

JP

HIRAGANA

Hiragana 2 · Chapter 3 · Za Ji Zu

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🌸 The Z Row Begins — ざ じ ず

The dakuten goes on the S row now, turning *s* into *z* to make ざ (za), じ (ji) and ず (zu). With these three, one of the most useful phrases in the language is yours: *ありがとうございます*, "thank you". Romaji is shown for everything.

PLAIN	WITH ゝ	SOUND BEFORE	SOUND NOW
さ	ざ	sa	za
し	じ	shi	ji
す	ず	su	zu

	a	i	u	e	o
s	さ	し	す	せ	そ
z (s + ゝ)	ざ	じ	ず	ぜ	ぞ

The three highlighted characters are today's. ゅ and ょ come in Chapter 4.

✨ Three New Characters — ざ じ ず

ざ

za

like "za" in *pizza* ("zah")

5 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

じ

ji

like "jee" in *jeep*, short ("jee")

3 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

ず

zu

like "zoo", relaxed lips ("zoo")

4 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a zap: さ with two sparks flying off. Three strokes plus two for the mark.

Memory hook: a fishhook in a downpour: し with two raindrops, *ji* like a jeep. One stroke plus two for the mark.

Memory hook: a curly-tailed animal at the zoo: ず with two dots. Two strokes plus two for the mark.

じ Is "Ji", Not "Zi"

Just as し is *shi*, not *si*, じ is *ji*: the English "j" of *jeep*, not the "z" of *zip*. So じかん is "ji-kan" and じしん is "ji-shin". Some romaji systems write it as *zi*, but you'll almost always see *ji*.

A Tiny "D" at the Start

At the start of a word, many speakers put a very light "d" in front of the Z sounds: ず is almost "dza", and ず almost "dzu". Don't worry about this: a plain "z" is always understood.

Read It — New Words

The first two entries are phrases you'll use every day. Read the Japanese first, then check the romaji.

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	ありがとうございます	arigatō gozaimasu	thank you (polite)	<i>a-ri-ga-tō go-za-i-ma-su: the polite form of ありがとう</i>
2	おはようございます	ohayō gozaimasu	good morning (polite)	<i>o-ha-yō go-za-i-ma-su</i>
3	じかん	jikan	time	<i>ji-ka-n</i>
4	みず	mizu	water	<i>mi-zu</i>
5	じしん	jishin	earthquake	<i>ji-shi-n: a word worth knowing in Japan</i>
6	ひざ	hiza	knee	<i>hi-za</i>

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
7	かざん	kazan	volcano	ka-za-n
8	ざんねん	zannen	too bad; a pity	za-n-ne-n
9	じゅう	jiyū	freedom	ji-yū: the <i>ゆ</i> is a long u
10	きず	kizu	scratch; wound	ki-zu

Real Japanese Tip — ございます Makes It Polite

ありがとう and おはよう are the casual versions, for friends and family. Add ございます and they become polite, the form to use with strangers, shopkeepers, colleagues and anyone older than you. When in doubt, use the long version: you can hardly be too polite.

Review: Words from Chapter 2

げんき (well) · ごはん (rice; a meal) · たまご (egg) · りんご (apple) · にほんご
(Japanese language) · ごめんなさい (I'm sorry).

Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

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

1. Read aloud: ざ · じ · ず

▼ Show answer

za · ji · zu

2. Read aloud and translate: じかん · みず · じしん

▼ Show answer

jikan (time) · mizu (water) · jishin (earthquake)

3. Read aloud and translate: ひざ · かざん · ざんねん

▼ Show answer

hiza (knee) · kazan (volcano) · zannen (too bad)

4. Read aloud: ありがとうございます . When do you use it instead of ありがとう ?

▼ Show answer

arigatō gozaimasu. Use it with strangers, shop staff, colleagues and elders; ありがとう is for friends and family.

5. How is じ pronounced, and what is the plain character it comes from?

▼ Show answer

ji, like the English "j" of *jeep*; it comes from し (shi).

6. Write in hiragana: mizu · jikan · kizu (check the stroke order).

▼ Show answer

みず · じかん · きず

Coming Up in Chapter 4

The rest of the Z row: ぜ (ze) and ぞ (zo). You'll be able to read かぜ (wind; a cold), ぞう (elephant) and かぞく (family).