

JP

HIRAGANA

Hiragana 2 · Chapter 4 · Ze Zo

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🌸 Finishing the Z Row — ぜ ぞ

Two characters complete the Z row: ぜ (ze) and ぞ (zo), the voiced forms of せ and そ. With them you can read かぞく (family) and かぜ (wind; a cold). Romaji is shown for everything.

PLAIN	WITH ゛	SOUND BEFORE	SOUND NOW
せ	ぜ	se	ze
そ	ぞ	so	zo

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

The two highlighted characters are today's; the Z row is now complete. Notice that じ is the only one that doesn't sound like a plain "z".

✨ Two New Characters — ぜ ぞ

ぜ

ze

like "ze" in zest ("zeh")

5 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a zebra: せ with two stripes flying off its back. Three strokes plus two for the mark.

ぞ

zo

like "zo" in zone, short ("zoh")

3 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a zombie's twisted arm: そ with two dots. One stroke plus two for the mark.

The Z Row Is Complete

You now have all five: ざ (za) · じ (ji) · ず (zu) · ぜ (ze) · ぞ (zo). Only じ breaks the pattern, because the plain し is *shi*, not *si*, so its voiced partner is *ji*.

Read It — New Words

Read the Japanese first, then check the romaji.

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	かぜ	kaze	wind; a cold	<i>ka-ze: the same sound for both meanings, so context decides</i>
2	かぞく	kazoku	family	<i>ka-zo-ku</i>
3	ぞう	zō	elephant	<i>zo-u: the ろ makes a long o</i>
4	ぜひ	zehi	by all means; definitely	<i>ze-hi</i>
5	ぜんぜん	zenzen	not at all	<i>ze-n-ze-n: normally used with a negative</i>
6	ぜんいん	zen'in	everyone; all members	<i>ze-n-i-n</i>
7	ぞうり	zōri	zōri (straw-style sandals)	<i>zo-u-ri</i>
8	かんぜん	kanzen	complete; perfect	<i>ka-n-ze-n</i>
9	ぜいきん	zeikin	tax	<i>ze-i-ki-n</i>
10	みぞ	mizo	ditch; gutter	<i>mi-zo</i>

Real Japanese Tip — ぜんぜん Usually Goes With a Negative

ぜんぜん means "not at all" and is normally paired with a negative ending, as in *ぜんぜん わかりません* ("I don't understand at all"). You'll learn those endings in Japanese Basic Conversation 1. In casual speech young people sometimes use it positively, but a learner should treat it as a negative word.

かぜ: Wind or a Cold?

Both *wind* and *a cold* are pronounced *kaze*. When the word is written in kanji they are different (風 and 風邪), but in hiragana you tell them apart from the sentence.

Review: Words from Chapter 3

ありがとうございます (thank you) · おはようございます (good morning)
· じかん (time) · みず (water) · じしん (earthquake) · ざんねん (too bad).

Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

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

1. Read aloud: ぜ · ぞ · ざ · じ · ず

▼ Show answer

ze · zo · za · ji · zu

2. Read aloud and translate: かぜ · かぞく · ぞう

▼ Show answer

kaze (wind; a cold) · kazoku (family) · zō (elephant)

3. Read aloud and translate: ぜひ · ぜんぜん · ぜんいん

▼ Show answer

zehi (by all means) · zenzen (not at all) · zen'in (everyone)

4. Which of the five Z-row characters is not pronounced with a plain "z", and why?

▼ Show answer

じ (ji): its plain partner し is *shi*, so the voiced one is *ji*, not *zi*.

5. What do the two meanings of かぜ have in common in speech?

▼ Show answer

They sound identical: *kaze*. Context tells you whether it's wind or a cold.

6. Write in hiragana: *kazoku* · *kaze* · *zehi* (check the stroke order).

▼ Show answer

かぞく · かぜ · ぜひ

Coming Up in Chapter 5

The D row: だ (da), ぢ (ji) and づ (zu), the voiced forms of た ち つ. Two of them are rarely used, but だれ (who) and ともだち (friend) will be readable.