

An Anime Fan's Guide to Learning Japanese

PART I

Why You Should Learn Japanese

Reasons You Might Want to Learn Japanese

- To get by when visiting Japan.
- To better understand Japanese culture.
- To make new friends.
- To watch anime without subtitles.
- To live and work in Japan.
- To work in translation.
- To improve your brain and help prevent dementia in later life.

PART II

Why Learning Japanese is Easier than You Might Think

Unless you think it's really easy

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Reasons People Think Japanese is Hard to Learn

- Three writing systems with thousands of characters.
- The grammar structure is totally different to English.
- Several levels of formality

Reasons Japanese isn't as hard to learn as you might think

- The writing systems make more sense when you understand the rules behind them.
- Japanese has a limited range of sounds and none are difficult for English speakers to pronounce.
- Many of the grammar rules are actually simpler than English

PART III

The Building Blocks of Japanese

Hiragana
ひらがな

Hiragana

- The ABCs of Japanese
- 51 phonetic characters
- Each character represents a single sound
- Organised in blocks of five
- Learning hiragana should be one of the first things you do

Combo Hiragana					Order from top to bottom, right to left				
にや	ちや	しや	きや		な	た	さ	か	あ
nya	cha	sha	kya		na	ta	sa	ka	a
にゆ	ちゆ	しゆ	きゆ		に	ち	し	き	い
nyu	chu	shu	kyu		ni	chi	shi	ki	i
によ	ちよ	しよ	きよ		ぬ	つ	す	く	う
nyo	cho	sho	kyo		nu	tsu	su	ku	u
ぎや	りや	みや	ひや		ね	て	せ	け	え
gya	rya	mya	hya		ne	te	se	ke	e
ぎゆ	りゆ	みゆ	ひゆ		の	と	そ	こ	お
gyu	ryu	myu	hyu		no	to	so	ko	o
ぎよ	りよ	みよ	ひよ		ん	わ	ら	や	ま
gyo	ryo	myo	hyo		n	wa	ra	ya	ma
びや	びや	ぢや	じや				り	み	ひ
pya	bya	dzya	jya				る	ゆ	む
びゆ	びゆ	ぢゆ	じゆ				れ	め	へ
pyu	byu	dzyu	jyu				を	ろ	よ
びよ	びよ	ぢよ	じよ				wo	ro	yo
pyo	byo	dzyo	jyo					も	ほ
								mo	ho
Dakuten					Hiragana Chart				
ば	ば	だ	ざ	が	bo	po	qo	so	do
pa	ba	da	za	ga	be	pe	qe	se	de
び	び	ぢ	じ	ぎ	bi	pi	qi	si	di
pi	bi	dzi	ji	gi	bu	pu	qu	su	du
ぶ	ぶ	づ	ず	ぐ	bo	po	qo	so	do
pu	bu	dzu	zu	gu	be	pe	qe	se	de
べ	べ	で	ぜ	げ	bi	pi	qi	si	di
pe	be	de	ze	ge	bu	pu	qu	su	du
ぼ	ぼ	ど	ぞ	ご	bo	po	qo	so	do
po	bo	do	zo	go	be	pe	qe	se	de

How to learn hiragana

- Believe in the me that believes in you!
- Download a hiragana chart and put it somewhere you will see it often.
<http://www.textfugu.com/resources/hiragana-chart/>
- Study three to five new characters a day
- Drill the characters you have studied whenever you get the chance
- Use a flash card app such as Memrise

Katakana
カタカナ

Katakana

- Represent the same set of sounds as hiragana
- Mostly used to sound out foreign loan words
- Similar to upper and lower case in English
- Also used for emphasis and onomatopoeia
- Hiragana and Katakana together are referred to as kana

Combo Katakana					Order from top to bottom, right to left					
ニャ	チャ	シャ	キヤ		ナ	タ	サ	カ	ア	"ah" like in "car"
nya	cha	sha	kya		na	ta	sa	ka	a	
ニユ	チュ	シュ	キユ		ニ	チ	シ	キ	イ	"i" like in "key"
nyu	chu	shu	kyu		ni	chi	shi	ki	i	
ニョ	チョ	ショ	キョ		ヌ	ツ	ス	ク	ウ	"u" like in "moo"
nyo	cho	sho	kyo		nu	tsu	su	ku	u	
ギャ	リヤ	ミヤ	ヒヤ		ネ	テ	セ	ケ	エ	"eh" like in "edge"
gya	rya	mya	hya		ne	te	se	ke	e	
ギユ	リュ	ミユ	ヒユ		ノ	ト	ソ	コ	オ	"oh" like in "go"
gyu	ryu	myu	hyu		no	to	so	ko	o	
ギョ	リョ	ミョ	ヒョ							
gyo	ryo	myo	hyo							
ピャ	ビャ	ヂャ	ジャ		ン	ワ	ラ	ヤ	マ	ハ
pya	bya	dzya	jya		n	wa	ra	ya	ma	ha
ピュ	ビュ	ヂュ	ジュ				リ		ミ	ヒ
pyu	byu	dzyu	jyu				ri		mi	hi
ピョ	ビョ	ヂョ	ジョ				ル	ユ	ム	フ
pyo	byo	dzyo	jyo				ru	yu	mu	hu
							レ		メ	ヘ
							re		me	he
						ヲ	ロ	ヨ	モ	ホ
						wo	ro	yo	mo	ho

Dakuten				
バ	バ	ダ	ザ	ガ
pa	ba	da	za	ga
ビ	ビ	ヂ	ジ	ギ
pi	bi	dzi	ji	gi
ブ	ブ	ヅ	ズ	グ
pu	bu	dzu	zu	gu
ベ	ベ	デ	ゼ	ゲ
pe	be	de	ze	ge
ボ	ボ	ド	ゾ	ゴ
po	bo	do	zo	go

Katakana Chart				
	mo	lo	no	wo
ㇿ	ㇾ	ㇼ	ㇺ	ㇸ
	ie	we	me	

How to learn katakana

- Repeat the same methods you used to learn hiragana.
- Learn to write your own name.
- Practise writing English words in katakana.

Vocabulary & Grammar

単語と文法

Vocabulary & Grammar

- Japanese grammar is very different to English
- Trying to literally translate sentences leads to awkward results
- Expose yourself to as much natural Japanese as possible to develop an ear for what it should sound like

Vocabulary & Grammar

- If you're self studying then audio lessons and podcasts are your friend.
- Beginner text books are a good source of basic Japanese and usually come with audio CDs. They're usually quite wooden though.
- Tae Kim's Grammar Guide <http://www.guidetojapanese.org/learn/> is an excellent overview of sentence structure.
- Many people like Japanese Pod 101.

Kanji
漢字

Kanji

- Pictographic characters adapted from Chinese.
- Used to represent the meaning of words.
- 2,136 "daily use" characters required for basic adult literacy!
- Words can be made up of a single kanji, compounds containing two kanji, or combinations of kanji and hiragana.



Kanji

- Kanji are made up of "radicals", smaller components that make up a bigger picture.
- Radicals have their own meanings, when combined they represent the meaning of a character, often in an abstract way.
- Some kanji only contain a single radical and often share a meaning with that radical.

Learning Kanji

- Japanese children learn kanji by constant repetition. This is slow.
- They learn characters with simpler meanings first, not simpler characters.
- Many Japanese classes will teach kanji in this order, not expecting you to learn them.
- There are better ways to learn kanji.

Learning Kanji

- Study the radicals as well as the characters.
- Learn characters roughly in order of written complexity.
- Practise hand writing but don't mindlessly repeat the same character.
- When you learn new words try to learn how they are written at the same time.
- Focus on learning key words for a character over learning all of its readings.
- Used spaced repetition to recall characters just as you are about to forget them.

Levels of Formality

PART IV

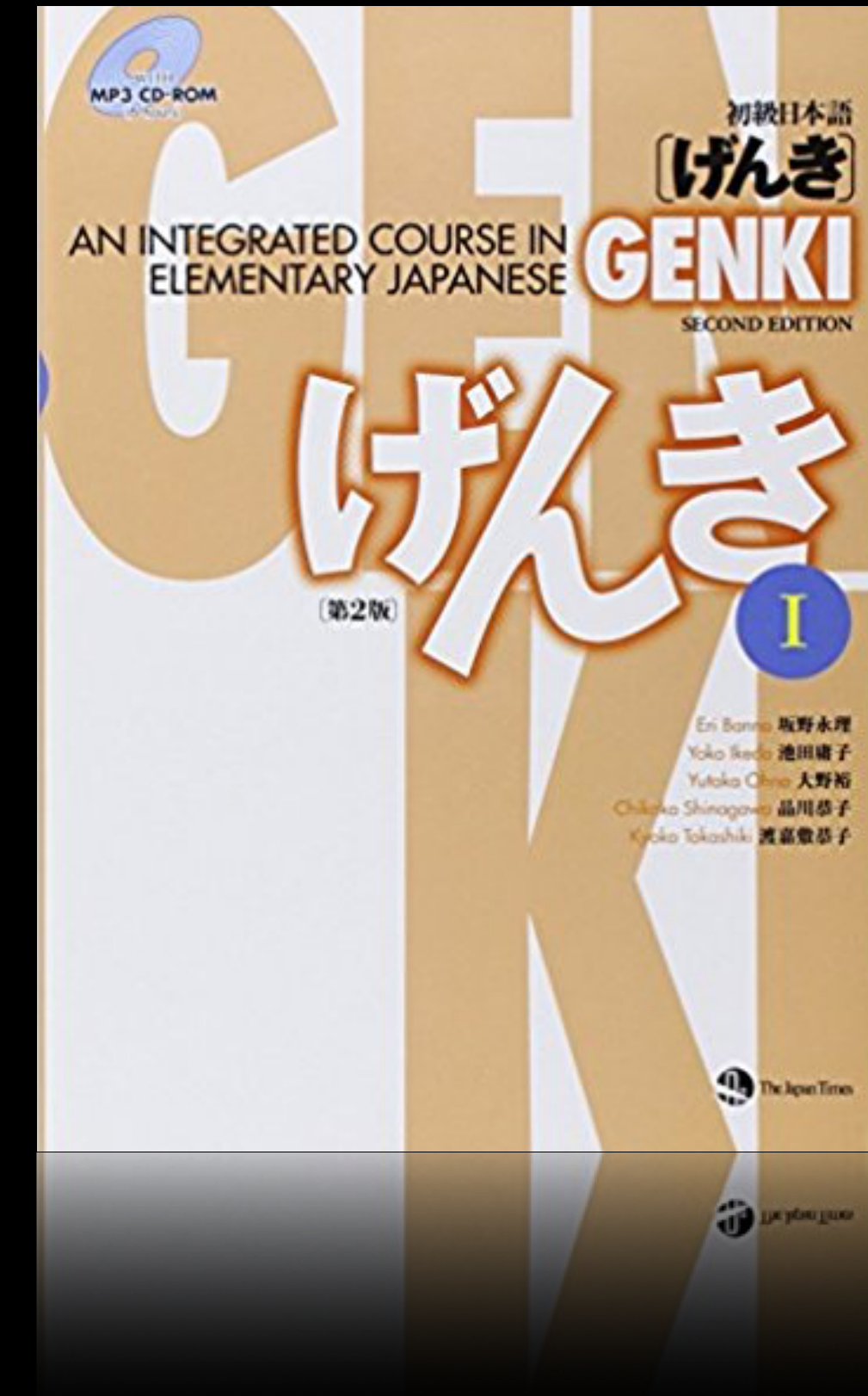
Learning Japanese from Anime

PART V

Useful Resources

Beginner Textbooks

- Genki and Japanese for Busy People are two of the best known.
- If you take a class they will probably follow one of these books.
- They are okay when you know nothing but you should aim to move on to other materials.
- Make sure you don't use a romaji textbook.



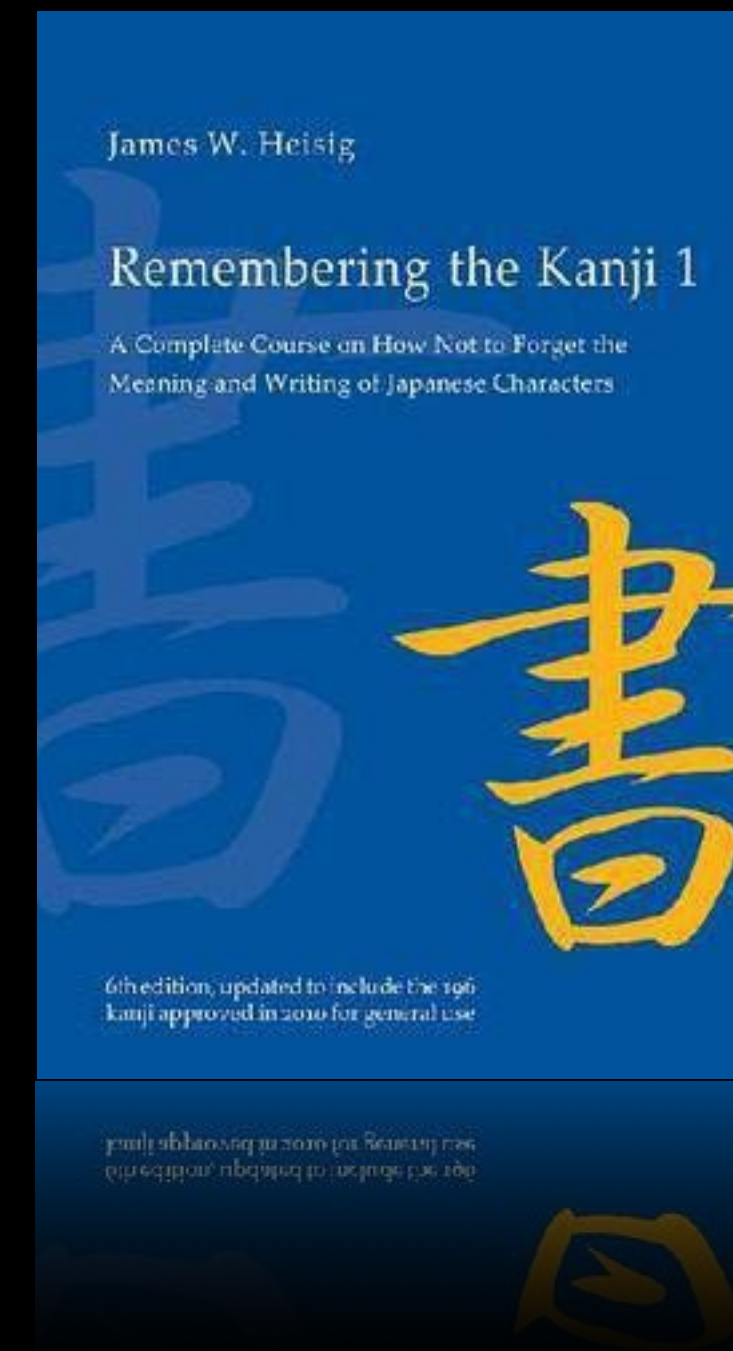
TextFugu

- Online Japanese textbook specifically designed for self-study.
- Focuses on motivation and study techniques as well as content.
- The first few chapters are available to read for free but afterwards there's a subscription.



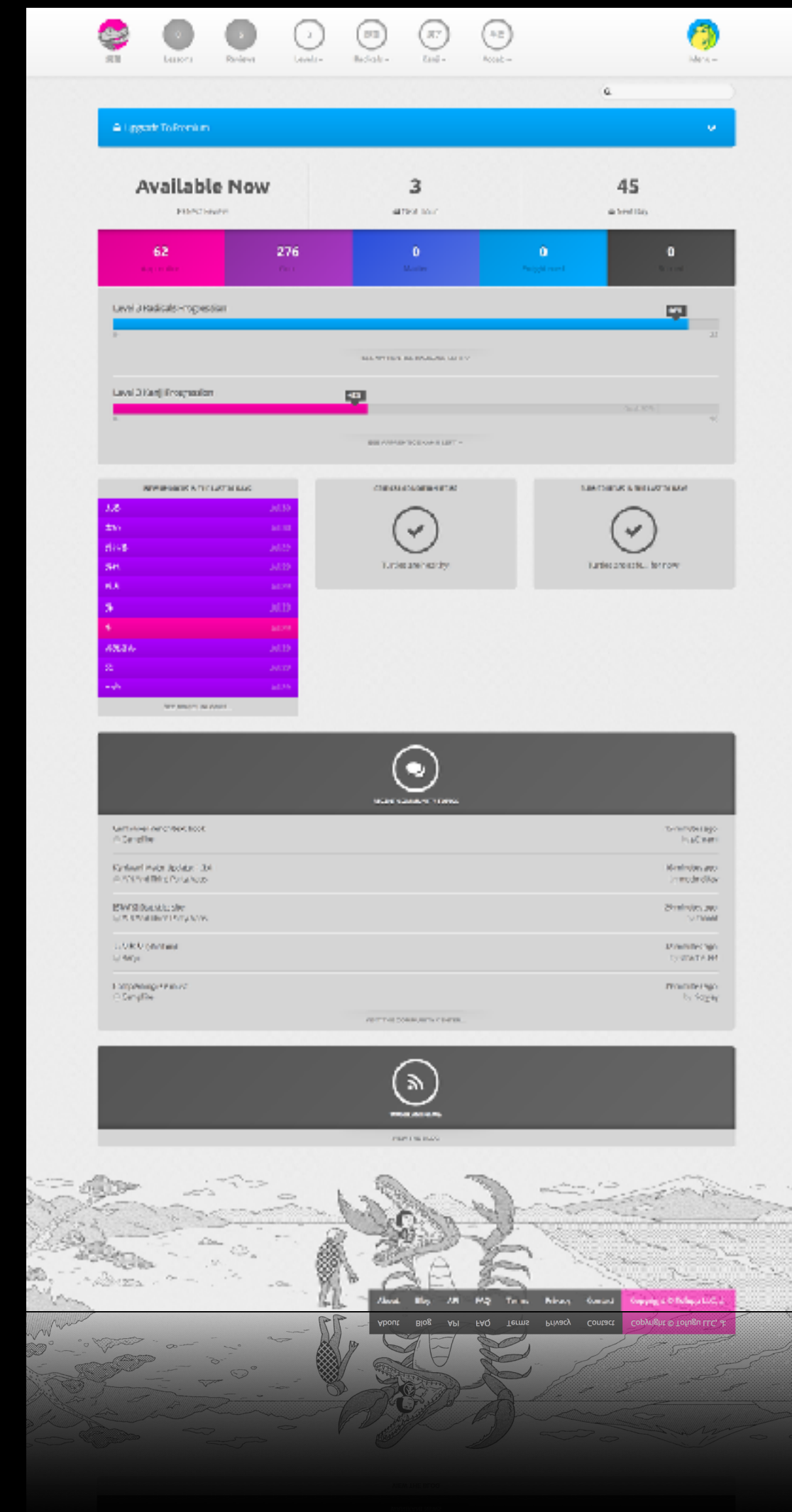
Remembering the Kanji

- Guides you through all of the radicals.
- Uses stories as mnemonic devices to recall kanji.
- Assigns a single keyword to each kanji.
- Doesn't tackle readings or vocabulary.



WaniKani

- Web app using a similar methodology to Remembering the Kanji.
- Contains radicals, kanji and vocabulary.
- Tackles meanings and readings
- Splits kanji into 50 levels (plus 10 bonus levels).
- Uses spaced repetition to quiz you at timed intervals.
- Free up to level 3, paid afterwards.



Thank You for Coming
ありがとうございました

