

Step 2. Separate them into groups and match them with their romanized/ English versions.

Luckily the chart above already does it for you. However, we still got to do it anyway, just for the sake of grouping them.

We'll separate all Hiragana Characters into 10 groups.

A あ, I い, U う, E え, O お
 KA か, KI き, KU く, KE け, KO こ
 SA さ, SHI し, SU す, SE せ, SO そ
 TA た, CHI ち, TSU つ, TE て, TO と
 NA な, NI に, NU ぬ, NE ね, NO の
 HA は, HI ひ, HU ふ, HE へ, HO ほ
 MA ま, MI み, MU む, ME め, MO も
 YA や, YU ゆ, YO よ
 RA ら, RI り, RU る, RE れ, RO ろ
 WA わ, WO を, N ん

Note about pronunciation: A is Ah (ah in Bah), I is Ee (ee in meet), U is Ooh like (like moo), E is Eh (like meh), O is O (like Ou in Cough or O in Or).

When you read these aloud, KA is KAH, KI is actually KEE, KU is actually KOO, KE is KEH, and KO is KO.

Step 3.1. Memorizing the first 5 groups.

So, going group by group, starting with the first one, you're going to memorize JUST the English/Romanized parts. This is not hard at all because all mostly follow the A, I, U, E, O pattern. There are a few exceptions that are bolded below.

Sit down, take the first 5 groups and memorize them. We'll do the first 5 for the sake of simplicity.

Say them out loud. Close your eyes. Write them down. This will take you a minute or three at most.

A I U E O
 KA KI KU KE KO
 SA SHI SU SE SO
 TA **CHI TSU** TE TO
 NA NI NU NE NO

Quick test: Can you repeat these 25 sounds without looking at this page? Yes? Good. Now, lets line them up with their Japanese Counterparts.

Step 4.1: Get acquainted with the stroke order for these characters.

n	w-	r-	y-	m-	h-	n-	t-	s-	k-	
ん N	わ WA	ら RA	や YA	ま MA	は HA	な NA	た TA	さ SA	か KA	あ A
	ゐ WI	り RI		み MI	ひ HI	に NI	ち CHI	し SHI	き KI	い I
		る RU	ゆ YU	む MU	ふ FU	ぬ NU	つ TSU	す SU	く KU	う U
	ゑ WE	れ RE		め ME	へ HE	ね NE	て TE	せ SE	け KE	え E
	を WO	ろ RO	よ YO	も MO	ほ HO	の NO	と TO	そ SO	こ KO	お O

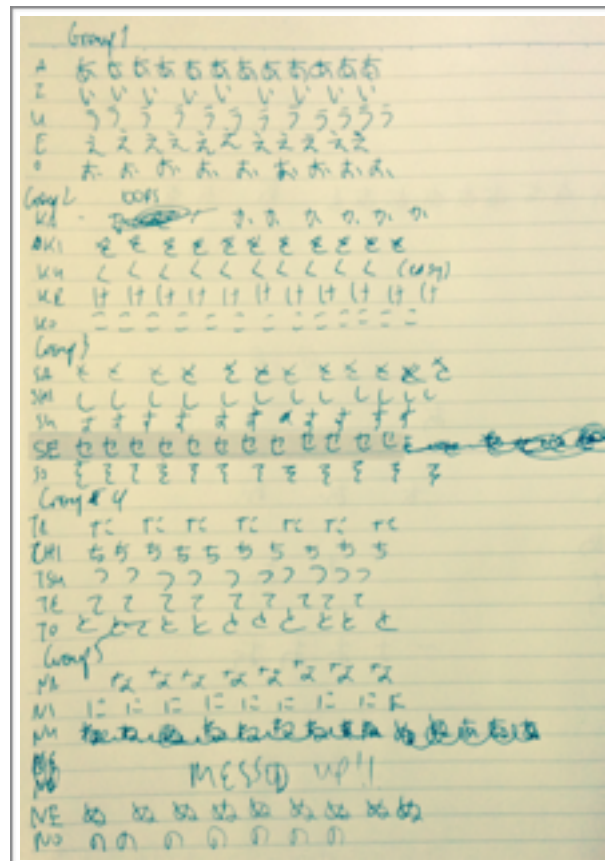
Step 5.1 Write 'em out.

Well you didn't expect to learn them just by reading an article did you? Now that you've memorized the English/Romanized sounds, write them down on a piece of paper and start practicing the hiragana characters across the page for each one.

It should look something like this.

And yes, expect as much cross-outs and mess-ups as I have.

No start is perfect.



This first half should take you 30 minutes if not less. Most of the time would go into writing these characters out, I assume. Before we proceed to part 2 and the next groups, 6-10, make sure to take some time to quickly drill quiz yourself on the newly learned characters.

Remember all 25 English sounds, write them down on the left side of the paper as I've done above. Then, for review, write in the Japanese Hiragana characters too.

Association Tips. I was thinking of not including association but some characters can be made simpler. Here are some of my ideas that may help you remember them easier. You don't have to agree but feel free to use them as a guide.

え Looks like a Z with a line on top and the bottom has a squiggle. Think of it as a Z squiggle.

の pretty much looks like a lower case n except that the left side is rounded out.

く is a K minus the vertical line.

け is a lower case t with a line next to it. Call it line-t.

う is a sideways U with a line on top. Call it sideways U-line.

た is pretty much a lowercase t with a ko (こ) next to it. You can call it a T-ko.

つ is a backwards C.

し, pronounced SHI, looks like a C or a U depending on how you want to look at it. For me, I associated し with SHI is C because that rhymes and it's indeed almost a C minus the top part being straight.

Done? Move on to Part 2: How To Learn Japanese Hiragana in Under 1 Hour PDF.

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