

Japanese Writing 書き方

THE JAPANESE HOUSE ACTIVITIES



Learn about Japanese writing and give it a try yourself!

TIME:
25 minutes

- MATERIALS:**
- Video: *Many Homes in Kyoto, Japan—Ran*
 - *Kanji and Hiragana* activity worksheets

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE:
Kanji: *Kah-n-gee*
Hiragana: *Hee-rah-gah-nah*
Katakana: *Kah-tah-kah-nah*

1. Learn about Japanese Writing

In Japanese, there are three writing systems called *Hiragana*, *Katakana*, and *Kanji*. *Hiragana* and *Katakana* are both made up of 46 basic letters. Each of these letters represents one syllable. *Hiragana* is used to write Japanese words, and *Katakana* is often used to write words from foreign languages. Japanese children start learning to write with *Hiragana* and *Katakana* in first grade.

Kanji, originally from China, is the writing system made of thousands of characters. Each character represents specific meaning. By putting characters together, you get new words with new meanings. Once first grade students have mastered *Hiragana* and *Katakana*, they start learning *Kanji*, but that takes a lot longer. By sixth grade, students will have learned 1,000 characters; to read newspapers, it's said you need to know 2,000 *Kanji* characters.

Besides these three writing systems, *Rōmaji*, the romanization of Japanese, is also commonly used.

Hiragana あ い う え お

Katakana ア イ ウ エ オ

Romaji a i u e o

Kanji 一 + 人 = 一人
ichi (one) *hito* (person) *hitori* (one person or alone)



2. Practice Writing in Japanese

1. Watch the chapter “Ran” in the video “Many Homes in Kyoto, Japan” and find her calligraphy done in brush and ink.
2. Review stroke orders in the activity sheets.

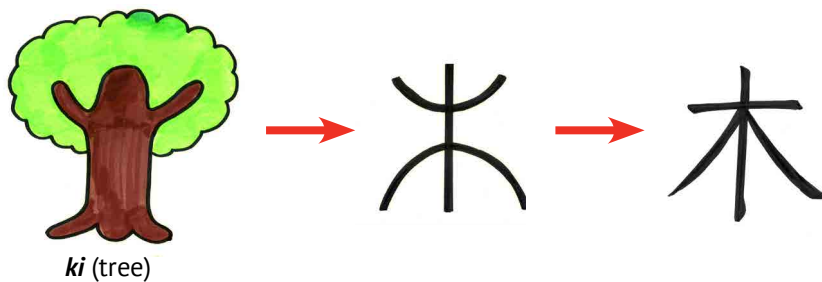
Stroke order is important: it often helps one to remember how to write letters and characters correctly, especially those with many strokes. In general, stroke order goes from top to bottom and from left to right.

3. Follow the stroke order and trace the dotted line.
4. Write on your own in the empty boxes. Remember to follow the stroke orders!

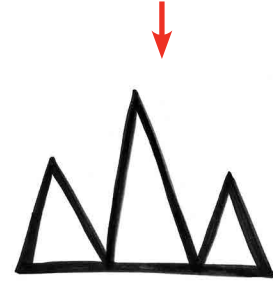
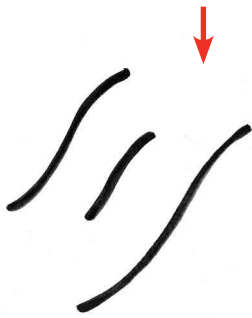
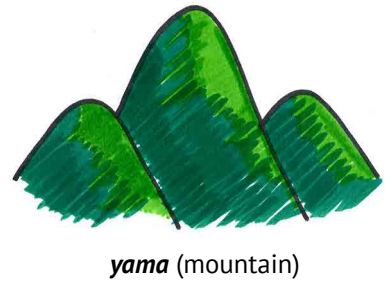
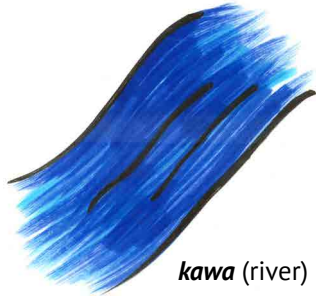


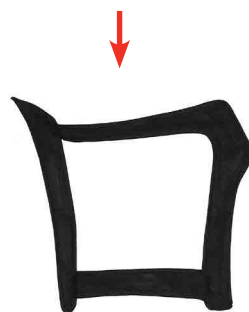
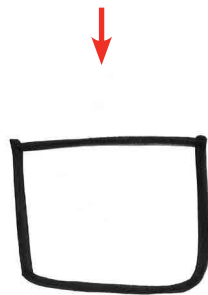
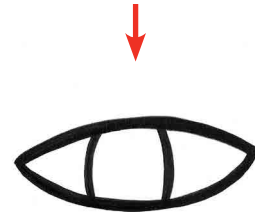
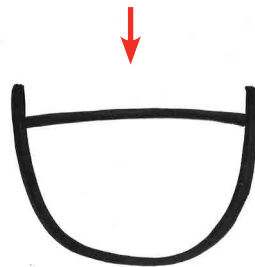
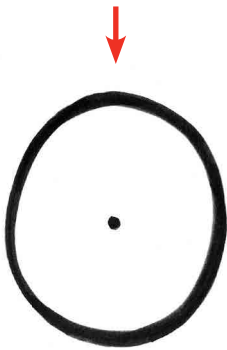
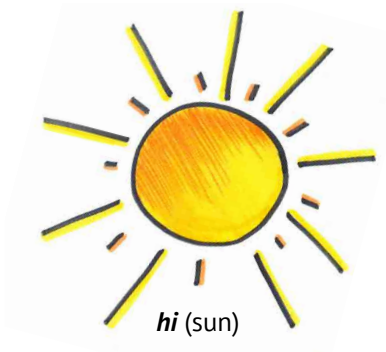
3. Things to Talk about

- If you want to learn more about Japanese writing, here are some books you might like!
 - Jimi's Book of Japanese: A Motivating Method To Learn Japanese (*Hiragana*), by Peter X. Takahashi
 - Jimi's Book of Japanese: A Motivating Method To Learn Japanese (*Katakana*), by Peter X. Takahashi
- To see more *Hiragana*, *Katakana*, and *Romaji*, check out the chart on page 4.
- *Kanji* developed from pictures of the words they represented. For example, below is how the *Kanji* character *ki* (tree) was developed. See more *Kanji* evolution on pages 5 and 6.



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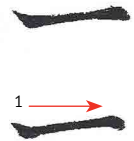
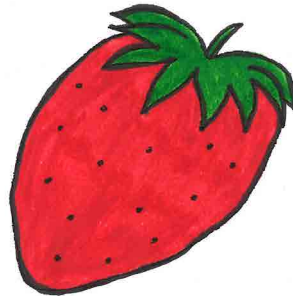
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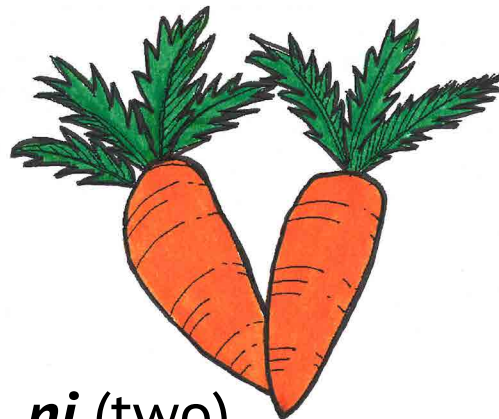
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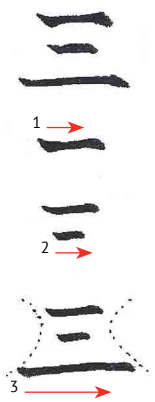
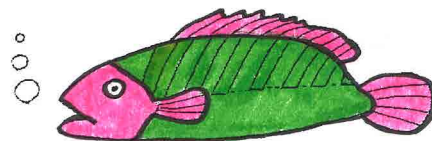
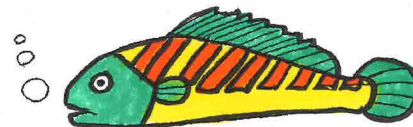
ichi (one)

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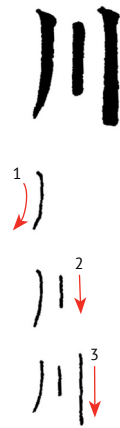
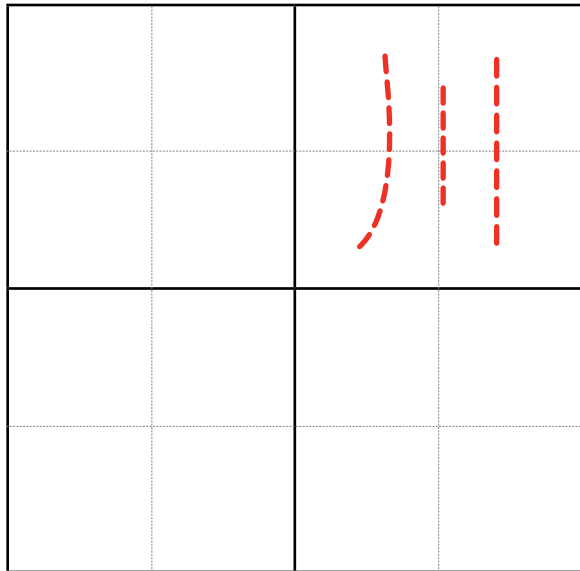


ni (two)

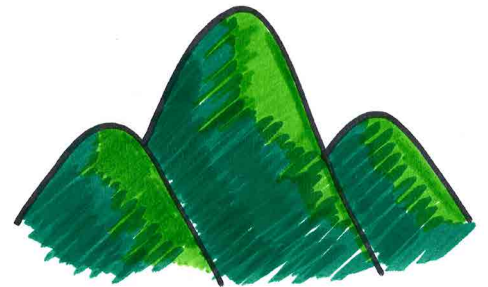
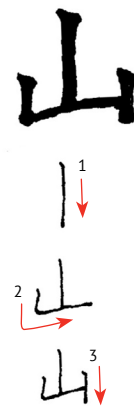
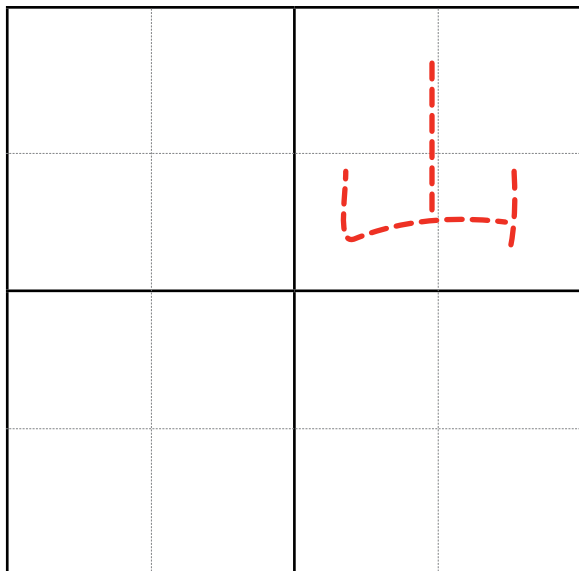
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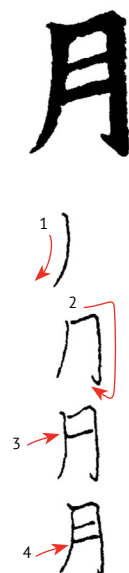
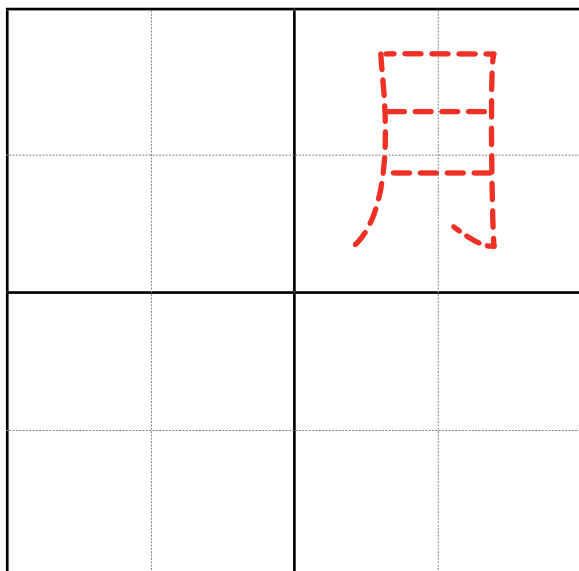
san (three)



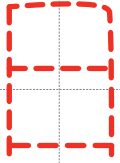
kawa (river)

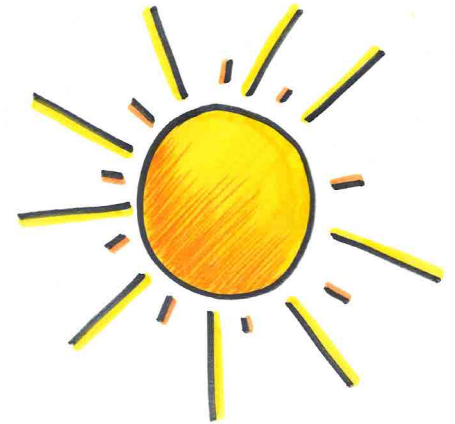
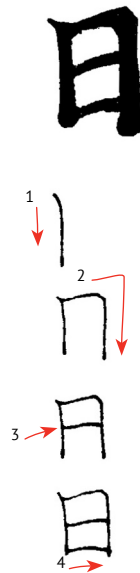


yama (mountain)

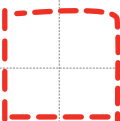


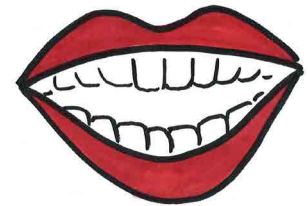
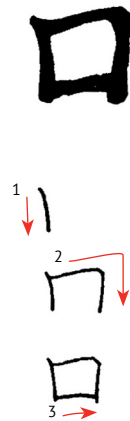
tsuki (moon)

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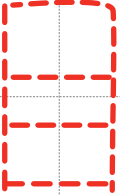


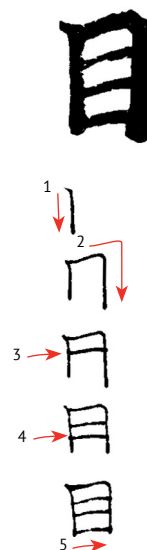
hi (sun)

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kuchi (mouth)

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me (eye)