

Essential Terminology Guide

Knowing Japanese is not a requirement, but as a Sensei or Sempai, it gives you additional credibility if you can use both Japanese and English, and as a student it means that you can train anywhere in the world and still understand the language. It also makes you feel good! Here are all the Japanese words that you'll need to describe kata and common techniques.

These are not the authentic Japanese pronunciations necessarily; rather they are the accepted GKR way of saying the words. I will be updating my complete terminology guide with verified Japanese pronunciations and literal meanings in the future.

In case you're interested, Romaji is the English alphabet way of spelling Japanese words. The word is a conjunction of two words "Roman" because the English alphabet actually derives from Roman letters; and "kanji" which is the term given to the Japanese alphabet.

Go Kan Ryu Karate Do

English	Romaji spelling	GKR pronunciation
Hard	Go	Go
Complete	Kan	Can
School	Ryu	Roo
Empty	Kara	Carah
Hand	Te	Teh
Way of	Do	Doh

Counting

English	Romaji spelling	GKR pronunciation
1	Ichi	Itch
2	Ni	Nee
3	San	Sun
4	Shi	Shee
5	Go	Go
6	Roku	Rook
7	Shichi	Shitch
8	Hachi	Hatch
9	Ku	Koo
10	Ju	Joo

Kata

English	Romaji spelling	GKR pronunciation
1 st kata	Taigyoku shodan	Tay ig yo koo show dahn
2 nd kata	Taigyoku nidan	Tay ig yo koo nee dahn
3 rd kata	Saifa	Sigh fuh
4 th kata	Bassai Dai	Bass eye dye
5 th kata	Seiunchin	Say un chin
6 th kata	Enpi/Empi	Em pee
7 th kata	Sanseru	Sahn seroo
8 th kata	Sepai	Seh pie
9 th kata	Hangetsu	Hahn get soo

Stances

English	Romaji spelling	GKR pronunciation
Parallel/ready stance	Heiko dachi	High coe datch
Long forward stance	Zenkutsu dachi	Zen koot soo datch
Short forward stance	Han zenkutsu dachi	Hahn zen koot soo datch
Back leaning stance	Kokutsu dachi	Coe koot soo datch
Horse riding stance/straddle stance	Kiba dachi	Keeba datch
Sumo stance	Shiko dachi	She coe datch
Cat stance	Neko ashi dachi	Neck oh ash ee datch
Pigeon-toed/hourglass stance	Sanchin dachi	Sun chin datch
Reverse cat stance	Gyaku nekoashi dachi	Gee ackoo neck oh ash ee datch

Strikes

English	Romaji spelling	GKR pronunciation
Stomach-level punch	Chudan tsuki	Chew dahn zooh key
Head-level punch	Jodan tsuki	Joe dahn zooh key
Front backfist	Uraken	You ra ken
Side backfist	Yoko uraken	Yoe koe you ra ken
Ridge-hand strike	Haito uchi	High toe oo chee
Short punch	Shita tsuki	Sheet ah zooh key
Rising elbow strike	Hiji ate	Hid jee ahh tee
Round elbow strike	Mawashi empi uchi	Mar wash ee em pee
Outside knife-hand strike	Soto shuto uchi	Sot oh shoe toe oo chee
Inside knife-hand strike	Uchi shuto uchi	Oo chee shoe toe oo chee
Straight punch (more accurately Choku tsuki)	Seiken	Say ken
Punch	Tsuki	Zoo key
Strike	Uchi	Oo chee
Reverse punch	Gyaku tsuki	Gee ack oo zoo key
Stepping or lunging punch	Oi tsuki	Oy zoo key

Blocks

English	Romaji spelling	GKR pronunciation
Rising head-level block	Jodan age uke	Joe dahn agay oo key
Inside block	Uchi uke	Oo chee oo key
Outside block	Soto uke	Sot oh oo key
Downward block	Gedan barai	Ged ahn bar eye
Sweeping block	Gedan uke	Ged ahn oo key
Double block	Chuge uke	Chew gee oo key
Hooking block	Kake uke	Car kay oo key
Round block	Mawashi uke	Mar wash ee oo key
Block	Uke	Oo key

Kicks

English	Romaji spelling	GKR pronunciation
Front kick	Mae geri	My geree
Round kick	Mawashi gero	Mar wash ee geree
Side kick	Yoko geri	Yo koe geree
Back kick	Ushiro geri	Oo shee row geree
Kick	Geri	Geree

General

English	Romaji spelling	GKR pronunciation
Yes	Hai	High
Stop	Yame	Yam ay
Start	Hajime	Ha jimmay
Prepare to bow	Seisa	Say zar
Bow	Rei	Ray
Each other/everybody	Otagai	Auto gar nee (bad) Octa gar nee (terrible!)
Close your eyes	Mokuso	Mock so
Open your eyes	Mokuso yame	Mock so yam ay
Teacher	Sensei	Sen say
Assistant	Sempai	Sem pie
Fighting	Kumite	Coo mit ay
Free fighting	Jyu kumite	Jee oo koo mit ay
Points fighting	Ippon kumite	Ip on koo mit ay
Fighting posture	Kame	Kam ay
Focus	Kime	Key may
Shout of focus and power	Kiai	Key eye
Training hall	Dojo	Doe joe
Awareness	Zanshin	Zan shin
Turn	Mawate	Mar what ay
Founder	Kancho	Can choe
Chief instructor	Shihan	She harn
Application	Bunkai	Bun kie
Grade below black belt	Kyu	Cue
Black belt grade	Dan	Dahn
Fore-knuckle punch	Seiken	Say ken
Groin level	Gedan	Ge dahn
Stomach level	Chudan	Chew dahn
Head level	Jodan	Joe dahn
Karate suit	Gi	Gee
Empty hand (fighting)	Karate	Car are teh
Practitioner of karate	Karateka	Car are teh kah
Front	Mae	My
Side	Yoko	Yoh koh
Back	Ushiro	Uh shee row
Right	Migi	Mi gee
Left	Hidari	He daree
1 st level black belt	Shodan	Show dahn
2 nd level black belt	Nidan	Nee dahn
3 rd level black belt	Sandan	Sahn dahn