

Explanatory Notes on the Use of the Flashcards

General Introduction

There are four sets of flashcards—Grammar, Kana, Kanji and Vocabulary flashcards. In the current digital age, it might seem superfluous to have printable, paper flashcards as there are now plenty of resources online to learn and review Japanese with. However, they can be very useful for a variety of reasons.

First of all, physical flashcards have one primary purpose: to help you learn something. That might sound strange, but haven't you ever switched on your phone to study some vocabulary on your favorite app only to get distracted by some social media notification. The next thing you know, you've spent 30 minutes checking up on your friend's social life and haven't learned anything new.

That's why using a single-purpose tool like paper flashcards can be a huge help. It helps you to stay focused and sometimes that is the most difficult part of studying a new language.

The second reason is that paper flashcards don't require any electricity. You can use them anytime, anywhere in any environment without worrying about a system crash or your battery dying.

Use these flashcards to review what you've learned from the Study Guide so that you are fully equipped with the necessary language skills, before going into the test. There is a big difference between being familiar with something and knowing it well. The JLPT expects you to know the material and recall it quickly. That means frequent revision and practice.

1. Grammar Flashcards – Quick Start Guide

The grammar cards contain the key phrases from all the grammar units of the Study Guide. Each card shows the phrase as it would be written, only using N5 kanji. This should help you get used to how it will appear on the test. The second column on the card has the phrase in romaji, and the third column is the natural English translation of the phrase. The fourth column is the grammar note related to this sentence. Refer to "List of Notes for the Grammar Flashcards" for more details.

4	Location Words	2	3	5
1	ぎんこうの 右に	ginkō no migi ni	to the right of the bank	See Note 38.
	としょかんと レストランの 間に	toshokan to resutoran no aida ni	between the library and the restaurant	See Note 38.
	ぎんこうの 左に	ginkō no hidari ni	to the left of the bank	See Note 38.
	ぎんこうの となりに	ginkō no tonari ni	next to the bank	See Note 38.
	JLPT N5 GRAMMAR CARD #01		©2019 Tuttle Publishing	

1. Key phrase
2. Key phrase (romaji)
3. English translation
4. Header of card
5. Notes - additional grammar notes. Refer to "List of Notes for the Grammar Flashcards".

How to Use

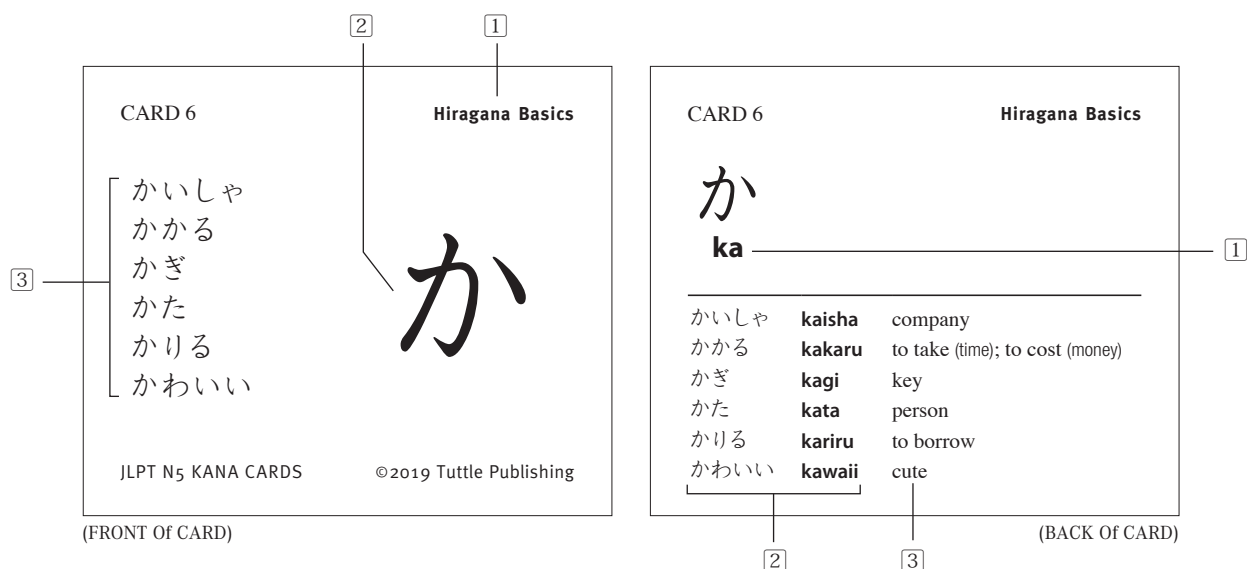
The cards are one-sided. To practice with them, you can cover whichever column of the card you want to drill. I would recommend starting by covering the English, and using the romaji to practice translating into the English. If you are already pretty familiar with kana and kanji, try covering up both the romaji and the English when you drill. You can also get some natural kanji reading practice by simply covering the romaji and trying to read the Japanese sentences.

As you get deeper in your studies, try covering up the Japanese and making Japanese sentences based on the English. This is actually going to be more useful in helping you produce Japanese sentences and use Japanese in everyday life.

Audio Flashcards

In addition to the printable flashcards, there are also audio flashcards that you can make use of to study for the N5. All the major sentences from the grammar units of the Study Guide are recorded in these. Each track has the Japanese expression, then a beep followed by the English translation. You can use the audio flashcards to study while doing your cleaning or taking a walk around your neighborhood, to maximize your study time.

2. Kana Flashcards – Quick Start Guide



The front of the card shows the card number of the set, the kana character itself as well as 6 of the more common words that use that kana. Note that some of these words may actually be written in kanji in common Japanese. A lot of these words will come up on the test either in kana or possibly in kanji in the reading section.

FRONT: 1 heading showing Hiragana or Katakana set
2 main kana character
3 common words using the main kana character

The back of the card shows the reading of the kana, the romaji reading for each of the 6 words on the front of the card as well as the English definitions for each.

BACK: 1 reading of the main kana character
2 readings of the common words in kana and romaji
3 English translation for each word

How to Use

It's important to shuffle the cards often. Studying the cards in a different sequence each time will help you recall the words a lot easier. For the initial round, it may be better to study the first word on each card first and once you have mastered the first word in that set, move on to the second word, the third word and so on. Finish going through the whole set and try and remember the words and their meanings. After which, reshuffle the cards to get cards in a different sequence. In this way you will remember the words separately and not as a list, thus making it easier to recall them later.

When you are confident you have mastered the set of cards, then you can lay the cards flat on a surface, and try picking up cards at random, covering up the column (kana, romaji, English) you want to test yourself on, and then test if you can remember the answers to the covered up column based on the other two columns.

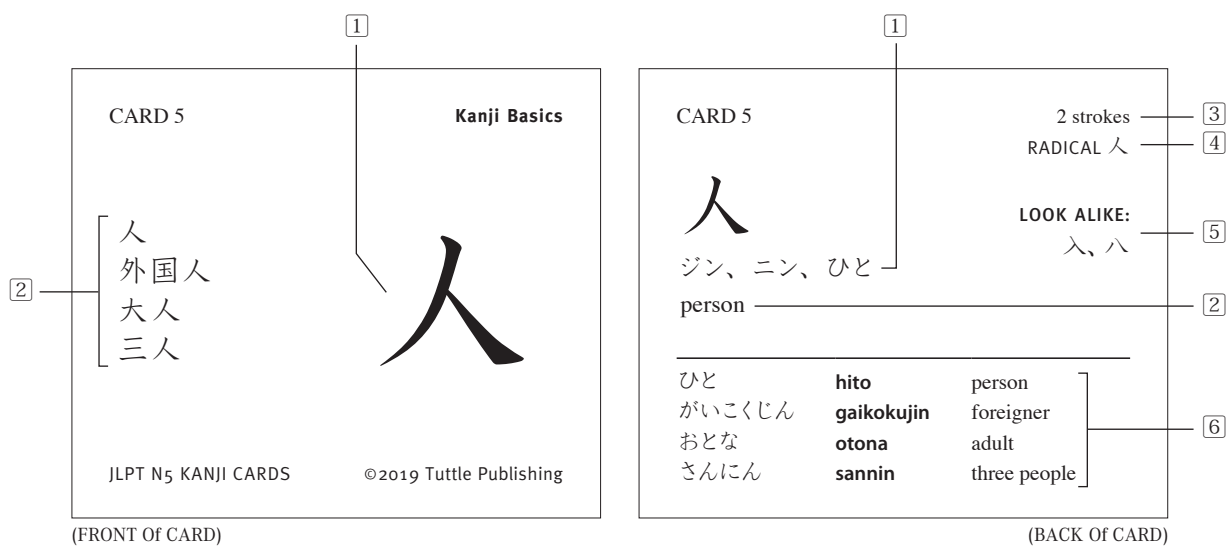
Hiragana

Hiragana is used for native Japanese words that do not have kanji or have obscure kanji that are not often used. It can also be used for okurigana which are kana suffixes that follow kanji to form adjectives and verbs. And finally, it is usually used for particles and other grammatical and function words.

Katakana

Katakana is used to represent loanwords from other languages (English, German, etc.) into Japanese. Also, the meaning of the word in Japanese may differ slightly or completely from the original. Generally speaking though, katakana words have more of a casual feeling than words that contain kanji or hiragana. They are also often used in advertising or writing for emphasis.

3. Kanji Flashcards – Quick Start Guide



The front of each card shows the card number of the set, the main kanji character itself and 4 of the more common kanji compounds used with that kanji. Note that not all of these compounds will appear on the JLPT N5. They are included to give you an idea of the different readings for the kanji, attached to the compounds.

FRONT: 1 main kanji character
2 common words using the main kanji character.

The back of each card has the following features:

BACK: 1 the ON and KUN readings of the main kanji character. The KUN (native Japanese) readings are in hiragana, while the ON (Chinese-based) readings are in katakana
2 the most common English meaning

- 3 the number of strokes used to write the kanji, for reference. You do not need to know this number for the test.
- 4 the radicals used in the kanji
- 5 kanji that look very similar to the main kanji
- 6 readings for the common kanji words on the front of the card with their romaji and English meanings.

ON and KUN Readings

The ON readings are borrowed from Chinese. These readings are commonly used in words borrowed from Chinese. A lot of these words are formed by combining two or more kanji together, so, in general, words with several kanji together, and lack okurigana, will use this reading. There are numerous exceptions though.

The KUN readings are native Japanese readings of the kanji. These readings are often used in words that have one kanji and okurigana, or kana suffixes that follow kanji stems like most adjectives (e.g. 大きい *ōkii*) or verbs (e.g. 行く *iku*). There are numerous exceptions though.

The JLPT N5 will not test your understanding of the readings of a kanji by themselves, but will instead test you on how a kanji is read in a particular word. Studying the 4 common words provided on each card will be the most helpful for the test. However, knowing the English meaning of the main kanji as well as its readings will help you guess the meanings of new words you may see in the future.

A Radical Way to Study

Kanji can get quite complex rather quickly. Luckily, all kanji can be broken down into kanji parts called radicals, or ぶしゅ *bushu* in Japanese, with each radical having a meaning attached to it. You can use these to form mnemonics to help you remember the meanings and readings of the kanji. When you encounter other new kanji, you can use a resources like jisho.org to find the radicals that make up the kanji.

4. Vocabulary Flashcards

The vocabulary cards contain a “best guess” list of the vocabulary that are likely to appear on the N5 test. Each card lists 6 words (on average) from the set, organized alphabetically. The first word on the left shows how the word would look in common Japanese. Words that use kanji more difficult than the N5 level have an asterisk to the right of them. For instance, the word 危ない *abunai* (dangerous) contains the kanji 危, which is not an N5 level kanji. So, on the test, the word will always be written in hiragana – あぶない. You will also not be asked about its reading in the kanji section

If the common Japanese word is usually written in kanji, it will be followed by its corresponding hiragana version. This is followed by the word’s romanized spelling (romaji), part of speech, primary English definition in bold, and finally secondary English meaning(s) of the word.

The diagram shows a rectangular flashcard layout. At the top, there are two boxes labeled 2 and 3. Box 2 is above the word '嫌い' and box 3 is above '嫌い kirai...'. On the right side, there is a box labeled 4 pointing to the header '嫌い kirai... 着る kiru'. On the left side, there is a box labeled 1 pointing to the first entry '嫌い*• きれい kirai ADJ-NA, N hate; dislike; suspicion, tendency, smack (of)'. The card content includes several entries: '嫌い*• きれい kirai ADJ-NA, N hate; dislike; suspicion, tendency, smack (of)'; 'きれい kirei ADJ-NA, UK pretty; beautiful, fair; clean, tidy; completely, entirely'; 'キロ, キログラム kiro, kiroguramu N kilogram'; 'キロ, キロメートル kiro, kiromētoru N kilometer'; '切る•きる kiru SUF, V5R, VT to cut (through); to sever (connections, ties); to turn off (i.e. the light)'; '着る*•きる kiru V1 to put on (from the shoulders down); to wear; to bear (guilt, etc...)'. At the bottom left is 'JLPT N5 VOCAB CARD #01' and at the bottom right is '©2019 Tuttle Publishing'. To the right of the card, a legend lists: 1. Key word; 2. Key word (romaji); 3. English translation: words in bold are the primary English meanings; 4. Header of card: the first and last words on each card.

“Best Guess”

Before 2010, the vocabulary lists for each of the levels were released and made publicly available. In 2010, the JLPT was revised and these lists were no longer published. Since that time, lists of vocabulary for each of the levels are only a “best guess.” To do your best on the test, you should expand your studies as much as possible and try to increase your exposure to more vocabulary at this level.

Also, the JLPT is very grammar-heavy. Most of the grammar you need to communicate on a daily basis can be picked up from N5 and some N4. But, the vocabulary you learn at these levels isn’t enough for you to communicate well. You will need to supplement it with other materials in order to be a more well-rounded speaker.

That’s why I recommend picking up a good beginner textbook like *Beginning Japanese* (by Tuttle Publishing) that you can use to pick up more vocabulary and expressions. Also, a good phrasebook like *Essential Japanese* (by Tuttle Publishing). You can use these to jump start a conversation and start speaking. Speaking and interacting with others in Japanese will rapidly accelerate your learning and help you feel more confident in the test.

The *Minna no Nihongo* series is also very authentic and provides a lot of real examples from everyday Japanese. **Shokyū** level 1 roughly corresponds to the N5 level. These textbooks don’t contain any romaji, so they provide a good immersive way to get more exposure and vocabulary.

Resources

Books

You should supplement your studies with additional textbooks that can help increase your confidence with the language. *Beginning Japanese* is an easy-to-follow textbook that has a good flow, and includes romaji to help you out if you are still struggling with kana. The *Genki 1* textbook is a very good book to use if you have a partner to practice with since it has a lot of pairwork activities. The *Minna no Nihongo* series is very popular in Japan. It includes numerous sentence patterns and lots of practice that can be completed with or without an instructor.

Websites

There are several online dictionaries. Most of them are based on Jim Breen’s WWWJDIC: Online Japanese Dictionary Service, which is a free open-source dictionary. The site that I find the easiest to use is jisho.org (<https://jisho.org>).

If you are having a little trouble coming up with kanji mnemonics on your own, Kanji Damage (<http://kanjidamage.com>) has some funny and interesting ideas to get you started. Decks by Memrise (<https://decks.memrise.com>) hosts a variety of decks to study with. An advantage of using Decks is that there are already numerous mnemonics that have been submitted by other users for all of the words.

If you have just started learning Japanese, you might want to try my “Introduction to Japanese” deck which walks you through the kana, and some key phrases and expressions. Once you have mastered kana, you should try my “N5 Readings” deck (<https://jlptbootcamp.com/N5Readings>). This deck not only goes over all the N5 vocabulary, but also covers how to read the kanji.

JapanesePod101 (<https://jlptbootcamp.com/jpod101>) has a huge library of listening materials that you can use to improve your listening. They also have a more casual approach to language learning which will expose you to a wider variety of vocabulary than some of the other sources on this list.

Practice Makes Perfect

Learning any language requires a lot of regular repetition of the key elements. Mastering these key elements at the N5 level will help you be a great Japanese speaker and communicator. It will also make the test a lot easier for you to take. It’s an amazing feeling to be able to walk into the test room knowing that you have mastered the material, and are fully prepared for the test.

Ganbatte!