

JP

KATAKANA

Katakana 1 · Chapter 18 · Wa Wo N

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🌿 The Last Three — ワ ヲ ン

The final three of the 46 basic katakana: ワ (wa), ヲ (wo) and ン (n). After this chapter you have the complete basic katakana set. Romaji is shown for everything, one last time.

✨ Your Three New Characters — ワ ヲ ン

ワ

wa

like "wa" in *water* ("wah")

2 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a water

bucket: the hat of ウ taken off, leaving just the bucket.

Hiragana twin: わ.

ヲ

wo

pronounced just o ("oh"), the same as オ

3 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a wobbly ヲ:

three bars with a slash through them. Rare: see below.

Hiragana twin: を.

ン

n

a nasal "n" that takes a full beat on its own

2 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a nod: a tiny

mark on the left and a long nod upward. Hiragana twin: ん.

KATAKANA

HIRAGANA TWIN

ROMAJI

ワ

わ

wa

ヲ

を

wo (pronounced o)

ン

ん

n

ヲ Is Rare

In hiragana, を is everywhere, because it marks the object of a sentence. Its katakana twin ヲ is very rarely seen: katakana is mostly for single words, not sentences, so it has no grammar job. You may meet it in stylised writing, for example ヲタク, a playful spelling of *otaku*. Learn to recognise it, but don't worry about writing it.

ン: A Beat of Its Own

ン is a syllable by itself: it takes **one full beat**, never starts a word, and its sound shifts slightly with what follows (like the n in *ten*, the m in *ham* or the ng in *sing*). Count it: ワイン is wa-i-n, three beats; ラーメン is ra-a-me-n, four beats.

⚠ The Last Look-Alike: ソ versus ン

Both have **two** strokes and a short mark beside a long stroke. The difference is the direction of the long stroke.

CHARACTER	SHORT STROKE	LONG STROKE	SOUND
ソ	a dot at the top, more upright	starts at the top and runs down	so
ン	a dot at the left, more sideways	starts at the bottom and sweeps up	n

One More: ワ, ウ and フ

ワ (wa) has an extra short stroke at the left; ウ (u) has a tick on top; フ (fu) has neither. With this, all the look-alike pairs of katakana 1 are covered.

📖 Read It — Real Words

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	ワイン	wain	wine	<i>wa-i-n: three beats</i>
2	ラーメン	rāmen	ramen	<i>ra-a-me-n: four beats</i>

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
3	レモン	remon	lemon	<i>re-mo-n</i>
4	レストラン	resutoran	restaurant	<i>re-su-to-ra-n: five beats</i>
5	サイン	sain	sign; autograph	<i>sa-i-n</i>
6	ヒント	hinto	hint	<i>hi-n-to</i>
7	ハワイ	Hawai	Hawaii	<i>ha-wa-i</i>
8	フランス	Furansu	France	<i>fu-ra-n-su</i>
9	ワンワン	wanwan	woof woof	<i>the dog sound from Chapter 1</i>
10	テント	tento	tent	<i>te-n-to</i>
11	ランチ	ranchi	lunch	<i>ra-n-chi</i>
12	ミント	minto	mint	<i>mi-n-to</i>
13	ライン	rain	line (LINE chat app)	<i>ra-i-n</i>

Real Katakana

Look at ライン: it's both the English *line* and the name of Japan's most popular chat app, LINE. And ワンワン, the dog's bark from Chapter 1, now reads as wa-n-wa-n. You can read the sample sentence from Chapter 1 too: the katakana part, コーヒー, is yours.

Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

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

1. Read aloud: ワ・ヲ・ン

▼ Show answer

wa · wo (pronounced o) · n

2. Read aloud and translate: ワイン・ラーメン・レモン

▼ Show answer

wain (wine) · rāmen (ramen) · remon (lemon)

3. Read aloud and translate: レストラン・サイン・ヒント

▼ Show answer

resutoran (restaurant) · sain (sign) · hinto (hint)

4. Read aloud and translate: ハワイ・フランス・ランチ

▼ Show answer

Hawai (Hawaii) · Furansu (France) · ranchi (lunch)

5. How can you tell ソ from ン?

▼ Show answer

ソ: the long stroke runs down from the top. ン: the long stroke sweeps up from the bottom.

6. Write in katakana: *wain* · *rāmen* · *remon* (check the stroke order).

▼ Show answer

ワイン・ラーメン・レモン

 **Course Complete — おめでとう！**

You have learned all 46 basic katakana, with plenty of real loanwords along the way. Here is the whole journey in one table.

CHAPTER	NEW CHARACTERS	YOU CAN NOW...
1	Meet Katakana: ア イ ウ	You can now what katakana is for, and read the first three characters.
2	エ オ	You can now read all five vowels.
3	カ キ ク + ー	You can now read the K row start and stretch vowels with ー.
4	ケ コ	You can now finish the K row: ケーキ, ココア.
5	サ シ ス	You can now start the S row: アイス, スキー.
6	セ ソ	You can now finish the S row: ソース, シーソー.
7	タ チ ツ	You can now tell シ from ツ: タクシー, ツアー.
8	テ ト	You can now finish the T row: テスト, トースト.
9	ナ ニ ヌ	You can now start the N row: ツナ, テニス.
10	ネ ノ	You can now finish the N row: ノート, ネクタイ.
11	ハ ヒ フ	You can now start the H row: コーヒー, ナイフ.
12	ヘ ホ	You can now finish the H row: ヘア, ホース.
13	マ ミ ム	You can now start the M row: マスク, マイク.

CHAPTER	NEW CHARACTERS	YOU CAN NOW...
14	メ モ	You can now finish the M row: アニメ, メキシコ.
15	ヤ ュ ヨ	You can now read the Y row: タイヤ, ヨーヨー.
16	ラ リ ル	You can now start the R row: カメラ, アメリカ.
17	レ ロ	You can now finish the R row: カレー, トイレ.
18	ワ ヲ ャ	You can now read ワイン, ラーメン and the rest.

What Next?

Not yet covered, and the subject of **Katakana 2**: the voiced marks ゛ and ゚ (ガ パ ビ ズ ...) that give you ビール, テレビ and スーパー; the small ツ; combined sounds such as キャ and シュ; and the extra foreign sounds like ティ and ファ. After that you can start on the Japanese Basic Conversation courses with a full set of kana behind you.