

Module 1-1 Japanese Vowels, Consonants, and Basic Sounds

In this module:

- You will learn and practice pronouncing the 46 basic sounds in Japanese.
- You will listen to and practice pronouncing words with the basic sounds.

In Japanese, there are 5 vowels ([a], [i], [u], [e], and [o]) and 10 consonants/semi-vowels ([k], [s], [t], [n], [h], [m], [y], [r], [w], and [N]). The vowels ([a], [i], [u], [e], [o]), combinations of the consonant/semi-vowel and vowel (ex. [k]+[a]), and the consonant [N] alone create 46 basic sounds in total.


Look at the following videos to learn more about Japanese vowels and basic sounds.

Japanese Vowels: <http://enunciate.arts.ubc.ca/japanese/introduction/vowels-of-japanese/>

Basic Sounds: <http://enunciate.arts.ubc.ca/japanese/introduction/46-sounds-of-japanese/>

The Japanese らりるれろ sounds are different from the English [l] and [r]. Look at the following video to learn how to produce らりるれろ:

<http://enunciate.arts.ubc.ca/japanese/lets-practice/rariru/>.

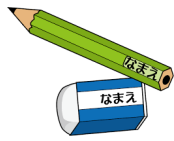
Practice I: Click the icon () below to listen to each sound, and repeat it. For example, if you want to listen to あいうえお, you can click the sound file “1-1-1.”

N	w	r	y	m	h	n	t	s	k		
 1-1-11	 1-1-10	 1-1-9	 1-1-8	 1-1-7	 1-1-6	 1-1-5	 1-1-4	 1-1-3	 1-1-2	 1-1-1	
ん	わ	ら	や	ま	は	な	た	さ	か	あ	a
		り		み	ひ	に	ち	し	き	い	i
		る	ゆ	む	ふ	ぬ	つ	す	く	う	u
		れ		め	へ	ね	て	せ	け	え	e
	を	ろ	よ	も	ほ	の	と	そ	こ	お	o

Practice II: Listen to the audio file and practice pronouncing the words below.



1. なまえ



2. わたし



3. へや



4. にほん



5. ねこ



6. つくえ



7. いす



8. よみもの



9. はたち
(20 years old)

10. おきる
(to get up)

Practice III: Listen to the audio file and practice pronouncing the words below.



1. ろく
(six)

2. れきし
(history)

3. うるさい
(noisy)

4. のむ
(to drink)

5. かりる
(to borrow)

6. そと
(outside)

7. あした
(tomorrow)

8. ゆめ
(dream)

9. ふゆ
(winter)

10. らいねん
(next year)

Practice IV: Practice with a Sound Recognition Device (ex. Siri, Google)

1. If you have access to a sound recognition/search device, say words (1) through (20) below to the device. Were the words recognized correctly? (Before speaking to the device, you may need to change the input mode into Japanese.)

If the words have been recognized correctly, the device will display the following words.

	Say these words	The device will display these		Say these words	The device will display these
1	なまえ	名前	11	ろく	6 or 六
2	わたし	私	12	れきし	歴史
3	へや	部屋	13	うるさい	うるさい
4	にほん	日本	14	のむ	飲む
5	ねこ	猫	15	かりる	借りる
6	つくえ	机	16	そと	外
7	いす	椅子	17	あした	明日
8	よみもの	読み物	18	ゆめ	夢
9	はたち	20歳	19	ふゆ	冬
10	おきる	起きる	20	らいねん	来年

2. If the words are not recognized correctly, keep trying until they are. Did you figure out any tips for pronouncing the sounds correctly?