



JAPAN INFORMATION
AND CULTURE CENTER
在米国日本大使館広報文化センター

TEACHING TUESDAY

JAPANESE PRONUNCIATION

Japanese only has five vowels and fourteen consonants, which combine together to make up the Japanese syllabary. While in English, spoken and written language can differ, Japanese pronunciation is extremely consistent.

The five vowels are a, i, u, e, and o. The “u” is pronounced with no forward movement of the lips. Pronounce the vowels following sentence to get an idea of how they are pronounced:

Ah (a), we (i) soon (u) get (e) old (o).

In terms of consonants (k, s, t, n, h, m, y, r, w, g, z, d, b, p), the good news is that most Japanese consonants are the same as English ones. Here are some exceptions:

G is pronounced as in “gone”

Ch is pronounced as in “chocolate”

Fu is pronounced like the “wh” in “who”

R is pronounced similar to a rolling r, but only trilled once

Tsu is pronounced like the ts at the end of bats

Check out <http://www.learn-japanese.info/pronunciation.html> for more information and to listen to audio samples.