

# Lesson 1

## SECTION A

### *About the Japanese Writing System*

Modern Japanese may be written horizontally, usually from left to right, or vertically, from top to bottom.<sup>1</sup> When it is written vertically, the columns are read starting from the right. While it is possible to write any text either horizontally or vertically, traditionally the choice depends on the type of text. Most newspaper and magazine articles, legal documents, literary works, and Japanese-language textbooks for native speakers of Japanese are still regularly written vertically; for other texts, horizontal writing has increasingly become the preferred choice, particularly for science and mathematics and foreign languages. Newer types of material, like e-mail and Web-site offerings, are written horizontally. Even some newer editions of Japanese dictionaries reflect the shift in printing style. The widespread use of computers for text processing is no doubt influencing these changes, although Japanese word processors do typically allow for both vertical and horizontal printing.

Japanese writing includes three types of symbols, used in conventional combinations: (1) *kanji*, characters for the most part originally borrowed from Chinese, which represent /sound + meaning/; (2) *kana* (incorporating *katakana* and *hiragana*), symbols developed through the simplification of *kanji*, which represent Japanese syllable-like sound units;<sup>2</sup> and (3) letters of the Roman alphabet and Arabic numerals,

<sup>1</sup>On moving vehicles—on the sides of ships, taxicabs, etc.—we can find right-to-left horizontal writing. In road signs and advertisements, we may encounter other unusual writing styles, just as we do in the writing of English in the United States, but these are not typical features of Japanese orthography.

<sup>2</sup>In *Japanese: The Spoken Language* (JSL), the term *mora* is used for these syllable-like units.

which may occur within a text consisting otherwise of kanji and kana or in a romanized text,<sup>3</sup> replacing kanji and kana. The principal difference in the appearance of kanji and kana is their complexity: while all kana symbols have very few strokes, most kanji have noticeably more. Can you tell which symbols in the following text are kanji and which are kana? For now, don't worry about what the text means.

Example 1:

先週は、お陰様でとてもいい勉強になりました。

This text includes six kanji (先, 週, 陰, 様, 勉, and 強) and two punctuation marks (、 and 。). The remaining symbols are kana.

There are two kana sets (usually referred to as syllabaries): hiragana and katakana. All kana symbols in Example 1 are hiragana, identifiable by their curved strokes. The strokes of katakana symbols, also few in number, are angular. Which of the symbols in the following all-kana sample are katakana?

Example 2:

このディスプレイはなかなかモダンですね。

If we line up the hiragana symbols of Example 2 next to its katakana symbols, the contrast is striking: the flowing lines of hiragana are very different from the angular lines of katakana.

Katakana: デ, イ, ス, プ, レ, イ, モ, ダ, and ン

Hiragana: こ, の, は, な, か, な, か, で, す, and ね

Now examine a few more sample texts (Examples 3, 4, and 5) and distinguish kanji, hiragana, and katakana.

Example 3:

メールをありがとうございました。コネチカットは雪で大変なようです。こちらは暖冬で、セーターもいらないくらいです。

<sup>3</sup>In this book Japanese words that have been borrowed into English are written according to English convention. Otherwise, JSL romanization is used throughout, but without accent marks. The simple **g** in JWL is equivalent to both **g** and **g̃** in JSL.

## Example 4:

高	来	ウ	さ	留
校	た	ス	ん	学
に	。	カ	は	生
留	今	ロ	、	紹
学	学	ラ	ア	介
し	期	イ	メ	ロ
て	か	ナ	リ	ジ
い	ら	州	カ	ヤ
る	山	か	の	ー
。	城	ら	サ	ズ

## Example 5:

さて、先日はクッキーをありがとうございました。リサさんが焼いてくださるクッキーやケーキはいつもとてもおいしく、お茶の時間が楽しくなります。

Look at Examples 3, 4, and 5 again, this time writing a single line under (or, in Example 4, on the right side of) the katakana symbols and a double line under (beside) the hiragana symbols. The remaining symbols are kanji and punctuation marks.

Were your answers correct? You can check them below.

## Example 3:

メールをありがとうございました。 コネチカットは雪で大変なよ  
うですね。 こちらは暖冬で、セーターもいらなくらいです。

## Example 4:

高	来	ウ	さ	留
校	た	ス	ん	学
に	。	カ	は	生
留	今	ロ	、	紹
学	学	ラ	ア	介
し	期	イ	メ	ロ
て	か	ナ	リ	ジ
い	ら	州	カ	ヤ
る	山	か	の	ー
。	城	ら	サ	ズ

## Example 5:

さて、先日はクッキーをありがとうございました。リサさんが焼  
 いてくださるクッキーやケーキはいつもとてもおいしく、お茶の時  
 間が楽しくなります。

Do Exercise 1.1 in the Workbook.

A reexamination of Examples 1–5 points up another striking feature of Japanese writing: the lack of spaces within sentences.<sup>4</sup> English speakers are accustomed to analyzing texts in terms of words, which they identify as the units bounded by spaces. Written Japanese, on the other hand, has no such guide; thus there is frequent disagreement on how to divide a text into wordlike units—for example, when writing romanization.

Without spaces between words how is it possible to read Japanese texts accurately? How do we know what goes with what? The conventionalized use of the different types of symbols provides many clues. For example, a katakana sequence in a text regularly signals a nominal,<sup>5</sup> as does a sequence of two or more kanji. Many verbal and adjectival roots are also represented by kanji, in which case inflectional endings written in hiragana follow. Particles and all forms of the copula are also written in hiragana. More will be said about these clues for text processing as we develop reading skill.

### *Introduction to Katakana*

Lessons 1 to 4 introduce katakana, the syllabary used primarily for writing loanwords (i.e., words borrowed from foreign languages). Katakana is also used to set off native Japanese words. Its use thus corresponds to the use of italics in English. Katakana occurs frequently in advertisements; it is used to represent something strange or unusual from a linguistic point of view (for example, to quote foreigners' errors in Japanese); and it is often used in writing onomatopoeic words—words that are intended to represent their meaning by their sound (example: **gata-gata**, representing a rattling sound). In addition, katakana is used in writing telegrams and, together with Chinese characters (kanji), in writing some legal documents.

Ideally, students of Japanese as a foreign language learn to read

<sup>4</sup>For younger students learning to read, spaces are sometimes inserted after phrases.

<sup>5</sup>The grammatical terminology used in this text follows that of JSL.

Japanese after gaining some knowledge of the spoken language, even if that knowledge is very limited. After all, a written language is basically a representation of the oral language. When studying reading, it is important to remember the implied order: spoken then written. Such is the nature of reading any language.

Most English-speaking students of Japanese begin their study of the language with some use of romanization, introduced not as a writing system but as a study aid, a reminder of the spoken language, which is being orally practiced and drilled. We will therefore introduce katakana symbols by giving their equivalence in romanization, on the assumption that students have already learned the Japanese pronunciation represented by the romanized symbols. For the student who has not had such an introduction, listening to the aural representation of these symbols will be particularly important (either by hearing them read by a native speaker or by listening to a recording of them), as will reading the description of them in the introduction to *Japanese: The Spoken Language* (JSL). We must always remember that the sounds of Japanese are not the same as the sounds of English, even if a few of them are similar.

The major adjustment that native speakers of English must make in learning to read and write katakana is to move from an alphabetic system to a syllabic system—or, more accurately, a mora-representing system. While there are many exceptions in both English and Japanese—particularly in English—in general we think of English as having one sound for each letter and Japanese as having one beat (mora) for each kana symbol.

In the names ‘Nina’ and ‘Lisa,’ for example, English speakers hear four sounds in each. We also hear similar vowel sounds in the two names and use the same letters, “i” and “a,” to represent them. What is more, we hear the consonant /n/ twice in the first name and therefore expect the same letter to occur twice in its spelling.<sup>6</sup>

But what about the katakana representation? Three symbols are used for ‘Nina’ (ニーナ). The first represents /ni/, and the third, totally different symbol represents /na/. The middle symbol represents the lengthening of the vowel portion of the preceding mora, /i/. ‘Lisa’ is represented with two symbols (リサ), one standing for the /li/ and the other for the /sa/. No symbol occurs twice in the writing of these two names: nothing in the writing suggests either the resemblance of the

<sup>6</sup>Letters enclosed in slashes represent sounds; because of the irregularity of English spelling, the same sound may be represented by other letters in other contexts.

vowels or the occurrence of /n/ twice in 'Nina'. Each symbol used in these two names is different and represents an entire mora.<sup>7</sup>

Our first task is to learn the katakana symbols that represent the mora of Japanese. When Japanese children, already fluent in the spoken language, learn to read, they begin with hiragana, the other set of mora-representing symbols, for reasons that do not apply to the foreign learner. For us, katakana has definite advantages as the first system to master. From the start, we want to read and write in authentic, adult style; and to use hiragana to represent everything in the language is not the way Japanese normally write. In fact, starting in the first grade, Japanese children use Chinese characters (kanji) together with their hiragana. More to the point, foreign learners cannot read or write in hiragana with comprehension, at least we cannot comprehend very much, assuming that we begin our study of the Japanese writing system when we have only a very limited knowledge of the language.

Since Japanese words borrowed from Western languages (especially English) are regularly written in katakana, katakana immediately provides us with a wealth of material that we can handle and that can be written authentically. What is more, it is important that we be reminded of the difference between the Japanese and English sound systems, and katakana provides excellent practice as we transfer directly from one language to the other. Finally, knowledge of katakana alone enables us to read many authentic Japanese texts, from restaurant menus to hotel notices, where hiragana alone has little use. In *Japanese: The Written Language* we therefore begin with katakana, then add hiragana and work with examples that use both of these syllabaries, and finally add kanji. At all times we work with the language written authentically, in normal adult style.

There are, of course, loanwords in the Japanese language that have come from languages other than English. The vast majority of loanwords have English origins, however, and it is these on which we will focus most of our attention.

Items borrowed from English and written in katakana can almost always be understood by the native speaker of English provided a few conversion tips are learned. And once having heard the Japanese borrowing of a foreign word, the English speaker can almost invariably write it accurately in katakana, provided the symbols have been learned. (Could we say this about the predictability of English spelling?) On the other hand, given an English word in its original form, we cannot always

<sup>7</sup>The slight difference in length of the first vowel is reflected in converting 'Nina' and 'Lisa' into Japanese.

predict what the Japanese conversion will be. Borrowings in Japanese are usually based on British or American pronunciation but sometimes on English spelling, and there is no way to make foolproof predictions. What is more, where there are different pronunciations in English for the same word, there is no way to predict which one the Japanese have chosen as the basis for their borrowing. We therefore concentrate on how to read katakana and how to write borrowed words in Japanese. We do not move from English directly to Japanese when the borrowed Japanese word is unfamiliar. As we gain more and more experience in reading katakana and seeing conversions from English to Japanese, we will find that we are automatically gaining facility in predicting how to move in this opposite direction.

Consider, for a moment, the question of pronunciation versus spelling. In studying the spoken language, we learn the Japanese borrowing for 'cake'. We represent this borrowing in romanization as **keeki**. The katakana writing of this word corresponds to its Japanese pronunciation, *not* its English spelling. In learning to read katakana, it is important always to *pronounce* an item *aloud* and *listen* to it, because most borrowings are based on pronunciation. We must not get entangled in the vagaries of English spelling until we recognize the English item that is represented. (An example of a Japanese borrowing based on English spelling is **ko-ko-a**, the borrowing for 'cocoa'.)

Let us now begin to master katakana, learning each symbol within a context and remembering always to concentrate first on reading (the receptive skill), then on writing (the productive skill). We will learn the katakana representation for each of the 113 mora of Japanese, plus a few special conventions that occur only in borrowed words pronounced with innovative pronunciation.

In the following lessons, English glosses are enclosed in single quotation marks ('cake'), and romanization is shown in boldface (**keeki**). Lowercase letters enclosed in slashes represent sounds in English (/k/) or occasionally in another foreign language. A romanized vowel preceded by a hyphen (as in -e) represents both the mora consisting of the vowel alone (e) as well as any mora ending in the vowel (**ke**, **se**, **te**, etc.). Remember that in katakana writing, a single symbol stands for each different /consonant + vowel/ combination; the consonant and the vowel cannot be written separately, as they always are in romanization.

To begin with, it is useful to master the regular vowel correspondences. The following list covers most conversions. All Japanese vowels and vowel combinations occur both with and without a preceding consonant, hence the hyphen preceding each Japanese item below.

Japanese vowel or vowel combination	Words with corresponding English vowel or diphthong <sup>8</sup>
-a	'pat' or 'pad' or 'putt' or 'ah!' (short) or 'sofa'
-aa	'ma' or 'card' or 'bird'
-ai	'my'
-au or -ao	'cow'
-i	'sit' (or 'seat')
-ii	'seed'
-u	'look' (or 'Luke')
-uu	'mood'
-e	'let' (or 'late')
-ee or -ei	'laid'
-o	'cot' (or 'coat')
-oo	'mode' or 'Maud'
-ou	'mode'
-oi	'boy'

### *Katakana Symbols 1–10*

Many English-language names have been borrowed into the Japanese language. Besides their frequent occurrence in the Japanese media, they are often found on business cards of foreigners in Japan. While there are many commonly occurring given names in English—Mary, John, Scott, Emily—family names vary widely.<sup>9</sup> Let us start by learning to read some given names.

How is the name 'Nina' represented in the Japanese writing system? Actually this name is pronounced with its first vowel lengthened, giving us a third mora: **ni-i-na**.

<sup>8</sup>A diphthong is a combination of more than one vowel sound within one syllable. For example, English 'high' is a one-syllable word containing a diphthong that moves from an /a/-sound to an /i/-sound. Compare the pronunciation of Japanese **hai**, which has two mora (**ha** + **i**) rather than one diphthong.

<sup>9</sup>The situation is quite the opposite in Japanese, where there are commonly occurring family names but a great variety of given names.







mora, *not* when it occurs as the vowel of a mora consisting of a /consonant + a/, like **na**, or when it represents the lengthening of the preceding vowel.

Examples:

- a. アン                      **Añ**                      ‘Ann’  
 b. リリアン                  **Ririañ**                      ‘Lillian’

(8) ト            to            ト            ト

Example:

- トニー                      **Tonii**                      ‘Tony’

(9) ム            mu            ム            ム

In English, unlike Japanese, many words and syllables end in a consonant. In Japanese, only a nasal consonant, represented by syllabic **ñ**, may occur in this position. When borrowing into Japanese items with a final consonant that is not /n/, the most common procedure is to add **-u**, that is, to use a /consonant + u/ mora. This gives us our second conversion tip.

**CONVERSION TIP 2:** In converting from Japanese back into English, try omitting the **-u** vowel that follows consonants at the end of words and syllables.

Examples:

- a. トム                      **Tomu**                      ‘Tom’  
 b. サム                      **Samu**                      ‘Sam’

(10) ケ            ke            ケ            ケ

What names are these?

- a. ケン                      **Keñ**                      ‘Ken’  
 b. ケニー                      **Kenii**                      ‘Kenny’  
 c. ケリー                      **Kerii**                      ‘Kelly’ or ‘Kerry’

The kana for **tu** regularly represents a sequence similar to English /ts(u)/, which makes it difficult to associate it with English /t(u)/. Thus, to represent /t/ at the end of English words or syllables, instead of following the usual “add **u**” rule, Japanese usually uses **to**.

**CONVERSION TIP 3:** When converting from Japanese back into English, try dropping the **-o** of the mora ト **to** when it occurs at the end of a word or syllable.

Thus:

ケート                      **Keeto**                      ‘Kate’

Do Exercise 1.2 in the Workbook.

## SECTION B

We continue with the introduction of symbols.

### *Katakana Symbols 11–20*

(11)    ロ            ro                        



Can you read these names? Remember Conversion Tip 1 about mora that begin with **r-**.

- |         |               |                    |
|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| a. ロン   | <b>Roñ</b>    | ‘Ron’              |
| b. ロニー  | <b>Ronii</b>  | ‘Ronny’            |
| c. ローリー | <b>Roorii</b> | ‘Laurie’ or ‘Rory’ |

(12)    ス            su                        

Examples:

- |        |              |         |
|--------|--------------|---------|
| a. スー  | <b>Suu</b>   | ‘Sue’   |
| b. アリス | <b>Arisu</b> | ‘Alice’ |

(13)    ク            ku                        

Consonant clusters (i.e., sequences of consonants within a single syllable, as in ‘street’), a common feature of English, are impossible in Japanese. The usual procedure is to convert from English by using mora that end in **-u** (or, if the consonant is /t/, the mora **to**), for all except the syllabic nasal **n̄** and the final consonant of the cluster. Thus, ‘street’, converted into Japanese, becomes ストリート **sutoriito**. In moving back from Japanese to English, once again we try dropping occurrences of **-u** in /consonant + **u**/ mora and the **-o** of **to**, just as we did when these occurred at the end of a word or syllable (Conversion Tips 2 and 3).

Example:

クリス                      **Kurisu**                      ‘Chris’

(14)    ル            ru            ル            

Examples:

a. ルー                      **Ruu**                      ‘Lew’ or ‘Lou’

b. ルーク                      **Ruuku**                      ‘Luke’

(15)    マ            ma                        

Can you identify these names?

a. マリー                      **Marii**                      ‘Marie’

b. マリア                      **Maria**                      ‘Maria’

c. トーマス                      **Toomasu**                      ‘Thomas’

Do Exercise 1.3 in the Workbook.

The combinations /ar/ as in ‘hard’ and /er/ as in ‘herd’ in English are usually represented in Japanese as a long **-aa** or sometimes, in word-final position, as a short **-a**.<sup>10</sup> Unpredictably, the combination may also be represented, according to the more general pattern, as **-aru** and **-eru** (see Conversion Tips 2 and 3).

**CONVERSION TIP 4:** Check any occurrences of **-aa** as possibly representing English /ar/ or /er/.

<sup>10</sup>A variety of English spellings represent these sounds, in words such as ‘her’, ‘sir’, ‘fur’, ‘purr’, and ‘word’.

Thus:


マーク	<b>Maaku</b>	‘Mark’
アート	<b>Aato</b>	‘Art’

The /th/ sound, as in English ‘thank’, does not occur in Japanese. To replace it, the Japanese usually use a mora beginning with **s-**. Thus, ‘thank’ is converted to Japanese サンク **sañku**, which could of course also represent English ‘sank’.

CONVERSION TIP 5: An **s-** may convert back into English as an /s/ or as a /th/, as in ‘thank’.

Do you recognize these names?

a. マーサ	<b>Maasa</b>	‘Martha’
b. アーサー	<b>Aasaa</b>	‘Arthur’
c. ルース	<b>Ruusu</b>	‘Ruth’
d. サマンサ	<b>Samañsa</b>	‘Samantha’

(16) イ    i    イ    

This is another example of a katakana symbol that represents a vowel alone as a mora. It occurs only when the vowel -i is a mora by itself and is not the lengthening of the vowel of the preceding mora.

Can you read these names?



a. イアン	<b>Iañ</b>	‘Ian’
b. ロイ	<b>Roi</b>	‘Roy’
c. リーロイ	<b>Riïroi</b>	‘Leroy’
d. ルイ	<b>Rui</b>	‘Louie’
e. ルイス	<b>Ruisu</b>	‘Louis’ or ‘Lewis’

The English diphthong /ey/ as in ‘May’ may be borrowed with either a long **-ee** or an **-ei** in Japanese loanwords.<sup>11</sup> In some examples, only one of these spellings is regularly used, and in others, we have a choice.

<sup>11</sup> Remember that **-ei** in Japanese is *not* a diphthong in a single syllable, but two mora.

Thus:

ケート	<b>Keeto</b>	
or ケイト	<b>Keito</b>	‘Kate’

(17) シ      **si**            

If we recall all the romanized mora that begin with **s-**, we notice a change in the quality of the sound represented by **s-** when it occurs before **-i**, bringing it closer to (*but not making it the same as*) English /sh/. It is not surprising, then, that both ‘see’ (or ‘sea’) and ‘she’ are written the same way when converted into Japanese: シー **sii**.

CONVERSION TIP 6: The **s-** in the mora シ **si** may represent English /s/, /sh/, or, as pointed out in Conversion Tip 5, /th/, as in ‘think’.

What personal names are these?

- |         |                |                    |
|---------|----------------|--------------------|
| a. シーナ  | <b>Siina</b>   | ‘Sheena’           |
| b. シリア  | <b>Siria</b>   | ‘Celia’            |
| c. シシリア | <b>Sisiria</b> | ‘Cecilia’          |
| d. ナンシー | <b>Nañsii</b>  | ‘Nancy’            |
| e. マーシー | <b>Maasii</b>  | ‘Marcy’            |
| f. ルーシー | <b>Ruusii</b>  | ‘Lucy’ or ‘Ruthie’ |

Do Exercise 1.4 in the Workbook.

(18) レ      **re**            

Can you read these names?

- |          |                 |            |
|----------|-----------------|------------|
| a. アレン   | <b>Areñ</b>     | ‘Allen’    |
| b. クレア   | <b>Kurea</b>    | ‘Clair’    |
| c. レスリー  | <b>Resurii</b>  | ‘Lesley’   |
| d. ローレン  | <b>Rooreñ</b>   | ‘Lauren’   |
| e. ローレンス | <b>Rooreñsu</b> | ‘Lawrence’ |

f.	トレーシー	<b>Toreesii</b>	
or	トレイシー	<b>Toreisii</b>	‘Tracy’
g.	テレサ	<b>Teresa</b>	‘Teresa’
h.	レイ	<b>Rei</b>	‘Ray’

(19)   へ       **he**              

What are these names?

a.	ヘンリー	<b>Heñrii</b>	‘Henry’
b.	ヘレン	<b>Hereñ</b>	‘Helen’
c.	ヘレナ	<b>Herena</b>	‘Helena’

(20)   エ       **e**              

Here, again, is a symbol that represents a vowel alone. It is used only when **-e** occurs as a mora by itself, never to represent lengthening of a preceding vowel.

Examples:

a.	エマ	<b>Ema</b>	‘Emma’
b.	エレン	<b>Ereñ</b>	‘Ellen’
c.	エリン	<b>Eriñ</b>	‘Erin’
d.	エルシー	<b>Erusii</b>	‘Elsie’

A /ye/ sequence at the beginning of an English word has traditionally been represented by **ee** or **ie** in Japanese.

Example:

	エール	<b>Eeru</b>	
or	イエール	<b>Ieeru</b>	‘Yale’

Do Exercise 1.5 in the Workbook.



## Gozyuuoñ-hyoo 'Table of Fifty Sounds'

Japanese mora are traditionally organized in what is referred to as the **Gozyuuoñ-hyoo** 'Table of Fifty Sounds', even though not all the boxes in the ten by five chart are filled and syllabic ñ is "extra."

	w-	r-	y-	m-	h-	n-	t-	s-	k-		
ñ	wa	ra	ya	ma	ha	na	ta	sa	ka	a	-a
		ri		mi	hi	ni	ti	si	ki	i	-i
		ru	yu	mu	hu	nu	tu	su	ku	u	-u
		re		me	he	ne	te	se	ke	e	-e
		ro	yo	mo	ho	no	to	so	ko	o	-o

The symbols in the chart are read vertically from right to left—that is, starting with the **a** column and ending with **ñ**. The fixed order of mora in the **Gozyuuoñ-hyoo**, like the order of letters of the English alphabet, is used to organize entries in dictionaries, indexes, and other lists of words.

The simplest way to learn the **gozyuuoñ** order is to memorize (1) the regular order of vowels, **a, i, u, e, o**, and (2) the horizontal **-a** row, as if it were two nonsense words: **akatatana** and **hamayarawa + ñ**. With just this information, we can determine the **gozyuuoñ** order of any list of words in katakana. Different dictionaries treat the vowel-lengthening symbol (ー or |) differently. Usually it is treated as if the lengthening were written out appropriately (for example, ニーナ is listed as if it were written ニイナ); occasionally dictionaries ignore the symbol (ニーナ is listed as ニナ). In this textbook, we follow the first, more common convention.

Remember that when English /ey/ is borrowed into Japanese, it may be represented in Japanese in two ways, as **-ee** or **-ei**. Its listing in a Japanese dictionary depends on which spelling is used.

Do Exercise 1.6 in the Workbook.

### *Summary of Symbols Introduced in Lesson 1*

Here is the **Gozyuuoñ-hyoo** with the katakana symbols you have learned in Lesson 1 inserted in the appropriate boxes. The numbers in the corners show the order in which you learned them.

6 ン	wa	ra	ya	15 ma マ	ha	2 na ナ	ta	4 sa サ	ka	7 a ア
		3 ri リ		mi	hi	1 ni ニ	ti	17 si シ	ki	16 i イ
		14 ru ル	yu	9 mu ム	hu	nu	tu	12 su ス	13 ku ク	u
		18 re レ		me	19 he ヘ	ne	5 te テ	se	10 ke ケ	20 e エ
		11 ro ロ	yo	mo	ho	no	8 to ト	so	ko	o

Special Symbol:

— (in horizontal writing) or | (in vertical writing) (vowel lengthening)

## SECTION C

Review all the examples in Lesson 1, making certain that you are able to read with facility every one of the twenty katakana symbols that have been introduced. Reading katakana even in context provides only limited opportunities for guessing symbols you don't know. *You must be sure of the sound value of all the symbols.* Be careful to distinguish those symbols that have rather similar shapes and are often confused, especially in production:

ア, マ, and ム

レ and ル

ニ and ン

イ and ト

ク and ケ

Predictably, the names for foreign foods and drinks are borrowed into Japanese along with the foods and drinks themselves. Can you read and identify the following food items? Remember to retain corresponding Japanese pronunciation when you are reading!

a. トマト

c. ロースト

e. クリーム

b. トースト

d. シリアル

f. アイスクリーム

a. トマト **tomato** 'tomato'; b. トースト **toosuto** 'toast'; c. ロースト **roosuto** 'roast'; d. シリアル **siriaru** 'cereal'; e. クリーム **kuriimu** 'cream'; f. アイスクリーム **aisukuriimu** 'ice cream'

With the exception of names of places in Japan and of a few in the rest of Asia, the Japanese have borrowed place-names from foreign languages. These are all written in katakana, and the katakana spelling, as usual, may be derived from the foreign spelling rather than the foreign pronunciation. The origin may be English or another language.

Do Exercise 1.7 in the Workbook.

If you encounter difficulties in figuring out how to convert a katakana item, try writing out its romanized equivalent and then apply the conversion tips. Remember, however, that this is a fallback method, which should be necessary only on rare occasions. Your goal is to be able to process Japanese words written in katakana without having to make conscious reference to any conversion tips.

Use Flash Cards 1 on the Web site to practice pronouncing non-Japanese names in Japanese. Practice associating them with their corresponding English names and organizing them according to **gozyuuon** order, too. For now, use only names in Lesson 1. Use the audio program on the Web site to verify your Japanese pronunciation.

### *Producing Katakana Symbols*

The widespread use of computers and word processors has, to some extent, reduced the need to produce written symbols from memory, but many texts continue to be handwritten. Although calligraphy as an art form is outside our present concern, we do need to know some of the basics of Japanese penmanship to write Japanese symbols and use Japanese dictionaries. Learning to write katakana has an added benefit: when we learn to write kanji later on, we will find that many katakana symbols occur as components of kanji.

Beginning learners of Japanese writing must pay close attention to stroke types, the length and angle of each stroke, stroke order, and the overall balance of the symbol.

The katakana symbols introduced so far are written with three basic types of strokes: (1) “straight” lines of various lengths at various angles, (2) slightly curved lines of various lengths at various angles, and (3) combination strokes, which begin with a straight line followed by a curved line or another straight line at an angle. The vowel-lengthening symbol is a good example of a long straight line. The katakana symbol  $\uparrow$  is written with an angled curved line and a vertical straight line. The symbol  $\downarrow$  is written with a single combination stroke that starts with a straight line and continues with a slightly curved line going from bottom to top. Since the number of strokes is a vital piece of information when

looking up kanji in dictionaries, it is important to start making careful distinctions between two distinct strokes and a single stroke that is a combination of two or more lines.

Some of the characteristics of strokes in traditional brush writing are evident in today's writing with pen and pencil and even in word-processed symbols. For example, "straight" lines, whether vertical or horizontal, tend to have areas at the beginning and at the end where the line is slightly thicker, which originally resulted from resting the brush on the paper. There is no such thickening of the line at the beginning of short lines that are angled.

Curved lines usually end with a gradual departure of the writing instrument from the writing surface, resulting in a gradual thinning of the line. Compare the first (straight) stroke and the second (curved) stroke of katakana **リ ri**. The end of the curved stroke shows a gradual thinning.

The angles and relative lengths of strokes are important. For example, compare **ニ ni** and **シ ſi**. Both have two strokes, but **ニ** is written with two straight lines, one short and the other longer, with the two lines nearly parallel to each other. Katakana **シ** starts with a slightly angled, short straight line, followed by a curved line drawn from bottom to top. Notice that the first stroke in **シ**, drawn from the high left down to the lower right, starts with no thickening (no resting of the brush); the top part of the second stroke, where the stroke ends, is thinner than the bottom part.

With few exceptions, like **シ ſi**, whose second stroke starts at the bottom and ends high, symbols are written from left to right, then top to bottom. To write the symbol **ト to**, for example, first draw one long straight line from the top down, then a short straight line at an approximately forty-five-degree angle down from the middle of the first stroke. To produce the symbol **ケ ke**, write a short curved stroke then a horizontal straight stroke, and then a slightly longer curved downward stroke.

Finally, the overall shape is important. Consider, for example, **ロ ro**. At first this may look like a simple square box. Careful examination will reveal that the first stroke and the second part of the combination stroke are slanted slightly so that the bottom of the box is slightly narrower than the top. Also, compare **ナ na** and **イ i**. Both consist of a horizontal stroke and a vertical stroke. However, in **ナ**, the vertical curved stroke begins above the horizontal stroke and crosses it. In **イ**, the vertical straight line starts at the middle of the angled curved line and does *not* cross it. Similarly, the second stroke in **ス su** does not cross the second part of the first combination stroke.

Now we are ready to start writing the katakana symbols introduced in this lesson.

### *Symbol Production Practice*

1. Study the stroke types and stroke order in each model symbol.
2. Place a sheet of tracing paper over the model symbols.
3. Trace the *completed* symbol. Follow the proper stroke order and pay attention to stroke type.
4. Proceed to the next frame to the left, which is one stroke short of being complete. Trace all of the printed strokes, and then add the last stroke to complete the symbol.
5. Proceed left one frame at a time, each time tracing all of the printed strokes and then adding the missing strokes to complete the symbol. When you get to the last frame, you will be filling in every stroke except the first.
6. Use the empty boxes to the right of each symbol to practice writing the entire symbol several times.

	1	2	3	Practice						
1 ni	一	ニ								
2 na	一	ナ								
vowel lengthening	丨	or	一							
3 ri	丨	リ								
4 sa	一	サ	サ							
5 te	一	ニ	テ							
6 n̄	、	ン								

*continued*

	1	2	3	Practice						
7 a	ア	カ								
8 to	ト	コ								
9 mu	ム	ク								
10 ke	ケ	セ	ケ							
11 ro	ロ	コ	ロ							
12 su	ス	セ								
13 ku	ク	ケ								
14 ru	ル	ル								
15 ma	マ	マ								
16 i	イ	イ								
17 si	シ	シ	シ							
18 re	レ									
19 he	ヘ									
20 e	エ	エ	エ							

As soon as you can produce each of the katakana symbols introduced in this lesson quickly and accurately, you are ready for Exercises 1.8, 1.9, and 1.10 in the Workbook. Then use the audio program on the Web site as dictation cues to practice writing the given names presented in Lesson 1.