



Absolute Beginner S1

Being Sorry in Japan

4

Kanji	2
Kana	2
Romanization	2
English	2
Vocabulary	2
Phrase Usage	3
Grammar Points	4

Kanji

(crowd of people)

- A イタタタ
あの...すみません。
B はい？
A あし...。
B あ、すみません！

Kana

(crowd of people)

- A イタタタ
あの...すみません。
B はい？
A あし...。
B あ、すみません！

Romanization

(crowd of people)

- A Itatata
Ano... sumimasen.
B Hai?
A Ashi....
B A, sumimasen!

English

(crowd of people)

- A Ouch!
Umm...excuse me.
B Yes?
A My foot...
B Oh, I'm sorry!

Vocabulary

Kanji	Kana	Romaji	English
あの・・・	あの・・・	ano...	um...
すみません	すみません	sumimasen	Sorry, excuse me
足	あし	ashi	foot
はい？	はい？	hai?	yes?

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

すみません。質問があります。

Sumimasen. Shitsumon ga arimasu.

Excuse me. I have a question.

足を怪我した。

Ashi wo kega shita.

I injured my foot.

A:すみません。B:はい？

A: Excuse me. B:Yes?

A:Sumimasen. B:Hai?

Vocabulary Phrase Usage

Ano... (あの...)

Ano... is used to get someone's attention, and is equivalent to "umm..." or "uhh...". If you suddenly start talking to someone without any warning, it might take the other person off guard, so this is good way to lead in and let them know you're about to say something.

—

Ashi (足)

Ashi is the word for "foot" or "leg." (Note that the character used is different depending on the meaning. The character used here, 足, refers to "foot").

—

Hai? (はい?)

As you will find out in later lessons, はい (hai) is a word used to give a positive answer, or confirm what someone else has said. It is also used to show the other person that you are listening. When spoken with rising intonation, as in this dialogue, it means "Yes?" or "I'm sorry?" and prompts the listener to continue or repeat what they have said. If someone is trying to get your attention, or you can't catch what someone says, you can say "hai?" with rising intonation.

Grammar Points

The Focus of This Lesson Is Saying "Excuse Me" and "I'm Sorry" in Japanese.

A, sumimasen!

あ、すみません！

Oh, I'm sorry!"

In this lesson, you'll learn one very handy phrase that we can use to mean both "excuse me" (to call out to someone or get someone's attention) and "I'm sorry" (to apologize for your actions).

The Phrase Sumimasen

In Japanese, the phrase that covers both "excuse me" and "I'm sorry" is sumimasen (すみません。).

Let's look at the two ways to use sumimasen that we saw in the dialogue.

1) あの・・・すみません。 Ano... sumimasen. "Umm... excuse me."

In the dialogue, the first speaker uses sumimasen to get the attention of the other speaker, who is stepping on his foot. In this way, sumimasen is the same as "excuse me" in English, and we can use it to get the attention of someone, like a stranger or a clerk in a store or restaurant. The ano means "umm" or "uhh," and we use it to alert the listener that we are about to speak. (Please see the vocabulary section above.)

2) あ、すみません！ A, sumimasen! "Oh, I'm sorry!"

JapanesePod101.com

Learn Japanese with **FREE** Podcasts

Toward the end of the dialogue, the woman realized she was stepping on the man's foot and said A, sumimasen! This sumimasen means "I'm sorry" and we use it to apologize.