

# How to Use This Series

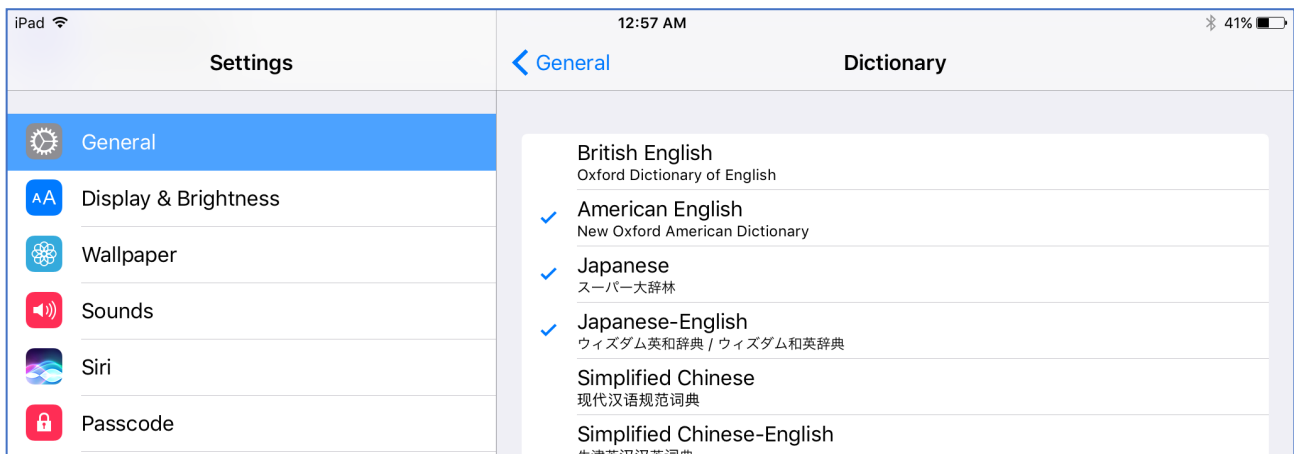
## Choose your platform

This series is available directly from the author (PDF), on Amazon Kindle (mobi), and on the iBooks Store (epub). Whichever platform you use, I recommend that you use “Scrolling View” or “Continuous Scrolling” (as opposed to “Page View”), so that you will be able to read the plain Japanese text at the bottom of the window while leaving the phonetic guides and English text out of view.

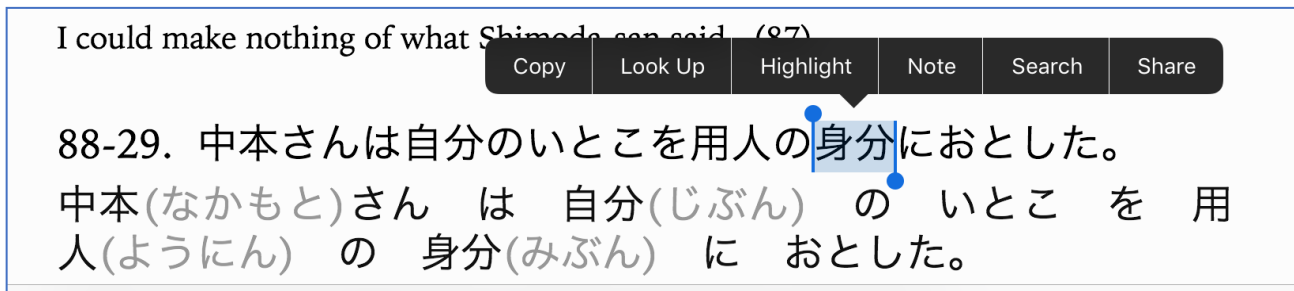
## Activate your Japanese-English dictionary

### For iOS

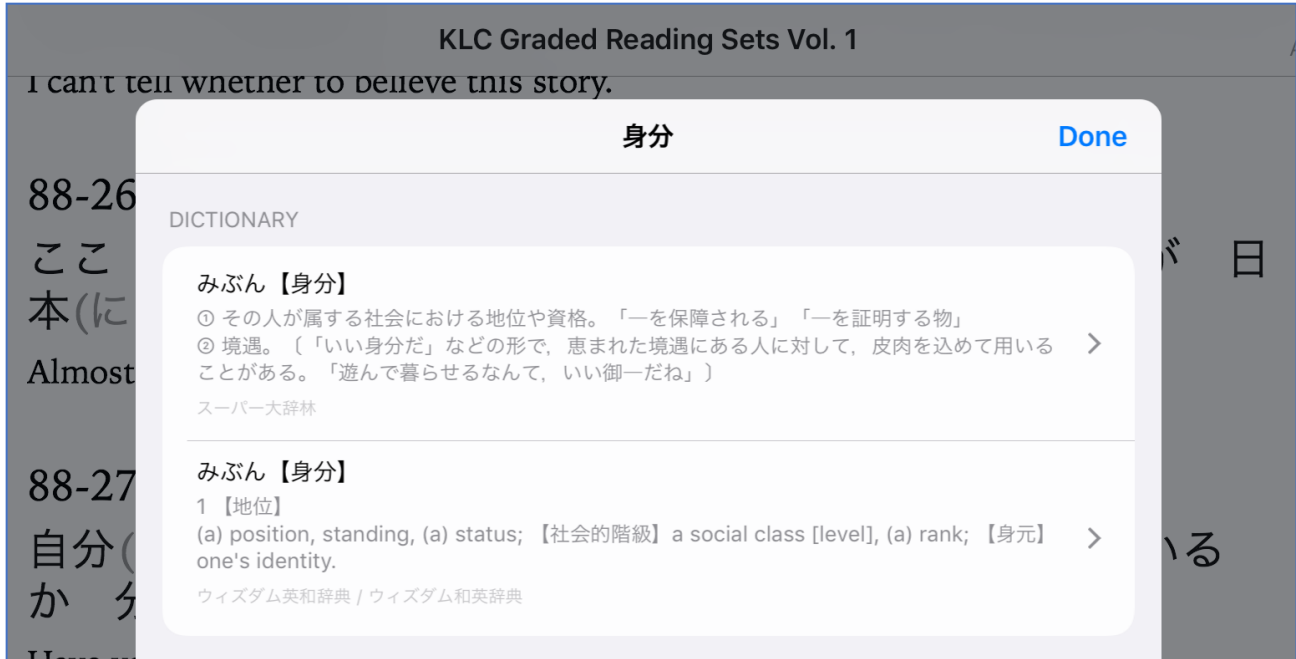
In the Settings app, select “General” followed by “Dictionary”, then activate the built-in Japanese-English dictionary (see the screenshot below). As your proficiency grows, the Japanese-only dictionary may also come in handy.



To use the Dictionary, highlight a segment of text, and tap “Look up” (if your device instead displays “Define”, tap that):



Then tap on the J-E definition appearing in the popup:



If no J-E definition appears in the popup, it is because the J-E Dictionary has no entry for the segment of text you highlighted. In that case, just copy the text into an online dictionary like Weblio, or an online translator like Google Translate or Bing Translate.

### For Mac OS

Open the Dictionary app on your Mac, open Preferences (Command + comma), and activate the J-E dictionary (and the Japanese-only dictionary, if you wish). Looking up Japanese words is even easier on the Mac – just double-click and Mac will display the definition. Conveniently, it will usually select the surrounding word correctly by itself, saving you the trouble of highlighting. If double-clicking does not automatically select the segment you want to look up, then you will need to highlight the segment with your pointer, then select “More” followed by “Look up”.

While MacOS version of iBooks does offer easier dictionary lookups than the iOS version, this advantage is surely outweighed by the usefulness of Scrolling View on iBooks for iOS – if only because the presence of the English equivalents will mostly obviate dictionary lookups.

### For Kindle

To activate the Kindle’s free Japanese-English dictionary, simply open this book with your Kindle device or Kindle app, tap on any Japanese word to display the dictionary download popup, select the Japanese-English dictionary, and download. Now you will be able to look up any word by tapping on it and navigating to the Japanese-English dictionary.

When connected to the Internet, you can also have Bing Translator translate any segment of text using the “Translate” window that pops up alongside the “Dictionary” window. Although it still has some limitations, Bing Translator is superior to the Japanese-English dictionary in several respects. For example, it allows you to look up text segments that are longer than words, and it often returns results for highly specific words not found in the J-E dictionary, such as 交戦権 (“the right to belligerency”).

There are a couple of known issues with Kindle's pop-up dictionary and translator on some or all devices/apps. First, there is no (official) way to set the default dictionary. Your Kindle device or app may default to the English dictionary even when you are looking up a Japanese word, forcing you to manually

select the Japanese-English dictionary each time. Also, if you are looking up a kanji-only word, Bing Translator may default to Chinese (though for kanji-only words it often makes little difference whether you look up the word in Chinese or Japanese).

Second, there is no official way to set the sequence of the three pop-up windows (Dictionary, Translate, and Wikipedia) so that the one you normally use appears first. For your purposes in reading this series, the Wikipedia window is not likely to be useful.

If enough of us write to [kindle-feedback@amazon.com](mailto:kindle-feedback@amazon.com) requesting that they add settings to Kindle allowing us to turn off Wikipedia and set the default dictionary and translation language, I hope that these issues might be resolved.

### Enable automatic updates (free)

To make sure you receive the updates to any volumes you have purchased, please see the [instructions](#) on the website for enabling automatic updates in your reader app. All updates are free.

### Incorporate this series into your study routine

Reading is likely to be the most enjoyable and important part of your kanji study regimen, especially once you have learned a few hundred kanji and begin seeing more substantial material. Read the exercises for each kanji as an integral part of studying that kanji, rather than waiting until you have studied a specified number of characters. This reading practice step can be added as “Step 9.5” of the “Step-by-Step Method” described on pages 24-25 of the Kanji Learner’s Course book (published before these reading sets came into existence).

First try to pronounce and comprehend each exercise without referring to its phonetic and English glosses. Use a bookmark or your hand to cover the glosses.

Once you activate your Japanese-English dictionary, you can easily look up any unfamiliar words by tapping on them and navigating to the dictionary. Yet you should not concern yourself with mastering every word of every exercise. Instead, **focus on familiarizing yourself with the meaning and function of the target kanji within each exercise**. If the KLC lists more than one meaning for the kanji, try to figure out which meaning the kanji conveys in that example. Also try to figure out the meaning the *other* kanji contribute to the compounds the target kanji appears in. Every appearance of an earlier studied kanji is an opportunity to deepen your knowledge of how it is used to convey meaning.

If you have forgotten any of the other kanji in the exercise, you can quickly find its KLC entry numbers using the [cross-reference number file](#) posted at [keystojapanese.com/klc-grs-cross-refs](http://keystojapanese.com/klc-grs-cross-refs).

To reinforce your learning, **re-read the exercises every ten sets or so**. Either use the ebook again, or use the [paperback version](#) to review offline without the distractions of a computer screen. While the paperback version lacks the convenience of one-tap dictionary lookups, it offers its own distinct advantages, and you’ll have less use for dictionary lookups the second time around.

### Make your own book

I have deliberately included a large volume of material so that those who wish to read a great deal may do so. Even so, **my intention is not to suggest that you read all the exercises provided, but to give you the opportunity to determine what amount is optimal for you**. Read whatever amount gives you solid practice and positive reinforcement without reaching the point of tedium, which will only sap your enthusiasm for further study.

To make it easy for you to customize your “workout” for each kanji, I have arranged the exercises by length.

## Don't worry about understanding every word, and be aware of loose translations

It is important to emphasize that you should not trouble yourself with understanding every bit of every exercise. Unlike a typical textbook, **this series does not present carefully homogenized content** to prevent inconvenient questions from arising. Instead it uses authentic sentences and translations drawn from “the wild”, including over 100 different sources written in different eras by different writers with many different ways of using the language. With such a diverse variety of real-world sources and over 30,000 exercises, the range of questions that will arise is necessarily broader than can possibly be answered in the series directly, despite the support provided by the English translations, the grammar glosses, the bilingual dictionary, and the progressive introduction of kanji.

Moreover, even though most exercises in this series present a transparent correspondence between English and Japanese, many translations are relatively liberal or “loose” – especially those drawn from literary sources. If you find a Japanese word that does not seem to correspond exactly to an English word, keep in mind that this may simply be a case of “translator’s license” – not a case of your having incorrectly learned the word. Indeed, **many of the translations are written to convey an overall idea or impression, and may not provide a perfect one-to-one componential correspondence with the original.** In some cases, one or more parts of the Japanese version may not correspond to any part of the English version. In addition, some expressions may be translated in a variety of different ways, given the wide range of sources, translators, and eras from which the material has been drawn.

In short, when you can't figure out the Japanese text word-for-word (even after looking up the words), just **focus on understanding the gist of each item, and how the target kanji is used within it.** Also, **be sure to...**

## Use complementary resources

Needless to say, even with these Graded Reading Sets, the Kanji Learner's Course series is not adequate by itself for developing your reading comprehension. Be sure to use it in conjunction with similarly structured tools that – unlike this series – are designed to progressively introduce grammatical expressions, verb conjugations, politeness registers, and other aspects of the language. The [Recommended Resources](#) webpage lists a selection of tools that may be particularly helpful.

## Skim key sources for background

The vast majority of exercises in this series are easy to understand despite having no context. A great deal of effort has gone into selecting items that met this criterion – or to edit them until they did.

Moreover, for literary sources, priority has been given to stories that many readers are likely to be familiar with from books or movies, such as *The Wizard of Oz*, *Around the World in 80 Days*, *Treasure Island*, the *Book of Genesis* and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. For example, the following item is likely to evoke a vivid image for anyone who has seen *The Wizard of Oz*:

家を支える大きな横材の角の下から、銀色の爪先が尖った靴を履いた足が二本、突き出ていました。

*Just under the corner of the great beam the house rested on, two feet were sticking out, shod in silver shoes with pointed toes.*

...even if they changed the color of the slippers for the movie.

Still, while most exercises should be easy to understand without context, there are a few sources that contain unfamiliar references, or are otherwise highly context-dependent. In particular, it is worthwhile for you to skim the following two free sources, particularly if you have any interest in the subject matter:

[Progress Against the Law: Fan Distribution, Copyright, and the Explosive Growth of Japanese Animation](#), by Sean Leonard (note in particular that “C/FO” stands for “the Collapsing Fan Organization”).

*Homesteading the Noosphere*, by Eric S. Raymond.

The text will refer you to these sources at the point where they begin to be used heavily.

### **Understood subjects**

One way in which Japanese differs sharply from English is that speakers often omit the subject when it can be understood from context:

全力で力んだ。

*I tried with all my might.*

Many translations in this series reflect this distinction, so you should not always expect to find a subject in the Japanese sentence to correspond to the one in the English equivalent.

### **Unfamiliar vocabulary and readings**

In each set, pay special attention to any unfamiliar words using the target kanji. Tap on them to look them up in the bilingual dictionary. Try to relate the meaning of these words to the core meaning(s) given in the KLC. For kanji with a wide range of meanings, look up their entries in a good J-E kanji dictionary like the *Kodansha Kanji Dictionary* or *Kodansha Kanji Learner's Dictionary*.

You will also encounter kanji readings (i.e. pronunciations) that are not listed in the KLC, which mostly restricts itself to the official readings published in the official Joyo Kanji List. The KLC avoids listing unofficial readings – other than some of the more commonly used ones – so as to avoid guiding you down unorthodox paths with your own usage. But authentic Japanese texts are rife with unofficial usages, and this series makes no attempt to shelter you from them. When you encounter one, just tap on it to look it up with your J-E dictionary or online translator.

### **Reviewing previously learned kanji**

If you wish to review the KLC entry of any kanji appearing in the exercises, you can quickly find its entry number using the [cross-reference number file](#) posted at [keystojapanese.com](http://keystojapanese.com).