

Let's Learn Hiragana: First Book of Basic Japanese Writing (Kodansha's Children's Classics)

By Yasuko Kosaka Mitamura

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There are three types of Japanese script-katakana, hiragana, and kanji. It is possible to read Japanese knowing only a limited number of kanji, but it is not possible with only a limited number of katakana or hiragana-one must know all of them. *Let's Learn Hiragana*, and its companion volume *Let's Learn Katakana*, is a textbook that introduces the learner to the basics of one of these fundamental Japanese scripts. Being a workbook, it contains all the exercises that allow the student to master hiragana by the time the book has been finished. *Let's Learn Hiragana* is a classic in the field, and the huge number of students that have used it successfully is a sign of its preeminence as a self-study guide.

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Editorial Review

About the Author
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Preface

The Japanese writing system is so different from the English alphabet that written Japanese may seem to be more complicated than it really is. Actually, Hiragana symbols, which comprise the basis of Japanese writing, are not difficult to learn. By using this workbook as a study guide, the student should be able to learn all the Hiragana symbols easily, in a relatively short time.

This workbook is specially designed and organized so that the beginning student, who is studying Japanese as a foreign language, can learn Hiragana through self-study, without the aid of an instructor. Each section contains sufficient explanation and exercises to enable students to study and practice on their own until proficiency has been attained. Consequently, the use of this workbook will eliminate the need for extensive writing drills in class. The class time can then be utilized more effectively for matters that require the presence of an instructor, such as question-and-answer type oral drills.

This book is composed of four chapters: chapter 1 introduces the forty-six basic Hiragana and the sixty-one modified symbols which are derived from them. Chapter 2 explains how to write words using Hiragana symbols. Chapter 3 shows how to write sentences, and chapter 4 contains review exercises. The derivation of Hiragana is presented in Appendix B.

In learning any foreign language, it is important to place equal emphasis on the four skills: hearing, speaking, reading and writing. Therefore, it is an essential prerequisite to become very familiar with Hiragana for the eventual mastery of Japanese. The student will find that diligent use of this workbook will be of great benefit in the quest for proficiency in Japanese.

Throughout this workbook, the Modified Hepburn System is used, for the most part, to Romanize Japanese words and sentences. This widely used system comes the closest to representing the correct Japanese sounds and facilitates learning Japanese pronunciation. It is also known as the Hyojun, or standard, System. (The original Hepburn System is no longer used, so references to the "Hepburn System" actually mean the Modified Hepburn System. The two are nearly identical, differing in only a few points.)....

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