

JAPANESE COUNTING

Japanese has five vowels, a, i, u, e, and o, which occur both short and long (with long o and long e often written as if they were ou and ei respectively). When a word is pronounced by itself, a final short vowel is usually cut off abruptly in the throat.

When counting clip the vowels so the word comes out short and clipped. Think of how the Japanese speak (if you have ever watched one of those movies!)

Sometimes the i and the u aren't pronounced. This usually occurs between voiceless consonants (p, t, k, ch, f, h, s, sh). So when counting the numbers ichi, roku, shichi, hachi we do not sound the final vowel.

A basic pronunciation guide for starting to count in Japanese.

Number Japanese Pronunciation

1	ichi	ee-ch
2	ni	n-ee
3	san	s-a-n
4	shi	sh-ee
5	go	go
6	roku	r-oh-k (o as in go)
7	shichi	sh-ee-ch
8	hachi	h-a -ch
9	ku	k-oo (oo as in boot)
10	ju	j-oo (oo as in boot)

To form the numbers from 11 to 19, start with *ju*, 10, and then add the number you need from the column on the left in the preceding chart. Don't forget to clip your vowels and pronounce the same as above.

11 juichi, 12 juni, 13 jusan, 14 jushi, 15 jugo, 16 juroku, 17 jushichi, 18 juhachi, 19 juku,
 20 niyu
 30 sanju
 40 yonju
 50 goju
 100 hyaku
 1000 sen
 10,000 is ichiman

*Information for this guide was taken from Master the Basics Japanese by Nobuo Akiyama and Carol Akiyama. Barron's 1995