

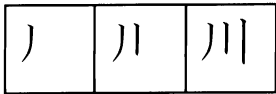
Basic Principles of Stroke Order [筆順] (Hitsujun)

Now that you have familiarized yourselves with the different types of strokes, the next step is to understand the process by which these various strokes are used to form radicals and eventually Kanji. This involves knowing the correct order in which to write the strokes. Stroke order follows a natural sequence in which each stroke flows smoothly from the previous one.

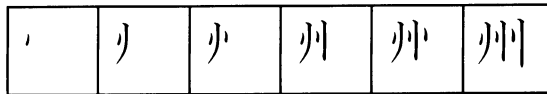
Stroke order is an integral part of Kanji that must be learned with every new radical and Kanji. Taking the time now to study the basic principles of stroke order will make learning even the most difficult Kanji much easier. Writing Kanji in their correct stroke order is also important when writing in cursive style. Cursive style Kanji written in the wrong stroke order is unreadable by anyone except the writer.

The following are some general rules for writing Kanji:

1. Kanji are written from left to right.

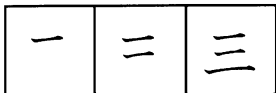


kawa (river)

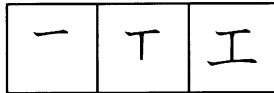


SHŪ (a state)

2. Kanji are written from top to bottom.

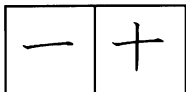


SAN (three)

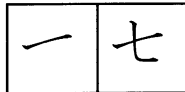


KŌ (craft)

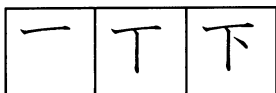
3. Usually, horizontal lines (*yoko sen*) are written before vertical lines (*tate sen*), even though the vertical line is curved.



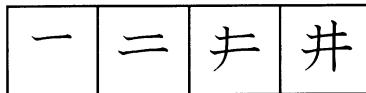
JŪ (ten)



SHICHI (seven)

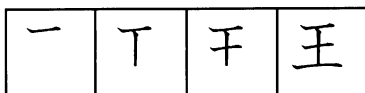


shita (underneath)

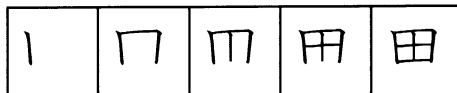


i* (well)

However, there are some exceptions. For example:

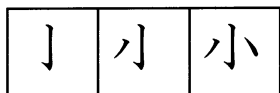


Ō (king)

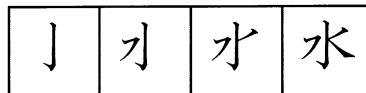


ta (a field)

4. When the character is symmetric, start at the middle, then move to the left, and lastly to the right side.

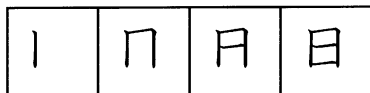


chii-sai (small)

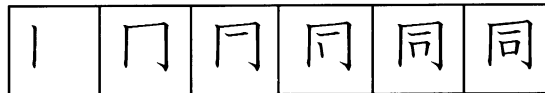


mizu (water)

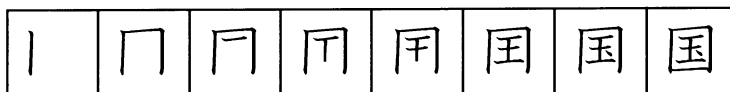
5. The outside of the character except the bottom line is written before the center portion.



hi (sun)

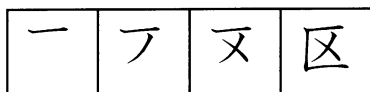


ona·ji (same, p. 3)

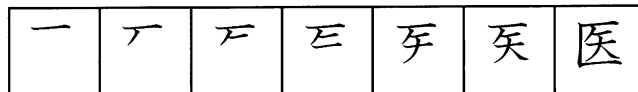


kuni (country)

However, there are some exceptions:

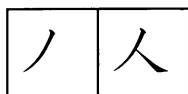


KU (a ward)

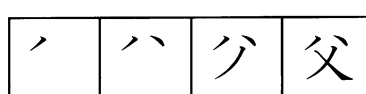


I (physician)

6. A left sweep (*hidari barai*) is written before a right stop sweep (*migi barai*).

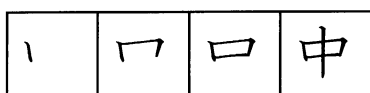


hito (person)

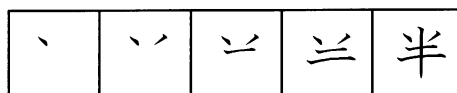


chichi (father)

7. A vertical line (*tate sen*) piercing through the center of a character is written last.



naka (middle)



HAN (half)



kuruma (car)

8. A horizontal line (*yoko sen*) piercing through the center of the character is written last.

レ	女	女
---	---	---

onna (woman)

レ	𠂇	𠂇	𠂇	母
---	---	---	---	---

haha (mother)

㇇	了	子
---	---	---

ko (child)

However, there is an exception:

一	十	卅	卅	世
---	---	---	---	---

yo (world)

9. A short left sweep (*hidari barai*) precedes a horizontal line (*yoko sen*).

ノ	ナ	𠂇	右	右
---	---	---	---	---

migi (right)

ノ	ナ	𠂇	有	有	有
---	---	---	---	---	---

a·ru/YŪ (to be)

However, a long left sweep (*hidari barai*) follows a horizontal line (*yoko sen*).

一	ナ	𠂇	𠂇	左
---	---	---	---	---

hidari (left)

一	ナ	方	友
---	---	---	---

tomo (friend)

EXERCISES

1. Choose the correct stroke order for the following Kanji.

(1) 王

a.	一	丅	干	王
b.	一	二	三	王

(2) 日

a.	丨	冂	日	日
b.	丨	冂	口	日

(3) 区

a.	一	匚	匚	区
b.	一	フ	又	区

(4) 井*

a.	一	二	井	井
b.	丿	川	井	井

(5) 右

a.	一	ナ	ナ	右	右
b.	ノ	ナ	ナ	右	右

(6) 左

a.	一	ナ	ナ	左	左
b.	ノ	ナ	ナ	左	左

(7) 世

a.	丨		卩	卩	世
b.	一	十	卅	卅	世

(8) 車

a.	一	冂	冂	冂	亘	車
b.	一	十	十	市	市	車

2. According to the principles you have just learned, draw in the stroke orders for the Kanji you see.

(example)

1	2
ノ	人
一	十
一	七

1.

1	2	3
		小
		子
		工

2.

1	2	3	4
			父
			水
			友

3.

1	2	3	4	5
				半
				田
				母

4.

1	2	3	4	5	6
					州
					同
					有