

the A, B, C's of Japanese

**KANA**, meaning "letters", is the basic alphabet of Japanese language. Just like in English, each letter stands for a certain vowel or consonant—however the difference is that most Japanese letters are actually a combo of sounds using vowels & consonants put together.

<u>example:</u> in English you would spell the word **she** using the letters "s", "h", and "e"; in Japanese you can spell a word that is pronounced the exact same way using only this letter:  $\bigcup$ 

in the above example, you can see that one Kana letter can do the work of 3 English letters put together!

The basic Japanese alphabet is divided into 2 types:

## HIRAGANA

## う え あ 11 お ah eh oh 00 け カン き koh kah kee koo keh X す 7 廿 sah shee seh soh soo لح た ち 0 7 tah chee tsoo teh toh は 77 ほ S hah hee foo heh hoh な に ぬ ね $\mathcal{O}$ neh noh nah nee noo ま 4 ts. ŧ, 8 mah moo meh moh mee Þ ゆ ょ yah yoh <u>yoo</u> 6 n ろ る れ rah ree roo reh roh N ん

-en

## KATAKANA

ア	1	ウ	工	才
ah	ee	00	eh	oh
力	キ	ク	ケ	コ
kah	kee	koo	keh	koh
サ	シ	ス	セ	ソ
sah	shee	soo	seh	soh
タ	チ	ツ	テ	1
<u>tah</u>	chee	tsoo	teh	toh
ハ	ヒ	フ	^	ホ
<u>hah</u>	hee	foo	eh	oh
ナ	=	ヌ	ネ	1
<u>nah</u>	nee	noo	neh	noh
7	3	L	メ	干
<u>ah</u>	ee	00	eh	oh
ヤ		ユ		彐
<u>yah</u>		<u>yoo</u>		<u>yoh</u>
ラ	リ	ル	V	口
<u>rah</u>	ree	roo	reh	roh
N	ン			
	-en			

## SPECIAL LETTERS

Certain Japanese letters with marks written above the right corner have a slightly altered sound to them: **tenten** are 2 small diagonals that harden the sound for "K", "S", "T", and "H" letters; a **maru** is a small circle that turns "H" letters into "P" letters.

<u>kana that use tenten</u>						kana that use maru					
が gah		ざzah		だdah		ばbah			ぱ	pah	
ぎ gee		₿ jee				U bee			$\mathcal{C}_{\mathcal{C}}$	pee	
< <sup>⋄</sup> goo		ず zoo				S boo			Š	poo	
げ geh		ぜ zeh		で deh		ベ beh			$\stackrel{\circ}{\sim}$	peh	
ご goh		ぞ zoh		どdoh		ぼboh			ぽ	poh	
¤	¤	¤	¤	¤	¤	¤	¤	¤	¤	¤	þ

~ *Try it!* See if you can spell your name in either Hiragana or Katakana.

Ex's: "DAVID"	"AMY"	"JIM"	"CARMEN"	"SALLY"
でびど	エミ	じむ	かるめん	さり
(deh-bee-doh)	(eh-mee)	(jee-muh)	(kah-ruh-meh-n)	(sah-ree)

