

JP

HIRAGANA

Hiragana 1 · Chapter 4 · Ke Ko

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🌸 Finishing the K Row — け こ

Two more characters complete the K row: **け** (ke) and **こ** (ko). With them you'll know ten characters in total, enough to read a whole new batch of everyday words, including three adjectives.

	a	i	u	e	o
(vowels)	あ	い	う	え	お
k +	か	き	く	け	こ

Ten down, thirty-six to go. Today's two are highlighted.

🌟 Two New Characters — け こ

け

ke

like the "ke" in *kettle*, short ("keh")

3 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a *kettle*: the vertical line on the left is the handle, and the rest is the spout and the body.

こ

ko

like the "co" in *core*, short and pure ("koh")

2 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a stack of two coins, one on top of the other.

Look-Alike Heads-Up: け Is Part of a Family

け starts with a vertical line on the left, just like は (ha) and ほ (ho), which come later in the course. For now, remember that け has **no loop at the bottom**, whereas は and ほ do. We'll compare all three side by side when we reach the H row.



Read It — New Words

With ten characters you can now read these. Remember that each character is one beat.

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	ここ	koko	here	<i>ko + ko</i>
2	こえ	koe	voice	<i>ko + e</i>
3	いけ	ike	pond	<i>i + ke</i>
4	こい	koi	carp (koi fish); also "love"	<i>the famous garden fish</i>
5	こけ	koke	moss	<i>ko + ke</i>
6	くうき	kuuki	air; atmosphere	<i>three beats: "ku-u-ki"</i>
7	あかい	akai	red (adjective)	<i>"is red"; used before a noun</i>
8	あおい	aoi	blue (adjective)	<i>a + o + i</i>
9	おおきい	ookii	big	<i>4 beats: "o-o-ki-i"</i>
10	おい	ooi	many, a lot	<i>o-o-i</i>

Words Ending in い — Many Are Adjectives

Look at あかい (red), あおい (blue) and おおきい (big). Many Japanese adjectives end in い, and they work like a verb ("is red"): あかい on its own means "(it) is red". You'll meet them properly in the conversation courses; for now, notice the pattern. Also notice おお: when you see the same vowel twice in a row, say it as **two beats** ("o-o"), a long sound. Long vowels get full attention in a later course.

Real Japanese Tip — "Ko" Means Near Me

ここ (koko, "here") is the first of a family of words that all start with こ when something is *close to the speaker*: ここ (here), これ (this), この (this ...). You will learn the "that" and "where" versions (そこ, あそこ, どこ) in the next chapters, which gives you a free vocabulary pattern.

Review: Reading Back

Cover the English and read these again: かお (face) · あか (red) · いか (squid) · えき (station) · あき (autumn) · おか (hill) · かう (to buy) · きく (to listen) · いく (to go) · かく (to write).

Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

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

1. Say the whole K row in order: か き く け こ

▼ Show answer

ka · ki · ku · ke · ko

2. Which of け and こ has 2 strokes?

▼ Show answer

こ has 2 strokes. け has 3.

3. Read and translate: ここ · いけ · くうき

▼ Show answer

koko (here) · ike (pond) · kuuki (air)

4. Write in hiragana: koe (voice) · ike (pond) · kuuki (air)

▼ Show answer

こえ・いけ・くうき

5. Read these three adjectives and say what they mean: あかい・あおい・おおき
い

▼ Show answer

akai (red) · aoi (blue) · ookii (big)

6. How many beats does おおきい have?

▼ Show answer

Four: o-o-ki-i (one per character).

Coming Up in Chapter 5

The K row is complete. Next up: the first S characters, さ し す (sa, shi, su), plus words like すし (sushi), さけ (sake), しお (salt) and いす (chair). Watch out: *shi* is spelled with an *h*.