

JP

KATAKANA

Katakana 1 · Chapter 4 · Ke Ko

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🌿 Finishing the K Row — ケ コ

Two characters complete the K row today: ケ (ke) and コ (ko). Together with カ キ ク you can now read the whole row, and your word list jumps to five real words, including cake and cocoa. Romaji is shown for everything.

🌟 Your Two New Characters — ケ コ

ケ

ke

like "ke" in *kettle* ("keh")

3 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a **kettle**: a pointed lid, a spout swinging out to the left and a long body. Hiragana twin: け.

コ

ko

like "co" in *cocoa*, but short ("koh")

2 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a **corner**: two lines meeting at a right angle, like a corner of a room. Hiragana twin: こ.

KATAKANA	HIRAGANA TWIN	ROMAJI
ケ	け	ke
コ	こ	ko

abc The Complete K Row

KA	KI	KU	KE	KO
カ	キ	ク	ケ	コ
か	き	く	け	こ

Top row katakana, bottom row hiragana: say each pair aloud.

Look-Alikes: コ vs コ, and ケ vs ク

コ (ko) is two lines and an open side, like a corner. Later in the course you'll meet コ (yu), which looks like コ with an extra line sticking out at the bottom. Also compare ケ with ク (ku): ケ has a third stroke, a long diagonal that crosses the short bar, and ク has only two.

Read It — Five Real Words

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	ケーキ	kēki	cake	ke + ー + ki: three beats
2	ココア	kokoa	cocoa	ko-ko-a: three beats
3	オーケー	ōkē	OK	o-o-ke-e: four beats; very common
4	エコ	eko	eco; eco-friendly	short for ecology
5	ケア	kea	care	as in skin care or hair care
6	コケ	koke	(drill)	a sound drill: ko-ke
7	ケーク	kēku	(drill)	a drill: ke-e-ku

Bent English

オーケー is the English "OK" written as the two letter names "oh-kay", each stretched with ー. And ココア shows the Japanese rule at work: no stressed syllables, just even beats, **ko-ko-a**, where English says "COH-koh". Say katakana words flat and even, and they'll sound much more natural.

Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

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

1. Read aloud: ケ・コ・キ・ク・カ

▼ Show answer

ke · ko · ki · ku · ka

2. Read aloud and translate: ケーキ・ココア

▼ Show answer

kēki (cake) · kokoa (cocoa)

3. Read aloud and translate: オーケー・エコ

▼ Show answer

ōkē (OK) · eko (eco)

4. How many beats are in オーケー?

▼ Show answer

Four: オ・ー・ケ・ー (o-o-ke-e).

5. What is the difference between コ and ク in shape and sound?

▼ Show answer

コ is two lines at a corner and sounds like *ko*; ク is a hook with a swoop and sounds like *ku*.

6. Write in katakana: *kēki* · *kokoa* · *kea* (check the stroke order).

▼ Show answer

ケーキ . ココア . ケア

Coming Up in Chapter 5

The S row begins: サ シ ス (sa, shi, su). You'll be able to read アイス (ice), スキー (ski), スイス (Switzerland) and more. Watch out for the look-alike pair シ and ツ, which we'll deal with when we reach ヅ in Chapter 7.