

MS Gothic

日本語

ひらがな

n	w	r	y	m	h	n	t	s	k		
ん	わ	ら	や	ま	は	な	た	さ	か	あ	a
		り		み	ひ	に	ち	し	き	い	i
		る	ゆ	む	ふ	ぬ	つ	す	く	う	u
		れ		め	へ	ね	て	せ	け	え	e
	を	ろ	よ	も	ほ	の	と	そ	こ	お	o

カタカナ

n	w	r	y	m	h	n	t	s	k		
ン	ワ	ラ	ヤ	マ	ハ	ナ	タ	サ	カ	ア	a
		リ		ミ	ヒ	ニ	チ	シ	キ	イ	i
		ル	ユ	ム	フ	ヌ	ツ	ス	ク	ウ	u
		レ		メ	ヘ	ネ	テ	セ	ケ	エ	e
	ヲ	ロ	ヨ	モ	ホ	ノ	ト	ソ	コ	オ	o

MS P Gothic

日本語

ひらがな

n	w	r	y	m	h	n	t	s	k		
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		り		み	ひ	に	ち	し	き	い	i
		る	ゆ	む	ふ	ぬ	つ	す	く	う	u
		れ		め	へ	ね	て	せ	け	え	e
	を	ろ	よ	も	ほ	の	と	そ	こ	お	o

カタカナ

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		リ		ミ	ヒ	ニ	チ	シ	キ	イ	i
		ル	ユ	ム	フ	ヌ	ツ	ス	ク	ウ	u
		レ		メ	ヘ	ネ	テ	セ	ケ	エ	e
	ヲ	ロ	ヨ	モ	ホ	ノ	ト	ソ	コ	オ	o

MS UI Gothic

日本語

ひらがな

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		り		み	ひ	に	ち	し	き	い	i
		る	ゆ	む	ふ	ぬ	つ	す	く	う	u
		れ		め	へ	ね	て	せ	け	え	e
	を	ろ	よ	も	ほ	の	と	そ	こ	お	o

カタカナ

n	w	r	y	m	h	n	t	s	k		
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		リ		ミ	ヒ	ニ	チ	シ	キ	イ	i
		ル	ユ	ム	フ	ヌ	ツ	ス	ク	ウ	u
		レ		メ	ヘ	ネ	テ	セ	ケ	エ	e
	ヲ	ロ	ヨ	モ	ホ	ノ	ト	ソ	コ	オ	o

MS Mincho

日本語

ひらがな

n	w	r	y	m	h	n	t	s	k		
ん	わ	ら	や	ま	は	な	た	さ	か	あ	a
		り		み	ひ	に	ち	し	き	い	i
		る	ゆ	む	ふ	ぬ	つ	す	く	う	u
		れ		め	へ	ね	て	せ	け	え	e
	を	ろ	よ	も	ほ	の	と	そ	こ	お	o

カタカナ

n	w	r	y	m	h	n	t	s	k		
ン	ワ	ラ	ヤ	マ	ハ	ナ	タ	サ	カ	ア	a
		リ		ミ	ヒ	ニ	チ	シ	キ	イ	i
		ル	ユ	ム	フ	ヌ	ツ	ス	ク	ウ	u
		レ		メ	ヘ	ネ	テ	セ	ケ	エ	e
	ヲ	ロ	ヨ	モ	ホ	ノ	ト	ソ	コ	オ	o

MS P Mincho

日本語

ひらがな

n	w	r	y	m	h	n	t	s	k		
ん	わ	ら	や	ま	は	な	た	さ	か	あ	a
		り		み	ひ	に	ち	し	き	い	i
		る	ゆ	む	ふ	ぬ	つ	す	く	う	u
		れ		め	へ	ね	て	せ	け	え	e
	を	ろ	よ	も	ほ	の	と	そ	こ	お	o

カタカナ

n	w	r	y	m	h	n	t	s	k		
ン	ワ	ラ	ヤ	マ	ハ	ナ	タ	サ	カ	ア	a
		リ		ミ	ヒ	ニ	チ	シ	キ	イ	i
		ル	ユ	ム	フ	ヌ	ツ	ス	ク	ウ	u
		レ		メ	ヘ	ネ	テ	セ	ケ	エ	e
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EPSON 教科書体M (Kyoukasho-tai)

日本語

ひらがな

n	w	r	y	m	h	n	t	s	k		
ん	わ	ら	や	ま	は	な	た	さ	か	あ	a
		り		み	ひ	に	ち	し	き	い	i
		る	ゆ	む	ふ	ぬ	つ	す	く	う	u
		れ		め	へ	ね	て	せ	け	え	e
	を	ろ	よ	も	ほ	の	と	そ	こ	お	o

カタカナ

n	w	r	y	m	h	n	t	s	k		
ン	ワ	ラ	ヤ	マ	ハ	ナ	タ	サ	カ	ア	a
		リ		ミ	ヒ	ニ	チ	シ	キ	イ	i
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	ヲ	ロ	ヨ	モ	ホ	ノ	ト	ソ	コ	オ	o

Japanese typefaces

<http://www.nihongoresources.com/language/writing/typefaces.html>

Japanese has, like most languages, a few different writing styles. Quite obviously you know a few different ones for English/American, because your handwriting isn't going to look like the "Microsoft sans serif" font when this is typed in, and neither will something written in cursive italics look much like either this sans serif font or your handwriting. In fact, the "A" alone will look completely different in all three scripts. Japanese has a few common faces, which have come from the various approaches to the Kanji system as employed since +/- 600 a.d.

Aside from normal printform styles, there are also old block-print styles, and the cursive styles that come from the artistic approach. (Compare this to our use of gothic calligraphy). As an illustration of the differences in Japanese fonts, let's look at the various forms one might encounter as main writing forms, if they can indeed so be called, since most were derived from brushes or woodblocks rather than pens.

Ming dynasty print style

明朝楷書で書いた日本語

This is the 明朝 (Minchō) typeface. This is the most used typeface in Japan, found in newspapers, in your word processor, etc. It is characterised by clearly identifiable strokes, thick verticals and thin horizontals, angular corners and serifs at the end of strokes.

Gothic print style

ゴシック楷書で書いた日本語

This is the ゴシック (Gothic) typeface. This is the second most used typeface in Japan. You will find it for instance on signs and the likes. Unlike minchō it doesn't have all the serifs or thickness differences. It just shows the essence of a Kanji without the pleasantries and decorations.

Text book print style

教科書楷書で書いた日本語

The 教科書 (Kyōkasho) or "text book" typeface is used quite often in - not surprisingly - text books and the likes. It is similar to the Minchō typeface, but feels slightly less computer inspired, and looks more a mix between a computer font and a carefully pencilled one.

Block style

真書で書いた日本語

This style, called 楷書, is the typeface originating from wood block carving. Every stroke is "written" individually, and thus makes it an intensive typeface to write (brush) in. While prettier than the Kaisho scripts, it's also sometimes harder to read. It is actually similar to the Minchō typeface, which also originated from woodblock carving, but differs in style by being less rigid and having serifs at different strokes.

Flowing and semi-cursive style

行書で書いた日本語 行書で書いた日本語

A cursive simplified way of writing, in "行書" style the strokes 'flow' more and in some places, more complex compounds are simplified. This style is typically used in hand writing, such as letters or memos. The first of the two images shows a "readable" Gyōsho style, close to neat handwriting, while the second is a far more flowing style and closer to how someone who writes fast would probably write Japanese, connecting up strokes and simplifying along the way..

Cursive or "grass" style

草書で書いた日本語 草書で書いた日本語

The artistic "shorthand" form of writing, in "草書" style most compounds are stroked without the brush or pen ever actually leaving the paper. This means there are a lot of thin connecting lines between actual strokes which can confuse reading, but also most compounds are simplified, which makes recognition of Sōsho Kanji very hard to impossible if one is not familiar with it. (the "grass" in the style name comes from the fact that the 草 in 草書 means grass or weeds)

Seal style

篆書で書いた日本語

This style, called 添書 is almost exclusively used for 判子 (Hanko), name seals. They're used in the red "signatures" you see on Chinese and Japanese calligraphic art, as well as being used as normal signature in Japan, where you are expected to have a little stamp with your name in Tensho for signing for your mail order packages, as contract signatures, etc.

Handwriting

手書きの日本語です

Finally an important style: handwriting. You don't really have a block of wood or a paintbrush and some calligraphical paper at hand most of the time, so it's not unimportant to note that handwritten Japanese of course also has its own distinct look. There are some differences between handwritten and printed Japanese, and these are probably apparent if you compare the following two images

