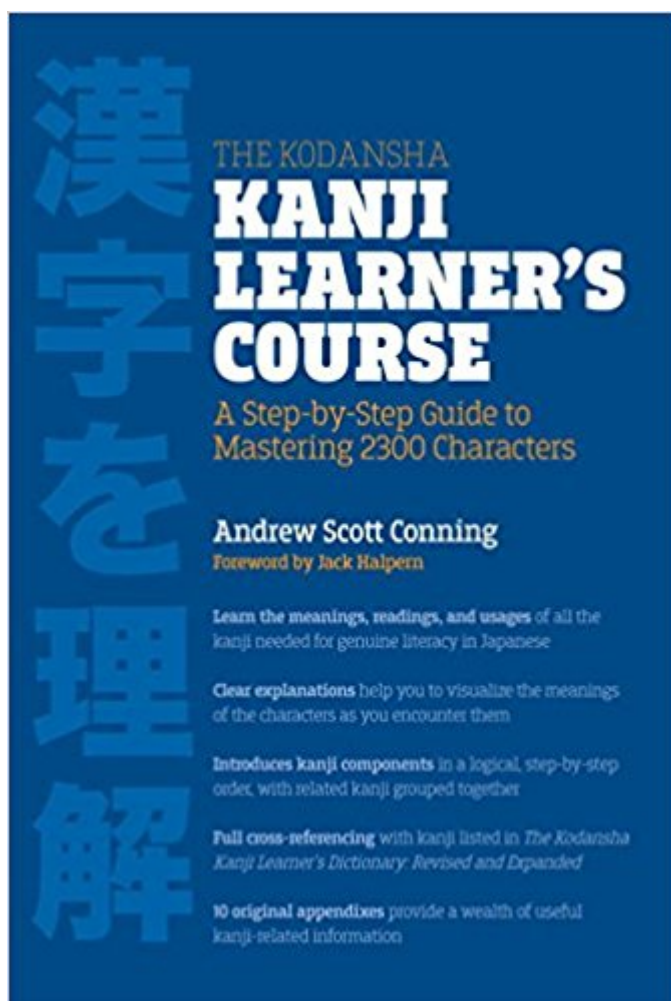


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# The Kodansha Kanji Learner's Course: A Step-by-Step Guide To Mastering 2300 Characters



## Synopsis

Kodansha's widely acclaimed Kanji Learner's Course (KLC) is a complete guide to mastering all the kanji needed for genuine literacy in Japanese. It anchors a comprehensive kanji learning system, supported by the KLC Graded Reading Sets, the KLC Green Book, the KLC Wall Chart, and [keystojapanese.com](http://keystojapanese.com) (a user-support website for forming study groups, exchanging tips, and tracking one's learning progress with points and level ranks). The KLC is also cross-referenced for convenient use with Kodansha's companion volume, the Kanji Learner's Dictionary.

**THE FOUR ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR KANJI LEARNING** The 2,300 entries of this main textbook adeptly integrate the four essential elements for mastering kanji meanings: (1) Accurate keywords. Each character's core meaning is encapsulated in a concise, easily memorized keyword. The keywords for all 2,300 entries have been carefully chosen to be semantically accurate and to integrate the character's various senses into a core idea. (2) Vocabulary to illustrate the keywords. The concept captured in each keyword is illustrated with up to five sample vocabulary items, carefully selected to clarify how the kanji is used in building typical words and phrases. (3) Mnemonic aids for remembering the keywords. Each entry contains an original mnemonic aid that is carefully designed to help learners remember the character's core meanings. Mnemonic aids pay special attention to helping learners immediately recognize each kanji and distinguish it from lookalikes. (4) Rational learning sequence. The course's widely praised sequence represents a breakthrough in kanji pedagogy. It aids learning by introducing kanji components step by step, grouping related kanji together, and building vocabulary progressively - all while teaching kanji in rough order of importance.

**A SELF-GUIDING, SELF-REINFORCING COURSE** The course arranges all the information needed to master 2,300 characters into a streamlined, self-guiding, and mnemonically self-reinforcing curriculum. Sample compounds include only such kanji as have previously been learned, ensuring that learners are able to understand and use each compound, and providing a built-in review of all the kanji already studied.

**THE ULTIMATE KANJI LEARNING RESOURCE** \*

Provides a sophisticated, pedagogically sound method for remembering the core meaning of each kanji, conveniently summarized in concise keywords to facilitate memorization. \* Introduces the meaning and usage of each grapheme the first time it appears, helping learners seamlessly acquire new kanji based on a sound understanding of their component parts. \* Innovatively uses concrete imagery to simplify complex characters and make their meanings immediately recognizable in their graphical forms. \* Teaches characters in a pedagogically effective sequence, presenting graphically related characters together to help learners give significance to their contrastive features as they learn them, and thereby avoid having to re-learn them later. \* Helps learners actively apply each

character's principal meanings and readings using key vocabulary words, carefully chosen to illustrate the character's uses and to help learners employ it in everyday reading and written communication. \* Helps learners differentiate among graphically similar kanji by showing how to remember the characters in a mutually contrastive manner that connects their graphical distinctions to their underlying semantic differences. Along the way, the course introduces nearly 800 pairs of easily confused kanji. \* Helps students learn to write kanji accurately, by indicating each kanji's stroke order and placing careful emphasis on distinctions among graphically similar characters. \* Includes all the kanji needed for genuine literacy in Japanese, including all 196 characters added to the official Joyo Kanji List in 2010.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The most effective kanji learning tool available today." — Jack Halpern, CEO of the CJK Dictionary Institute

I created the kanji course because it was the kind of tool I wished had existed when I was studying kanji myself. I sincerely hope that it will help you on your way toward a more direct and profound understanding of Japan and its people. Supporting tools: To support your studies with the kanji course, I've created a writing practice workbook called the KLC Green Book (amzn.to/2dvKpFF), the KLC Wall Chart (bit.ly/2gEV8kU), and the KLC Graded Reading Sets series (bit.ly/2hqs6Fp). I hope you'll make yourself the proud owner of the whole set!

User-support website: I warmly invite you to use [keystojapanese.com](http://keystojapanese.com) to track your progress with the KLC, form study groups, ask questions, etc. For kana learners: If you're working on mastering kana, do take full advantage of my unpresuming The Ultimate Kana Wall Chart: A Visual Guide to Japanese Phonetic Writing ([bit.ly/2hBYeq8](http://bit.ly/2hBYeq8)). Connect with me at [asc349 \[at\] mail \[dot\] harvard \[dot\] edu](mailto:asc349@mail.harvard.edu). Sincere thanks for your interest, and best wishes for your studies.

I rarely post a review, but when I do, it's because the book really deserves it. This book is a fantastic resource for anyone who is serious in learning Japanese, but why you ask? What it has to make it different from other similar books? PROS You actually learn vocabulary in this book. The best way to learn on/kun readings is definitely learning the vocabulary with the kanji, what is more, this book always give you about three to five words/sentences for each kanji you learn, making this a super valuable tool for learning. The title of the book may be humble in its way, because it doesn't teach you 2300 characters. It teaches you much more than that, including the 2300 characters plus around a 6000 to 9000 words vocabulary to learn (rough guess, I didn't count). The vocabulary is taken from "The Kodansha Kanji Learner's Dictionary: Revised and Expanded", another great asset in combination with this book. To learn Kanji, this book have some things that makes it much more easier to learn than most books out there (believe me, I have several books for Kanji, and this is my favorite one so far), the order of characters is very well implemented and yes, the order you learn is really important, because you have to fortify the memories from what you learn. The best way to fortify your memories is through mnemonic, short stories or phrases that makes you learn and retain the Kanji. This book tries to follow a solid, concrete aspect, so you can distinguish between similar Kanji and meanings, although, of course with so much mnemonics in the book, a few of them may be not so helpful for you, in that case, you can think of your own story or mnemonic to complement the Kanji you are having difficulty. Aside from Kanji meanings/readings and Vocabulary, you can also learn the Kanji stroke order - very useful to learn to write them; and the traditional Kanji (probably used in specific literature books) which can be useful for advanced learners of the language. CONS The only thing I would change in this book, which would be great in my opinion, is to add the type of each word presented to you. For example, noun, verb, adjective, etc. It has sometimes distinction for vert transitive and intransitive. Problem is, this is a flaw from the Kodansha Kanji Dictionary itself, not this book itself. What happens is this book takes the vocabulary from there, therefore it doesn't include the type of the word nor any indication of what type of word is that vocabulary coming from. A simple example would be like this: 二倍 (nibai) double, 二重 (nigao) double, 二重 (nigao) double. One is a noun, and the other is a suru verb (to

double), but as Kodansha Kanji Dictionary doesn't have indications for type of words, the new learner may have a difficulty time figuring out what the word really means. This was just a simple example that can cause confusion, but most of times you will never know if the word is a verb or noun if you are a beginner, so it's a good idea to use other dictionaries to pair up with this book.

**COMPARING WITH - Remembering the Kanji - by James W. Heisigl** studied and completed the book *Remembering the Kanji 1* - by James W. Heisig, and I have to admit, while Heisig does a good job on teaching the meaning of the Kanji, I personally dislike how the RTK book is lazy with stories and mnemonics. In the introduction, it says you need to create your own stories and mnemonics using the keywords of each Kanji, but in reality, the learner just wants to learn, and most of the time he/she won't have the time to create everything for each Kanji. This book on the other side is much more complete in that sense, because it gives you more stories, more phrases, and more content to build your memory with, without the need to waste time being super creative with tons of characters. You clearly see that this book loves more the Kanji than RTK or other similar books. Other problem is that RTK does not teach you the vocabulary in the same scope as you are learning each Kanji. This book here shines in this aspect, because you are learning the Kanji, and you are also learning common words that uses that Kanji, what is more, in a cumulative way. You won't see strange Kanji in the vocabulary until you learned them.

**SUMMARY** This book is definitely the best book released so far to learn and memorize the Kanji and useful Vocabulary as extra. The only downside is the source - "The Kodansha Kanji Learner's Dictionary: Revised and Expanded" which doesn't teach you the type of the words - if it's a noun, verb or adjective.

It is a fact that any serious student of Japanese must have a working knowledge of Kanji, the building blocks for the majority of Japanese vocabulary. One cannot go far in acquiring a substantial vocabulary without Kanji, and it is essential for technical vocabulary. This book is the single best resource for learning Kanji. That Jack Halpern, author of the *Kodansha Kanji Learner's Dictionary* recommended it was sufficient for me to purchase it. The brief mnemonics are creative, memorable and hew closely to traditional Japanese radical or component meanings. The truly unique and outstanding feature of this book is that Kanji are presented in order of frequency of appearance in Japan, each with a short vocabulary accompanying each Kanji example, with all vocabulary items consisting only of previously presented/learned Kanji! As a Kanji learning tool, this book has no peer. You start from the first Kanji, learning the meaning and pronunciation, and with the next Kanji, you learn vocabulary that includes the previous Kanji with pronunciation. This approach is unique to this book and facilitates the most rapid acquisition of Kanji facility. It is a perfect mate to Jack

Halpern's book if additional vocabulary examples are desired, but is truly a stand-alone resource. Get this with a good Japanese Text (like Genki), A Japanese Verb handbook (I like Kodansha's), the three Japanese Grammar Dictionaries by Makino and the Kodansha particle Dictionary and you are set for self-study.

Learning kanji is intimidating. There are over 2000 basic characters, and most of them have different readings depending on the words they're used in. I started studying kanji seriously about six months ago, and I found myself quickly overwhelmed by their sheer complexity. The really simple kanji were fine; but the more I learned, the more trouble I had coming up with mnemonics to memorize and distinguish all the characters. For example, how am I supposed to distinguish between 美 and 工? Sure, I can see where they differ by a couple strokes, but how can I easily remember that one means "beautiful" and the other means "work"? That's where this book came in for me. For each of the 2300 kanji (all of the Joyo kanji plus some extras), it provides a useful mnemonic to help you remember the multiple meanings of the character. As part of this, it gives mnemonics to remember individual radicals, which are really useful even if they aren't tied to the actual etymology of the radicals. I use this book mainly as a reference. Every day, I go through a set of new vocabulary words on a separate website; and if an unfamiliar kanji character pops up, I'll look it up in this book. I think the book would be fine on its own as well - each character comes with a list of words, and the words only contain kanji that have already been introduced. I haven't read any other similar books (like Heisig), so I can't make any comparisons there, but you really can't go wrong buying this book.

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