

# Kanji Memorization Drills

Version One

Workbook of Exercises  
for the Mastery of  
608 Kanji

A Supplement to the  
“Learn to Read in Japanese” Series

by Roger Lake

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## Introduction

This first version of *Kanji Memorization Drills* consists of a set of exercises designed to teach a total of 608 kanji and their pronunciations. Before you dive in, I recommend that you first work through our Japanese Reader, *Learn to Read in Japanese*, Volume I. Once you are familiar with that material, you may want to alternate between practicing with this workbook and revisiting the Reader.

On each of the following pages, you will see three columns. In the **first column**, there is a kanji character followed by a small number that denotes the number of pronunciations that you should try to learn for that character. In the **second column**, you will see that kanji's unique listing number, taken from the Kanji Catalogue that is included in the Reader. Also in the second column, there are mnemonics (which I also call CUES in the Catalogue) that approximate the Japanese pronunciations and help students to remember them. Finally, in the **third column**, there are sample Japanese words that contain the actual kanji readings.

Where feasible, I have sorted the kanji into informal groups of similar characters and arranged those characters so that they fit within the confines of a single page, to make it easier for students to compare them.

In order to use this book productively, I suggest that you use **three tools**: 1) an index card, roughly 3 x 5 inches in size, 2) a pen with a fine point and 3) an eraser tool. The purpose of the index card is to conceal the second and third columns while you test yourself on the pronunciations of the kanji in the first column. The purpose of the pen is to make small erasable dots in the margin to the left of any characters whose pronunciations you cannot readily recall. The purpose of the eraser tool is to erase those dots after you have successfully re-tested yourself on the missed kanji.

After experimenting with several erasure methods, I've concluded that it's probably best to use the "Pentel Presto Jumbo Correction Pen Fine Point" for the eraser tool. The fluid in its tank flows easily, it lasts for a long time, it can be applied precisely to the areas that you want to erase, and it will keep your book in good condition after many erasures. However, if you ever feel that the pages in this volume need to be replaced, you can purchase a PDF replacement book from our PDF store at [JapaneseAudioLessons.com](http://JapaneseAudioLessons.com), print it, and staple the pages together in groups of about 24 (i.e., 12 sheets, assuming two-sided printing).

To use this book, please begin by placing the index card to the right of the first column on a page, concealing the “answers” in the second and third columns. Take note of the number of pronunciations that you are expected to know for the kanji in the first column (indicated by the small numbers that follow each character) and try to recall those pronunciations from memory. Check your answers by referring to the mnemonics in the second column and the sample vocabulary in the third column. If you are not able to remember every pronunciation for a given character, place a small **dot** in the margin to its left, about 5 mm outside the box surrounding the printed text, and move on to the next entry. After you complete a page in this way, you will probably see one or more dots in the left margin, denoting kanji that require further testing.

Next, starting at the top of the page again, do a **one-dot page review**, testing yourself on only dotted kanji. Try to recall the pronunciations for all the kanji with dots on that page while they are still fresh in your memory. If you are still unable to provide correct answers for every dotted kanji on the page, repeat the process until you get perfect results, but don’t erase the dots yet. Turn the page and continue testing yourself in this way on subsequent pages until you finish the chapter, which is usually six pages in length.

After you complete a chapter, turn back to its first page and conduct a **one-dot chapter review**, testing yourself again on the kanji with dots. If there are still one-dot kanji whose pronunciations you cannot fully recall, add **second dots** in the margin to the left of those characters and continue your testing on any additional one-dot kanji in the chapter, adding second dots to the characters wherever necessary.

After you complete this one-dot chapter review, return to the first page of the chapter and perform a **two-dot chapter review**, testing yourself on only kanji with two dots. If there are still kanji whose pronunciations you cannot fully identify on this round, add a third dot next to them. If necessary, keep conducting additional chapter reviews (for example, you can test yourself on kanji with three dots and four dots, etc.) until you have achieved correct results for all the characters in the chapter.

After you have provided perfect responses for all the kanji on a given page, use the Pentel correction pen to erase the dots on that page, to preserve your book for future use. If you haven’t used the correction pen for a while, you may have to squeeze the tube and rub the tip on the paper surface to get the white fluid flowing. Although the fluid is nontoxic, it is difficult to remove after it dries, so try not to spill it on your clothes or hands. Make only *vertical* strokes over the dots that you want to erase, to avoid accidentally covering the printed

material on the right. Apply the minimum amount of fluid needed to cover the dots. Wait a few seconds and then use the index card to blot the fluid. After erasing the dots, move on to the next page.

When testing yourself on kanji with a large number of pronunciations and deciding whether to place dots next to them, you can choose to be either strict or lenient in your grading. It may seem unreasonable to expect yourself to remember as many as 13 readings for a single character, and perhaps your primary goal at this stage should be merely to learn to recognize each kanji's shape and recall at least a few of its pronunciations. Of course, it's best to try to remember all of the readings if you can.

As you use this book, you will find it helpful to consult the Kanji Catalogue that is included in *Learn to Read in Japanese*, Vol. I, or the one that is included in the stand-alone *Core Kanji* book. For example, on p. 1-1, in the second column next to kanji # 175, you will see “正 (correct) laws,” and you may want to look up that kanji's **DESCRIPTION** in the Catalogue to understand why the radical 正 is used to mean “correct.” In addition, the Pronunciation Index in the Catalogue is useful for looking up characters when you want to compare them to the ones you are currently studying.

Please note that some kanji are pronounced in two ways that, at first glance, appear identical. For example, on page 1-4, in the listing for kanji # 297, you will find two similar mnemonics in the second column: **Toes** and **Tortoise**. To understand why I've employed these two almost interchangeable mnemonics (“toe” and “to”) for this character, please refer to the sample words in the third column. These illustrate that sometimes this kanji is pronounced “tou” and sometimes “to,” which are two distinct pronunciations to Japanese ears.

Please be aware of **rendaku**, a phenomenon that can affect the pronunciations of kanji in compound words when the kanji appear in the middle or at the end of a word. Kanji pronunciations that contain the consonants in the following table can change as shown here:

ch → j (e.g., chi → ji)	k → g (e.g., koto → goto)
f → b (e.g., fun → bun)	s → z (e.g., sushi → zushi)
f → p (e.g., fuku → puku)	sh → j (e.g., sha → ja)
h → b (e.g., hito → bito)	t → d (e.g., toki → doki)
h → p (e.g., hai → pai)	ts → z (e.g., tsukai → zukai)

As a result of rendaku, a few kanji in this book have more possible pronunciations than the numbers in their first columns indicate. For example, on

page 1-4, next to kanji # 298, the number “3” appears in the first column, indicating that there are three mnemonics in the second column (**H**awaiian, **H**ats and **H**ole), but in the last column you will see *four* pronunciations, contained in the sample words “happyou,” “hatsumei,” “shuppatsu” and “hossa,” meaning that “patsu” has been omitted from the mnemonics column. The reason for the omission is that I elected not to invent a fourth mnemonic for this character, since the “hatsu” pronunciation implies the “patsu” reading (h → p). Generally, however, the book supplies mnemonics for almost all of the rendaku-driven pronunciations that are associated with the kanji.

I hope that the drills in this volume will help you to achieve Japanese reading fluency.

Roger Lake

July 1, 2025

## Kanji Memorization Drills, Version One

## Chapter 1

食 <sub>5</sub>	^398. I went to this 白 (white) Tavern by the Shore, where I 食べた tabeta (ate) 良 (good) food and drank Kool-Aid, after which they Showed-Cookies for dessert, but I lost my appetite after I realized I had dropped my Jeep-Keys Light Years away	食べる taberu = to eat; 食感 shokkan = texture of food; 食う kuu = to eat (rough speech); 食事 shokuji = meal; 餌食 ejiki = victim, prey
飯 <sub>2</sub>	^400. Hansel cooked this 食 (meal), including ご飯 gohan (cooked rice), but it's Messy, and it gets an F; we're also marking it with this X	ご飯 gohan = meal, cooked rice; 残飯 zanpan = leftover food; 冷や飯 hiyameshi = cold rice
返 <sub>2</sub>	^356. when I got this F on my paper and had it marked with this X, I put it on this snail and 返した kaeshita (returned it) to the teacher, but the teacher Called-Esther, my mother, and sent the paper back to us on a Hen	返す kaesu = to return an item; 寝返る negaeru = to betray; 返事 henji = reply
政 <sub>1</sub>	^175. 政治家 seijika (politicians) should pass 正 (correct) laws to ensure that dancers like this can find Safe places to practice	政治 seiji = politics, government; 政治家 seijika = politician
供 <sub>5</sub>	^486. this man, who is staying in a Dopy-Motel in Kyouto, tilts his hat back in order to watch as 子供 kodomo (children) play in these plants above this hill, and he offers them Kool-Aid in exchange for getting Tomograms, or at least Sonar exams	子供 kodomo = child; 提供する teikyuu suru = to offer, provide, sponsor; 供物 kumotsu = offering; お供する otomo suru = to accompany; 供える sonaeru = to offer at an altar
寒 <sub>2</sub>	^507. when it's 寒い samui (cold), this Samurai's wife, who lives in Kansas and sports this bad haircut and this corset, maneuvers around these patches of ice	寒い samui = cold atmosphere; 寒気 kanki = a chill; this can also be pronounced "samuke"
同 <sub>2</sub>	^339. this line above this box in this two-sided lean-to, which is 同じ onaji (the same) on the left and on the right, represents an Old-Napkin that was used to wrap a Doughnut	同じ onaji = the same; 同情 doujou = sympathy, pity
捨 <sub>2</sub>	^594. Superman is this person who is crawling toward this Shabby house in order to 捨てる suteru (throw away) this 土 (soil) that is defiling this 口 (box)	捨てる suteru = to throw away; 四捨五入する shishagonyuu suru = to round to the nearest whole number
説 <sub>3</sub>	^439. this 兄 (older brother), who is wearing these rabbit ears because he is Zany, 言 (speaks) and 説明する setsumei suru (explains) about how he Set-up-a-Super farm, where he grows Tomatoes	遊説 yuuzei = election campaign; 説明 setsumei = explanation; 小説 shousetsu = novel; 演説 enzetsu = a speech; 説く toku = to explain, persuade, preach
浴 <sub>3</sub>	^256. this bathroom in the Yukon near the Arctic with water vapor rising from the roof and this spring of water outside is a good place to 浴びる abiru (bathe), after which one can put on a 浴衣 yukata (summer robe) and eat Yogurt-and-Cookies	浴衣 yukata = summer kimono; 浴びる abiru = to bathe; 浴室 yokushitsu = bathroom
容 <sub>1</sub>	^296. after receiving this bad haircut, I fled to Yosemite, explored its 内容 naiyou (contents) and bathed in this bathroom	内容 naiyou = content
欲 <sub>3</sub>	^535. this bathroom with water vapor rising from it and this oil derrick outside are attached to our Hotel at Yosemite, and we tell the waiters in the restaurant that we 欲しい hoshii (desire) Yogurt-and-Cookies	欲しい hoshii = to desire; 欲求 yokkyuu = desire; 欲張り yokubari = greed; 食欲 shokuyoku = appetite
熱 <sub>3</sub>	^65. 九 (nine) vegetables which were slashed after being grown in this 土 (soil) walking on 土 (soil) are being cooked by this fire At-Superman's house and are 熱い atsui (hot); they will Net-Superman a profit when he sells them Next door	熱い atsui = hot (objects); 熱 netsu = fever; 熱心に neshin ni = enthusiastically
勢 <sub>4</sub>	^110. this 土 (soil) at the upper left walks on these lopsided legs across more 土 (soil) towards a Zany guy who uses a Saber to slash 九 (nine) kinds of vegetables with 力 (force) before Selling them to 大勢の oozei no (many) Icky-Ogres	大勢 oozei = many people; 勢力 seiryoku = power, influence; 伊勢崎 isesaki = a city in Japan; 勢い ikioi = power, energy
男 <sub>4</sub>	^109. this 男性 dansei (man), who is wearing an Ottoman-era-Coat, exercises this 力 (force) by Dancing in this 田 (rice paddy) with Nancy Pelosi, who is Old	男の子 otoko no ko = boy; 男性 dansei = man; 長男 chounan = first-born son; 正男 Masao = a boy's given name