

JP

KATAKANA

Katakana 1 · Chapter 6 · Se So

Katakana 1

Chapter 6 · Se So

🌿 Finishing the S Row — セ ソ

Two characters complete the S row: セ (se) and ソ (so). Today also brings your first serious look-alike lesson, because ソ is easy to mix up with other characters. Romaji is shown for everything.

✨ Your Two New Characters — セ ソ

セ

se

like "se" in set ("seh")

2 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a **seat** with a high back: a long seat running across and a tall back at the right.
Hiragana twin: せ.

ソ

so

like "so" in sorry, short ("soh")

2 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a **sewing** needle and its thread: a long needle slanting down, and a tiny dot of thread at the top. Hiragana twin: そ.

KATAKANA	HIRAGANA TWIN	ROMAJI
セ	せ	se
ソ	そ	so

abc The Complete S Row

SA	SHI	SU	SE	SO
サ	シ	ス	セ	ソ

SA

SHI

SU

SE

SO

さ

し

す

せ

そ

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

Look-Alikes: ソ, シ and ン

ソ (so) has **two** strokes, a short dot at the top and a long stroke slanting down, so it is different from シ (shi), which has **three**: always count the strokes. There's also ン (n), which you'll meet in Chapter 18: the two characters are very close, and the usual trick is that ソ's long stroke goes *down* from the top while ン's long stroke *sweeps up* from the bottom.

Read It — Five Real Words (and Two Drills)

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	ソース	sōsu	sauce	so-o-su
2	ソーサー	sōsā	saucer	so-o-sa-a: four beats
3	シーソー	shīsō	seesaw	shi-i-so-o: four beats
4	スコア	sukoa	score	su-ko-a
5	アーサー	Āsā	Arthur (a name)	a-a-sa-a: four beats
6	セコ	seko	(drill)	a sound drill: se-ko
7	ソソ	soso	(drill)	a drill: so-so, compare ソ with シ

Sound, Not Spelling

Katakana words carry the English word's sound, not its spelling: *score* becomes *su-ko-a* (the "r" disappears and the "s" gets an extra vowel), and *sauce* becomes *sō-su*. When a katakana word

doesn't look like English, try saying it in a flat Japanese accent first.

Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

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

1. Read aloud: セ・ソ・サ・シ・ス

▼ Show answer

se · so · sa · shi · su

2. Read aloud and translate: ソース・ソーサー

▼ Show answer

sōsu (sauce) · sōsā (saucer)

3. Read aloud and translate: シーソー・スコア

▼ Show answer

shīsō (seesaw) · sukoa (score)

4. How many strokes does ソ have, and how many does シ have?

▼ Show answer

ソ has two; シ has three.

5. How many beats are in シーソー?

▼ Show answer

Four: シ・ー・ソ・ー (shi-i-so-o).

6. Write in katakana: sōsu · sukoa · shīsō (check the stroke order).

▼ Show answer

ソース・スコア・シーソー

Coming Up in Chapter 5

The T row begins: タ チ ツ (ta, chi, tsu). You'll read タクシー (taxi), タイ (Thailand) and ツアー (tour), and we'll finally deal with ツ against シ properly.