

JP

KATAKANA

Katakana 1 · Chapter 9 · Na Ni Nu

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Chapter 9 · Na Ni Nu

🌿 The N Row Begins — ナ ニ ヌ

Three new characters: ナ (na), ニ (ni) and ヌ (nu). Don't confuse this "n" row with the lone character ン (n) that you'll meet in Chapter 18. Romaji is shown for everything.

🌟 Your Three New Characters — ナ ニ ヌ

ナ

na

like "na" in *nacho* ("nah")

2 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a nature-trail signpost: a post with a crossbar near the top.
Hiragana twin: な.

ニ

ni

like "knee", short ("nee")

2 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: the number **two**: two bars. In Japanese the word for two is *ni*, and ニ comes from the kanji 二 (two).
Hiragana twin: に.

ヌ

nu

like "noo" in *noon*, relaxed ("noo")

2 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a noodle twirled on chopsticks: a hook and a crossing swirl. Hiragana twin: ぬ.

KATAKANA

HIRAGANA TWIN

ROMAJI

ナ

な

na

ニ

に

ni

ヌ

ぬ

nu

Look-Alikes: ヌ and ス, ニ and ミ

ヌ (nu) is close to ス (su), which you met in Chapter 5: ヌ has an extra small tail where its lines cross, which ス does not have. Compare them on the stroke-order pages. And ニ (ni) is two *horizontal* lines, whereas ミ (mi), which comes in Chapter 13, is three *slanting* lines. Horizontal and two means ni; slanting and three means mi.

Read It — Real Words

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	ツナ	tsuna	tuna	<i>tsu-na</i>
2	ナース	nāsu	nurse	<i>na-a-su</i>
3	テニス	tenisu	tennis	<i>te-ni-su</i>
4	ナイス	naisu	nice ("Nice one!")	<i>na-i-su; said when someone does well</i>
5	ナイト	naito	night; knight	<i>na-i-to</i>
6	ケニア	Kenia	Kenya	<i>ke-ni-a</i>
7	カヌー	kanū	canoe	<i>ka-nu-u</i>
8	テナー	tenā	tenor	<i>te-na-a</i>

Borrowed Meanings

Look at ナイス: it's the English word *nice*, but Japanese uses it as a casual cheer, something like "Nice one!" or "Well done!" when a friend scores in a game. Katakana words sometimes drift from their English meaning, so treat the English as a hint, not a guarantee: ナース is a nurse, but a ナイト can be a night or a knight.

Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

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

1. Read aloud: ナ・ニ・ヌ

▼ Show answer

na・ni・nu

2. Read aloud and translate: ツナ・ナース・テニス

▼ Show answer

tsuna (tuna)・nāsu (nurse)・tenisu (tennis)

3. Read aloud and translate: ナイス・ナイト

▼ Show answer

naisu (nice)・naito (night; knight)

4. Read aloud and translate: ケニア・カヌー

▼ Show answer

Kenia (Kenya)・kanū (canoe)

5. How can you tell ニ (ni) from ミ (mi, coming in Chapter 13)?

▼ Show answer

ニ is two horizontal lines; ミ is three slanting lines.

6. Write in katakana: *tenisu*・*tsuna*・*nāsu* (check the stroke order).

▼ Show answer

テニス・ツナ・ナース

Coming Up in Chapter 5

Two more N sounds: ネ (ne) and ノ (no). You'll read ノート (notebook) and ネクタイ (necktie), and see how simple ノ is, a single stroke.