

JP

KATAKANA

Katakana 2 · Chapter 4 · Ba Bi Bu Be Bo

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🌸 The Dakuten on the H Row — バ ビ ブ ベ ボ

The dakuten on the H row turns **h** into **b**: バ ビ ブ ベ ボ (ba bi bu be bo). This one row gives you ビール (beer), バス (bus), ボール (ball) and テレビ (TV), a very practical chapter. Romaji is shown for everything.

PLAIN	WITH °	SOUND BEFORE	SOUND NOW
ハ	バ	ha	ba
ヒ	ビ	hi	bi
フ	ブ	fu	bu
ヘ	ベ	he	be
ホ	ボ	ho	bo

	a	i	u	e	o
h	ハ	ヒ	フ	ヘ	ホ
b (h + °)	バ	ビ	ブ	ベ	ボ

All five highlighted characters are today's: the whole B row in one chapter. The little circle ° (P row) is next chapter.

🌟 Five New Characters — バ ビ ブ

バ

ビ

ブ

ba

like "ba" in *bar* ("bah")

4 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a *bat* with two wings flapping: ハ with two marks. Hiragana twin: ば.

bi

like "bee", short ("bee")

4 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a *bee* buzzing: ヒ with two marks. Hiragana twin: び.

bu

like "boo" ("boo")

3 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a ghost going *boo*: フ with two marks. Hiragana twin: ぶ.



be

like "be" in *bet* ("beh")

3 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a *beach* hill with two beach balls: ヘ with two marks. Hiragana twin: べ.



bo

like "bo" in *boat*, short ("boh")

6 strokes · [stroke order](#) ▶

Memory hook: a *boat* with two flags: ホ with two marks. Hiragana twin: ぼ.

Short or Long? — ビル versus ビール

Katakana's long-vowel mark — matters. ビル (*biru*) is a **building** (from *building*), but ビール (*bīru*) is **beer**. Ask for a ビル and you'll get a very odd look. Always check for —.

Look-Alikes: ボ and ポ, バ and パ

Today's marks are two dots (ゝ). Next chapter's mark is a little circle (゜), which turns the same characters into パ ピ プ ペ ポ. Check carefully: ボ (bo) has two dots, ポ (po) has a circle.

Read It — New Words

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

#	WORD	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	ビール	bīru	beer	<i>bi-i-ru: not ビル!</i>
2	バス	basu	bus	<i>ba-su</i>
3	ボール	bōru	ball	<i>bo-o-ru</i>
4	ブーツ	būtsu	boots	<i>bu-u-tsu</i>
5	ベル	beru	bell	<i>be-ru</i>
6	テレビ	terebi	television	<i>te-re-bi: shortened from television</i>
7	ズボン	zubon	trousers	<i>zu-bo-n: from French, not English</i>
8	バナナ	banana	banana	<i>ba-na-na</i>
9	ボタン	botan	button	<i>bo-ta-n</i>
10	バター	batā	butter	<i>ba-ta-a</i>

Real Japanese Tip — バス and the Journey

バス is the bus, and a bus stop is a バステイ (*basutei*), with て and い from hiragana. Japanese often mixes katakana and other scripts in one word, which is why you learned all three.

ズボン and テレビ: Borrowed and Shortened

ズボン comes from the French word *jupon*, not English, a reminder that katakana covers all foreign words. テレビ is *television* chopped down to its first and last sounds, a very common Japanese way of shortening loanwords.

Review: Words from Chapter 3

ドア (door) · デート (date) · ダンス (dance) · ドラマ (drama) · ドル (dollar) · データ (data).

Try It Yourself — れんしゅう

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

1. Read aloud: バ · ビ · ブ · ベ · ボ

▼ Show answer

ba · bi · bu · be · bo

2. Read aloud and translate: ビール · バス · ボール

▼ Show answer

bīru (beer) · basu (bus) · bōru (ball)

3. What is the difference between ビル and ビール?

▼ Show answer

ビル (biru) is a building; ビール (bīru) is beer. The long-vowel mark — changes the word.

4. Read aloud and translate: テレビ · ズボン · ボタン

▼ Show answer

terebi (TV) · zubon (trousers) · botan (button)

5. Read aloud and translate: ブーツ · バナナ · バター

▼ Show answer

būtsu (boots) · banana (banana) · batā (butter)

6. Write in katakana: *bīru · basu · terebi* (check the stroke order).

▼ Show answer

ビール・バス・テレビ

Coming Up in Chapter 5

The little circle ° on the H row: パピプペポ (pa pi pu pe po). You'll be able to read パン (bread), ペン (pen), ピアノ (piano) and スーパー (supermarket).