



Learn Japanese online  
from experienced teachers

nihongo-pro.com

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# Ready, Set, NihonGO!

## WE ♥ NIHONGO!

This is the first edition of our free newsletter to help you learn Japanese.

We hope to make it something special, so get ready to learn new, fun stuff about all things Japanese.

Each issue, we'll have one or two articles from our teachers, in Japanese and translated to English. We promise the articles will be fun and unique—and will teach you something new about Japanese.

We'll keep you up to date on happenings at Nihongo-Pro, too.

We want to include your voice, too! We love teaching Japanese, and we know a lot of you love learning it, too. Why not share your enthusiasm about Japan and the Japanese language? Watch this space for more details!

## なかみ INSIDE

### WRITE YOUR NAME IN KANJI



Find the right characters for you and your personality. Michiko LILLY shows you how. [Page 2](#)

### MO-MO-MO-MORE NIHONGO



Try a Japanese tongue twister (hint: line up lots of “mo”s). Yutaka ASO walks you through step by step. [Page 4](#)

### “I WAS CRIED BY THE BABY.”



It's a perfectly good sentence in Japanese. What makes Japanese passive voice so hard for us English speakers? [Page 6](#)



## Nihongo-Pro Exclusives

- ✓ Earn free lessons with ProPoints
- ✓ Book lessons up to 30 days in advance
- ✓ Plus, free chat, quizzes, and kanji games!

# あなたの名前を漢字で書くと…

日本語には欠かせない漢字。漢字が好きな人もいれば、大の苦手という人もいますね。最近ではタトゥーに漢字を入れる人も少なくありません。私もアメリカ



LILLY Michiko

Nihongo-Pro Teacher

Kanji-Fandom

<http://kanji-fandom.com/>

力の友人や知り合いに「私の名前を漢字で書いて！」とよく聞かれます。あなたも自分の名前を漢字で書くと、どんな漢字を使うのか知りたいと思いませんか？そんなときにはこのサイトで調べてみてはどうでしょうか。

たとえばNihongo-Proの頼れるサポートスタッフ、Steve Cooperの名前を入れてみると…

## 「捨居夫 卷刃」

という漢字名が出来上がります。でも、これがちょっと気に入らないという場合には、自分で漢字を選んで別の漢字名をつくることもできます。たとえば、私はこんな漢字を選びました。

## 「主手依夫 久派」

この名前カードの横にはそれぞれの漢字の意味も出てきます。

Kanji	How It's Read	Meaning (selected meaning in red)
主	ス (usually シュ)	lord   <b>chief</b>   master   main thing   principal
手	テ	<b>hand</b>
依	イ	<b>reliant</b>   depend on   consequently   therefore   due to
夫	ブ (usually フ)	husband   <b>man</b>
久	クー (usually キュウ or ク)	<b>long time</b>   old story
派	パー (usually ハ or パ)	faction   group   party   clique   sect   <b>school</b>

漢字の名前は意味を持つので、とても面白いですね。

あなたの名前を漢字で書くとどうなるか、サイトにアクセスして調べてみてはいかがでしょうか？

もちろん、「調べてください！」というリクエストもお待ちしていますよ！

ちなみに私の姓Lillyは「梨里」でした。

# 英訳 ENGLISH TRANSLATION AND NOTES

## IF YOU WRITE YOUR NAME IN KANJI...

Kanji are indispensable in Japanese. There are people who like Kanji and people who have a lot of trouble with Kanji. Lately quite a few people are getting Kanji in tattoos. I am often asked by my American friends, “Write my name in Kanji!” Don’t you, too, wonder which Kanji would be used in writing your own name? How about trying out Kanji-Fandom, a site where you can do just that.

**Kanji-Fandom**

<http://kanji-fandom.com/>

For example, if I enter the name of our support guy, Steve Cooper, here are the Kanji that come out:

捨居夫 卷刃

If you don’t care for the Kanji selected for you, you can choose different characters to make a different Kanji name. For instance, I chose these characters (for Steve Cooper):

主手依夫 久派

Next to the Kanji name, the page also shows the meanings of the Kanji used in the name.

It makes it rather interesting, because names written in Kanji have meaning. Why don’t you visit the site yourself and look up how your own name is written. Of course, I also welcome your request to “look it up for me!” By the way, my last name “Lilly” showed up as <sup>リリー</sup>梨里.

## NOTES

～には欠かせない<sup>か</sup>

Indispensable in ～. Literally means “cannot be lacking”.

大の苦手<sup>だい にがて</sup>

A big weakness—i.e., something one is really, really no good at.

～は少なくありません<sup>すく</sup>

Quite a few ～. Literally means “not (just) a few ～”.

～とよく聞かれます<sup>き</sup>

“(I am) often asked ～”. 聞かれます is the passive voice of 聞きます. Remember this one—it’s used all the time in Japanese!

～みてはどうでしょうか

How about trying out ～? This is a standard technique in Japanese for suggesting an action, where we might say “you should” in English. いか<sup>が</sup> is more polite than どう.

～みてはいかがでしょうか

漢字の名前は意味を持つので、とても面白いですね。<sup>かんじ なまえ い み も おもしろ</sup>

Literally translated, this is “Because a kanji name has meaning, it is very interesting, don’t you think?”

# すももももももものうち

こんにちは。

にほんご いっかいめ  
おもしろい日本語の1回目です。さて、つぎの日本語がわかりますか。



ASO Yutaka

Nihongo-Pro Teacher

## すももももももものうち

あれ? 「も」が 8つもある。どんな意味か、わかりにくいですね。

じゃ、「、」を打ってみましょう。

## すももも、ももも、もものうち

どうですか。すこしわかりましたか。え? まだ、はっきりわかりませんか。

じゃ、ね、次のヒント。「すもも」と「もも」は果物の名前です。それから、助詞の「も」もあります。そして、最後の「うち」は、ここでは「同じグループ」という意味です。どうですか。うん、そうです、そのとおりピンポン(正解)です。漢字を使って書くと、

すもも もも もも  
**李も、桃も、桃のうち**

つまり、「李も桃も、同じ桃という果物のグループだよ」、という意味ですね。本当は、李は桃のグループじゃないんですけど、見ても聞いても、楽しい日本語ですね。日本語って、おもしろいですね。はい、これで、おしまい。

## JAPANESE 1, ENGLISH 0

Aso-sensei writes in an breezy, conversational way—perfect for introducing a classic in はやくちことば 早口言葉, or Japanese tongue twisters (literally, *fast-mouth words*).

Some are hard to pronounce correctly (try saying とうきょうとつきよきよかきよく 東京特許許可局 [the real name of the Tokyo Patent Office!]) 10 times really fast). Others, including this one, challenge you to uncover the meaning. With eight *mo*'s in a row, no English tongue twister can beat this Japanese for “the most repeats”.

Hello. This is the first in a series on fun and interesting Japanese. OK, do you understand this Japanese?

Huh? There are eight  $\pm$ s. It's hard to figure out what it means. Well, then, let's add some punctuation:

Better? Is it starting to make sense? What?—you still don't get it? Alright, another hint. すもも and もも are the names of fruit. Plus, the particle も is in there. The うち at the end means “the same group” in this context. How about it now?

Yep, you got it, that's the right answer. Write it in Kanji and it looks like this:

In other words, it means “*sumomo* and *momo* are in the same group of *momo* fruit.” Actually, the truth is that *sumomo* isn’t in the *momo* fruit group, but no matter how you look or listen to it, Japanese really is a fun language. Funny and fun—that’s Japanese.

OK, that's all for now.

すもも 李	A plum
もも 桃	A peach
あれ？	Huh? What? An informal expression used when you see or hear something unexpected.
え？	Similar to あれ
じょし 助詞	A Japanese particle, such as も. (Don't we all just despise particles?)
ピンポン	"Right answer", as in "you hit the nail on the head." (One of Aso-sensei's favorite expressions, if you take his lessons, you'll hear it a lot!)
せいかい 正解	The more formal way to say "right answer".
おしまい	The end



# “I WAS CRIED BY THE BABY.”

## PASSIVE VOICE IN JAPANESE



Steve Cooper

Nihongo-Pro Support

Japanese and English both have a grammar construction called *passive voice*. Passive voice is a way of turning a sentence inside out, reversing the subject and object. Consider:

- ◆ “We held a meeting” can be turned into the passive “A meeting was held (by us).”
- ◆ “She told him to call tomorrow” goes passive as “He was told (by her) to call tomorrow.”

Japanese has this kind of passive voice, too, and it is used just like it is in English. So far, so good. But Japanese doesn’t stop there. Japanese has a passive form that includes a nuance of injury, damage, or inconvenience. Plus, some sentences that simply cannot be made passive in English can be expressed naturally in Japanese.

“I was cried by the baby” is one such example. The Japanese for this is 「(私)は赤ちゃんに泣かれた。」 It means, literally, “the baby cried and (I) wish he/she hadn’t.” In Japanese, it is easy to convert the sentence 「赤ちゃんが泣いた。」 (“The baby cried”) to the passive voice 「赤ちゃんに泣かれた。」 In fact, it is a natural way in Japanese to say, “Darn it, the baby cried.” But in English this sentence just can’t be made passive.

Occasionally, English and Japanese match. 「(私)は財布を泥棒に盗まれた。」 means “I got my wallet stolen by a thief.” English is close in nuance to the Japanese, conveying the inconvenience suffered as a result of having one’s wallet stolen. Or, if you get caught in the rain without an

umbrella, you might say, 「(私)は雨に降られた。」 (“I got rained on”).

But “I got cried by the baby”? No, it just won’t work. English is limited in the types of sentences that can be made passive, so we run into a brick wall trying to understand the Japanese in terms of equivalent English.

As you study Japanese, it might help to think about this kind of passive voice differently, starting with the English name.

The Japanese word for passive voice is 受身形, which literally means “receiving-body form”. The key here is *receiving*. Rather than thinking in terms of passive voice, think of *receiving action*: The subject of the passive-voice sentence *receives an action*, possibly with inconvenience or injury.

- ◆ 「(私)は赤ちゃんに泣かれた。」 means “I received (the action of) the baby crying (and didn’t like it).”
- ◆ 「(私)は雨に降られた。」 means “I received (the action of) the rain falling (and was inconvenienced).”
- ◆ 「(私)は財布を泥棒に盗まれた。」 means “I received (the action of) the thief stealing my wallet.”

So, the next time your online Japanese lesson includes 受身形, try thinking in terms of “receiving voice” and see if the Japanese doesn’t make a little more sense.

Happy studies!

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Please share your thoughts on *Ready, Set, NihonGO!* What kinds of articles would you like to see? Is the Japanese text too hard? Too easy?

And, we would really love to publish your articles! Short, long, or anything in between—we need your help to spread the word about learning Japanese.

- ◆ Why do you study Japanese? How do you keep up your motivation?
- ◆ What do you like best about learning online?
- ◆ What surprised you most the first time you visited Japan?
- ◆ If you could change one thing about the Japanese language, what would you choose?
- ◆ Do you think Japanese is vague? Is it difficult?
- ◆ If you’ve taken the JLPT, which section was easiest? Which was hardest? Any advice for other JLPT students?

Please write us at [support@nihongo-pro.com](mailto:support@nihongo-pro.com).  
よろしく おねがい します！