

JP

KATAKANA

Katakana 1 · Chapter 11 · Ha Hi Fu

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Chapter 11 · Ha Hi Fu

🌿 The H Row Begins — ハ ヒ フ

Three new characters: ハ (ha), ヒ (hi) and フ (fu). The big payoff today is コーヒー, coffee, the example from Chapter 1 that you can finally read yourself. Romaji is shown for everything.

🌟 Your Three New Characters — ハ ヒ フ

ハ

ha

like "ha" in *ha-ha* ("hah")

2 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: ha-ha: two strokes spreading apart like the corners of a laughing mouth. Hiragana twin: は.

ヒ

hi

like "hee" in *heed*, short ("hee")

2 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a high-**heel**ed shoe seen from the side: a flat sole and a curved heel. Hiragana twin: ひ.

フ

fu

a soft "foo", made by blowing gently with rounded lips, not by touching teeth to lip

1 stroke · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a **funnel**: one stroke with a flat top and a spout bending down. Hiragana twin: ふ.

KATAKANA

HIRAGANA TWIN

ROMAJI

ハ

は

ha

ヒ

ひ

hi

フ

ふ

fu

The Japanese "F" Is Not the English "F"

The Japanese **fu** is made by blowing air between your lips, as if cooling soup, rather than by pressing your top teeth on your lower lip. In romaji it's spelled *fu*, but it sounds like a softer cousin of "h". You'll hear this in words like ナイフ and ハーフ.

Look-Alikes: フ, ウ and ワ

フ (fu) is a single stroke. ウ (u), which you learned in Chapter 1, has an extra **tick on top**, and ワ (wa), which comes in Chapter 18, has an extra **short stroke on the left**. If you see a plain bent line with no extras, it's フ. Also, ハ (ha) will have a close relative in Chapter 12: ヘ (he).

Read It — Real Words

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	コーヒー	kōhī	coffee	<i>ko-o-hi-i: four beats</i>
2	ハート	hāto	heart	<i>ha-a-to</i>
3	ナイフ	naifu	knife	<i>na-i-fu: the English "k" is silent, and so it is here</i>
4	ヒーター	hītā	heater	<i>hi-i-ta-a: four beats</i>
5	ハーフ	hāfu	half	<i>ha-a-fu</i>
6	ソフト	sofuto	soft; software	<i>so-fu-to</i>
7	シフト	shifuto	shift (work shift)	<i>shi-fu-to</i>
8	ハイ	hai	yes; hi	<i>ha-i; the everyday "yes" is usually written in hiragana</i>
9	ハイテク	haiteku	high-tech	<i>ha-i-te-ku</i>

Listen for the English

Look at コーヒー: the English *coffee* has an "f" sound in the middle, but basic katakana has no "f" sound, so Japanese substitutes **hi**: *ko-o-hi-i*. A good habit is to read each katakana word aloud, quickly, and listen for the English: with ヒーター, "heater" appears almost at once.

Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

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

1. Read aloud: ハ・ヒ・フ

▼ Show answer

ha · hi · fu

2. Read aloud and translate: コーヒー・ハート

▼ Show answer

kōhī (coffee) · hāto (heart)

3. Read aloud and translate: ナイフ・ヒーター・ハーフ

▼ Show answer

naifu (knife) · hītā (heater) · hāfu (half)

4. Read aloud and translate: ソフト・シフト・ハイテク

▼ Show answer

sofuto (soft; software) · shifuto (shift) · haiteku (high-tech)

5. How can you tell フ from ウ?

▼ Show answer

フ is a single bent stroke; ウ has an extra tick on top.

6. Write in katakana: *kōhī* · *hāto* · *naifu* (check the stroke order).

▼ Show answer

コーヒー・ハート・ナイフ

Coming Up in Chapter 5

Two more H sounds: ヘ (he) and ホ (ho), completing the H row. You'll read ヘア (hair) and ホース (hose), and see how ヘ differs from ハ.