

JP

HIRAGANA

Hiragana 1 · Chapter 8 · Te To

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Chapter 8 · Te To

🌸 Finishing the T Row — て と

Two characters complete the T row: て (te) and と (to). That brings you to **twenty characters**, which is enough to read short, real conversations, so this is where the first mini-dialogs appear.

	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

Twenty down, twenty-six to go. The N row comes next.

🌟 Two New Characters — て と

て

te

like "te" in *ten*, short ("teh")

1 stroke · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a hand reaching out with curled fingers. (て is also the Japanese word for "hand".)

と

to

like "to" in *toe*, short and pure ("toh")

2 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a *toe* with a small splinter stuck in its side (the short first stroke).

📖 Read It — New Words

Twenty characters give you a big batch. Remember that each character is one beat.

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	て	te	hand	<i>a word as well as a character</i>
2	とけい	tokei	clock, watch	<i>to + ke + i</i>
3	とし	kotoshi	this year	<i>ko + to + shi</i>
4	とし	toshi	year; age	<i>also used for someone's age</i>
5	てつ	tetsu	iron (the metal)	<i>te + tsu</i>
6	おと	oto	sound, noise	<i>o + to</i>
7	そと	soto	outside	<i>so + to</i>
8	いと	ito	thread	<i>i + to</i>
9	こと	koto	thing, matter	<i>an abstract "thing"</i>
10	いつ	itsu	when?	<i>a question word</i>
11	たいせつ	taisetsu	important, precious	<i>four beats: ta-i-se-tsu</i>
12	あたたかい	atataakai	warm	<i>five beats; an adjective</i>

Your First Mini-Dialogs

You can already read three short, casual exchanges. Read the Japanese first, then look at the romaji and English.

① Is It Hot? — あつい？

② Delicious? — おいしい？

A:

そこ、あつい？

soko, atsui?

Is it hot there?

B:

ええ、あつい！

ee, atsui!

Yes, it's hot!

A:

おいしい？

oishii?

Is it delicious?

B:

ええ、おいしい。

ee, oishii.

Yes, it's delicious.

A:

そうか。

sō ka.

I see.

③ A Trip — いつ？

A:

いく？

iku?

Are you going?

B:

ええ、いく。

ee, iku.

Yes, I'm going.

A:

いつ？

itsu?

When?

B:

とし！

kotoshi!

This year!

How These Sentences Work — Punctuation, Questions and No Spaces

- 。 is the Japanese full stop and 、 is the comma. They look like small circles and slanted ticks, and they sit at the foot of the line.
- The little word **か** at the end of a sentence turns it into a question, as in そうか ("Is that so? / I see"). In casual speech, you can also make a question with a **rising voice** and a **?**, as in おいしい?
- Japanese is normally written **without spaces** between words. Children's books add spaces to help beginners, and so does the romaji in this course. Soon you'll see where the words break without any help.

Real Japanese Tip — Casual Speech Is Short

These dialogs use the casual style, the way close friends talk: short, with no extra polite endings. The polite style (the one you'd use with a stranger, a shopkeeper or a teacher) adds endings such as **です** and **ます**. You'll meet them in the conversation courses. Casual speech is fine with friends, but with strangers, always choose the polite style.

Review: Reading Back

Cover the English and read these again: たこ (octopus) · うた (song) · くち (mouth) · つき (moon) · つくえ (desk) · いち (one) · つかう (to use) · たかい (high; expensive) · あつい (hot) · ちいさい (small) · ちかい (near).

Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

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

1. Say the whole T row in order: た ち っ て と

▼ Show answer

ta · chi · tsu · te · to

2. How many strokes do て and と have?

▼ Show answer

て has 1 stroke. と has 2.

3. Read and translate: とけい・ことし・そと

▼ Show answer

tokei (clock, watch) · kotoshi (this year) · soto (outside)

4. Write in hiragana: oto (sound) · itsu (when) · taisetsu (important)

▼ Show answer

おと・いつ・たいせつ

5. Read this exchange and say what it means: いく？ ええ、いく。 いつ？
ことし！

▼ Show answer

"Are you going?" "Yes, I'm going." "When?" "This year!"

6. What do 、 and 。 mean?

▼ Show answer

、 is the comma and 。 is the full stop (period).

Coming Up in Chapter 9

The N row begins: な に ぬ (na, ni, nu). You'll then read いぬ (dog), なつ (summer), にく (meat) and さかな (fish). Watch out for ぬ: it is easy to confuse with め, which you'll meet later in the course.