

JP

HIRAGANA

Hiragana 2 · Chapter 7 · Ba Bi Bu

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🌸 The B Row Begins — ば び ぶ

The dakuten turns **h** into **b**, giving ば (ba), び (bi) and ぶ (bu). This chapter also solves a small puzzle: why the greeting こんにちは ends in a character you'd read ha but say wa. Romaji is shown for everything.

PLAIN	WITH ゛	SOUND BEFORE	SOUND NOW
は	ば	ha	ba
ひ	び	hi	bi
ふ	ぶ	fu	bu

	a	i	u	e	o
h	は	ひ	ふ	へ	ほ
b (h + ゛)	ば	び	ぶ	べ	ぼ

The three highlighted characters are today's. べ and ぼ come in Chapter 8.

✨ Three New Characters — ば び ぶ

ば

ba

like "ba" in bar ("bah")

5 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

び

bi

like "bee", short ("bee")

3 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

ぶ

bu

like "boo", relaxed lips ("boo")

6 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a *bat* with two flapping wings: は with two dots. Three strokes plus two for the mark.

Memory hook: a *bee* with two buzzing marks: ひ with two dots. One stroke plus two for the mark.

Memory hook: a ghost going *boo*: ふ with two dots. Four strokes plus two for the mark.

Why Is H Voiced Into B?

The H row is unusual: the dakuten turns it into **b**, not into a "voiced h". Linguists believe that in Old Japanese the H row was pronounced with a *p* sound, which explains why this row is the only one with *two* marks: ㇰ gives *ba bi bu* (this chapter) and ㇱ gives *pa pi pu* (Chapter 9).

Read It — New Words

Read the Japanese first, then check the romaji.

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	こんばんは	konbanwa	good evening	<i>ko-n-ba-n-wa</i> : the last は is read "wa"
2	ばんごう	bangō	number	<i>ba-n-go-u</i> : as in a phone number
3	ばんごはん	bangohan	dinner; evening meal	<i>ba-n-go-ha-n</i> : ばん + ごはん
4	かばん	kaban	bag	<i>ka-ba-n</i>
5	あぶない	abunai	dangerous; careful!	<i>a-bu-na-i</i> : you'll see it on warning signs
6	ぶどう	budō	grapes	<i>bu-do-u</i>
7	ぶた	buta	pig	<i>bu-ta</i>
8	ばら	bara	rose	<i>ba-ra</i>
9	ゆびわ	yubiwa	ring (jewellery)	<i>yu-bi-wa</i>

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
10	さびしい	sabishii	lonely	<i>sa-bi-shi-i: the しい is a long i</i>

Real Japanese Tip — Why こんにちは Ends in は

こんにちは (good day) and こんにちは (good evening) both end in は, but it is pronounced **wa**, not *ha*. These greetings were once the start of a longer sentence in which は was the particle meaning "as for", and the spelling stayed even though the sentence was dropped. The particle は (read *wa*) is coming in Hiragana 3.

A Handy Pair

こんにちは is for daytime, こんにちは for evening, and おはようございます for morning. Put them together with ありがとうございます and どうぞ and you can greet and thank anyone politely.

Review: Words from Chapter 6

です (is; am; are) · どこ (where) · でんわ (telephone) · でぐち (exit) · どうぞ (please) · どうも (thanks).

Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

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

1. Read aloud: ば · び · ぶ

▼ Show answer

ba · bi · bu

2. Read aloud and translate: かばん · ぶた · ばら

▼ Show answer

kaban (bag) · buta (pig) · bara (rose)

3. Read aloud and translate: ぶどう · ゆびわ · あぶない

▼ Show answer

budō (grapes) · yubiwa (ring) · abunai (dangerous)

4. Read aloud: こんばんは. How is the last character pronounced?

▼ Show answer

konbanwa. The final は is read wa, not ha.

5. Which consonant does the dakuten make from the H row?

▼ Show answer

B: は → ば, ひ → び, ふ → ぶ.

6. Write in hiragana: kaban · buta · bangō (check the stroke order).

▼ Show answer

かばん · ぶた · ばんごう

Coming Up in Chapter 8

The rest of the B row: ベ (be) and ぼ (bo). You'll be able to read たべる (to eat), お弁当 (lunch box) and /ぼく (I, said by a man or boy).