

JP

KATAKANA

# Katakana 1 · Chapter 15 · Ya Yu Yo

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# Katakana 1

Chapter 15 · Ya Yu Yo

## 🌿 The Y Row — ヤ ュ ヨ

Three new characters: ヤ (ya), ュ (yu) and ヨ (yo). The Y row has only three characters, because Japanese has no basic yi or ye, so it's a short chapter with a lot of fun words. Romaji is shown for everything.

## 🌟 Your Three New Characters — ヤ ュ ヨ

ya

like "ya" in yacht ("yah")

2 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

**Memory hook:** a yak: a bar for its back and a big horn curving out on one side.  
Hiragana twin: や.

yu

like "you", short ("yoo")

2 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

**Memory hook:** a U shape with its tail stretching out along the base: say you. Hiragana twin: ゆ.

yo

like "yo" in yo-yo, short ("yoh")

3 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

**Memory hook:** a backwards E: three bars and a spine, and you can say yo to a friend.  
Hiragana twin: よ.

| KATAKANA | HIRAGANA TWIN | ROMAJI |
|----------|---------------|--------|
| ヤ        | や             | ya     |
| ユ        | ゆ             | yu     |
| ヨ        | よ             | yo     |

**Look-Alikes:** ム and コ

㇏ (yu) is a close relative of ㇏ (ko), which you learned in Chapter 4: ㇏ is ㇏ with an **extra line** along the bottom that sticks out to the right. As promised, now you can tell them apart: ㇏ is a corner, ㇏ is a corner sitting on a ledge. And ㇏ (yo) looks like a backwards E, which is not confusable with ㇏ (e), the plain I-beam from Chapter 2.

## Read It — Real Words

| # | WORD | ROMAJI   | ENGLISH              | NOTE                  |
|---|------|----------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | タイヤ  | taiya    | tyre; tire           | ta-i-ya               |
| 2 | ユーモア | yūmoa    | humour               | yu-u-mo-a: four beats |
| 3 | ヨーヨー | yōyō     | yo-yo                | yo-o-yo-o: four beats |
| 4 | ヤマハ  | Yamaha   | Yamaha (the company) | ya-ma-ha              |
| 5 | ユニセフ | Yunisefu | UNICEF               | yu-ni-se-fu           |
| 6 | ヤク   | yaku     | yak                  | ya-ku                 |
| 7 | ヨーク  | yōku     | York; yolk           | yo-o-ku               |

### Brand Names

Katakana is also used for company and brand names: ヤマハ is Yamaha, and ユニセフ is UNICEF. In Japan you'll see katakana on shop signs, product packaging and adverts, often chosen because it looks modern or international. Reading it gives you a head start on everyday life there.

## Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

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

1. Read aloud: ヤ・ユ・ヨ

▼ Show answer

ya · yu · yo

2. Read aloud and translate: タイヤ・ユーモア・ヨーヨー

▼ Show answer

taiya (tyre) · yūmoa (humour) · yōyō (yo-yo)

3. Read aloud: ヤマハ・ユニセフ

▼ Show answer

Yamaha (Yamaha) · Yunisefu (UNICEF)

4. Read aloud and translate: ヤク・ヨーク

▼ Show answer

yaku (yak) · yōku (York; yolk)

5. How can you tell ャ from コ?

▼ Show answer

ャ has an extra line along the bottom that sticks out to the right; コ is just a corner.

6. Write in katakana: taiya · yūmoa · yōyō (check the stroke order).

▼ Show answer

タイヤ・ユーモア・ヨーヨー

Coming Up in Chapter 5

The R row begins: ラ リ ル (ra, ri, ru). You'll read カメラ (camera), アメリカ (America), ミルク (milk), ホテル (hotel) and even オーストラリア (Australia). It's the biggest word-list chapter yet.