

Let's Read Hiragana

By

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Cast of Characters

Shimada, Michiko

Full Name: Shimada, Michiko

Description: Japanese adolescent female.

Age: 18

Hair: Black

Eyes: Brown

Height: 165cm (5'5")

Weight: 52 kg (110 lb)

Key Character Traits: Level-headed. If she didn't like Nakamura so much, she'd be slightly contemptuous of him. Treats him with a mix of affection and exasperation. (Can't live with him, can't live without him.)

Nakamura, Tadashi

Full Name: Nakamura, Tadashi

Description: Japanese adolescent male.

Age: 19

Hair: Black

Eyes: Brown

Height: 178 cm (5'10")

Weight: 66 kg (145.5 lb)

Key Character Traits: Impulsive, brash; "doesn't care if school keeps or not, and will be the first to tell you."

Prof. Izumi, Hideo

Full Name: Izumi, Hideo

Description: Generic anime "wise professor." Portly, westernized, balding, white cumulus cloud mustache, round glasses.

Age: 50

Hair: Bald, white moustache

Eyes: Blue

Character's Goal: If there are technical explanations to be made, Prof. Izumi has the authority to give them.

Panel	Description	Dialog
1.1	Full page with the main characters under a title that says "Let's Read Hiragana", with "Hiragana" in <i>furigana</i> over the word.	

Panel	Description	Dialog
2.1	Prof. Izumi in panel. His name is in furigana above his name in the word balloon.	<p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> Hi! I'm Prof. Izumi Hideo
2.2	Izumi pointing back at the previous panel; word Hiragana is in furigana also.	<p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> See those marks above my name? That's my name written in Hiragana, one of the three Japanese writing systems.
2.3	Izumi at lower corner of panel. Shimada in traditional Japanese dress, writing calligraphy on paper in Hiragana. (Izumi is taking up part of the caption space; just a reduced view of his head)	Caption: Hiragana is cursive writing; it's used to write parts of words in Japanese text in manga.
2.4	Izumi at lower corner of panel Nakamura in samurai garb doing a Japanese yell with sound effect in Katakana.	Caption: Katakana is a block printing form; it's used for manga sound effects.
2.5	Izumi in screen holding newspaper with Kanji headline.	<p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> And the third form, Kanji, uses one symbol per word.
2.6	Izumi puts down paper; gives an embarrassed look.	<p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> But we'll just be learning Hiragana today. Oh- where are my manners?

Panel	Description	Dialog
3.1	Izumi pointing to next panel	<p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> Let me introduce the people who will be giving you all the details:
3.2	Shimada in modern Japanese dress. Furigana over her name.	<p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> Hi. I'm Shimada Michiko!
3.3	Nakamura in modern Japanese dress; Furigana over his name.	<p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA, TADASHI</p> And I'm Nakamura Tadashi.
3.4	Both giving formalized bow.	<p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA/SHIMADA</p> Pleased to meet you!
3.5	Nakamura pulling Shimada towards edge of page (possible bleed off with no border?)	<p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA, TADASHI</p> Come on, let's get started!

Panel	Description	Dialog
4.1	"Wheel of Fortune" set, Shimada as "Vanna" pointing to a grid that is 11 across and 6 down. Rightmost column will have English vowels in it. Nakamura spinning the wheel.	<p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA, TADASHI</p> Let's buy some vowels! Our first vowel is あ a. It sounds like what you say when the doctor says:
4.2	Nakamura sitting on table in doctor's office; Izumi wearing white coat & holding tongue depressor.	<p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> Say <p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA, TADASHI</p> ("ah" appears above letter) あ
4.3	Nakamura in samurai garb, slicing a round birthday cake with a red slash (the international "no" symbol)	<p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA, TADASHI</p> Although you may see it romanized as "A," you never pronounce it as in "cake"
4.4	Shimada holding a ridiculous, ugly hat at arm's length over a garbage can with a look of disgust on her face.	<p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> And you never pronounce it as in "hat".
4.5	Izumi holding tongue depressor, Nakamura and Shimada sitting on table, mouths open	<p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> You always say... <p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA/SHIMADA</p> あ

Panel	Description	Dialog
5.1	Back to wheel of fortune, with the あ in the upper right of the grid.	<p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA, TADASHI</p> Time to spin the wheel for our next vowel. Or something like that...
5.2	い appears in the grid underneath あ; focus in on Shimada.	<p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> This is the sound "ee"; it's what your typical manga character says when scared by a mouse...
5.3	Shimada looking at Nakamura with an exasperated expression. Nakamura in nerdy clothes, on a chair, terrified of a mouse, saying:	<p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA, TADASHI</p> い
5.4	Izumi comes into the panel.	<p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> When Japanese is Romanized, you'll see い written as "i", but it's not pronounced like "eye," but like
5.5	Izumi looks at mouse; jumps up in shock.	<p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> い
5.6	Extreme close up of Izumi	<p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> Wait! Forget the mouse! We can make two Japanese words already!

Panel	Description	Dialog
6.1	Shimada and Nakamura holding hands; birds fluttering around them; word balloon is a large heart. This should look as sappy and cliché'd as possible. Izumi in lower corner of panel "speaking" the caption.	Caption: That means "love." NAKAMURA/SHIMADA あい
6.2	Shimada and Nakamura, facing reader	SHIMADA, MICHIKO You pronounce あい as "ah-ee" NAKAMURA, TADASHI But don't run the vowels together!
6.3	Same pose as previous panel	SHIMADA, MICHIKO That's good, and good is NAKAMURA, TADASHI いい in Japanese
6.4	Izumi pokes his head in from the corner	PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO Which is pronounced like "ee" only longer.
6.5	Shimada at the wheel of fortune grid	SHIMADA, MICHIKO Time for our next vowel! Ooh! It's う!
6.6	Nakamura in foreground, Shimada in background.	NAKAMURA, TADASHI That's right. う is pronounced like "ooh", and is transliterated as "u."
6.7	Nakamura and Shimada dressed as businesspeople exchanging business cards.	SHIMADA, MICHIKO The word meaning "to meet" is "あう."

Panel	Description	Dialog
7.1	Wheel of fortune again. Nakamura is asleep at the wheel, Shimada is shaking him awake.	SHIMADA, MICHIKO Our next vowel is... NAKAMURA, TADASHI [waking up] ゑ? SHIMADA, MICHIKO Don't give me "eh," Nakamura-san! Get to work!
7.2	Nakamura beginning to stand up	NAKAMURA, TADASHI With that vowel ゑ, pronounced "eh" and Romanized as "e," I can make a new word: うゑ.
7.3	Nakamura leaping up on top of the table	NAKAMURA, TADASHI うゑ means "on top," it's pronounced oo-eh, and Romanized as "ue."
7.4	Nakamura leaping up and hanging from a chandelier (How it got into the wheel of fortune set I don't know. Don't ask.)	NAKAMURA, TADASHI うゑ also means "above."
7.5	Shimada shaking her head	SHIMADA, MICHIKO No.
7.6	Nakamura looking confused.	NAKAMURA, TADASHI What do you mean "no"? うゑ does mean "above."
7.7	I'm not sure what expression Shimada should have here.	SHIMADA, MICHIKO No, I mean that we can now make the Japanese word for "no." いいえ (iie) means "no."
7.8	Nakamura looking mightily confused	NAKAMURA, TADASHI No. I mean yes. I mean...
7.9	Nakamura is at side of panel, head still whirling. Shimada is at the wheel. ゑ is now highlighted in the grid.	SHIMADA, MICHIKO And now, our final vowel...

Panel	Description	Dialog
8.1	Shimada reveals the vowel on the grid. Nakamura looks at it in surprise.	<p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA, TADASHI</p> <p>お! -- Oh!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> <p>Yes, お is pronounced "oh." Something wrong?</p>
8.2	Nakamura scratching his head	<p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA, TADASHI</p> <p>Haven't we seen that one before?</p>
8.3	Shimada pointing to grid, with あ and お highlighted.	<p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> <p>The one on top is あ (a); the one at the bottom is お (o). They do look similar, so you have to be careful when you read and write them.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> <p>お -- by the way, we can make another word: あお. (ao, pronounced "ah-oh") It's the name of a color.</p>
8.4	Nakamura on left, as incredible Hulk; Shimada on right as Smurfette. Izumi in the middle.	<p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> <p>あお is a color that encompasses both green and blue.</p>
8.5	Closeup of Izumi	<p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> <p>A green traffic light in the U.S. actually has some blue color to it. Japanese people would call that color あお.</p>
8.6	Nakamura on left, Shimada on right (back to normal)	<p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA, TADASHI</p> <p>Now that you know how to read the Hiragana vowels...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> <p>It's time to learn how to write them.</p>

Panel	Description	Dialog
9.1	<p>This is a landscape mode page. Prof. Izumi small head shot at top. The remainder of the page has five lines (or ten if space requires). The first part of the line shows the stroke order for each of the vowels, with "grid lines" like you have when you learned to write in elementary school. After the stroke order, you get the stroke order again in gray for you to trace, and then empty space for you to try it yourself.</p>	<p>Caption: Practice writing the vowels. Remember to go right to left, the same direction as the pages in this book. Make sure you draw the lines in the order shown-- it's the authentic Japanese way!</p>

			あ
			い
			う
			え
			お

Panel	Description	Dialog
10.1		<p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA, TADASHI</p> <p>And that's all there is to it! (SHIMADA ELBOWS NAKAMURA IN RIBS) Huh?</p>
10.2	Shimada whispering in Nakamura's ear; Nakamura blushing.	<p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA, TADASHI</p> <p>Oh yeah, consonants. Ummm... there aren't any.</p>
10.3	Shimada pushes Nakamura aside.	<p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> <p>What he means is, there aren't any <i>separate</i> consonants.</p>
10.4	Pointing to the grid with column labeled "k" highlighted	<p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> <p>Instead, every syllable (a consonant-and-vowel) gets its own symbol.</p>
10.5	Grid has K/A highlighted, filled in with か.	<p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> <p>Here, at the intersection of K and A, is the syllable か, pronounced "kah" and Romanized as "ka."</p>
10.6	Shimada closeup	<p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> <p>With this consonant and our vowels, we can already make some more words.</p>

Panel	Description	Dialog
11.1	Nakamura in store, buying from Izumi	<p>NAKAMURA, TADASHI かう (kau)</p> <p>PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO That means "to buy."</p>
11.2	Nakamura as some manga character who is known by his bright red skin	<p>NAKAMURA, TADASHI あかい (akai) -- that means "red."</p>
11.3	Shimada looking at fish tank inside which Nakamura is being strangled by a giant squid	<p>SHIMADA, MICHIKO いか (ika, pronounced "ee-kah") means "squid."</p>
11.4	Nakamura climbing out of tank, with some generic shellfish attached to his shoulder	<p>NAKAMURA, TADASHI かい means "shellfish."</p>
11.5	Shimada in a business suit greeting Prof. Izumi, also in a business suit. Nakamura at side of panel.	<p>SHIMADA, MICHIKO かい also means "meeting."</p> <p>NAKAMURA, TADASHI Wait--how can you tell which word you mean?</p>
11.6	Shimada in a business suit, greeting a shellfish in a business suit.	<p>SHIMADA, MICHIKO The context makes it clear. You wouldn't say "I'm late for my 10:00 shellfish."</p>
11.7	Prof. Izumi holding two small businessmen (doll size) with the kanji 会 above their heads in one hand; a shellfish in the other with the kanji 貝 above its head.	<p>PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO In writing, the kanji makes it clear which one you mean.</p>

Panel	Description	Dialog
12.1	Shimada in front of wheel of fortune grid, with き in proper position, highlighted.	<p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> This syllable is pronounced like "key" and is romanized as "ki."
12.2	Nakamura lounging at the base of a tree.	<p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA, TADASHI</p> The word き means "tree," and its kanji symbol is 木.
12.3	Prof. Izumi at a train station, with bullet train in background. From this point onwards, when a Kanji appears, it will be shown in small letters above the hiragana. (This is the reverse of <i>furigana</i> , and it might be necessary to point this out explicitly)	<p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> The Japanese word "eki", えき, (駅) means "station."
12.4	Nakamura in Godzilla suit, trampling buildings; Shimada in foreground.	<p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA, TADASHI</p> The word おおきい means "big." It also has a very commonly used Kanji: 大きい. <p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> And きき (危機) means "crisis."
12.5	Prof. Izumi; head only	<p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> Writing the word for "big" uses both Kanji and Hiragana! 大きい

Panel	Description	Dialog
13.1	Shimada in front of wheel of fortune chart with く in its proper place; she is holding up 9 fingers.	<p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> The syllable く, pronounced "ku" (that's like "cool" without the "l") also means nine.
13.2		<p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> When you look up verbs in the dictionary, you'll see く at the end of many of them.
13.3	Nakamura holding ear to door	Caption: きく (聞く)--to listen
13.4	Nakamura opening door	Caption: あく (開く)--to open
13.5	Nakamura exiting through door	Caption: いく (行く)--to go
13.6	Hand writing the word かく	Caption: かく (書く)--to write
13.7	Hand placing written paper on a table	Caption: おく (置く)--to put or place (something)

Panel	Description	Dialog
14.1	Shimada in fright wig in front of wheel of fortune chart with け in its proper place.	<p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> け (pronounced "keh") is the word for hair. (毛)
14.2	Prof. Izumi in mad scientist garb; Nakamura as "Igor" the assistant	<p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> The word for "a plan" is けいかく (計画) <p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA, TADASHI</p> Yes, master!
14.3	Shimada in business suit again	<p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> The general climate of business is called けいき (景気). <p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> That last kanji, 気, means "mood" or "spirit."
14.4	Nakamura in meditative posture at a koi pond	<p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA, TADASHI</p> The word for "pond" is いけ (池).

Panel	Description	Dialog
15.1	Shimada as a small child in front of wheel of fortune chart, with こ in its proper position.	SHIMADA, MICHIKO Our last entry in the "k" column is こ, pronounced "ko." The word こ (子) means "child."
15.2	Nakamura with small child at koi pond, pointing at the fish.	NAKAMURA, TADASHI The こ is looking at the carp, or こい (鯉) in the いけ (池). SHIMADA, MICHIKO The こうけい, (光景) or scene, pronounced "ko-u-ke-i," is quite charming.
15.3	Shimada in business suit, with a wad of cash in her hand.	SHIMADA, MICHIKO And こうけいき, (好景気) means "a good economic climate" or "boom times."
15.4	Prof. Izumi on cliff with word balloon coming back as an echo	PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO こえ (声) means "voice."
15.5	Nakamura standing with an X under his feet, pointing to the X; there's an anvil descending "Road-runner" style towards his head.	NAKAMURA, TADASHI ここ means "here."

Panel	Description	Dialog
16.1	This is a landscape mode page, also with grid lines showing stroke order and leaving place to practice.	Caption: Practice writing the letters か-こ. Remember to go right to left, the same direction as the pages in this book. Make sure you draw the lines in the order shown.

			か
			き
			く
			け
			こ

Panel	Description	Dialog
17.1	Shimada in front of wheel of fortune chart, showing あ-お and か-こ filled in.	SHIMADA, MICHIKO And now, let's move on to...
17.2	Nakamura comes in, dressed in tacky salesman garb.	NAKAMURA, TADASHI Wait! I can give you five more syllables, absolutely free!
17.3	Nakamura waving a card with dakuten (") on it. (")	NAKAMURA, TADASHI By adding this mark to the letters か-こ, you change the "k" sound to a hard "g" sound.
17.4	Shows letters か-が	Caption: "ka" changes to "ga", pronounced "gah!"
17.5	Shows letters き-ぎ	Caption: "ki" changes to "gi", pronounced as in "geek"
17.6	Shows letters く-ぐ	Caption: "ku" changes to "gu", pronounced as in "goo"
17.7	Shows letters け-げ	Caption: "ke" changes to "ge", pronounced as in "get"
17.8	Shows letters こ-ご	Caption: And "ko" changes to "go".

Panel	Description	Dialog
18.1	Shimada at wheel of fortune	<p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> Here are some words that use our semi-new "g" syllables:
18.2	Izumi as mad scientist	<p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> The word for "science" is かがく (科学)
18.3	Nakamura trying to plug in some sort of appliance	<p style="text-align: center;">NAKAMURA, TADASHI</p> And きぐ (器具) is an appliance.
18.4	Shimada on stage in a costume	<p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> The word for drama is げき (劇)
18.5	Prof. Izumi in front of a Capitol-style building	<p style="text-align: center;">PROF. IZUMI, HIDEO</p> The word ぎかい (議会) means "congress" or "parliament."
18.6	Shimada holding up five fingers	<p style="text-align: center;">SHIMADA, MICHIKO</p> And the word ご (五) means "five."