

JP

HIRAGANA

Hiragana 1 · Chapter 6 · Se So

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Chapter 6 · Se So

🌸 Finishing the S Row — せ そ

Two characters complete the S row: せ (se) and そ (so). That makes **fifteen characters** in total, and today's reading words include a useful family of place words: here, there, over there.

	a	i	u	e	o
(vowels)	あ	い	う	え	お
k +	か	き	く	け	こ
s +	さ	し	す	せ	そ

Fifteen down, thirty-one to go. Next chapter starts the T row.

🌟 Two New Characters — せ そ

せ

se

like "se" in set, short ("seh")

3 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a seesaw: a long board with a pivot, and a hooked foot at the bottom.

そ

so

like "so" in saw, short and pure ("soh")

1 stroke · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a zig-zag of thread being sewn, "so" sounds like "sew".

Stroke Count: そ

そ is written in **one stroke** in standard handwriting, but in many printed fonts the short top bar is separated from the zig-zag, so it looks like 2. Follow the stroke-order animation and write it in one flowing movement.



Read It — New Words

Fifteen characters let you read all of these. Remember that each character is one beat.

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	せかい	sekai	world	<i>se + ka + i</i>
2	あせ	ase	sweat	<i>a + se</i>
3	せき	seki	seat; also a cough	<i>two meanings, same spelling</i>
4	うそ	uso	lie	<i>u + so; also used as "No way!"</i>
5	そこ	soko	there (near you)	<i>so + ko</i>
6	あそこ	asoko	over there	<i>far from both of us</i>
7	そう	sō	so; that's right	<i>"soh-oh": a long sound (2 beats)</i>
8	そうか	sō ka	I see; oh, really?	<i>a very common reaction</i>
9	おそい	osoi	slow; late	<i>an adjective</i>
10	さそう	sasou	to invite	<i>a verb: ends in う</i>

Real Japanese Tip — Ko, So, A, Do

In Chapter 4 you met ここ (here, near me). Today's そこ and あそこ complete a four-part pattern that Japanese uses everywhere:

STARTS WITH	MEANS	PLACE WORD	MEANING
こ	near me	こ こ koko	here

STARTS WITH	MEANS	PLACE WORD	MEANING
そ	near you	そこ soko	there
あ	far from both	あそこ asoko	over there
ど (later)	question	doko	where?

The same four starting sounds turn up in *this*, *that*, *that over there*, *which?*, so you'll learn the whole family at once. (We'll write *doko* when we reach ど.)

Real Japanese Tip — そう and そうか

そう ("sō") means "so" or "that's right", and そうか ("sō ka") is "I see" or "oh, is that so?": the reaction you'll hear most in a conversation. Even at this stage you can use it. Notice the doubled vowel in そう: it's said as two beats, "so-o", a long sound.

Review: Reading Back

Cover the English and read these again: すし (sushi) · しお (salt) · いす (chair) · かさ (umbrella) · あさ (morning) · あし (foot) · うし (cow) · いし (stone) · しか (deer) · すき (like) · おいしい (delicious).

Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

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

1. Say the whole S row in order: さ し す せ そ

▼ Show answer

sa · shi · su · se · so

2. Which of せ and そ is written in one stroke?

▼ Show answer

そ is one stroke. せ has 3.

3. Read and translate: せかい・あせ・うそ

▼ Show answer

sekai (world)・ase (sweat)・uso (lie)

4. Write in hiragana: *soko* (there)・*asoko* (over there)・*osoi* (slow)

▼ Show answer

そこ・あそこ・おそい

5. Of ここ, そこ and あそこ, which means "over there, far from both of us"?

▼ Show answer

あそこ (asoko). ここ = here, そこ = there (near you).

6. You hear a friend say そうか. What are they telling you?

▼ Show answer

"I see" or "Oh, really?", a reaction that shows they've understood.

Coming Up in Chapter 7

The T row begins: た ち つ (ta, chi, tsu). Two of them have spelling surprises, since *chi* and *tsu* aren't written *ti* and *tu*. You'll then read たこ (octopus), うた (song), くち (mouth), つぎ (moon) and つくえ (desk).