

Japan



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Language

The Japanese writing system consists of **three** different character sets:

- **Kanji** (ideogram – several thousands of Chinese Characters)
- **Katakana** (phonograms)
- **Hiragana** (phonograms)

Roman alphabets are used only, for example, for:

- Abbreviations (e.g. UFO)
- Company names (e.g. NTT - Nippon Telegraph and Telephone)
- Product names (e.g. iPhone, ThinkPad)

In Japanese writing, English words are not mixed with Japanese letters. Instead, words which are borrowed from foreign languages are written in Katakana based on their pronunciations.

Written Japanese consists of thousands of characters across four character sets: Hiragana, Katakana, Kanji and the Latin alphabet. The four character sets are used in combination within the same sentence, each with its own purpose and rules, as well as its own visual weight and texture.



Typography and fonts

Web fonts

The Japanese language have three different character sets - Kanji, Katakana and Hiragana. While there are a lot of web fonts for Latin alphabets, there are not many for Japanese. The reason is because Latin fonts can be squeezed into files of tens to a few hundreds of kilobytes, Japanese font sets are enormous and typically go into the megabytes. This would be a problem because the website will not display correctly until the font has finished downloading and is loaded into browser memory.

There are many different Japanese font types. The two dominant and readily available ones are **Meiryo** (sans-serif) and **Yu Gothic** (serif).

Most popular fonts

Meiryo This is the most common, web-safe fonts (preinstalled on many devices) in Japan and it is used in most websites, quite similar to Latin sans-serifs. However, it is not as beautiful and not particularly legible.

Yu Gothic While **Meiryo** (sans-serif) has plain and even-width strokes, **Yu Gothic** (serif, close to Roman type) has decorative pieces on thick and thin strokes. It is also one of the most browser compatible fonts. Although it has more 'Japanese touch', it is not always being rendered properly and has low legibility. Some people, therefore, would use this font (or other more fancy fonts) but render it as graphic instead.

Other Japanese fonts include:

- **Shiragusa** meaning 'clear to read'. As it is easier to read as compared to other font and it is a web-safe font, it is also one of the most popular choices for many web designers. While it is not particularly beautiful, it does not share the same strong characteristics as other fonts, making it one of the best fonts for paragraphs
- **Shiragusa** It can be used in both formal and informal documents. It has 5 weights so you can use the font for both headings and body text
- **Shiragusa** The design concept of **Shiragusa** is the font for Japanese history novels. This modern font blends incorporate beautiful Japanese traditional elements in it which makes it a good option for both formal and informal documents. It has 4 font weights.

A key consideration when choosing the right font(s): Page loading speed!

In English, typography has very a small impact to page loading speed because font file sizes are usually very small (e.g. less than 500KB). However, it is a different story for Japanese fonts.

Japanese font files have double-digit hiragana, both single-digit and double-digit katakana, both single-digit and double-digit alphanumeric characters, many symbols, and from 2,000 to 12,000 kanji characters. Some font files have more than 300,000 characters in total and the file size can be bigger than 2MB. Therefore, sometimes it might be safer and better to use okay-looking, pre-installed fonts unless you want to sacrifice fast loading speed for some beautiful fonts!

Font design

Japanese text characters are more compact than Latin letters. Characters themselves are composed of many strokes.

Character height and compactness. Japanese text is narrower than Latin text. Height from middle, upper and lower spacing, and line height.

Font size

Japanese characters are generally bigger. This is because it is harder to read slightly smaller.

Recommendation: Do not use smaller than 10pt font size. Possible.

Letter spacing and text alignment

The Japanese language does not have spaces. The space between text is always the same and needs no adjustment.

Recommendation: 100% - 0.5em letter spacing for body paragraph is enough slightly.

To change the text alignment to justify is more consistent. To justify, body text is almost always justified. The most important treatment of the paragraph with all Japanese characters.

Line height

Recommendation: **120%** line height increases the height by around 20 - 25%. Line height should be higher than 1.2em. The average height is 1.2em.

The high density content with the characters of Japanese text is more readable when selected than to allow the eye to move across the page without jumping lines. Increase in the height must be balanced against the need to fit more content. With standard line lengths you may only need to adjust one of the two. Also, if you are setting columns of Japanese text, you may need to adjust one of the two. Also, if you are setting columns of Japanese text, you may need to adjust one of the two. Also, if you are setting columns of Japanese text, you may need to adjust one of the two.

Line length

Recommendation: **60%** line length around 60 characters. Possible.

Japanese content is highly variable in the way information is displayed. Choosing the proper line length is therefore critical.

AB

Capitalisation and Italicisation

There is no capitalisation in Japanese. Japanese characters do not use upper or lower case.

The Latin alphabet has no gendered characters in the Japanese writing system and typography. There is therefore no formality and necessity of using the Latin alphabet in Japanese text.

However, when used in professional sites or they can easily damage the visual quality and legibility of the site. Still, the use of formal or uninformal writing differs in Japanese text in some contexts.

For example, the use of the word 'regional office'.

There is no specific way to emphasise words in Japanese as we find underlines, brackets, or quotation marks in other languages as a way to emphasise them.

“”

Punctuation marks

When Japanese characters are used, you do not have to worry about adding spaces between words and sentences as there are spaces automatically added after the punctuation.

Period and comma

The period, **。** and comma, **,** have the same use as in English except the comma is used more liberally.

Ellipsis

Ellipsis **…** are used in place of English ellipsis dashes. However, ellipsis dashes are already used in letters for sufficient pauses. For example, a range of something **1-10**. They can also be used instead of the word **etc.** **…** although dashes can be used for this purpose too.

Colon

Colons **：** are used in Japanese but generally only in addresses **1-1-1**. Sometimes do not use in Japanese.

Hyphen

Exclamation mark

Exclamation marks **！** are used in the same way as in English and are also common in Twitter and social media. They are not used as much for formal writing.



Text input

When entering Japanese digitally, it is possible to use all three types of character combinations: Hiragana, Katakana, and Romaji.

Desktop input

To input Japanese characters on a computer:

1. Set the input method to Japanese input mode. In this mode, users can communicate in Roman alphabet, hiragana, katakana, and kanji.
2. Users can press the spacebar to see the hiragana. For example, if the user types "teramachi", a list of words in Hiragana, Katakana, and Kanji will be shown. They can then go through the list to select the character they want from the list by using arrow key and the spacebar or enter key.
3. Users can press the Return key to make the selection.

Mobile input

To input Japanese characters on a mobile, you can either use a Hiragana replacement tool commonly used on a smart phone. When using smart phone, it works the same way as on the computer.



Title

The address book is used to manage contacts. You can add contacts to your address book. You can also use the address book to manage your contacts. You can also use the address book to manage your contacts.

In a business setting, you can use the address book to manage your contacts. You can also use the address book to manage your contacts. You can also use the address book to manage your contacts.

Here are some tips for using the address book:

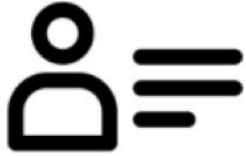
- 1. Add contacts to the address book. You can add contacts to the address book by tapping the plus sign (+) in the top right corner. You can also add contacts by tapping the plus sign (+) in the top right corner.
- 2. Add contacts to the address book. You can add contacts to the address book by tapping the plus sign (+) in the top right corner. You can also add contacts by tapping the plus sign (+) in the top right corner.



Title

Our recommendation for your digital product design

We would recommend applying the following to your digital product design. The first step is to ensure that you have a clear understanding of the user's needs and expectations. This will help you to design a product that is both useful and easy to use. The second step is to ensure that you have a clear understanding of the user's culture and values. This will help you to design a product that is both respectful and appropriate. The third step is to ensure that you have a clear understanding of the user's behavior and preferences. This will help you to design a product that is both intuitive and engaging. The fourth step is to ensure that you have a clear understanding of the user's feedback and suggestions. This will help you to design a product that is both iterative and user-centered.



Naming convention

Order

When the Japanese write their names in Japanese, they write their family name first and their given name second. They reverse the order when writing their names in Roman letters because the Japanese language is written from right to left. However, in 2006, Japan's government has added international trade regulations to use the family name first when writing Japanese names in a country of the Japanese language. It is a change to make a variety of linguistic convention. Japan started using the traditional order for Japanese names in English in official documents, and family name first. It is an old-fashioned way to do so, although it is not to be widely adopted.

Middle names

Japanese do not have middle names.

Online name fields and labellings

☞ The most general name field sometimes is just means the first name. That form would divide the name into surname and name. ☞ Last name given name first name ☞ Last

That website would require you to type your name in both ways and label them with characters. It is a good practice to provide an example of the input or character type which are required for each field.



Address format

Address order of Japanese addresses (from city area code to postal number)

Example of a Japanese address: 〒100-0001 東京都千代田区千代田 1-1-1

If you input address to include a postal code

Usually an address is written in one line or two lines (if necessary)

To input an address on a website, most websites provide separate fields for each part of the address (e.g. country, city, address, zip code)

Somehow it is quite difficult for Japanese users to know how to input a city name or a postal code when it is not pronounced in the same way as the name in input using kanji. Therefore, most Japanese websites provide fields to input city and postal code in roman. Most Japanese websites provide an example of the input area description of each character type (city name, postal code) in kanji and a description in roman for each field.



Phone number

Area numbers (calling code) is 01.

Landline numbers

- It starts with the first digit always being 0. The second number refers to the geographical location (eg. 110 assigned to Hokkaido, 03 for Chiba and so on for the rest)
- In the biggest cities, the first two digits are the area code (eg. in Tokyo phone numbers are 03-XXXX-XXXX)
- In other big cities, the first 3 digits are the area code (eg. in Sapporo phone numbers are 011-XXXX-XXXX)
- Smaller cities have four digit area codes and the smallest ones have five

Mobile numbers

It starts with starting with 090, 080 or 070



Date format

The month-day-day of the week is the most commonly used date format in Japan with the Japanese characters meaning year (西), month (月), and day (日) inserted after the numbers and the day of the week usually abbreviated to single characters at the end. For example:

西暦 2022 年 10 月 10 日 (Monday) 10月10日

The Japanese usually use the following to indicate the day of the week:

- 月曜日
- 火曜日
- 水曜日
- 木曜日
- 金曜日
- 土曜日
- 日曜日

There is no space between the Arabic numbers and Japanese characters.

Numbers in parentheses are generally used for date expressions when dates need to be abbreviated but made sure the format should be used throughout the website. Avoid using such formats.

For date (month) commonly used format: year (西暦) (Month) of the year

Using date: year (西暦)

Year date: year (西暦)

Imperial calendar

The Japanese imperial calendar is also sometimes used when using the year on the edge of Japanese companies. Japan is the only country in the world that uses the era name system, or Gengo, which has its roots in China, although the Gregorian calendar is also in common use.

Since May 2019, Japan has adopted the 西暦 (year) imperial era name in the expression of a date in Japan in the Governmental context. For example:

2019 (西暦) (西暦) year 1 of the Reiwa era

2020 (西暦) (西暦) year 2 of the Reiwa era

Reference

Additional reference: Although the Gregorian calendar is now used in business contracts and for most other daily purposes, the Japanese imperial calendar is used for many official documents such as certificates, Certificate of Birth Register, Certificate of Marriage and usage in many formal situations. It is important to change when they individuals refer to their birth date using the Japanese imperial calendar and official forms often require the date of birth to be entered accordingly, which can confuse foreigners. For example, a birthdate on 28 April 2018 will mean birth date of 10th April 2018 in the Japanese calendar and 10th April 2018 will mean birth date of 19th May 2018.

Note: According to country Japan News in 2019, asked whether they would prefer to use the new range of the Gregorian calendar or a date based on the old one. 68.1% said they would use both, 26.1% chose the Gregorian calendar and 6.8% preferred the long era calendar.

Online date fields and labellings

For example, a date field from the new **BEYŌ Japan** **BEYŌ Japan** website may look something like this:

BEYŌ Japan

BEYŌ Japan





Calendar picker

First Day of the Week



Time format

How many of hour and/or hour minutes are compulsory? (0-24)

When using the 12-hour notation, what unit to add

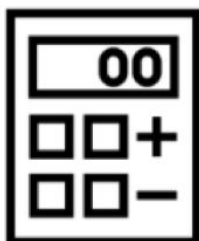
is compulsory before hour (am/pm)

is compulsory after hour (am/pm)

Reference for examples

12:00 - 12:00 AM / 12:00 PM

12:00 - 12:00 AM / 12:00 PM



Numeric format

Thousands are separated by a comma. For example: 1,234

Decimals are separated by a period. For example: 123.45

Do not round up the value when the decimal number does not contain more than two decimal digits or when 999.

The symbol for a unit must use **■** when a measurement number.



Currency

The Beyō Global office currency is JPY. The price of the Beyō Global Japan Design Guide is ¥10,000. The price is shown in the number you are referring to, for example:

¥10,000

Be aware that the price of the Beyō Global Japan Design Guide is ¥10,000. The price of the Beyō Global Japan Design Guide is ¥10,000.

There are no denominations of JPY smaller than the design price. The JPY is the only unit of currency used in the design price. The JPY is the only unit of currency used in the design price. The JPY is the only unit of currency used in the design price.



Unit of measurements

Officially, Japan is on the **metric system** (SI units).

Measuring space

Although the metric system is used in Japan, some traditional units of measurement are still in use, such as the **shō**.

When it comes to the space, a common unit of area used when describing room size is **畳** (tatami). It is based on the size of one tatami mat (approximately 1.62m x 0.87m). A common example of how to use tatami is "this room is 10 tatami mats" (this room is approximately 16.2m x 8.7m).

In addition, when measuring the length of a room, it is common to use **間** (ma). The space between two tatami mats is approximately 1.8m. It is commonly used when describing the spacing between furniture or the length of a room (e.g., "the spacing between the two tatami mats is 1.8m").



Unit of measurements

温度

The way temperature measurements are written in Japanese is slightly different than in the West. For example, the

room temperature is 室温 (室温) which is written as 室温 (室温) and the room temperature is 室温 (室温).

室温

室温 (室温) → room temperature (室温)

室温 (室温) is written as 室温 (室温) and the room temperature is 室温 (室温).

室温 (室温) → room temperature (室温)



Search engine

Google is the most popular search engine in Japan with a share of 76.2% as of June 2016.

Other popular search engines include Yahoo! Japan, although they both use Google's core search algorithms.



Social network

LINE is the most popular messaging platform with 45 million users as of June 2016. It is most popular among older adults with many being business profiles.

Twitter is also widely used. The most followed accounts are celebrities and news channels but brands also attract many followers.

Instagram is most popular among females between 18-30.

Facebook is popular among older demographics but has recently been losing users.



Key payment methods

Popular payments methods in Japan vary according to the types of stores, services or products.

Cash on delivery is the most popular method of payment with large retailers also common with banks and regular customers delivery services. An amount of 10,000 yen is often used as a buffer payment card. The method for cash on delivery is accepted by most of small shops and stores.

Payment at convenience stores is a commonly used payment method in Japan. Consumers can order goods and services online and pay for them cash at the counter of a convenience store with a payment number received from the website.

Credit/debit cards are not very widely accepted especially in big cities. In general, for online shopping credit card payment is the most popular other than cash on delivery. Cards accepted online include Visa, Mastercard and JCB. The Japanese credit card.

Buy now is a well known service in Japan and enables online shoppers to make payments from their online bank. The customer simply selects their bank of choice and is authorized to their online banking interface to complete the payment.



Key payment methods

Examples of common payment methods used in Japan. They are widely used for transactions and for payments in many shops and vending machines.

Other common payment methods:

- 1. **QR code payment**: A payment method using QR codes to make payments.
- 2. **Mobile payment**: A payment method using mobile devices to make payments.
- 3. **Online payment**: A payment method using online banking or credit cards.
- 4. **Gift certificate**: A payment method using gift certificates to make payments.

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