

JP

HIRAGANA

Hiragana 2 · Chapter 8 · Be Bo

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🌸 Finishing the B Row — べ ぼ

Two characters complete the B row: べ (be) and ぼ (bo), the voiced forms of へ and ぼ. They give you the verb **たべる** ("to eat") and the lunch-box word **お弁当**, both of which turn up everywhere in Japan. Romaji is shown for everything.

PLAIN	WITH ゛	SOUND BEFORE	SOUND NOW
へ	べ	he	be
ほ	ぼ	ho	bo

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

The two highlighted characters are today's; the B row is now complete.

✨ Two New Characters — べ ぼ

べ

be

like "be" in *bet* ("beh")

3 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a beach hill with two beach balls:
へ with two dots. One stroke plus two for the mark.

ぼ

bo

like "bo" in *boat*, short ("boh")

6 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a boat with two flags on its mast:
ほ with two dots. Four strokes plus two for the mark.

A Verb at Last: たべる

たべる (*taberu*) means "to eat". Like every Japanese dictionary-form verb it ends in *-u* (here る). Its polite form, たべます (*tabemasu*), is the one you'll use when speaking. Put the two together with いadakimasu and ごちそうさま from earlier chapters and you can handle a whole meal.

Read It — New Words

Read the Japanese first, then check the romaji.

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	たべる	taberu	to eat	<i>ta-be-ru</i> : dictionary form
2	たべもの	tabemono	food	<i>ta-be-mo-no</i> : lit. "eating thing"
3	お弁当	obentō	boxed lunch	<i>o-be-n-to-u</i> : the どう is a long o
4	べんり	benri	convenient	<i>be-n-ri</i> : a favourite word for shops and gadgets
5	べつ	betsu	different; separate	<i>be-tsu</i>
6	かべ	kabe	wall	<i>ka-be</i>
7	ぼく	boku	I (used by boys and men)	<i>bo-ku</i> : casual
8	ぼうし	bōshi	hat; cap	<i>bo-u-shi</i>
9	ぼうけん	bōken	adventure	<i>bo-u-ke-n</i>
10	ぼんやり	bon'yari	vaguely; absent-mindedly	<i>bo-n-ya-ri</i> : a good word for a Monday morning

Real Japanese Tip — ぼく or わたし?

ぼく is a casual word for "I" used by boys and men, and you'll hear it a lot in anime. In real life the safe choice for any learner is わたし, which is polite and neutral for everyone. Use わたし with strangers, at work and in shops, and keep ぼく for hearing, not saying, until you know the setting.

おべんとう in Everyday Life

おべんとう is the packed lunch that children take to school and workers buy at stations. The お is a polite prefix, just like the ご in ごはん. Look for them in convenience stores: おべんとう and おにぎり (rice balls) are the quickest meal in Japan.

Review: Words from Chapter 7

こんばんは (good evening) · ばんごう (number) · かばん (bag) · あぶない (dangerous) · ぶどう (grapes) · ぶた (pig).

Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

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

1. Read aloud: ベ · ぼ · ば · び · ぶ

▼ Show answer

be · bo · ba · bi · bu

2. Read aloud and translate: たべる · たべもの · おべんとう

▼ Show answer

taberu (to eat) · tabemono (food) · obentō (boxed lunch)

3. Read aloud and translate: べんり · かべ · ぼうし

▼ Show answer

benri (convenient) · kabe (wall) · bōshi (hat)

4. Which word for "I" is safest for a learner: **ぼく** or **わたし**?

▼ Show answer

わたし (watashi): polite and neutral for everyone. **ぼく** is casual and male.

5. What is the polite form of **たべる**?

▼ Show answer

たべます (tabemasu).

6. Write in hiragana: *taberu* · *obentō* · *boku* (check the stroke order).

▼ Show answer

たべる · おべんとう · ぼく

Coming Up in Chapter 9

The P row, using the other mark, the little circle ° (*handakuten*): **ぱ** (pa), **ぴ** (pi) and **ぷ** (pu). You'll be able to read **えんぴつ** (pencil), **さんぷん** (three minutes) and **ぱん** (bread).