

JP

HIRAGANA

Hiragana 2 · Chapter 9 · Pa Pi Pu

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🌸 The Little Circle ° — ぱ ぴ ぷ

Here is the second mark: the little circle ° (handakuten, or maru, "circle"). It works on the H row only, turning **h** into **p**, to give ぱ (pa), ぴ (pi) and ぷ (pu). P sounds are rarer in native Japanese words than the sounds you've learned so far, so this chapter also shows you where to expect them. Romaji is shown for everything.

PLAIN	WITH °	SOUND BEFORE	SOUND NOW
は	ぱ	ha	pa
ひ	ぴ	hi	pi
ふ	ぷ	fu	pu

	a	i	u	e	o
h	は	ひ	ふ	へ	ほ
p (h + °)	ぱ	ぴ	ぷ	ぺ	ぽ

The three highlighted characters are today's. ぺ and ぽ come in Chapter 10.

🌟 Three New Characters — ぱ ぴ ぷ

ぱ

pa

like "pa" in *papa* ("pah")

4 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

ぴ

pi

like "pea", short ("pee")

2 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

ぷ

pu

like "poo" in *pool*, relaxed lips
("poo")

5 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a *parachute*: は with a small round canopy. Three strokes plus one for the circle.

Memory hook: a *pea* beside a pod: ひと with a small round pea. One stroke plus one for the circle.

Memory hook: a *poodle* with a round pom-pom: ふ with a small circle. Four strokes plus one for the circle.

Two Marks, Two Jobs

The two dots ˆ (dakuten) *voice* a consonant: k→g, s→z, t→d, h→b. The little circle ° (handakuten) has just one job: h→p. Only the H row ever takes the circle. The circle is written as one small, round stroke at the top right.

Where You'll Meet P Sounds

Native Japanese words rarely start with *p*. You'll find it in three places: **mimetic words** that imitate sounds and looks (ぴかぴか, shiny; ばくばく, munching), **numbers and counters** after ん (さんぶん, 3 minutes) and, above all, **foreign loanwords**, which are written in katakana, as in パン (bread); the katakana versions of ˆ and ° come in Katakana 2.

Read It — New Words

Read the Japanese first, then check the romaji.

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	えんぴつ	enpitsu	pencil	<i>e-n-pi-tsu</i>
2	さんぶん	sanpun	three minutes	<i>sa-n-pu-n: ぶん (minute) becomes ぶん after ん</i>
3	よんぶん	yonpun	four minutes	<i>yo-n-pu-n: the same change</i>
4	ぱん	pan	bread	<i>pa-n: usually written パン in katakana, but this is how it sounds</i>
5	ぱぱ	papa	dad; daddy	<i>pa-pa</i>

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
6	ぴかぴか	pikapika	shiny; sparkling	<i>pi-ka-pi-ka: a mimetic word</i>
7	ぱくぱく	pakupaku	munch munch (eating)	<i>pa-ku-pa-ku: a mimetic word</i>
8	おんぷ	onpu	musical note	<i>o-n-pu</i>
9	てんぷら	tenpura	tempura	<i>te-n-pu-ra</i>
10	ぶんぶん	punpun	fuming; angry (mimetic)	<i>pu-n-pu-n</i>

Real Japanese Tip — Minutes: ぶん or ぷん?

The word for "minute" is ぶん, but after a number ending in ん it changes to ぷん: さんぷん (3 minutes), よんぷん (4 minutes). After ご (5) and に (2) it stays ぶん: ごぶん, にぶん. You'll practise this properly when you reach telling the time in Japanese Basic Conversation 1.

Mimetic Words Are Fun

Japanese has thousands of *mimetic* words that imitate sounds and states, such as ぴかぴか (shiny), ぱくぱく (eating with big bites) and ぶんぶん (steaming with anger). They're usually repeated syllables, so they're easy to read and a good place to practise the P row.

Review: Words from Chapter 8

たべる (to eat) · たべもの (food) · お弁当 (boxed lunch) · べんり
(convenient) · かべ (wall) · ぼうし (hat).

Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

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

1. Read aloud: ぱ・ぴ・ぷ

▼ Show answer

pa · pi · pu

2. Read aloud and translate: えんぴつ・てんぷら・おんぷ

▼ Show answer

enpitsu (pencil) · tenpura (tempura) · onpu (musical note)

3. Read aloud and translate: さんぷん・よんぷん

▼ Show answer

sanpun (3 minutes) · yonpun (4 minutes)

4. Which row can take the little circle °, and which consonant results?

▼ Show answer

Only the H row: h → p (は→ぱ, ひ→ぴ, ふ→ぷ).

5. Read aloud and translate: ぴかぴか・ぱくぱく

▼ Show answer

pikapika (shiny) · pakupaku (munch munch)

6. Write in hiragana: *enpitsu* · *papa* · *pikapika* (check the stroke order).

▼ Show answer

えんぴつ・ぱぱ・ぴかぴか

Coming Up in Chapter 10

The last two characters of the course: ぺ (pe) and ぽ (po), plus a **Course Complete** recap. You'll be able to read *さんぽ* (a walk) and *たんぽぽ* (dandelion).

