

JP

HIRAGANA

Hiragana 1 · Chapter 12 · He Ho

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🌸 Finishing the H Row — へ ほ

Two characters complete the H row: へ (he) and ほ (ho). That makes **thirty characters**. Today you'll meet the second of the three special particles, へ, which is read e and means "to / toward", and you'll be able to build your first sentences with は and へ together.

	a	i	u	e	o
(vowels)	あ	い	う	え	お
k +	か	き	く	け	こ
s +	さ	し	す	せ	そ
t +	た	ち	つ	て	と
n +	な	に	ぬ	ね	の
h +	は	ひ	ふ	へ	ほ

Thirty down, sixteen to go. The M row comes next.

🌟 Two New Characters — へ ほ

he

like "he" in *hen*, short ("heh")

1 stroke · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: an arrow tip pointing up and to the right, *heading off toward* a destination.

ho

like "ho" in *hoe*, short and pure ("hoh")

4 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: Santa's "*Ho ho ho!*"; it's は's "Ha!" with an extra bar, a bigger laugh.

Look-Alike Warnings: ほ and は, へ and く

ほ and は are almost the same character. The difference is **one extra bar**: ほ (*ho*) has **two** short bars at the top, and は (*ha*) has **one**. That's also why ほ has 4 strokes and は has 3. へ and く are both simple angled strokes: へ (*he*) is **wide** and points up, whereas く (*ku*) is **tall and narrow** and points left.

Read It — New Words

With thirty characters, you can read all of these. Remember that each character is one beat.

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	へ	e	to, toward	<i>the particle; read "e"</i>
2	ほし	hoshi	star	<i>ho + shi</i>
3	ほか	hoka	other, else	<i>ho + ka</i>
4	ほね	hone	bone	<i>ho + ne</i>
5	ほお	hō	cheek	<i>a long "o": 2 beats</i>
6	ほしい	hoshii	want, would like	<i>an adjective, "(I) want it"</i>
7	ほそい	hosoi	thin, narrow	<i>an adjective</i>
8	ほとけ	hotoke	Buddha	<i>ho + to + ke</i>
9	へそ	heso	belly button	<i>he + so</i>
10	へた	heta	unskilled, poor at	<i>he + ta</i>
11	へい	hei	wall, fence	<i>a garden wall</i>

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
12	ほう	hō	direction; side	<i>used in comparisons later</i>

🔗 The Particle へ — Read as "e"

Just as は is read *wa*, the particle へ is read *e* and means "to / toward": A へ いく = "go to A". The character stays へ; only the reading changes. (Spaces are added to show the word breaks.)

JAPANESE	ROMAJI (AS SPOKEN)	ENGLISH
えき へ いく。	eki e iku.	(I) go to the station.
いえ へ いく。	ie e iku.	(I) go to the house.
そと へ いく。	soto e iku.	(I) go outside.
いぬ は いえ へ いく。	inu wa ie e iku.	The dog goes to the house.
ねこ は そと へ いく。	neko wa soto e iku.	The cat goes outside.

Real Japanese Tip — へ or に?

Japanese people often use に (*ni*) instead of へ with a place and a verb of movement: えき に いく and えき へ いく both mean "go to the station". As a beginner, you can think of へ as "toward" and に as "to / at the exact spot". You'll hear and read both, and nobody will mind which one you pick.

Real Japanese Tip — ほしい, "I Want It"

ほしい (*hoshii*) means "want" and it's very useful to know. A thing you want is "ほしい": ほしい? ("Do you want it?"), はい、ほしい! ("Yes, I want it!"). It's an い-adjective, like おいしい and ちいさい.

Mini-Dialogs

① Do You Want It? — ほしい？

A:

ほしい？

hoshii?

Do you want it?

B:

はい、ほしい！

hai, hoshii!

Yes, I want it!

② Where Do They Go? — いく

A:

いぬはいえへいく。

inu wa ie e iku.

The dog goes to the house.

B:

ねこは？

neko wa?

And the cat?

A:

ねこはそとへいく。

neko wa soto e iku.

The cat goes outside.

③ To the Station — えきへ

A:

ねえ、えきへいく？

nē, eki e iku?

Hey, are you going to the station?

B:

はい、いく！

hai, iku!

Yes, I'm going!

Review: Reading Back

Cover the English and read these again: はい (yes) · はな (flower; nose) · ひと (person) · ふね (ship) · ひこうき (aeroplane) · はこ (box) · はは (mother) · ひとつ (one thing) · ふたつ (two things) · ひくい (low) · ふく (clothes) · はなし (talk).

Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Say the whole H row in order: は ひ ふ へ ほ

▼ Show answer

ha · hi · fu · he · ho

2. How can you tell ほ from は?

▼ Show answer

ほ has two short bars at the top (4 strokes); は has one (3 strokes).

3. Read and translate: ほし · ほね · へそ

▼ Show answer

hoshi (star) · hone (bone) · heso (belly button)

4. Write in hiragana: hoshii (want) · hoka (other) · heta (unskilled)

▼ Show answer

ほしい · ほか · へた

5. Read and translate: いぬ はい え へ いく。

▼ Show answer

"inu wa ie e iku": The dog goes to the house. (は is read *wa* and え is read *e*.)

6. How is ん pronounced when it's used as a particle, and what does it mean?

▼ Show answer

It's read *e*, and it means "to / toward".

Coming Up in Chapter 13

The M row begins: ま み む (ma, mi, mu). You'll then read うま (horse), みみ (ear), むし (insect) and まち (town). One more particle is waiting for the end of the course: を.