

Kanji City

by Clayton 'Mac' MacKnight



Welcome to Kanji City, an entire city full of kanji. I'll be your guide through the many nooks and crannies that we call home here. Feel free to pick up kanji on your way around. You will most likely need them in the future, so that you can read and understand Japanese better.

But, first let me explain the method to all this madness. This city was designed in order to help everyone lock in the kanji they need. A lot of memory techniques used by some of the great memory champions have been employed to help you remember kanji as effortlessly as possible.

Mnemonics are normally used to make it a lot easier to remember large pieces of information. The Heisig method of learning kanji is an example of a good use of mnemonics to help people learn kanji more easily. His series of books walk you through most of the common and uncommon kanji you will ever need using mnemonics.

On our journey through Kanji City, we will be using mnemonics to lock in kanji readings (on, kun yomi) and how they look. But, Kanji City adds an extra twist to the mix. Mnemonics help you remember kanji individually, but it is also useful to be able to reference kanji and relate kanji to other kanji. This helps strengthen the bonds and doesn't leave a stray kanji behind.

It can be quite taxing, even with the help of clever mnemonics, to remember kanji one by one. So how about grouping them together? Using one kanji to link to another kanji, so that you can create a kanji dictionary in your head.

There is a method used by memory masters, like Ed Cooke (creator of Memrise), that involves laying out information or words in a city in order to sort the information out. A city is a very easy thing to imagine, because we have all been to or lived in one. And it provides a visual base for us to

sort things out, and it is generally easier to remember images than words.

If you think back to your grade school years, you undoubtedly took a few family or school trips. I bet that you can remember at least a few select scenes from those trips, even random ones that had no real significant meaning. And for some of you, those trips were ages ago. For me, it was a good 20 years ago, but I can still recall parts of those trips.

How to Use it

You'll notice that Kanji City has no pictures, only simple representations of the kanji we are studying. This is to help you visualize the city on your own. By using your favorite buildings from your past or places you visited it will be more memorable than any image I can draw for you. So let your creativity and imagination go wild building the scene yourself.

There is no story exactly in Kanji City. I'm just going to show you around the place, but be sure to fully visualize everything in the environment to make it more real. The more real it is to you, the more memorable it will be. You will want to regularly close your eyes and visualize what the story describes. Go wild with it. The crazier the better.

On the first page there will be words written in capital letters that sound similar to the sounds of the on and kun yomi of the kanji. There is also an image of the kanji with the on and kun yomi written in kana to help you understand the sounds more natively. On the opposite page, the English words are replaced by the kanji and sometimes okurigana. The on and kun yomi will not be shown.

On this second page, try to recall what the readings are from the context of the story. Ideally, you should print the page out and fold it in half so that you can drill the one side and then flip it over to check. In this way, you

can practice a small a group of kanji at one time, making the whole process easier than trying to remember a gigantic list of words.

The entire time, try to use images as much as you can, try to imagine yourself in the city. You might even want to go so far as to imagine the smells and atmospheric sounds you might hear there. Make it real for you, and it will be just that much easier to remember everything.

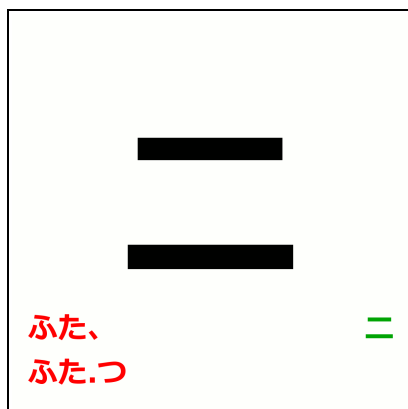
When you have a free moment, waiting for the bus, taking a smoke break, going for a leisurely stroll or you find yourself standing naked outside your hotel room desperately waiting for someone to unlock your door, you can try to recall the city in your head. It is an incredibly effective use of your time.

On your right here you can see our magnificent ten-story welcome center. On the first floor is the main lobby. This is Cap'n Nyan Nyan, our receptionist. He ITCHes a lot because he doesn't usually bathe, sorry about the smell.

HE TOLD us that bathing was against his religion and we want to respect his wishes. IT'S a bit difficult to get used to at first but eventually the smell just blends in to the background, trust me.

Whatever you do, don't try to take his magic mouse. HE TOTSU (totes) that thing around with him everywhere. There is obviously something very important about that mouse.

- | | | |
|----------|---------|----------|
| 1. ひとり | 2. ひとつ | 3. いち |
| 4. いっしょに | 5. いちばん | 6. ついたち* |



- | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. ににん | 2. ふたつ | 3. に |
| 4. はたち* | 5. はつか* | 6. ふつか* |

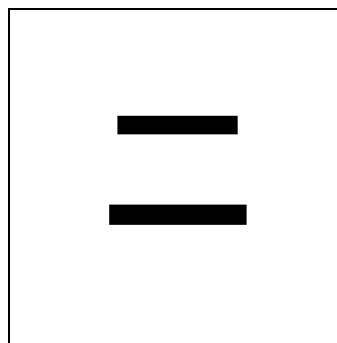
And if you go up the stairs to the second floor, we have [the knights who say NI](#). There is only two of them, but they can answer any questions you might have. Don't touch their FUTAns that they sleep on. They get very angry at anyone WHO TATSU them.

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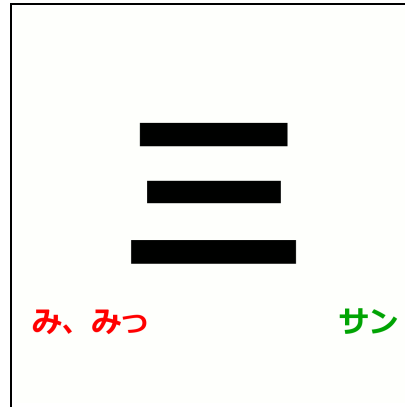
- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. 一人 - one person | 2. 一つ - one thing |
| 3. 一 - one | 4. 一緒に - together |
| 5. 一番 - number one | 6. 一日* - 1 st day of the month |



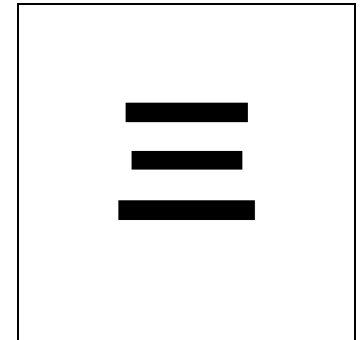
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|---|--|
| 1. 二人 - two people | 2. 二つ - two things |
| 3. 二 - three | 4. 二十歳 - 20 years old |
| 5. 二十日 - the 20 th , 20 days | 6. 二日 - the 2 nd , two days |

And if you go up the stairs to the second floor, we have [the knights who say 二](#). There is only two of them, but they can answer any questions you might have. Don't touch their 二 ns that they sleep on. They get very angry at anyone 二つ them.

The third floor is host to 3 Mleting rooms. Cap'n Nyan Nyan MITTSU with his poker group a lot, but you can use the rooms for anything. Just remember they are closed on SANDay. Monday through Saturday they are open though.

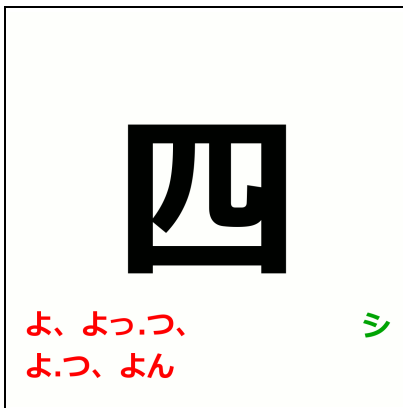


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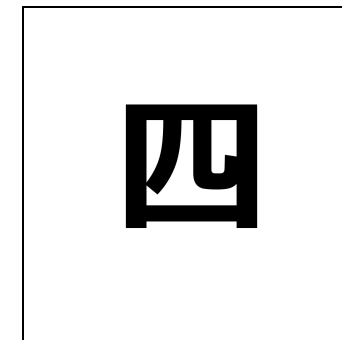


- | | | |
|---------|--------|--------|
| 1. さんにん | 2. みつつ | 3. さん |
| 4. さんかく | 5. み | 6. みっか |

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. 三人 – three people | 2. 三つ – 3 things |
| 3. 三 – 3 | 4. 三角 – triangle |
| 5. 三 – 3 | 6. 三日 – the 3 rd day of the month, 3 days |



The 4th floor is actually home to the world famous 4 YOddler's school. They are practicing for their big show next month - "CoYOTES in Paradise". They are YOddling **out the window with curtains** to their coYOTES. And they did such an amazing job with the background. Even though they colored it with craYON, it is still a masterpiece. You can SHI such amazing detail in it.

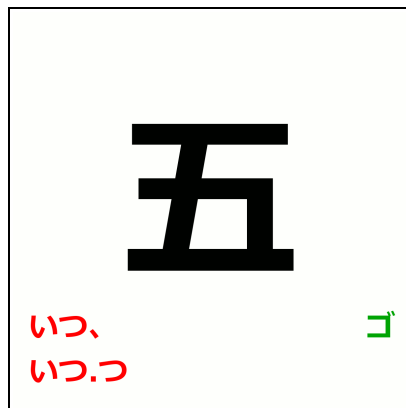


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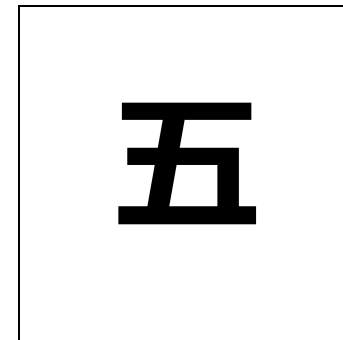
- | | | |
|---------|---------|--------|
| 1. よんにん | 2. よつつ | 3. よん |
| 4. しかく | 5. よつかど | 6. よっか |

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. 四人 – four people | 2. 四つ – 4 things |
| 3. 四 – four | 4. 四角 – square |
| 5. 四つ角 – four corners | 6. 四日 – the 4th day of the month, 4 days |

On the 5th floor, we have 5 brITS working for the British Consulate of Kanji City. They broke their table in a fight yesterday so that one poor guy has to **hold up the table while down on one knee**. If I were him, I'd tell the others to GO screw themselves. I would never hold up a table like that.



On the 5th floor, we have 5 br 五 working for the British Consulate of Kanji City. They broke their table in a fight yesterday so that one poor guy has to **hold up the table while down on one knee**. If I were him, I'd tell the others to 五 screw themselves. I would never hold up a table like that.



1. ごにん

2. いつつ

3. ご

4. ごじ

5. ごじゅうおん

6. いつか

1. 五人 – five people

2. 五つ – 5 things

3. 五 - five

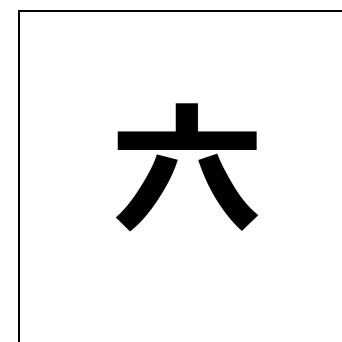
4. 五時 – 5 o'clock

5. 五十音 – Japanese syllabary

6. 五日 – the 5th, 5 days



On the 6th floor is our visiting mad scientist. He always wears that **giant hat with two long points of his mustache sticking out from underneath**. He has spliced newt DNA with cow DNA. He calls them MUTS because they MU just like cows. That one on the ROKU over there is the biggest.



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1. ろくにん

2. むつつ

3. ろく

4. ろくがつ

5. じゅうろく

6. むいか

1. 六人 – 6 people

2. 六つ – 6 things

3. 六 - 6

4. 六月 – 6 months

5. 十六 - 16

6. 六日 – the 6th, 6 days