

# *A Guide to Writing*

# KANJI & BOOK 1 KANJI KANJI

	<i>GAKU</i> -study <i>mana(bu)</i> -learn
	大学 <i>daigaku</i> 入学 <i>nyūgaku</i> 学生 <i>gakusei</i> 語学 <i>gogaku</i>

## A SELF-STUDY WORKBOOK FOR LEARNING JAPANESE CHARACTERS

By Wolfgang Hadamitzky and Mark Spahn

- Features over 750 of the most commonly used characters
- Includes *hiragana* and *katakana*
- Provides ample space for writing practice
- Gives readings, meanings, compounds, and stroke order
- Together with Book 2, presents all 1,945 basic characters (Jōyō Kanji)



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*A Guide to Writing*

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**KANJI**  
**& BOOK 1**  
**KANA**

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A Guide to Writing

KANJI  
& BOOKS  
KANJI

A REFERENCE WORKBOOK FOR  
LEARNING JAPANESE CHARACTER

by William Handberg and Akira Saito

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of *A Guide to Writing Kanji and Kana* is to help students of Japanese master writing the two *kana* syllabaries (46 hiragana and 46 katakana) and the 1,945 basic characters (Jōyō Kanji) officially recommended for daily use.

With so many characters, it is important that you study them systematically, in a carefully thought-out progression. Most textbooks for learning Japanese, however, do not offer an introduction to Japanese script based on sound didactic principles. *A Guide to Writing Kanji and Kana* answers the need for a step-by-step presentation of characters by following the system developed in the book *Kanji & Kana*<sup>1</sup>. Also, up to three basic graphical elements (graphemes) indicating its meaning and/or pronunciation are listed for each kanji. Furthermore, the characters are taught not in isolation but as parts of important compounds that use only characters that have been introduced earlier.

Characters are presented in brush, pen, and printed forms. Each character in pen form is printed in light gray for you to trace over. These gray lines will guide your hand the first time you try writing a

new character and will help you quickly develop a feel for the proper proportions.

When practicing writing the characters, don't forget that they should be written to fit into squares, either real or imaginary, of exactly the same size. *A Guide to Writing Kanji and Kana* has convenient, pre-printed squares: large and normal size for all kana and the first 778 kanji, and normal size for kanji 779–1,945.

The best way to begin learning the Japanese writing system is to start with one of the two syllabaries, either hiragana or katakana. This is because:

1. The number of characters is limited to 46 characters per syllabary.
2. The forms of the characters are simple (there are one to four strokes per kana).
3. Each character has only one pronunciation (except for two characters that have two readings).
4. The kana syllabaries represent the entire phonology of the Japanese language, which means that any text can be written entirely in kana and without using any kanji at all.

<sup>1</sup> Hadamitzky, Wolfgang and Mark Spahn: *Kanji & Kana: A Handbook and Dictionary of the Japanese Writing System*, Charles E. Tuttle Company, Rutland, VT and Tokyo, 1981.

It is difficult to say which syllabary should be learned first. If you learn katakana first, even as a beginner you will be able to write many words, especially loanwords from English, that you already know. Hiragana, however, is by far the more widely used syllabary. We recommend the following learning sequence as the quickest way to master hiragana or katakana; for best results, we suggest using, if available, the computer program *SUNRISE Script*<sup>2</sup> to help you learn correct pronunciation.

1. Divide either syllabary into several **small units**. Concentrate on only a few kana at each session. Begin, for instance, with the first five vowels of hiragana.
2. Practice the **pronunciation** of each kana, first while looking at the transcription and later without looking. This will help you link the sound of each kana to its visual image.
3. Memorize the **order of the syllables** (*a-i-u-e-o, ka-ki-ku-ke-ko*) by reading them aloud.
4. Memorize the **shape** of each kana and compare it to that of other kana; take notice of similarities and peculiarities.
5. Memorize the **order** in which the strokes are written and the **direction** in which each stroke is written.
6. **Practice writing** each kana, first writing on the three gray pen forms in the large squares. Practice each kana until you can write it with the correct stroke order, stroke direction, and proportions without looking at the model.

7. Read aloud and **write all the words** that are given as examples for each character. Using *SUNRISE Script*, you can browse through the kana you've learned, manually or automatically, in a given order or at random, at various speeds, and with or without the audio function.
8. After finishing all the characters of either the hiragana or katakana syllabary, **review** them to check your grasp of forms and sounds.
9. **Repeat** the above steps for each unit.
10. **Review regularly**.

When memorizing kanji, use the same method as the one recommended above for the syllabaries. For kanji, look at the **basic graphical elements** (graphemes) the entry character is made up of; you will soon notice that all kanji are constructed from relatively few basic elements. These elements often indicate the meaning and/or pronunciation of the kanji. Instead of following the order of kanji presented in this book, you can choose any order you like. You might, for example, select the order in which kanji are introduced in the textbook you're using in class. The disadvantage to this, however, is that the words and compounds will then contain characters that you have not yet learned.

The kanji are fully indexed by *on-kun* readings. The *Index* in Book 1 lists all kanji contained in that volume. The *General Index* at the end of Book 2 lists all kanji contained in both volumes, grouping together kanji that share the same reading and a common graphical element.

<sup>2</sup> Hadamitzky, Wolfgang and Mark Spahn: *SUNRISE Script: Electronic Learning and Reference System for Kanji*, JAPAN Media, Berlin, 1989. (With this computer program you can both hear and read the pronunciation of the characters.)

## EXPLANATION OF THE CHARACTER ENTRIES

### Hiragana/Katakana

4	5	6		
か ka	加 709	かお あかい	koo akai	faca red
か	か	か	か	か
1	2	3		

1. The kana character in brush form, with numbers showing stroke order positioned at the beginning of each stroke.

- Squares with the kana character in pen form, printed in light gray, and serving as a practice template to trace over.
- Empty squares in which to write first the kana character and then the example words.
- The kana character in printed form, with pronunciation in roman letters.
- Kanji from which the kana character is derived, with the sequential number of that kanji.
- Up to four common words, with romanization and meanings. These words contain only kana that have already been introduced.

### Kanji

4	5a	5b	6		
67	言 7a	口 3d 1a3	GO - word; <i>kata(ru)</i> - talk, relate; <i>kata(ran)</i> - converse		
言	口	語	日本語 <i>Nihongo</i> Japanese language	5, 25	
語	語	語	国語 <i>kokugo</i> national/Japanese language	40	
1	2	3			

- The kanji in brush form, with numbers showing stroke order positioned at the beginning of each stroke.
- Three squares with the kanji in pen form, printed in light gray and serving as a practice template to trace over.
- Empty squares in which to write the entry kanji and compounds.
- Number of the kanji in these manuals.
- a. Radical with its number-and-letter "descriptor", under which the kanji is listed in the *Japanese Character Dictionary*<sup>2</sup>.  
b. Up to three graphemes (basic elements) with their number-and-letter "descriptor", under which the kanji can be retrieved in *SUNRISE*

*Script* (see footnote 2).

A numeral from 2 to 4 added to the descriptor indicates how many times that radical or grapheme is contained in the kanji. If the radical is not a grapheme, it is put in parentheses.

- On* readings, in capital italics; *kuo* readings, in lowercase italics; readings that are infrequent or used only in special cases, in brackets; *okurigana* (part of a word that is written in kana), in parentheses; English meanings. All officially recognized readings of the kanji are listed.
- Compounds, with romanization, meanings, and cross-reference numbers to the main entries for other kanji in the compound.

<sup>2</sup> Spahn, Mark and Wolfgang Hadamitzky: *Japanese Character Dictionary: With Compound Lookup via Any Kanji*, Nichigai Associates, Tokyo, 1989.



あ a	安 105	ああ a	ah, oh															
あ	あ	あ																
あ																		

い i	以 46	いい ii	ii	good, alright	あい ai	ai	love, affection											
い	以	い																
い																		



う <small>u</small>	宇 <small>990</small>	あう <small>au</small>	moet	いう <small>iu</small>	say
う	う				
う	う				

え <small>e</small>	衣 <small>677</small>	え <small>e</small>	picture, painting	ええ <small>e</small>	yes, yeah, uh-huh
		うえ <small>ue</small>	top, area above	いいえ <small>ie</small>	no
え	え				
え					

お	於	-	あおい	aoi	blue, green	おおい	oi	lots of, many
お	お							
お	お	お						

か	加	709	かお	kao	face	かう	kau	buy, purchase
			あかい	akai	rod	えいが	eiga	movie
か	か							
か	か	か						
が	が	が						

き	ki	幾	877	あき おおきい	aki ōki	autumn big, large	えき かぎ	eki kagi	(train) station key
き	き	き	き	き	き	き			
き	き	き							
き	き	き							

く	ku	久	1210	いく かく	iku kaku	go write	きく かく	kiku kagu	hear; ask furniture
く	く	く	く	く	く	く			
く	く	く							
く	く	く							

け <i>ke</i>	計 340	いけ <i>ike</i>	pond	けいき <i>keiki</i>	times, business													
け		け	け	け														
け	け	け																
げ	げ	げ																


こ <i>ko</i>	己 370	ここ <i>koko</i>	here, this place	こえ <i>koe</i>	voice													
こ		こ	こ	こ														
こ	こ	こ																
こ	こ	こ																


さ <i>sa</i>	左 75	さあ さけ	<i>sa</i> <i>sake</i>	well now, alright saké	あさ けいざい	<i>asa</i> <i>keizai</i>	morning economy
さ	さ	さ	さ				
し	し	し	し				
じ	じ	じ	じ				

し <i>shi</i>	之 -	あし おいしい	<i>ashi</i> <i>oishii</i>	leg, foot tasty, tastes good	いし あじ	<i>ishi</i> <i>aji</i>	stone taste, savor
し	し						
し	し	し	し				
じ	じ	じ	じ				

す <i>su</i>	寸 1894	すし いす	<i>zushi</i> <i>isu</i>	<i>sushi</i> <i>chair</i>	あす かす	<i>asu</i> <i>kazu</i>	tomorrow number
す	す	す	す				
す	す	す					
す	す	す					

せ <i>se</i>	世 252	あせ かぜ	<i>ase</i> <i>kaze</i>	sweat, perspiration wind, breeze	せいじ なぜ	<i>seiji</i> <i>naze</i>	politics why
せ	せ	せ	せ				
せ	せ	せ					
せ	せ	せ					

そ <small>so</small>	曾 <small>so</small>	そう うそ	<small>so</small> <small>uso</small>	so, like that lie, falsehood	そこ かぞく	<small>soko</small> <small>kazoku</small>	there family
		そ	そ	そ			
そ	そ	そ					
そ	そ	そ					

た <small>ta</small>	太 <small>629</small>	たかい かた	<small>takai</small> <small>kata</small>	high; expensive person (polite)	した ただしい	<small>shita</small> <small>tadashii</small>	bottom, area below correct
		た	た	た			
た	た	た					
た	た	た					



ち <i>chi</i>	知 214	ちいさい <i>chīsai</i> いち <i>ichi</i>	little, small one		ちかい <i>chikai</i> うち <i>uchi</i>	near home, residence				
ち	ち	ち	ち							
ち	ち	ち								
ち	ち	ち								

つ <i>tsu</i>	川 33	つぎ <i>tsugi</i> いくつ <i>ikutsu</i>	the next how many		つかう <i>tsukai</i> がっこう <i>gakkō</i>	use school				
つ	つ	つ	つ							
つ	つ	つ								
づ	づ	づ								

て	て	天	141	て	te	hand	ちかてつ	chikaitetsu	subway
				きって	kite	(postage) stamp	です	desu	be
て	て	て	て						
て	て	て							
て	て	て							

と	と	止	477	とおい	toi	far	とし	toshi	year, city
				せいと	seito	pupil, student	いちど	ichido	one time, once
と	と	と	と						
と	と	と							
と	と	と							

な <i>na</i>	奈 -	ななつ なか	<i>nanatsu</i> <i>naka</i>	seven the inside	なつ おなじ	<i>natsu</i> <i>onaji</i>	summer the same
な	な	な	な				
な	な	な					

に <i>ni</i>	仁 1619	にし にど	<i>nishi</i> <i>nido</i>	west twice, two times	にく なに	<i>niku</i> <i>nani</i>	meat what
に	に	に	に				
に	に	に					

ぬ nu	奴 1933	ぬぐ しぬ	nugu shinu	take/peel off die	いぬ きぬ	inu kinu	dog silk		
ぬ	ぬ	ぬ	ぬ	ぬ					
ぬ	ぬ	ぬ							

ね ne	ね -	ねこ おかね	neko okane	cat money	ねがい あね	negai ane	a request elder sister		
ね	ね	ね	ね	ね					
ね	ね	ね							

の no	乃 -	ので この	node kono	because, since this	のど たのしい	noda tanoshii	throat merry, pleasant
の	の	の	の	の			
の	の	の					

は ha wa	波 666	はは (は) にばい	haha (wa) nibai	mother (wa = particle) double, twice as much	はい しっばい	hai shippai	yes failure, flop
は	は	は	は	は			
は	は	は					
は	は	は					

ひ hi	比 798	ひと hito くび kubi	person, man neck	ひがし higashi いっぴき ippiki	east one (animal)
ひ	ひ	ひ	ひ		
ひ	ひ	ひ			
ひ	ひ	ひ			

ふ fu	不 94	ふたつ futatsu どうぶつ doubutsu	two animal	ふね fune きっぷ kippu	ship ticket
ふ	ふ	ふ	ふ		
ふ	ふ	ふ			
ふ	ふ	ふ			

へ <i>he/</i> <i>e</i>	部 86	へた かべ	<i>heta</i> <i>kabe</i>	unskillfulness wall	どこへ べらべら	<i>doko e</i> <i>peraperu</i>	where to (speak) fluently
へ	へ	へ	へ	へ			
へ	へ	へ					
へ	へ	へ					

ほ <i>ho</i>	部 489	ほか ぼうし	<i>hoka</i> <i>bōshi</i>	other hat	ほね ほかほか	<i>hone</i> <i>pokapoka</i>	bone repeatedly
ほ	ほ	ほ	ほ	ほ			
ほ	ほ	ほ					
ほ	ほ	ほ					



ま <i>ma</i>	末 305	まつ しま	<i>matsu</i> <i>shima</i>	wait island	なまえ いま	<i>namae</i> <i>ima</i>	name now
ま	ま	ま	ま				
ま	ま	ま					

み <i>mi</i>	美 401	みみ うみ	<i>mimi</i> <i>umi</i>	ear sea, ocean	みせ みなみ	<i>mise</i> <i>minami</i>	shop, store south
み	み	み	み				
み	み	み					

む <i>mu</i>	武 1031	むっつ よむ	<i>mutsu</i> <i>yomu</i>	six read	むずかしい さむい	<i>muzukashi</i> <i>samui</i>	difficult cold
む	む	む	む				
む	む	む					

め <i>me</i>	女 102	めいし だめ	<i>meishi</i> <i>dame</i>	name card useless, vain	あめ いつつめ	<i>ame</i> <i>itsutsu-me</i>	rain the fifth
め	め	め	め				
め	め	め					

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sample content of Guide to Writing Kanji & Kana, Book 1: A Self-Study Workbook for Learning Japanese Characters

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