ほんま is another staple Kansai-ben vocabulary word. You’re going to hear it all the time, pretty much regardless of with whom you’re speaking if they are a Kansai native. It is the equivalent of standard Japanese’s 本当, meaning “true;” “truly;” “real;” “really,” and is used much in the same way. However, remember that as a noun it will conjugate with だ rather than だ, as explained in Chapter 2.

### Grammatical Usage

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One of the main uses of ほんま in conversation is to express general consensus or agreement, fairly similar to how せやなあ is used. For example, we could take this sentence from Chapter 4, replace the せやなあ with ほんま(や/なあ), and the meaning would essentially remain the same:

1) **Tsunemi:** 今日の試験難しかったなあ！

   **Kyohei:** せやなあ。あんまできへんかった。

Tsunemi: Today’s test was hard!
Kyohei: Yeah it was. I didn’t do too well on it.

⇒ **Tsunemi:** 今日の試験難しかったなあ！

   **Kyohei:** せやなあ → ほんまやなあ！あんまできへんかった。

⇒ Tsunemi: Today’s test was hard!
Kyohei: That’s for sure. I didn’t do too well on it.

As you can see, the words slightly change, however the overall meaning being expressed in the sentence - that Kyohei agrees that the test was hard - remains the same. Let’s take a look at another sentence where せやなあ and ほんま are fairly interchangeable:

2) **Tsunemi:** トミヱ、かわいいやろ？

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1 In this line we again encounter あんま, the contraction of あまり that is often favored in Kansai
Tsunemi: Don’t you think Tomie is cute?
Kyohei: Yeah she is. But, she has a boyfriend.

⇒ Tsunemi: トミエはかわいいやろ？
Kyohei: せやなあ。でも、彼氏おるやん。

⇒ Tsunemi: Don’t you think Tomie is cute?
Kyohei: That’s for sure. But, she has a boyfriend.

In this sentence, as we have seen in previous examples with other Kansai-ben words, ほんま is repeated twice for emphasis - in this case to acknowledge that Kyohei agrees with Tsunemi’s opinion that Tomie is cute.

ほんま also has three more different conversational uses, which are the same as 本当:

1) As a question; inviting the speaker to share more information (ほんまに/か?)
2) As an expression meaning that something is real or true (ほんまで)
3) As an adverbial modifier meaning “really,” or “truly.”（ほんまに）

Let’s take a look at a sample conversation that features all three of these conversational uses, in that order:

ツネミ：トミエ、彼氏と別れてたんって！

キョヘイ：ほんまに？

ツネミ：ほんまで！俺、チャンスあるんちゃう？

キョヘイ：ほんまにええチャンスかもなぁ。デートに誘ったらええやん？

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2 In this line we see おる, which is the Kansai-ben version of いる meaning “to be,” or “to exist,” which will be formally introduced in Chapter 13. We also encounter おる once again, which is the Kansai-ben version of じゃん, which will be further elaborated on in Chapter 11.

3 Recall the use of ちゃう when you are seeking agreement on a matter, or when you are unsure of something and want confirmation from someone else, as explained in Chapter 5.

4 In this sentence we again encounter ええ, which is the Kansai-ben version of いい. Next we see the expression かも which is the contracted version of かもしれない. Lastly, we see 誘ったらええやん,
Tsunemi: Tomie said she and her boyfriend broke up!
Kyohei: Really? [Inviting Tsunemi to share more information about the situation]
Tsunemi: Really! That means I have a chance with her right?
Kyohei: You might have a really good chance. Why don’t you invite her on a date?

Now let’s look at a sentence with the first usage: as a question; inviting the speaker to share more information (ほんま(に/か)？):

Tsunemi: 俺、気分悪いね。
Kyohei: ほんま(に)？なんで？
Tsunemi: 風ひいたかも。
Kyohei: それやったら、帰ったらがええかもなー。
Tsunemi: そやろ。ほん、俺帰りわ。

Tsunemi: I don’t feel good…
Kyohei: Really? How come?
Tsunemi: I might have caught a cold.
Kyohei: Is that right? If so, you should probably go home…
Tsunemi: Right? Alright, I’m going home.

Next let’s look at a sentence with the second usage: as an expression meaning that something is real or true (ほんまやで):

トミエ：ツネミーくん、今日、彼氏と別れたで。
Tsunemi：嘘！

which is like saying 誘ったらどうですか？

5 Here we encounter the sentence final particle ねん for the first time, which will be introduced in Chapter 15.

6 Once again we see わ as a sentence final particle, which will be discussed in Chapter 14.
Tomie: Tsunemi, today my boyfriend and I broke up.

Tsunemi: No way!

Tomie: It's true! I'm not lying.

Tsunemi: I don't believe it.

Lastly, as the third usage: as an adverbial modifier meaning “really,” or “truly.”

ほんまにすみません！ (I'm) really sorry!

ほんまにありがとう！ Thanks so much!

ほんまにしんどい ⁸ (I'm) super tired.

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⁷ ありえへん (ありえない in standard Japanese) literally means “impossible,” however in Kansai it is often used in place of 信じられない “I can't believe it,” (the negative potential form of 信じる “to believe.”)

⁸ In Kansai, しんどい (“tired;” “frazzled”) is often used in place of 疲れる