



UNITED STATES BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES
Foreign Geographic Names:
Standardization Policy:
Word Segmentation of Japanese

The Board's Foreign Geographic Names Standardization Principles apply to foreign geographic names in general and form the basis for the Board's foreign names decisions. Additional normative regulations must be developed to address specific geographic and linguistic phenomena peculiar to countries or regional areas. Special classes of place-names, such as high seas features, may also require special analysis and treatment. For this reason the Board develops supplementary standardization policy and procedure on a country basis, and to address specific standardization issues.

Policy: Word Segmentation for Japanese

SCOPE

The following policy applies to all geographic names in Japan. The policy describes how to segment transliterated Japanese geographic names.

POLICY

Background:

Romanizing Japanese writing requires analysts to consider issues beyond choice of letters because of the characteristics of the writing system. Japanese writing does not include spaces or hyphens between words, nor does it include capitalization. In order to achieve consistent romanization, this document provides detailed guidance on how to apply such features to romanized Japanese.

Summary of Rules:

The following rules apply to all Japanese geographic names, including those of foreign origin. They follow the conventions used by Japan's official mapping agency—the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan (GSI)—with some modifications to add clarity.

1. When a geographic name consists of a specific term followed by a generic term, the generic term is separated by a space and its initial letter is capitalized.

| Kanji | Hiragana | Romanized |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 埼玉県 | さいたまけん | Saitama Ken (ADM1) ¹ |

¹ Feature designation codes from the Geographic Names Database are shown parenthetically to indicate feature type.

| | | |
|------|----------|---------------------------------------|
| 豊中市 | とよなかし | Toyonaka Shi (ADM2) |
| 淀川 | よどがわ | Yodo Gawa (STM) |
| 富士山 | ふじさん | Fuji San (MT) |
| 新横浜駅 | しんよこはまえき | Shin'yokohama Eki (RSTN) ² |

2. A noun acting as a modifier in a specific term is separated by a space (1) if it consists of two or more *kanji* characters or (2) if it is a false generic. Otherwise, it is not separated.

| Kanji | Hiragana | Romanized |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 静岡少年鑑別所 | しずおかしょうねんかんべ つしよ | Shizuoka Shōnen Kanbetsusho (PRNJ) |
| 和歌山城西之丸庭園 | わかやまじょうにしのまる ていえん | Wakayama Jō Nishinomaru Teien (GDN) |
| 東北大学水産 実験所 | とうほくだいがくすいさん じっけんしよ | Tōhoku Daigaku Suisan Jikkensho (ITTR) |
| 金華山 | きんかさん | Kinkasan (ISL) (generic term for island was omitted from the name) |
| 馬毛島岬 港 | まげしまみさきこう | Mageshimamisaki Kō (HBR) |
| 黒杭川ダム | くろくいがわだむ | Kurokuigawa Dam (DAM) |
| 秋田太平山カントリーク ラブゴルフ場 | あきたたいへいざんかんと りーくらぶごるふじょう | Akita Taiheizan Country Club Golf Jō (RECG) |
| 大ヶ峠トンネル | おおがたおとんねる | Ōgatao Tunnel (TNL) |
| 十和田市駅 | とわだしえき | Towadashi Eki (RSTN) |

² See Japanese country policy appendix “Japanese Romanization System for Japanese Kana” for use of apostrophe.

3. A modifier within a generic term is not separated. Examples of such words include 大 (romanized *dai* or *ō*) (big), 小 (*shō* or *ko*) (small), 中 (*chū* or *naka*) (middle), 上 (*jō*, *ue*, or *kami*) (upper), 下 (*ge*, *ka*, *shita*, or *shimo*) (lower), and 新 (*shin*) (new).

| Kanji | Hiragana | Romanized |
|-------|----------|--------------------|
| 奄美大島 | あまみおおしま | Amami Ōshima (ISL) |
| 四条大橋 | しじょうおおはし | Shijō Ōhashi (BDG) |

4. Elements that combine to make a compound name are separated by a hyphen. Following a hyphen, the initial letter of a name is not capitalized.

| Kanji | Hiragana | Romanized |
|------------|------------------------|--|
| 会津若松市 | あいづわかまつし | Aizu-wakamatsu Shi (ADM2) |
| 山陽小野田市 | さんようおのだし | San'yō-onoda Shi (ADM2) |
| 赤岩上羽田 | あかいわかみはだ | Akaiwa-kamihada (PPL) |
| 四条大宮 | しじょうおおみや | Shijō-ōmiya (PPL) |
| 西七条東八反田町 | にししちじょうひがしはっ たんだちょう | Nishishichijō- higashihattandachō (PPL) |
| 上賀茂烏帽子ヶ垣内町 | かみがもえぼしがかきうち ちょう | Kamigamo-eboshiga- kakiuchichō (PPL) |
| 深草大亀谷五郎太町 | ふかくさおおかめだにごろ うたちょう | Fukakusa-ōkamedani- gorōtachō (PPL) |

5. A modifier that begins a specific term is not separated by a hyphen. Examples of modifiers include 南 (*nan* or *minami*) (south), 北 (*hoku* or *kita*) (north), 東 (*tō* or *higashi*) (east), 西 (*sei* or *nishi*) (west), 下 (*ge*, *ka*, *shita*, or *shimo*) (lower), 上 (*jō*, *ue*, or *kami*) (upper), 新 (*shin*) (new), and 旧 (*kyū*) (old).

| Kanji | Hiragana | Romanized |
|-------|----------|-----------|
|-------|----------|-----------|

| | | |
|-------|-----------|--------------------------|
| 南魚沼市 | みなみうおぬまし | Minamiuonuma Shi (ADM2) |
| 北広島市 | きたひろしまし | Kitahiroshima Shi (ADM2) |
| 東大阪市 | ひがしおおさかし | Higashiōsaka Shi (ADM2) |
| 西東京市 | にしとうきょうし | Nishitokyō Shi (ADM2) |
| 下諏訪町 | しもすわまち | Shimosuwa Machi (ADM3) |
| 新ひだか町 | しんひだかちょう | Shinhidakachō (PPL) |
| 新温泉町 | しんおんせんちょう | Shin'onseichō (PPL) |

6. The generic terms 町- (*cho*) (town), 区 (*ku*) (ward), and 村 (*mura*) (village) are not separated from the specific terms for populated places (PPL). However, they are separated for administrative divisions.

| Kanji | Hiragana | Romanized |
|-------|----------|--------------|
| 末崎町 | まつさきちょう | Matsusakichō |
| 弁天町 | べんてんちょう | Bentenchō |
| 蛭川村 | えびかわむら | Ebikawamura |
| 南区 | みなみく | Minamiku |

7. The genitive particle の (*no*) and conjunctive particles (e.g., および (*oyobi*)) are separated by spaces and not capitalized.

| Kanji | Hiragana | Romanized |
|-------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| 西行戻しの松 | さいぎょうもどしのまつ | Saigyō Modoshi no Matsu (TREE) |
| 鳶の須崎 | とびのすさき | Tobinosu Saki (PT) |
| 下ノ岬 | しものみさき | Shimono Misaki (PT) |
| 鷺ノ巣沢 | わしのすさわ | Washinosu Sawa (STM) |
| 鬼首の雌釜および雄釜間 | おにこうべのめがまおよび | Onikōbe no Megama oyobi |

| | | |
|------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| 歇温泉 | おがまかんけつおんせん | Ogama Kanketsu Onsen (SPNT) |
| 柿の木台 | かきのきだい | Kakinokidai (PPL) |
| ツバノ鼻 | つばのはな | Tsubano Hana (PT) |
| 門之浜 | かどのはま | Kadonohama (PPL) |

8. An ordinal number is separated with a space unless it is within a populated place (PPL) name, in which case it is separated with a hyphen.

| Kanji | Hiragana | Romanized |
|-----------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 第二松台 | だいにまつだい | Daini-matsudai (PPL) |
| 栄浦第二遺跡 | さかえうらだいにいせき | Sakaeura Daini Iseki (ANS) |
| 西新宿五丁目駅 | にししんじゅくごちょうめえき | Nishishinjuku Gochōme Eki (RSTN) |
| 第二西日暮里架道橋 | だいににしにつぼうりかど うきょう | Daini Nishinippori Kadōkyō (BDG) |
| 富士見台第三団地 | ふじみだいだいさんだんち | Fujimidai Daisan Danchi (DEVH) |

9. A modifier that begins a specific term may be separated with a hyphen if it prevents the specific term from becoming longer than seven syllables.

| Kanji | Hiragana | Romanized |
|--------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 東二十三番町 | ひがしにじゅうさんばんち ょう | Higashi-nijūsanbanchō |
| 西十四番町 | にしじゅうよんばんちょう | Nishi-jūyonbanchō |
| 東五番町 | ひがしごばんちょう | Higashi-gobanchō |
| 南白山台 | みなみしろやまだい | Minami-shiroyamadai |

10. All populated place (PPL) names that run longer than seven syllables are hyphenated. In such cases, the hyphen is placed between a modifier and the rest of the name if possible.

| Kanji | Hiragana | Romanized |
|----------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 新千里西町 | しんせんりにしまち | Shinsenri-nishimachi |
| 早稲田南町 | わせだみなみちょう | Waseda-minamichō |
| 少林寺町北 | しょうりんじちょうきた | Shōrinjichō-kita |
| 粟生間谷東 | あおまだにひがし | Aomadani-higashi |
| 小野原東 | おのはらひがし | Onohara-higashi |
| 新在家東町 | しんざいけひがしまち | Shinzaike-higashimachi |
| 篠原南町 | しのはらみなみまち | Shinohara-minamimachi |
| 第四生内開拓 | だいよんおもないかいたく | Daiyon'omonai-kaitaku (PPLL) |
| 新屋松が丘南町 | あらやまつがおかみなみまち | Araya-matsugaoka-minamimachi |
| 旭川新藤田東町 | あさひかわしんとうだひがしまち | Asahikawa-shintōda-higashimachi |
| 紫竹西野山東町 | しちくにしのやまひがしまち | Shichiku-nishinoyama-higashimachi |
| 七条御所ノ内南町 | しちじょうごしょのうちみなみまち | Shichijō-goshonouchi-minamimachi |

11. Island names sometimes contain multiple modifiers, each belonging to either the specific term or the generic term. If a specific term ends in a directional modifier, the modifier will be separated with a hyphen. Examples of directional modifiers include 南 (romanized *nan* or *minami*) (south), 北 (*hoku* or *kita*) (north), 東 (*tō* or *higashi*) (east), and 西 (*sei* or *nishi*) (west). If a generic term begins with a modifier such as 大 (romanized *dai* or *ō*) (big) or 小 (*shō* or *ko*) (small), the modifier is not separated.

| Kanji | Hiragana | Romanized |
|----------|--------------|----------------------------|
| 幌満西小島 | ほろまんにしこじま | Horoman-nishi Kojima |
| 門別鼻南小島 | もんべつはなみなみこじま | Monbetsuhana-minami Kojima |
| エサンベ鼻北小島 | えさんべはなきたこじま | Esanbehana-kita Kojima |
| 東ノ崎東小島 | とうのさきひがしこじま | Tōnosaki-higashi Kojima |
| 三ツ石北西小島 | みついしほくせいこじま | Mitsuishi-hokusei Kojima |

12. The genitive particle ケ is romanized as *ga* instead of *ke*, and it is not separated from the specific term.

| Kanji | Hiragana | Romanized |
|-------|----------|--------------------|
| 関ヶ原 | せきがはら | Sekigahara (PPL) |
| 釜ヶ崎 | かまがさき | Kamaga Saki (PT) |
| 京ヶ森 | きょうがもり | Kyōga Mori (FRST) |
| 市ヶ尾町 | いちがおちょう | Ichigaochō (PPL) |
| 十種ヶ峰 | とくさがみね | Tokusaga Mine (MT) |
| 調布ヶ丘 | ちょうふがおか | Chōfugaoka (PPL) |

13. The generic term 駅 (*eki*) (station) is separated by a space. Prepositions in station names are not separated.

| Kanji | Hiragana | Romanized/ |
|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 周防高森駅 | すおうたかもりえき | Suō-takamori Eki |
| やながわ希望の森公園前 駅 | やながわきぼうのもりこう えんまええき | Yanagawa Kibō no Mori Kōenmae Eki |
| 小樽築港駅 | おたるちっこうえき | Otaru-chikkō Eki |

| | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|---|
| 本輪西駅 | もとわにしえき | Motowanishi Eki |
| 西戸崎駅 | さいとざきえき | Saitozaki Eki |
| 安芸阿賀駅 | あきあがえき | Aki-aga Eki |
| 浮間舟渡駅 | うきまふなどえき | Ukima-funado Eki |
| 長者ヶ浜潮騒はまなす公園前駅 | ちょうじゃがはましおさい はまなすこうえんまええき | Chōjagahama Shiosai Hamanasu Kōenmae Eki |
| 南阿蘇水の生まれる里白水高原駅 | 南阿蘇みずのうまれるさと はくすいこうげんえき | Minamiaso Mizu no Umareru Sato Hakusui Kōgen Eki |

14. A foreign language name (or portion of a name) reverts to the original Roman-script spelling and orthography.

| Kanji/Katakana | Hiragana | Roman Script Equivalent |
|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 東京ディズニーランド | とうきょうでいずにーらんど | Tokyo Disneyland |
| ユニバーサルスタジオジャパン | ユニバーサルスタジオジャパ ン | Universal Studios Japan |
| 赤倉温泉スキー場 | あかくらおんせんすきーじょ う | Akakura Onsen Ski Jō |
| 鬼首 GC ゴルフ場 | おにこうべごるふくらぶごる ふじょう | Onikōbe Golf Club Golf Jō |

RELATED DOCUMENTS AND WEBSITES

BGN/PCGN Japanese Romanization Tables

Toponymic Guidelines for Map Editors and other Editors by Japan (Item 17, Twenty Third Edition, 2006 and Third Edition, 2007)

Gazetteer of Japan 2007, Government of Japan

27th BGN/PCGN conference technical discussions, Agenda Item 2.9 – Japanese Romanization – stylistic notes, September 2011

ALA-LC Romanization Tables

19th BGN-PCGN Conference Agenda Item 9.d, 1998

Word Segmentation Standard for Chinese Geographic Names (approved FNC 352 July 10, 2007)

http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/nc/k19541209001/k19541209001.html by Ministry of Education, Cultural, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan

<http://www.post.japanpost.jp> by Japan Postal Service

<http://www.jreast.co.jp> by East Japan Railway Company

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_grammar

Merriam Webster's Japanese English Learner's Dictionary

A Reference Grammar of Japanese by Samuel E. Martin

<http://www.gsi.go.jp/common/000024858.pdf> Romanization of Geographical Names in Japan by Takehide Hishiyama, Topographic Department, Geospatial Information Authority of Japan

<http://www.gsi.go.jp/WNEW/koohou/439-5.htm> 地名などのローマ字表記に関する規定などの改定について by GSI

<http://www.age.ne.jp/x/nrs/iso3602/iso3602.html> ISO 3602 (1989 version) in Japanese

http://park.itc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/eigo/UT_Komaba_Nihongo_no_romaji_hyoki_v1.pdf 日本語のローマ字表記の推奨形式 by English Department, Tokyo University

<http://www.massangeana.com/mas/charsets/keiji.txt> 鉄道揭示基準規程 by Japan Railway

<http://www.mlit.go.jp/road/sign/sign/annai/direction-sign.htm> 道路技術基準、道路標識 by Department of Land, Infrastructure, Transportation and Tourism