

Introduction

Konnichi wa!
Welcome to
Mirai Stage 1.

You are about to start learning Japanese. Soon you will be able to talk about yourself and understand what other people are saying about themselves. You will also learn to read and write the Japanese syllabary called hiragana and a few of the picture writing called kanji.

You will meet the following people who attend a judō academy run by Mr Tanaka. Mr Tanaka is a famous judō expert who now lives in Australia. He encourages all the students who attend his academy to speak in Japanese, because they are all learning Japanese at school.



Tanaka-sensei



Karen Scott



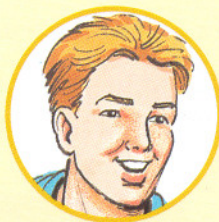
Johnny Lee



Naomi Akimoto



Hiro Yamaguchi



Ken Thomson



Masashi Yamada



Nicki Fenwick

You will also meet Yukari and Shingo, real Japanese teenagers who are there to help you and to tell you about their lives in Japan.



Hi! I'm Yukari. I'm in grade 8. Shingo and I will explain any new expressions.



Hi! I'm Shingo. I'm in grade 10.

You will also meet the Ninja,
a historical character from
feudal Japan. He will help you
in lots of ways.



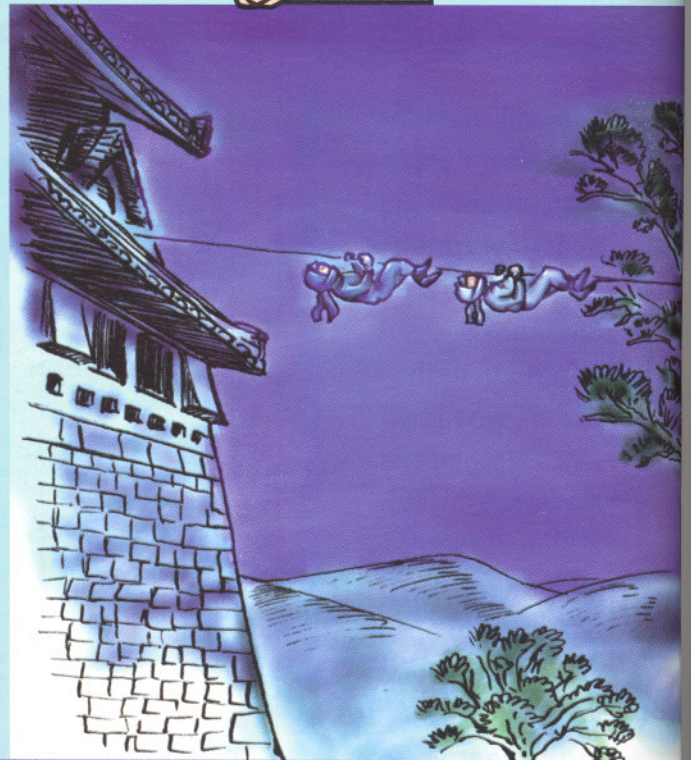
The ninja were members of the secret service in feudal times. They were trained from childhood in martial arts. They were not only highly skilled fighters but also developed high powers of concentration that enabled them to withstand pain and bodily discomfort. They were able to enter the castles of their masters' enemies without being seen and find out the enemies' secret plans. Unlike modern spies, who can use cameras and tape recorders, the ninja had to memorise everything.

The ninja were so skilful, people thought that they had magic powers. They did not have magic powers but they did have:

- ◆ discipline
- ◆ determination
- ◆ daring.

Discipline was needed to keep practising their martial arts every day, so that they were constantly becoming faster. Their reflexes were almost instantaneous. **Determination** was necessary to keep their goals in sight and **daring** gave them the courage to try anything.

These attributes will help you too succeed in learning a new language. That is why we have chosen the Ninja as your guide and inspiration.



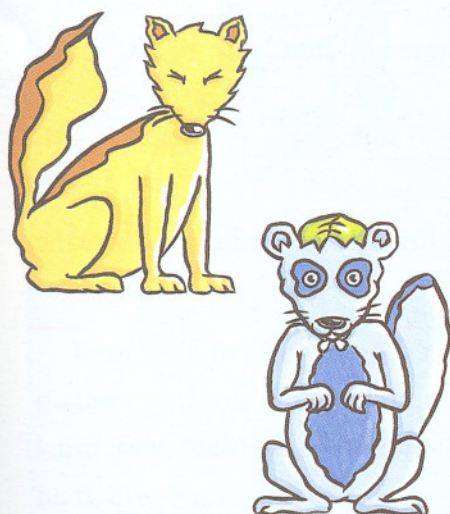
Finding your way around this Course Book

The first section, called **Japanese writing**, is an explanation of the way in which Japanese is written. It is a good idea to read it before you start so that you have some understanding of Japanese writing. You do not need to remember everything; just use it for reference as you learn to write hiragana.

The rest of the book is divided into three parts, with three units in each part. Within the units you will find the following icons.



This means that the section is on compact disc.



This indicates a pair-work activity in which you take turns to play the characters. The characters are: **Kitsune**, a Japanese fox, and **Tanuki**, a Japanese raccoon dog.

Kitsune is famous in Japanese folklore because he is able to trick human beings as well as other animals. There are many folktales in which he changes himself into human shape, either male or female. In the myths and fables of Japan, Kitsune was also the messenger of Inari, the god of the rice fields.

Tanuki is also a character who frequently appears in Japanese folktales. He also likes to trick people and can take on human form. He is an amusing character who likes to do silly things. When these two come together they always try to trick each other.

AB p. 4

This is a reference to a page in the Activity Book, where you will find more activities related to what you have been learning.

せつめい コーナー
Explanation corner

Explanation corner. Here you will find explanations about new sentences and expressions.

Particles



Particles. The Ninja gives you special help here and in other sections.

できますか

Dekimasuka
CAN YOU DO IT?



Can you do it? These are activities to test your understanding.

わかった!

Wakatta!
I'VE GOT IT!



I've got it! These summaries show what you know.

インフォ

Info
DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know? These pages tell you interesting information about Japan.



べんきょうの こつ

What's your secret? Handy study hints!



あそびましょう

Just for fun! Things that Japanese children learn to do.

ひらがな



Reading and writing hiragana. Practice in reading and writing.

てんせい



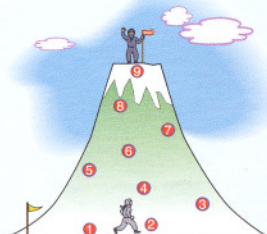
Tensei. A continuing manga about Tensei, an alien who visits Japan.

WHAT A USEFUL EXPRESSION!

What a useful expression! That's exactly what they are!

チェック しましょう

Let's check! A vocabulary and checklist, where you can tick everything you have learned to do and mark your progress up Mt Fuji.

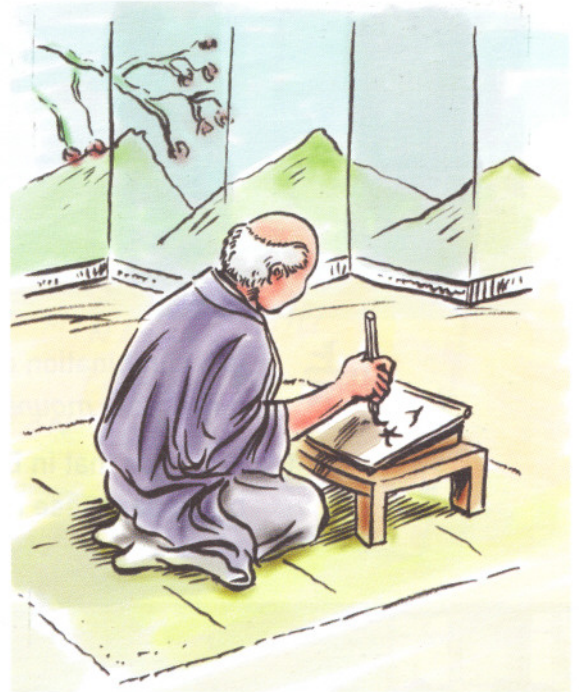


Japanese writing

Japanese is a language that does not use the alphabet to write sounds and words. In fact, Japanese writing consists of three types of writing. They are called, kanji, hiragana and katakana.

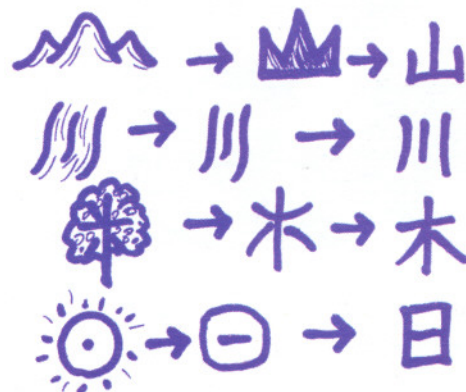


The kanji system was brought to Japan from China more than 1500 years ago by visiting Buddhist priests and scholars. For a while, scholars in Japan wrote in Chinese—just like scholars in Europe and Britain wrote in Latin and Greek.



Kanji originally developed from the pictures of things. Indeed, there are still many kanji that actually look like the word they represent. For example, it is easy to see that 山 looks like a mountain—and that is exactly what it means!

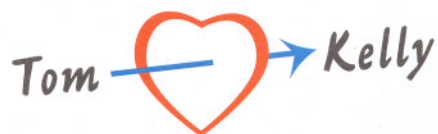
Can you guess what these other kanji mean?



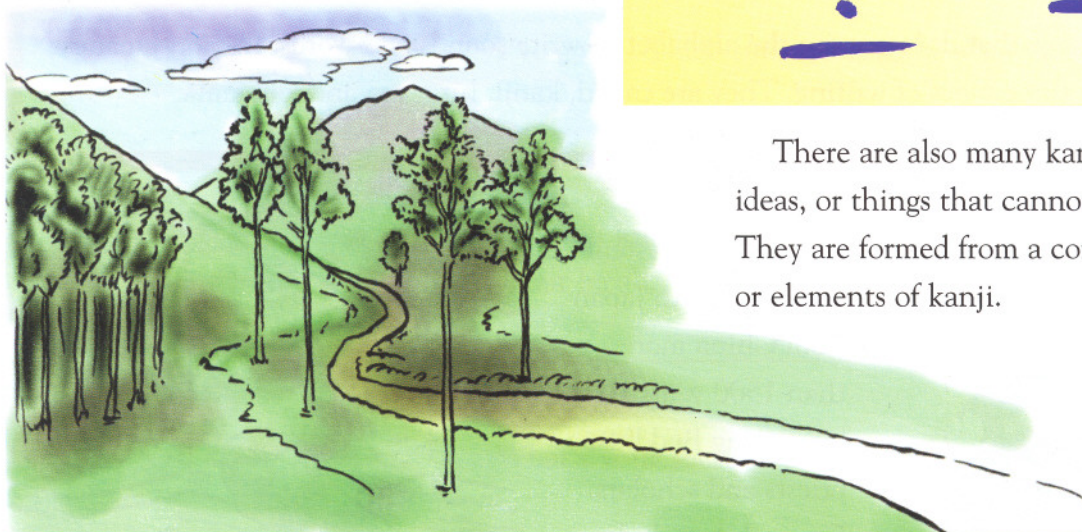
You often see picture-writing in English. Can you think of any other examples?



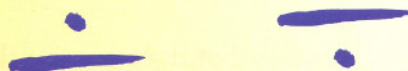
BRISBANE 4-DAY OUTLOOK



Of course there are many kanji that do not look like their original picture at all. This is because the picture has been simplified or changed over the centuries.



For example 上 is the kanji for *up*, and 下 is the kanji for *down*. Originally, they were written like this:



There are also many kanji that represent ideas, or things that cannot be drawn simply. They are formed from a combination of kanji or elements of kanji.



is a combination of the kanji for *mountain* 山 plus *up* 上 and *down* 下. It means *a mountain pass*.

Notice that in English we have to use twelve letters to express this idea, but in Japanese it can be expressed with one kanji.



In all, Japanese primary school children learn to read and write about 1000 kanji. By the end of high school, they should know how to read and write almost 2000. In this Course Book you will only learn a few easy kanji, which you should enjoy learning to read and write. Kanji are not like our alphabet; they are used to represent words and not to spell them out. So every time you learn a new kanji, you have to learn how to say it, or read it aloud.

When the Japanese tried to write Japanese using Chinese kanji, they found it rather inconvenient, because Japanese is quite different from Chinese. For example, they needed to write word endings that do not occur in Chinese. To give you an English example, the word *jump* could be written with a kanji but the different endings of the word, such as *jumping*, or *jumped* could not be written with kanji. They therefore developed kana, two different scripts that represent sounds. Every single word can be spelt using these scripts.

What are the other two kinds of writing for?



ひ	hi
ら	ra
が	ga
な	na

One of these two types of kana is **hiragana**. Hiragana is the first script that Japanese children learn. Using hiragana, you can write anything that you can say in Japanese. As soon as you have learned it, you can start to write to a penfriend in Japan. Hiragana is a form of writing that has forty-six symbols. Each symbol represents a syllable. That means that each hiragana symbol is used to write a *sound*. The hiragana symbols do not have any meaning by themselves. Hiragana can be used to write every single Japanese word by spelling it out. Hiragana symbols are mostly rounded in shape.



カ	ka
タ	ta
カ	ka
ナ	na

Katakana is the name of the other type of kana. It also has forty-six symbols that are used to write the sounds that make up a word. They are exactly the same sounds as in hiragana but are written with straighter, sharper lines. Katakana is used to write foreign (mostly English) words that have been absorbed into the Japanese language. It is also used for emphasis or to give a special look to certain styles of writing, such as comics. Onomatopoeic words—like buzz, hiss and clatter—are also written in katakana.

メイクアップアーティスト

Makeup artist

テレビ

Television

カメラ

Camera

All three scripts (kanji, hiragana and katakana) can be used in the same sentence, as shown in the following example.

私はバナナを食べました。

I ate a banana.

kanji hiragana

katakana

hiragana kanji

hiragana

In this Course Book we will concentrate on learning hiragana as soon as possible. It makes good sense to learn hiragana first. This allows you to write and read full sentences even if you do not know any kanji.

The hiragana syllabary

Here are the forty-six basic hiragana symbols. All but six of the symbols stand for a syllable consisting of a consonant and a vowel. For example, *ka*, *ki*, *ku*, *ke*, *ko*. Syllables that do not consist of a vowel plus a consonant are the five vowel sounds *a*, *i*, *u*, *e*, *o* and the one consonant *n*. Roomaji (Japanese that is written using the Roman alphabet) has been placed underneath to help you. Your teacher will help you to learn how to pronounce each syllable.



Start here and read down.

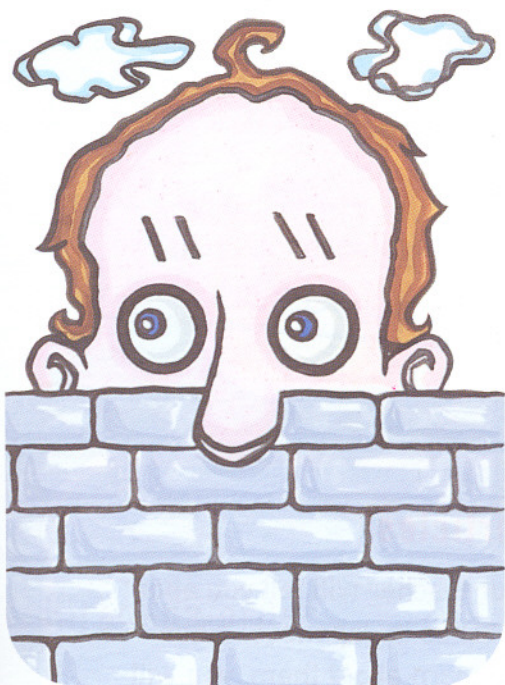
11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
ん n	わ wa	ら ra	や ya	ま ma	は ha	な na	た ta	さ sa	か ka	あ a
		り ri		み mi	ひ hi	に ni	ち chi	し shi	き ki	い i
		る ru	ゆ yu	む mu	ふ fu	ぬ nu	つ tsu	す su	く ku	う u
		れ re		め me	へ he	ね ne	て te	せ se	け ke	え e
	を o	ろ ro	よ yo	も mo	ほ ho	の no	と to	そ so	こ ko	お o

Dakuten (゜) and handakuten (゜)

These forty-six hiragana symbols are extended by the use of two signs.

These are called **dakuten** (゜) and **handakuten** (゜).

Syllables that start with *g, z, j, d, b* and *p* are written by putting these special little marks to the top right of the sounds that start with *k, s, t* and *h*.



6	5	4	3	2	1
ぱ ば	だ ざ	が			
pi ba	da za	ga			
ぴ び	ぢ じ	ぎ			
pi bi	ji ji	gi			
ぷ ぶ	づ ず	ぐ			
pu bu	zu zu	gu			
ぺ べ	で ぜ	げ			
pe be	de ze	ge			
ぽ ぼ	ど ぞ	ご			
po bo	do zo	go			

Other sounds

Some syllables are created by combining a normal-sized hiragana with a small-sized hiragana: や *ya*, ゆ *yu* or よ *yo*.

りや	みや	ひや	にや	ちゃ	しゃ	きや
rya	mya	hya	nya	cha	sha	kya
りゅ	みゅ	ひゅ	にゅ	ちゅ	しゅ	きゅ
ryu	myu	hyu	nyu	chu	shu	kyu
りょ	みょ	ひょ	にょ	ちょ	しょ	きょ
ryo	myo	hyo	nyo	cho	sho	kyo



Once you have learned the hiragana symbols, it is fairly easy to write full Japanese words. You don't have to worry about learning lots of spelling (as you do in English), because hiragana is a phonetic syllabary and that means you write the words as they sound. For example, the word for Japan is *Nihon*, and you write it にほん.

Rules for writing words

Things you need to know

There are a few simple rules to remember when writing hiragana.

To double a consonant

You must put a small つ (tsu) before the consonant you wish to double.

For example, *itte* is written いて. Notice the position of the little つ.

This rule does not apply when you double an n sound. Instead you use hiragana ん.

For example: *minna* is written みんな.

To extend a vowel sound

Just write the relevant vowel after the syllable you wish to extend.

For example:

okaasan is written おかあさん

oniisan is written おにいさん

kuuki is written くうき

oneesan is written おねえさん.

The only exception to this rule is the *o* vowel, which is almost always extended using the *u* symbol.

For example, *otōsan* is written おとうさん.

In this Course Book, all *o* that are extended with a *u* symbol are written in roomaji with a line over the *o*, like this: *ō*. The few words that are extended using the *o* symbol will be written in roomaji with a double *oo*. For example, おおさか would be written Oosaka.

Particles

Your teacher will tell you about particles in Japanese. When you learn about them, you will need to know that three of them are written using different hiragana from the way they are pronounced.

The particle *wa* is written は.

The particle *e* is written え.

The particle *o* is written を.

Punctuation

Full stops are written .

Commas are written ,.

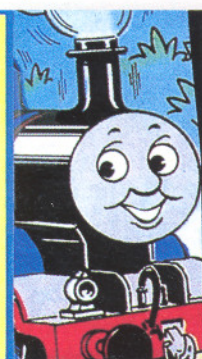
Across or down the page?



Perhaps you have already noticed that Japanese can be written across the page, just like English, or down the page from right to left. Traditionally, Japanese was always written down the page, but in modern times the English way is commonly used. Magazines and newspapers use both ways of writing on the same page because it gives great scope for interesting designs.

By the way, when the combined syllables such as きゃ、きゅ、きょ are written down the page, the small syllable is placed below and to the right.

① トーマスは、はたらくのが だいすき。
とくに きゃくしゃの アニーと
くらラベルを ひっぱって いる ときが
いちばん たのしいです。



Hiragana order

As you know, dictionaries and word lists in English are written in alphabetical order. Naturally, Japanese word lists and dictionaries are written in hiragana order. This order is the same order as the syllabary chart: a, i, u, e, o, ka, ki, ku, ke, ko and so on. The dictionary at the end of this Course Book is in hiragana order, but to help you get started, there is a list of the new vocabulary under topic headings at the end of each unit. Within the topics, the words are listed in hiragana order.

Roomaji

While you are learning hiragana, roomaji will be written under the Japanese script to help you. When a particle is written in roomaji a space has been placed between the word and the particle to help you to recognise that it is a particle and not part of the word. For example, *sensei wa* means *as for the teacher*. The word for teacher is *sensei* not *senseiwa*. The *wa* is a particle. A hyphen has been placed between words and suffixes for the same reason.

Also, Japanese is not normally written with spaces between the words. You will get used to this at a later stage, when you know some kanji. For now, though, you will find spaces between all the words.

There is a red overlay provided with this book. Use it when you are ready to read hiragana without help from the roomaji.

Australia's Japanese connections

AB pp. 1-3

Find your state's sister prefecture and your capital city's sister city and connect them on the map.

Victoria	Aichi Prefecture
Western Australia	Hyōgo Prefecture
New South Wales	Metropolitan Tōkyō
Queensland	Saitama Prefecture Osaka Prefecture
South Australia	Okayama Prefecture
Melbourne	Osaka
Hobart	Yaizu
Brisbane	Kōbe
Perth	Kagoshima
Sydney	Nagoya
Adelaide	Himeji
Canberra	Nara

