

JP

HIRAGANA

# Hiragana 1 · Chapter 17 · Re Ro

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# Hiragana 1

Chapter 17 · Re Ro

## 🌸 Finishing the R Row — れ ろ

Two characters complete the R row: れ (re) and ろ (ro). That makes **forty-three characters**, with only three left. Today completes the "this / that" word family (これ, それ, あれ), gives you the colours, and lets you read most of the numbers from 1 to 10.

|          | 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 |
| m +      | ま | み | む | め | も |
| y +      | や |   | ゆ |   | よ |
| r +      | ら | り | る | れ | ろ |

Forty-three down, three to go: わ, を and ん.

## ✨ Two New Characters — れ ろ

れ

re

ろ

ro

a tapped "r" + "eh", like "re" in *rest*, but quicker  
("reh")

2 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

**Memory hook:** a *rescue* worker with a long *cape* streaming out behind.

a tapped "r" + "oh", like "ro" in *road*, but quicker  
("roh")

1 stroke · [stroke order](#) ▶

**Memory hook:** a winding *road*, twisting twice on its way up the hill.

### Look-Alike Warnings: る and ろ, and the れ-ね-わ Cousins

る and ろ are the same shape, except る has a **loop** at the bottom (the kangaroo's pouch) and ろ **doesn't**. Check the loop every time. れ, ね and わ are three cousins that all start with a vertical line on the left. ね **ends in a loop**, whereas れ **ends in an open sweep**, and わ (next chapter) is a rounder cousin. We'll compare れ and わ side by side in Chapter 18.

## Read It — New Words

*With forty-three characters, you can read all of these. Remember that each character is one beat.*

| # | WORD | ROMAJI | ENGLISH         | NOTE                              |
|---|------|--------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | これ   | kore   | this (thing)    | <i>near me</i>                    |
| 2 | それ   | sore   | that (thing)    | <i>near you</i>                   |
| 3 | あれ   | are    | that over there | <i>far from both; also "Huh?"</i> |
| 4 | ろく   | roku   | six (6)         | <i>ro + ku</i>                    |
| 5 | れい   | rei    | zero (0)        | <i>re + i</i>                     |
| 6 | いろ   | iro    | colour          | <i>i + ro</i>                     |
| 7 | くろ   | kuro   | black           | <i>ku + ro</i>                    |

| #  | WORD | ROMAJI    | ENGLISH              | NOTE                        |
|----|------|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 8  | しろ   | shiro     | white                | <i>shi + ro</i>             |
| 9  | きいろ  | kiiro     | yellow               | <i>three beats: ki-i-ro</i> |
| 10 | ひろい  | hiroi     | wide, spacious       | <i>an adjective</i>         |
| 11 | ふるい  | furui     | old (not for people) | <i>an adjective</i>         |
| 12 | それから | sore kara | and then, after that | <i>so + re + ka + ra</i>    |

## Colours — いろ

You can now read five colours. Add **い** to turn a colour into an adjective that describes something: **あか** → **あかい** ("red").

| COLOUR (NOUN) | ROMAJI | ADJECTIVE | ENGLISH |
|---------------|--------|-----------|---------|
| あか            | aka    | あかい       | red     |
| あお            | ao     | あおい       | blue    |
| くろ            | kuro   | くろい       | black   |
| しろ            | shiro  | しろい       | white   |
| きいろ           | kiiro  | きいろい      | yellow  |

## Numbers You Can Read Now

Most of the numbers from 0 to 9 are written with characters you now know. Only 3, 5 and 10 are missing: they need ん, ご (a voiced sound) and a combined sound, which come later.

| NUMBER | HIRAGANA | ROMAJI        | NOTE                         |
|--------|----------|---------------|------------------------------|
| 0      | れい       | rei           | also ゼロ in katakana          |
| 1      | いち       | ichi          | Chapter 7                    |
| 2      | に        | ni            | just the one character       |
| 4      | し        | shi           | often said yon (よん) instead  |
| 6      | ろく       | roku          | new today                    |
| 7      | なな / しち  | nana / shichi | two readings                 |
| 8      | はち       | hachi         | ha + chi                     |
| 9      | く        | ku            | often said kyū (きゅう) instead |

### Real Japanese Tip — Unlucky Numbers: 4 and 9

The number 4 (し) sounds like the word for "death" (死), and 9 (く) can sound like "suffering" (苦), so Japanese speakers often avoid them. They say よん for 4 and きゅう for 9 instead. Some hospitals and apartment blocks even skip the 4th floor, and gift sets often come in threes and fives rather than fours.

### Real Japanese Tip — それから and これから

それから (sore kara) means "and then, after that", and it's the connector you'll use to tell a story in order. Its partner これから (kore kara) means "from now on" or "after this". You can read both already.

## Mini-Dialogs

### ① Is This a Cat? — これは？

A:

これはねこ？

*kore wa neko?*

Is this a cat?

B:

いいえ、いぬ。

*iiē, inu.*

No, a dog.

A:

そうか。

*sō ka.*

I see.

### ② Where's the Plate? — あれ？

A:

あれ？ さら、ない！

*are? sara, nai!*

Huh? The plate isn't here!

B:

そこにある。

*soko ni aru.*

It's there.

### ③ A White Dog — しろい いぬ

A:

あの いぬ、しろい ね。

*ano inu, shiroi ne.*

That dog over there is white, isn't it.

B:

ええ、しろい ね！

*ee, shiroi ne!*

Yes, it's white!

### Review: Reading Back

Cover the English and read these again: さくら (cherry blossom) · くるま (car) · そら (sky) · りす (squirrel) · とり (bird) · さら (plate) · ある (to be there) · いる (to be there, alive) · みる (to see) · のる (to ride) · つくる (to make) · かえる (to return).

## Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

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

1. Say the whole R row in order: ら り る れ ろ

▼ Show answer

ra · ri · ru · re · ro

2. How many strokes do れ and ろ have, and how can you tell ろ from る?

▼ Show answer

れ has 2, ろ has 1. る has a loop at the bottom; ろ doesn't.

3. Read and translate: これ · それ · あれ

▼ Show answer

kore (this, near me) · sore (that, near you) · are (that over there)

4. Write in hiragana: kuro (black) · shiro (white) · kiiro (yellow)

▼ Show answer

くろ · しろ · きいろ

5. Read these numbers: ろく · なな · はち · and write "2" in hiragana.

▼ Show answer

6 · 7 · 8, and 2 is に.

6. What does それから mean?

▼ Show answer

"And then" or "after that".

### Coming Up in Chapter 18

The last chapter: わ (wa), を (wo / o) and ん (n). You'll finish with わたし (I), にほん (Japan), こんにちは (hello), さようなら (goodbye) and おはよう (good morning), plus the third particle, を, and a "Course Complete" summary.