

# Wa



This character (和) is pronounced *wa*.

*Wa* has several meanings, though perhaps the best way to grasp the overall concept is to imagine an atmosphere in which a group of people can comfortably and amiably coexist. The word also carries connotations of maintaining harmony and getting along with each other. The character is included in the word *heiwa* (平和), which means “peace.” The original meaning conveys the sense of a group working together peacefully and helping one another.

The character *wa* is also used to refer to Japan and Japanese people and culture. For example, in the term *washoku* (和食), *shoku* means “cuisine,” giving this compound the meaning “Japanese cuisine.”

*Wa* is tremendously valued by the Japanese, and it is a word that directly expresses the spirit of the Japanese people. In sharing *wa* with our friends (*tomodachi*) around the world, we hope to play a role in bringing peace to the world.