you ask? Don't ask, I
don't know.

PRACTICE WRITING ッ



LET'S PRACTICE READING!

What's the reading? Write in romaji.

ヨ	ン	ワ	ン	ワ	ヨ	ン	ン	ワ	ヨ


ワ	イ	ン



ワイン is wine.



サ	ン	シャ	イ	ン



サンシャイン is sunshine.

ワ	ン	タ	ン

ワンタン is wonton
(a Chinese dumpling).

LET'S PRACTICE READING KATAKANA FROM M - Y - R - W ROWS!

What's the reading? Write in romaji.

リ	ミ	ル	ロ	ユ	ル	ヲ	ヨ	ヤ	マ
ン	レ	ヤ	ル	ム	ユ	リ	ワ	ル	レ
ヨ	ル	ン	ヤ	メ	レ	ン	ユ	リ	モ
ラ	ロ	メ	レ	ヤ	ン	ワ	ル	ミ	ユ
ル	リ	ラ	マ	モ	レ	ロ	ン	ヤ	モ
レ	ム	ユ	リ	ン	メ	ヨ	ロ	リ	ラ

LEARN VARIATION KATAKANA

Congratulations! You've learned all the basic katakana. Now it's time for you to learn about "variation" katakana.

DAKUTEN & HAN-DAKUTEN

Remember how we can change kana pronunciation with dakuten (this double quotation mark-looking symbol: `) and han-dakuten (this little circle: °)? They work with katakana too.

	K → G		S → Z		T → D		H → B		P
ア A	カ KA	ガ GA	サ SA	ザ ZA	タ TA	ダ DA	ハ HA	バ BA	パ PA
イ I	キ KI	ギ GI	シ SHI	ジ JI	チ CHI	ヂ JI (DI)	ヒ HI	ビ BI	ピ PI
ウ U	ク KU	グ GU	ス SU	ズ ZU	ツ TSU	ヅ ZU (DU)	フ FU	ブ BU	プ PU
エ E	ケ KE	ゲ GE	セ SE	ゼ ZE	テ TE	デ DE	ヘ HE	ベ BE	ペ PE
オ O	コ KO	ゴ GO	ソ SO	ゾ ZO	ト TO	ド DO	ホ HO	ボ BO	ポ PO

What's unique about dakuten katakana is that you can dakuten ウ, turning it into ヴ. ヴ represents the "vu" sound, and is used for transcribing v-sounds (we'll talk more

about this later in the combination katakana section).

ウ U	→	ヴ BU (VU)
--------	---	--------------

You can technically dakuten う in hiragana too (which would be っ), but doing so in katakana is much more common. That's because

v-sounds aren't traditionally used in Japanese, so you see this in katakana a lot more. Be aware that although ヴ is the character for "vu," it actually sounds more like "bu" (ブ) because a lot of Japanese speakers are not used to pronouncing v-sounds.

COMBINATION KATAKANA

Now, do you remember the two components you use for combination kana? These work the same way with katakana as they do with hiragana.

1) Kana from the イ (I) row.

2) The small ヤ - ュ - ヨ.

However, combinations don't stop here with katakana. There are a lot more combinations in katakana that we can use to represent sounds not traditionally available in Japanese. Some combinations are less common than the others, but another set you can combine is:

1) Kana from the ウ (U) row — especially ヲ, ウ, フ, and ツ.

2) The small ア - イ - ウ - エ - オ.

	ヴ	ウ	フ	ツ
ア	ヴァ BWA (VA)		ファ FA	ツァ TZA (TSA)
イ	ヴィ BWI (VI)	ウィ WI	フィ FI	ツイ TZI (TSI)
ウ	ヴ BU (VU)	ウ U	フ FU	ツ TSU
エ	ヴェ BWE (VE)	ウェ WE	フェ FE	ツェ TZE (TSE)
オ	ヴォ BWO (VO)	ウオ WO (UXO)	フォ FO	ツォ TZO (TSO)

Combination katakana that use ヲ (ヴァ - ヴィ - ヴェ - ヴォ) are pronounced more like b-sounds or bw-sounds, though they are often used to represent v-sounds such as ヲイオリン (violin) and ヲジュアル (visual).

ウ-sounds are sort of making up for the missing w-sounds (since the w-column only has フ and ヲ), and are used for words like ウィンドウ (window) and ウェンズデー (Wednesday). To type ウォ, type ウ ("U") and the small オ ("XO") separately.

フ-sounds are pretty straightforward — they are used for f-sounds to represent words like ファン (fan) and フィッシュ (fish).

ツ-sounds are less common, but are used for tz/ts sounds. They often appear when transliterating Italian "z" sounds like モツツアレラ (Mozzarella) as well as Chinese "ts" or "tz" sounds. Note that you use "ts" on the keyboard when typing those ツ-sounds.

In addition to the combination sets that we've talked about so far, there are a few more scattered sounds you can make with combination katakana using the small vowels.

Here's the rest of the common ones.

ティ TI (THI)	party
ディ DI (DHI)	candy
トゥ TWU	<u>two</u>
ドウ DWU	<u>do</u>

シェ SHE	<u>shell</u>
ジェ JE	<u>jelly</u>
チェ CHE	<u>check</u>

Are you getting the gist of it? Don't worry if you are still taking it all in.

The most important thing right now is to be able to read these extra combinations and know they exist. You'll see some of these pretty often, which means that through experience they will feel more natural to you. It's just one of those things you have to use and experience to become comfortable with it.

LONG VOWELS (ー)

You've already seen this dash earlier in the reading exercises. Unlike hiragana, which deals with long vowels by repeating the vowel, katakana has a special vowel extender character, a dash. When you see this, you'll just need to extend the vowel that it comes after.

For example, "cheese" is pronounced like "chiizu." To represent that in katakana, you write チーズ. If this didn't have the dash and looked like チズ, it'd be pronounced "chizu" and mean "map" in Japanese, instead of delicious "cheese."

You'll see this dash a lot in katakana. It can be challenging at first to guess how to spell words with it, but with a lot of experience, you'll start to understand when and how to use it. For now, just focus on reading it correctly. That part is much easier, and that is the part that will give you the experience you need to reproduce it later on.

LET'S PRACTICE READING ALL THE KATAKANA!

What's the reading? Write in romaji.

ボクシング

チャンピオン

トリオ

タイ

カード

リスニング

メッセンジャー

イン

アクセサリー

オレンジ

カード

ルック

クラシック

コミュニケーション

アイディア

プラスティック

レストラン

フィードバック

ハイブリッド

センチメンタル

レギュラー

LET'S PRACTICE READING ALL THE KATAKANA!

What's the reading? Write in romaji.

ヴォーグ

フィレンツェ

フォーム

ポパイ

トゥモロー

ウェイター

ディスコ

アット

ティーンズ

アップル

ホラー

スプーン

センター

ジャーナリスト

ロマネスコ

チェーン

リアクション

ルーティーン

コンピューター

オートマティック

ラッキー

WHAT'S NEXT?

Here are some recommendations for what you can do to keep moving forward with your Japanese proficiency.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICE

Tofugu's online kana quiz tool <https://kana-quiz.tofugu.com> will be handy for additional katakana practice too! Just like you (hopefully) did for your hiragana learning, try spacing out your practice. That will help you retain the knowledge in the long term. If you feel like you can use some more hiragana help, mixing in some hiragana reviews during your katakana practice is a good idea too. That will help you solidify both your hiragana and katakana knowledge!

LEARN KANJI (& JAPANESE VOCABULARY)

Tofugu has an online platform for learning kanji (characters of Chinese origin) and Japanese vocabulary called WaniKani (wanikani.com). Now you've gone through all the katakana, it would be a good time to start studying kanji.

Kanji can be intimidating, because they're complicated and unfamiliar to a lot of learners. But WaniKani makes it easy by breaking them down into parts and giving you memory hints (a.k.a. mnemonics) to help you associate their shapes with their meanings and readings.

WaniKani also uses SRS (Spaced Repetition System) for its flashcard feature. It automatically spaces out your practice so that everything you learn sticks better to your brain. You can learn about 2,000 kanji and more than 6,000 words using WaniKani. If you're fast, you can do that in a little over a year! Try the first three levels for free and see if it works for you.

...This is the end of Tofugu's Learn Katakana Book. We hope to see you around on your Japanese learning journey!