

🔦 Game and activity ideas for hiragana recognition 🔦

1 - Simple games

(1) Cleaning board game

Words or letters that students have learned are written randomly on the board. Have a student come to the board and erase the word or letter you call out.

(2) Write a word that students are familiar with on the board with one letter missing. Students read what is written and guess what the word is in order to guess the missing letter.

(3) *Shiritori*

Divide the class into two teams. One student from each team plays *Janken* to see who starts the game. The winning team calls out a word beginning with “a”. The teacher or a student writes the last letter of that word in hiragana on the board. The other team must then call out a word beginning with that letter. If they are able to do this, it is the first team’s turn to do the same.

If a team is unable to come up with a word they lose. If the team say a word which ends in “n”, they lose, as no words begin with “n”. A team is not allowed to use a word which has been used previously in that game.

2 - Card games

(1) Recognition game

Picture cards are placed face up on the floor or a table. Players sit in a circle around the cards. The teacher shows a word written in hiragana. Students pick up the picture which corresponds to the word.

(2) *Karuta*

This game can be played with hiragana cards or the *karuta* picture cards introduced on page 72. The cards are placed face up. The teacher or a student calls out a hiragana sound, word or phrase. 4, 5 or 6 players race to take the card that corresponds to what is called.

(3) Speed recognition

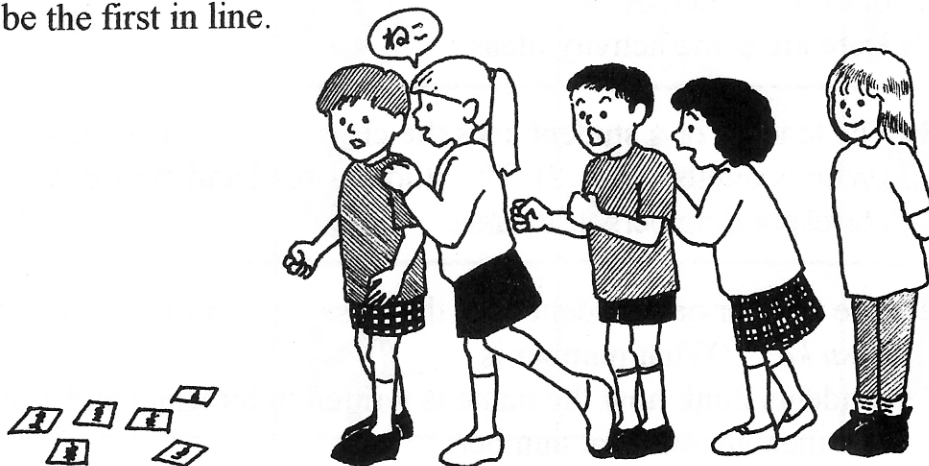
Two players in front of the class. Each takes one hiragana or word card. At the class count *ichi - ni - san* (one - two - three) they show their cards to each other. The first to recognise and call out their partner's card wins and remains to face a new challenger.

(4) Matching game

Two related sets of cards are required. For example, picture cards and hiragana word cards or the same hiragana word cards in different colours. Cards are placed face down and one card from each group is turned over by a player who then calls them out. If they match, the pair can be kept.

(5) Secret whispers

A set of "secret hiragana word cards" are placed face up at the front of the classroom. The class is arranged into two to four teams sitting or standing in rows. The first person from each row is told or shown a secret word by the teacher. These students then return to their own row and whisper the secret to the next person in line. The secret is passed down the line from one student to the next until the last student has heard it. The last student then comes to the head table and picks up the "secret card". The first student to hold up a secret card wins a point for his/her team, then returns to be the first in line.



- (6)** Up to ten hiragana cards are placed on the board. Have the students memorise the cards. Get students to close their eyes and then turn one card over, so students can not see what it is. Ask the students to open their eyes and say what the missing letter is.


3 - Hiragana chart making

Enlarge the blank hiragana chart on the following page to A3 in size. For each hiragana letter students find a word which begins or ends with that letter and draw a picture of the word in the box. These pictures will remind the student of the hiragana sounds. Each student will have their own personal and original hiragana chart.



There is a chart master with pictures. If you use this, an activity idea is to have students colour in a picture when they are able to recognise the letter or say the word.

4 - Worksheets “*Hiragana kuizu*” (Hiragana Quiz)

Match the pictures and the hiragana letters, for example  is *enpitsu*. *Enpitsu* starts with *e* so students find *e* and join the dots. The exceptions in these worksheets are *kaeru* and *hon*, as the matching letter is the last letter of those words. This is because few words start with *ru* and no words start with *n*.

5 - Worksheet “*Namae wa nan desu ka.*” (What are their names?)

There are lots of children’s faces drawn with their names printed underneath on this worksheet. This worksheet can be used for lots of different activities.

Here are some activity ideas.

- (1) The teacher or a student asks the class “*___ ban wa dare desu ka.*” (Who is number ___?) The students read and answer the corresponding person’s name.
- (2) The teacher or a student asks the class “*___ san/kun wa nan ban desu ka.*” (What number is ___?) Students think how the name is written in hiragana and search for it and then answer that number.
- (3) Students are given an allocated time period and try to recognise as many names as they can in the given time. Students may circle in the people whose names they recognise.