

Look out for the following icons throughout the book:



'Shortcut' Phrase

Easy to remember alternative to the full phrase



Q&A Pair

Question-and-answer pair – we suggest a response to the question asked



Look For

Phrases you may see on signs, menus etc



Listen For

Phrases you may hear from officials, locals etc

LANGUAGE TIP

Language Tip

An insight into the foreign language

CULTURE TIP

Culture Tip

An insight into the local culture

How to read the phrases:

- Coloured words and phrases throughout the book are phonetic guides to help you pronounce the foreign language.
- Lists of phrases with tinted background are options you can choose to complete the phrase above them.

These abbreviations will help you choose the right words and phrases in this book:

a adjective
inf informal
lit literal

n noun
pl plural
pol polite

sg singular
v verb

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Learn about Japanese, build your own sentences and pronounce words correctly.

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Travel Phrases

Ready-made phrases for every situation – buy a ticket, book a hotel and much more.



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Quick reference vocabulary guide – 3500 words to help you communicate.

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INTRO

Japanese

日本語 ni·hon·go

Who speaks Japanese?

Standard Language

**TOKYO
DIALECT**
WHOLE
COUNTRY

Regional Dialects

WESTERN
SHIKOKU; HONSHŪ WEST
OF THE JAPAN ALPS

EASTERN
HOKKAIDŌ; HONSHŪ EAST
OF THE JAPAN ALPS

RYŪKYŪAN DIALECTS
RYŪKYŪ ISLANDS

KYŪSHŪ DIALECTS
KYŪSHŪ

Why Bother

Japanese people are often too shy or worried about making mistakes to speak to visitors using what English they may know. Even the smallest effort to speak to locals in Japanese will be very warmly received.

Distinctive Sounds

Note the reduced, almost silent **u** (especially when it appears at the end of a word); and the **r**, which is pronounced halfway between an 'l' and an 'r'. Japanese has fewer sounds than most other major languages.

10 Phrases to Sound Like a Local

Great! すごい! su·goy

Sure. もちろん。 mo·chi·ron

Hey! ちょっと、ちょっと! chot·to chot·to

Just a minute. ちょっと待って。 chot·to mat·te

It's OK. いいよ。 i·yo

No problem. 大丈夫。 dai·jō·bu

Good luck. 頑張っ。 gam·bat·te

No kidding? マジ? ma·ji

Really? ほんと? hon·to

Fat chance! ありえない! a·ri·e·nai



ABOUT Japanese

Pronunciation

Japanese pronunciation is not considered difficult for English speakers. Unlike some other Asian languages, it has no tones and most of its sounds are also found in English.

Vowel Sounds

Vowels in Japanese can be either short or long. The long ones should be held twice as long as the short ones and are represented in our pronunciation guides with a horizontal line on top of them.

~ SYMBOL ~	~ ENGLISH ~	~ JAPANESE EXAMPLE ~
a	run	na·ka
ā	father	sak·k ^ā
e	red	sa·ke
ē	reign	p ^ē ·ji
i	bit	ni·ji
ī	bee	shī·tsu
o	pot	mot·to
ō	paw	pas·p ^ō ·to
u	put	mu·ra
ū	moon	kū·ki

It's important to make the distinction between short and long vowels as vowel length can change the meaning of a word, as in these examples:

Pronounce the double consonants with a slight pause between them.

~ SYMBOL ~	~ ENGLISH ~	~ JAPANESE EXAMPLE ~
b	big	ba·sho
ch	chili	chi·zu
d	din	dai·ga·ku
f	fun (almost like 'fw' with the lips in a rounded position, especially before 'u')	fu·ro
g	go (always a hard sound as in 'go')	gai·jin
h	hit	hi·to
j	jam	jū·su
k	kick	kan·ji
m	man	mu·su·me
n	no	no·ri
p	pig	pan·tsu
r	run (halfway between 'l' and 'r')	ren·ji
s	so	sa·ba·ku
sh	show	shi·ma
t	tin	ta·bi
ts	hits	tsu·na·mi
w	win	wa·sa·bi
y	yes	yu·ki
z	is/zoo	za·ru

Word Stress

Syllables are pronounced fairly evenly in Japanese, so there's no need to indicate stressed syllables.

