

JP

HIRAGANA

Hiragana 1 · Chapter 7 · Ta Chi Tsu

Hiragana 1

Chapter 7 · Ta Chi Tsu

🌸 The T Row Begins — た ち つ

The third consonant row is **t**, with た (ta), ち (chi) and つ (tsu). Two of them break the pattern in romaji: they're *chi* and *tsu*, not *ti* and *tu*. By the end you'll know **eighteen characters** and be able to read your first set of numbers and opposites.

	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

Eighteen characters known, twenty-eight to go. て and と come in Chapter 8.

✨ Three New Characters — た ち つ

た

ta

like "ta" in *tar*, short ("tah")

4 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: "ta-da!": a performer with arms out on the left, and a little flag on the right.

ち

chi

like "chee" in *cheese*, short ("chee")

2 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a *cheerleader* leaping, with a pompom held high.

つ

tsu

"ts" as at the end of *cats*, then "oo" ("tsoo")

1 stroke · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a *tsunami* wave curling over.

Spelling Surprise: Chi and Tsu

The Japanese "t" sounds change before the vowels *i* and *u*. *ti* becomes **chi** (as in *cheese*) and *tu* becomes **tsu** (as in *tsunami*). So the T row goes **ta · chi · tsu · te · to**, and the romaji spelling follows the actual sound. The "ts" is easier than it looks: it's the end of the English word *cats*, followed by "oo".

Look-Alike Warnings: ち and さ, つ and し

ち and **さ** are close in shape: さ is written in **3 strokes**, ち in **2**, so count the strokes while you're learning them. **つ** and **し** are both a single curved stroke: し (*shi*) is tall and ends by curving up like a fishing hook, whereas つ (*tsu*) is wide and flat like a wave curling over.

The Japanese "T" Is Softer Too

Like the Japanese "k" you met in Chapter 3, the Japanese "t" has less puff of air than the English "t", and the tongue tends to touch the back of the upper front teeth rather than the ridge behind them. Say "stop", then drop the "s": that's closer to a Japanese *ta*.

Read It — New Words

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

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	たこ	tako	octopus	<i>ta + ko</i>
2	うた	uta	song	<i>u + ta</i>
3	くち	kuchi	mouth	<i>ku + chi</i>
4	つき	tsuki	moon	<i>tsu + ki</i>
5	つくえ	tsukue	desk	<i>three beats: tsu-ku-e</i>
6	いち	ichi	one (1)	<i>your first number</i>

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
7	ちち	chichi	(my) father	<i>used for your own father</i>
8	つかう	tsukau	to use	<i>a verb: ends in う</i>
9	たかい	takai	high, tall; expensive	<i>two meanings, one word</i>
10	あつい	atsui	hot	<i>an adjective</i>
11	ちいさい	chiisai	small	<i>the opposite of おおきい (big)</i>
12	ちかい	chikai	near, close	<i>an adjective</i>

Real Japanese Tip — Opposites in a Pair

Learning words in opposite pairs makes them stick. You now know おおきい (big) and ちいさい (small); おそい (slow) will get its partner, the word for "fast", in a later chapter. Also notice that たかい means both "tall" and "expensive" (written with the same kanji), so Japanese people use it for a high mountain or a high price.

A Peek Ahead — The Small つ

Later you will meet a **small** つ, written つ. It isn't "tsu" at all: it marks a short pause that doubles the next consonant (as in きっぷ, "ticket", said "kip-pu"). It belongs to a later course. For now, whenever you see a full-size つ, read it as *tsu*.

Review: Reading Back

Cover the English and read these again: せかい (world) · あせ (sweat) · うそ (lie) · そこ (there) · あそこ (over there) · そう (so) · そうか (I see) · おそい (slow) · さそう (to invite).

Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

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

1. Read these aloud: た・ち・つ

▼ Show answer

ta · chi · tsu

2. How many strokes do た, ち and つ have?

▼ Show answer

た has 4, ち has 2, つ has 1.

3. Read and translate: たこ・つき・くち

▼ Show answer

tako (octopus) · tsuki (moon) · kuchi (mouth)

4. Write in hiragana: uta (song) · tsukue (desk) · chiisai (small)

▼ Show answer

うた・つくえ・ちいさい

5. What is the opposite of おおきい (big)?

▼ Show answer

ちいさい (chiisai, small).

6. How are ち and つ written in romaji, and why not *ti* and *tu*?

▼ Show answer

chi and *tsu*. The spelling follows the real sound: *ti* and *tu* change to "chee" and "tsoo" in Japanese.

Coming Up in Chapter 8

Two characters finish the T row: テ (te) and ト (to). You'll then read テ (hand), トけい (clock), ことし (this year) and テつ (iron), and the first short phrases begin to appear.