

JP

KATAKANA

Katakana 2 · Chapter 2 · Za Ji Zu Ze Zo

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🌸 The Dakuten on the S Row — ザ ジ ズ ゼ ソ

The dakuten now goes on the S row, turning *s* into *z*: ザ ジ ズ ゼ ソ (za ji zu ze zo). As in hiragana, the second one is *ji* and not "zi", because the plain シ is *shi*. Romaji is shown for everything.

PLAIN	WITH ゝ	SOUND BEFORE	SOUND NOW
サ	ザ	sa	za
シ	ジ	shi	ji
ス	ズ	su	zu
セ	ゼ	se	ze
ソ	ゾ	so	zo

	a	i	u	e	o
s	サ	シ	ス	セ	ソ
z (s + ゝ)	ザ	ジ	ズ	ゼ	ゾ

All five highlighted characters are today's: the whole Z row in one chapter.

🌟 Five New Characters — ザ ジ ズ ゼ ソ

ザ

za

ジ

ji

ズ

zu

like "za" in *pizza* ("zah")

5 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a *zap* of lightning: サ with two sparks.
Hiragana twin: ざ.

like "jee" in *jeep*, short ("jee")

5 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a *jeep*'s windscreen wipers: シ with two marks. Hiragana twin: じ.

like "zoo" ("zoo")

4 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a *zoo* animal's curly tail: ス with two dots. Hiragana twin: ず.

ゼ

ze

like "ze" in *zest* ("zeh")

4 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a *zebra*'s stripe: セ with two marks.
Hiragana twin: ぜ.

ゾ

zo

like "zo" in *zone*, short ("zoh")

4 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a *zombie*'s twitch: ソ with two marks.
Hiragana twin: ぞ.

ジ Is "Ji", Not "Zi"

Just like じ in hiragana, ジ is *ji*, the English "j" of *jeep*. Katakana uses it to write the English "j" sound in loanwords, so ジム is *ji-mu*, "gym" (the English word *gym* begins with a j sound too).

Look-Alikes with the Marks

ジ is シ plus two marks, so check the corner: if there are two small marks at the top right, it is ジ. ズ (zu) is ス with two marks, and is a close cousin of ヌ (nu): the marks make the difference.

Read It — New Words

Read the Japanese first, then check the romaji and the English word it comes from.

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	ゼロ	zero	zero	ze-ro: the English zero

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
2	ジム	jimu	gym	<i>ji-mu</i>
3	ゾーン	zōn	zone	<i>zo-o-n</i>
4	ジーンズ	jīnzu	jeans	<i>ji-i-n-zu: a plural in -ズ</i>
5	サイズ	saizu	size	<i>sa-i-zu: clothes and shoes</i>
6	ズーム	zūmu	zoom	<i>zu-u-mu</i>
7	ガレージ	garēji	garage	<i>ga-re-e-ji</i>
8	ゼリー	zerī	jelly	<i>ze-ri-i</i>
9	リズム	rizumu	rhythm	<i>ri-zu-mu</i>
10	レーザー	rēzā	laser	<i>re-e-za-a</i>

Real Japanese Tip — サイズ and ジーンズ

サイズ is one of the most useful katakana words when you shop for clothes or shoes: in a store you'll be asked **サイズは?** ("What size?"). And **ジーンズ** ends in **ズ** because English plural **s** after a voiced sound becomes a **z**, and Japanese keeps it.

When Does a Word Get —?

Compare **ゼロ** (zero) and **ゼリー** (jelly): one has a long vowel mark and one does not. You cannot always predict — from the English word, so learn each word as you meet it.

Review: Words from Chapter 1

ゲーム (game) · ギター (guitar) · ガス (gas) · ゴルフ (golf) · ゴール (goal) · ギフト (gift).

Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

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

1. Read aloud: ザ · ジ · ズ · ゼ · ゾ

▼ Show answer

za · ji · zu · ze · zo

2. Read aloud and translate: ゼロ · ジム · ゾーン

▼ Show answer

zero (zero) · jimu (gym) · zōn (zone)

3. Read aloud and translate: ジーンズ · サイズ · ズーム

▼ Show answer

jīnzu (jeans) · saizu (size) · zūmu (zoom)

4. Read aloud and translate: ガレージ · ゼリー · レーザー

▼ Show answer

garēji (garage) · zerī (jelly) · rēzā (laser)

5. How is ジ pronounced, and which plain character does it come from?

▼ Show answer

ji, like the English "j" of *jeep*; it comes from シ (shi).

6. Write in katakana: *jimu* · *saizu* · *zero* (check the stroke order).

▼ Show answer

ジム・サイズ・ゼロ

Coming Up in Chapter 3

The dakuten on the T row: ダヂヅデド (da ji zu de do). Two of them are rare, but ドア (door), デート (date) and ダンス (dance) will be readable.