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1 Nouns

1.1 People

Subjects

僕 boku	I (male, used to be servant/young person)
私 watashi	I (polite)
- 達 tachi	we
俺 ore	I (rough?)
あなた anata	you
男 otoko	male
女 onna	female
__の子 ko	child
__の人 hito	adult
__の達 tachi	plural
彼 kare	male/person (can also be children)
-ら ra	men/people
彼女 kanojo	female
- 達 tachi	
大人 otona	adult (lit. big people)
-tachi	
子供 kodomo	children
-tachi	
主人 shujin	master
嬢 jou	lady (both usually “o-_-sama”)
少年 / 少女 shounen shoujo	boy/girl
これ kore	this
-ra	plural
それ sore	it/that
あれ are	that (over there)
来店 raiten	visitor
客 kyaku	customer
彼氏 kareshi	boyfriend
奴 yatsu	“guy/thing,” used in times with no respect either friendly or not, kind of like a naughtier 人. Note: this also works with こ/そ/あ to form e.g. こいつ and あいつ. Think of it as somewhere between “this” and “this shit”
大将 taishou	general/boss (but also used for chef)
妻 tsuma	wife

You can see a pattern with *kore*, *sore*, and *are*:

Things that point

これ	this (one) [out of many]
それ	it/that (one)
あれ	that (one) (over there)
どれ	which (one)
この	this ____ (e.g. “this book”)
その	that ____
あの	that ____
どの	which ____
ここ	here
そこ	there
あこ	over there
どこ	where
誰 dare	who
こっち	this (one) [out of two]
そっち	that (one)
あっち	that (one)
どっち	which one
こっちら	this (one) [polite, out of any]
そっちら	that (one)
あっちら	that (one)
どっちら	which one (could also mean where, e.g. <i>kuruma o dochira desuka</i> = “where/which is your car?”) (could also be <i>dono</i> (add <i>no</i>)) (could also be <i>dare</i> (add <i>sama</i>))

People

Honorific 様 sama -san	Most honorific/master/God Mr./Ms.
Informal -chan	Usually used for girls, children, friends, etc. Sometimes used for men. Kind of cutesy.
君 -kun	Usually used for guys. Also, kind of cutesy, so often not used for men.
-bo	More cutesy than -chan and -kun and more childish. Do NOT use for adult male
-tan	Used between couples and only in private
友達 / 友人 tomodachi yujin 友 tomo	friend (uses 達 tachi) friend
Family お母さん okaasan お父さん otousan お婆さん obaasan お爺さん ojiisan 叔母さん obasan 叔父さん ojisan お姉さん oneesan お兄さん oniisan 妹 imouto 弟 otouto	Generally, follows “o- _ -san” format mother father grandmother grandfather aunt uncle older sister older brother younger sister younger brother
親 oya 家族 kazoku	parent(s) family
息子さん musuko-san 娘さん musume-san	son daughter
恋人 koibito 元カノ moto kano	lover ex-girlfriend (元彼女) moto kanojo
都合がいい女 tsugou ga ii onna セフレ sefure	friend with benefits
日本 nihon	Japan
語 -go 英語 eigo 日本語 nihongo	language English language Japanese language
人 -jin 日本人 nihonjin	people Japanese people

Occupations

仕事 shigoto	job/occupation
警察官 / 警官 keisatsukan / keikan	police officer
医者 isha	doctor
会社員 kaishain "kaishai-in"	office worker
学生 gakusei	student
年生 -nensei	_ year student
二年生 ninensei	second year student
留学生 ryuugakusei	international student
大学生 daigakusei	college student
大学院生 daigakuinsei	graduate student
高校生 koukousei	high school student
専攻 senkou	school major
コンピュータ konpyuutaa	computer
科学 kagaku	science
文学 bungaku	literature
人類学 jinrui-gaku	anthropology
ビジネス bijinesu	business
アジア研究 ajia kenkyuu	Asian studies
経済 keizai	economics
国際関係 kokusai kankei	international relations
政治 seiji	politics
歴史 rekishi	history
弁護士 bengoshi	lawyer
先生 sensei	teacher or honorable master
教師 kyoushi	teacher (modest, such as when describing one's own occupation)
主婦 shufu	housewife

1.2 Common objects

Common items

物 mono	stuff
持ち物 mochimono	one's own belongings
事 koto/-ji	thing (e.g. 大事 daiji)
円 en	yen
選択(肢) sentaku(shi)	option/choice
予定 yotei	plans/schedule
用事 youji	tasks/things to do
窓 mado	window
箸 hashi	chopsticks
本 hon	book
写真 shashin	photo
傘 kasa	umbrella
カバン kaban	bag
財布 saifu	wallet
名刺 meishi	business card
お金 okane	money
お土産 omiyage	souvenir
贈り物 okurimono	gift
座席 / 席 zaseki / seki	seat
貸金庫 kashikinko	safe-deposit box
料金 ryoukin	price
障子 shouji	paper sliding door (hash)
畳 tatami	Japanese straw floor mat
言葉 kotoba	word
携帯 keitai	cell phone (lit. portable)
スマホ sumaho	smart phone
ガラケ garake	dumb phone (contraction of "Galapagos portable")
写メ shame	picture message (contraction)
明かり akari	light (general, e.g. "the lights")
番組 bangumi	program/show

Common Kanji

入 iri/iru/-nyuu/juu	enter/insert (入れる, 入る) ireru hairu
口 guchi	opening/mouth
窓口 madoguchi	ticket window
南口 minami guchi	south exit
入口 iriguchi	entrance
出口 deguchi	exit
笑 emi	Lol
立入禁止 tachiirikinshi	keep out
注目 chuumoku	attention/notice
お知らせ oshirase	notice/announcement
電 -den	electricity (電話, 電気, 電車, 電灯, 電球) denwa denki electric train light/lamp light bulb densha dentou denkyuu
明 aki,aka/mei-,myou-,men-	bright, light
末 sue/-matsu	end/close (週末) shuumatsu
未 -mi	not yet
未来 mirai	future (lit. not yet come)
以 -i	by means of/compared with
以来 irai	since (“since then, ...”)
以内 inai	within/inside (n.) less than (adv.)
以下 ika	less than/below
以上 ijou	more than/above
外 soto/-gai	outside
以外 igai	other than/except _
訳 wake/-yaku	translation/reason/meaning

Food (high level)

食べ物 / 食物 / 飯 tabemono shokumotsu meshi	food
食事 / ミール shokuji miiru	meal
ご飯 gohan	Japanese food
和食 washoku	menu
メニュー menyuu	menu/program/schedule
献立 kondate	order
注文 chuumon	breakfast
朝ごはん asagohan	lunch
昼ごはん hirugohan	dinner
晩ごはん bangohan	grilled
焼き yaki	grilled chicken (lit. grilled bird)
焼き鳥 yaki tori	octopus dumplings (lit. grilled octopus)
たこ焼き tako yaki	meat
肉 niku	vegetable
野菜 yasai	sushi (both nigiri & maki)
寿司 sushi	fish on a bed of rice (握る) nigiru
握り nigiri	roll (sushi with nori on outside)
巻 maki	“hand-rolled” (hand-roll maki)
手巻き temaki	“sliced body” (fish with no rice)
刺身 sashimi	snack/appetizer, also used to request sushi without rice
つまみ	dried seaweed
海苔 nori	red bean paste
餡こ anko	curry
カレー	non-smoking section
禁煙席 kin en seki	smoking section
喫煙席 kitsu en seki	bill
お会計 okaikaei	bento box lunch
弁当 bentou	train station bento often has local specialties
駅弁 ekiben	

Food (items)

ご飯 / お米 gohan okome	rice
そば soba	wheat noodle
鳥 tori	bird/poultry
鶏 niwa tori	chicken
雛 / ひよこ hina	chick
たこ tako	octopus
いか ika	squid
魚 sakana	fish
鮪 maguro	tuna
鮭 / サーモン sake	salmon
鰹節 katsubushi	bonito flakes
牛肉 gyuu niku	beef (lit. cow meat)
とろ / かた toro kata	soft/hard (boiled egg)
卵 / 玉子 tamago tamago	egg
河豚 fugu	blowfish
唐揚げ kara age	fried chicken
パン pan	bread
アイスクリーム aisukuriimu	ice cream
ハンバーガー hanbaagaa	hamburger
チーズバーガー chiizubaagaa	cheeseburger
林檎 ringo	apple
美味しい oishii	delicious
盛り合わせ moriawase	assorted (if alone = combo platter)
串 kushi	skewers

Food adjectives

美味しい oishii	delicious
甘い amai	sweet
辛い tsurai/karai	spicy
抜き nuki	without

Drinks

飲み物 nomimono	drink
飲料 inryou	beverage
乾杯 kanpai	cheers
水 mizu	water
お茶 ocha	tea
コーヒー koohii	coffee
ジュース juusu	juice
ミルク / 牛乳 miruku gyuunyuu	milk
酒 sake	alcohol
日本酒 nihonshu	sake
焼酎 shouchuu	shochu
梅酒 umeshu	plum wine

Food (toppings)

砂糖 satou	sugar
塩 shio	salt
味付け ajitsuke	seasoned
調味料 choumiryou	seasoning
煮 ni	boiled
とんかつ tonkatsu	pork cutlet
ねぎ negi	leek/green onion
唐辛子 tougashii	chili (pepper)

Office/room items

部屋 heya	room
台所 daidokoro	kitchen
道具 dougū	utensil/tool
椅子 isu	chair
鉛筆 enpitsu	pencil
消しゴム keshigomu	eraser
ゴム gomu	rubber
ペン pen	pen
ノート nooto	notebook
机 tsukue	desk
新聞 shinbun	newspaper
雑誌 zasshi	magazine
時計 tokei	watch/clock
手紙 tegami	letter
メール meeru	email
ボール booru	ball
電話 denwa	telephone
テレビ terebi	TV
辞書 jisho	dictionary
黒板 kokuban	blackboard

Plants

草 kusa	grass
花 hana	flower
花見 hanami	act of enjoying flowers (lit. flower viewing)
桜 sakura	cherry blossom
木 moku/ki	wood or tree
森 / 林 / 森林 mori hayashi shinrin	forest

Colors

色 iro	color
黒 kuro	black
白 shiro	white
赤 aka	red
青 ao	blue
黄色 kiiro	yellow
緑 midori	green

Clothing

靴 kutsu	shoes
ジーンズ jiinzu	jeans
シャツ shatsu	shirt
帽子 boushi	hat/cap

Animals

犬 inu	dog
猫 neko	cat
馬 uma	horse
牛 ushi	cow
梟 fukurou	owl
体 karada	body

1.3 Locations and things to do

Buildings

トイレ / 便所 toire benjo	toilet/restroom
喫茶店 / カフェ kissaten kafe	cafe
居酒屋 izakaya	bar/pub/tavern
レストラン / 料亭 resutoran ryoutei	restaurant
店 mise	shop
売店 baiten	shop/stand
店舗 tenpo	store
__屋 __-ya	__-store (e.g. bookstore restaurant honya ryouriya)
建物 tatemono	building
家 ie	house
うち uchi	home
大学 daigaku	college/university
高校 koukou	high school
学校 gakkou	school (学) manabu
銀行 ginkou	bank
図書館 toshokan	library
郵便局 yuubinkyoku	post office
会社 kaisha	company/office
仕事 / 作業 shigoto sagyou	work
病院 byouin	hospital/doctor's office
教室 kyoushitsu	classroom
ホテル hoteru	hotel
スーパー suupaa	supermarket
デパート depaato	department store
水族館 suizokukan	aquarium (apparently, hot spot)
博物館 hakubutsukan	museum
出身 shusshin	home town, come-from, place of origin/graduation
お茶会 ochakai	tea party/ceremony
歓迎会 kangeikai	welcome party

Transportation/Movement

鉄道駅 tetsudou eki	train station
鉄道 tetsudou	railway (lit. iron road)
駅 eki	station
通り touri	street
バス停 basu tei	bus stop
道路 douro	road/highway
道 michi	road/street/way/path
国際空港 kokusai kuukou	international airport
線 sen	line/wire/beam (e.g. train line)
地下鉄 chikatetsu	subway
列車 ressha	train
電車 densha	electric train
新幹線 shinkansen	bullet train
車 kuruma	car
自転車 jitensha	bike
バス basu	bus
公共交通 koukyoukoutsuu	public transportation
乗車 jousha	boarding/entering to ride/board Like 乗る (see List of verbs) noru
配達 haitatsu	delivery

Nature

自然 shizen	nature/natural
温泉 onsen	hot springs
公園 kouen	park
公 kou	public
お寺 otera	temple
庭園 / 庭 / 園 teien niwa en	garden
__ 山 yama/san	mountain (富士山) Mt. Fuji fujisan

Location Kanji

路 -ro 道路 douro 水路 suiro	Kanji for “road/way” road/highway waterway/channel/canal
所 tokoro/-jo	place (便所) bathroom benjo
外 soto/-gai	outside

Things to do

映画 eiga	movie
音楽 ongaku	music
まつり matsuri	festival
買い物 kaimono	shopping (物 = stuff) mono
試合 shiai	game/match/contest
クラス kurasu	class
アルバイト arubaito	part-time job
スポーツ supootsu	sports
デート deito	date (romantic)
テニス tenisu	tennis

1.3.1 Directions

Relative directions

右 migi	right
左 hidari	left
真っ直ぐ massugu	straight
前 mae	front (see also: <u>Time</u>) Also means “across (the street)” or “opposite X”
向い mukai	opposite X e.g. across the street
後ろ ushiro	back (後) later/behind ato/ushi-,-go
裏 ura	back (behind something else, not visible)
中 naka	inside
上 ue	on
下 shita	under
近く / そば chikaku / soba	near/nearby
横 / 隣 yoko / tonari	next to <i>Tonari</i> is used when the items are of the same category, e.g. “two people” or “two pens.” <i>Yoko</i> is used when they’re different.
間 aida	between (A と B の 間)
反対側 hantaisoku	opposite side (反対側 に...)
方 hou/pou/kata	direction/way. Used for: moving directions cardinal directions 行き方 ; 南方 ikikata nanpou conceptual directions 方法 houhou
住所 juusho	street address

For the directions above, the direction word goes after の such that the noun before の is the descriptor and the direction after の is the main topic. Examples:

- カバンは机の下です = “The bag is under the desk.”
kaban wa tsukue no shita desu
- 猫は椅子の上います = “The cat is on the chair.”
neko wa isu no ue imasu
- 銀行は図書館と喫茶店の間にあります = “The bank is between the library and the coffee shop”
ginkou wa toshokan to kissaten no aida ni arimasu

Cardinal directions

北 kita/hop	north
南 minami/nan	south
東 higashi/tou	east
西 nishi/sei	west
南方 nanpou	southward/south side (note use of on'yomi)
東北 touhoku	northeast

High-level locations

— の 行き方 no ikikata	directions (to __)
国 kuni	country
都市 toshi	city
-区 -ku	ward/district
地区 chiku	district
街 machi	town
東京 toukyou	Tokyo
京都 kyouto	Kyoto
大阪 ousaka	Osaka
アメリカ Amerika	USA
イギリス igirisu	Britain
韓国 kankoku	Korea
中国 chuugoku	China
四川省 shisenshou	Sichuan
日本国 nipponkoku	Japan

Other location-based words

階段 kaidan	stairs
曲がる magaru	to turn (e.g. around a corner)
上がる agaru	to go up (e.g. stairs)

Examples:

- First, turn right (from here),
 • まず は そこ まで 右 に 曲がって
 mazu ha soko made migi ni magatte
 then go up the stairs at the end
 突き当たりの 階段 を 上 が れ
 tsukiatari no kaidan o agare

1.4 Time

Qualifiers

時間 jikan	time
午前 gozen	AM (lit. before noon)
午後 gogo	PM
時 toki/ji	time/o'clock/hour
半 han	half
頃 - goro	around (see <u>Numbers</u>)
何時頃 nanji goro	around what time
三時頃 sanji goro	around 3 o'clock
ほど	approximately e.g. about 15 minutes
— 時間 — jikan	— hours
三時間 sanjikan	3 hours
前 mae	before (<i>mae ni</i>)
先 saki/-sen	before (<i>osaki douzo</i>)
まで	until/by/before
まだ	still/yet e.g. I'm still not done
以降 ikou	thereafter/on and after (like "I'll come after 5:00")
過ぎ sugi	past/after (like "I'll come after 5:00")
はじめ hajime	begin (verb 始める) hajimeru
はじめ 何 を しますか hajime nani o shimasuka	What do you want to do first?
よく / しばしば yoku shibashiba	often (adverb)
時々 tokidoki	sometimes (adverb)
しばらく shibaraku	for a while (adverb)
最近 saikin	recently
現在 genzai	currently
後で atode	later (後) ato/u,-go
前/今/次-回 zen/kon/ji-kai	last/this/next time
今度 kondo	this/next time (context)
期間 kikan	length of time/period/term
遅刻 chikoku	late (noun, e.g. 遅刻だよ) It's late chikoku da yo

Note that durations of time, e.g. 一時間^{one hour}, **aren't** followed by any particles. Examples:

- メアリーさんはあそこ^{Mary waited for him there for an hour}で彼を一時間待ちました
Mary-san wa asoko de kare o ichijikan machimashita
- 私は昨日図書館で日本語を三時間勉強しました
I studied Japanese in the library for 3 hours yesterday
Watashi wa kinou toshokan de nihongo o sanjikan benkyoushimashita
- 治るのにどのくらいの期間がかかりますか
How long will it take to get well?
naoru noni donokurai no kikan ga kakarimasuka

Finally is said multiple different ways depending on what they mean:

- ついに = finally (after working hard)
tsuini
I finally finished school
ついに大学院を済みました
tsuini daigakuin o sumimashita
- やっと = finally (gradually, slowly)
yatto
I finally talked to her
やっと彼女と話した
yatto kanojo to hanashita

Later/after is said using 後^{later/rear/behind}. For example:
ple:

- うちに帰った後、何があったの = “What happened after I returned home?”
uchi ni kaetta ato, nani ga atta no

Relative time of the day

朝 asa	morning
昼 hiru	noon/daytime
明日 ashita	tomorrow
昨日 kinou	yesterday
週 shuu	week
週末 shuumatsu	weekend
日 nichi	day
晩 ban	night
夜 yoru/-ya	night
毎 mai	every ____
毎日 mainichi	every day
毎晩 maiban	every night
今 ima	now (also “this ____”)
今日 kyou	today
今晚 konban	this evening
今夜 konya	this evening/night
今週 konshuu	this week
今朝 kesa	this morning
来 rai	next ____
来土曜日 rai doyoubi	next Saturday
来年二月 rainen nigatsu	February next year
先 sen/saki	ahead/before/previous
先週 senshuu	last week

Days and such

<i>nichiyoubi</i> 日曜日	Sunday “Sun-weekday”
<i>getsuyoubi</i> 月曜日	Monday “Moon-weekday”
<i>kayoubi</i> 火曜日	Tuesday “Fire-weekday”
<i>suiyoubi</i> 水曜日	Wednesday “Water-weekday”
<i>mokuyoubi</i> 木曜日	Thursday “Wood-weekday”
<i>kinyoubi</i> 金曜日	Friday “Money-weekday”
<i>doyoubi</i> 土曜日	Saturday “Earth-weekday”
-- 月 gatsu	month of -- January February e.g. 1月 = 2月 ichigatsu nigatsu

Other time-related words

誕生日 tanjoubi	birthday
お誕生日 おめでとう otanjoubi omedetou	happy birthday

You will note that 間 *aida/-kan/-ma* has many different meanings (e.g. between, hours, etc.). This is because 間 is a general kanji for time/space/while/interval/etc. Don't fret too hard about not understanding it completely.

1.5 Miscellaneous

Weather

空 sora	sky
太陽 taiyou	solar/sun
月 tsuki	moon
世界 sekai	world
夕焼け yuuyake	sunset (lit. scorched evening)
雨 ame	rain
雪 yuki	snow
暑い atsui	hot/warm

Body parts

手 te	hand
足 ashi	foot/leg
声 koe	voice

Other

おかげ okage	thanks (as a noun) e.g. “Thanks to my friend, ...”
おめでとう	congratulations
発明 hatsumeai	invention
理由 riyuu	reason
重視 juushi	focus/emphasis
方向 houkou	direction(s)
休暇 kyuuka	vacation
休 yasa/-kyuu	rest
暇 hima/-ka	spare time, leisure
学割 gakuwari	student discount
準備 junbi	preparation/provision/arrangements
上手 jouzu	skill(ed/ful)
喧嘩 kenka	fight
黙祷 mokutou	silent prayer/moment of silence
喰種 guuru	ghoul
秘密 himitsu	secret
興味 kyoumi	interest (興味がある) I am interested
賛成 sansei	I agree with him agree (彼に賛成だ) kare ni sansei da
署名 shomei	signature
自己紹介 jikoshoukai	self-introduction
嘘 uso	lie
略 ryaku	abbreviation/stands for geisen means game center ゲーセンはゲームセンターの略だ geisen wa geimu sentaa no ryaku da
エッチ	lewd/immoral/sex
冗談 joudan	joke
総集編 soushuuhen	omnibus (series summary episode)
修行 shugyou	training/discipline
研修 kenshuu	training

1.6 Numbers

Numbers (Numerals = on'yomi)

番号 bangou	number (series of digits)
零 rei/nuru	zero
一 ichi/hito-	one
二 ni/futa-	two
三 san/mi-	three
四 yon,shi/yo-	four
五 go/itsu-	five
六 roku/mu-	six
七 nana,shichi/nana-	seven
八 hachi/ya-	eight
九 kyuu/kokono-	nine
十 juu/tou-	ten
百 hyaku	hundred
千 sen	thousand
万 man	10,000
十万 juuman	100,000
百万 hyakuman	1 million

Numbers 1-100 are quite simple: you just append what number from 1-10 onto where it would be to say the number. For example, fifteen would be 10 + 5 = "juugo." Likewise, putting a number before 10 makes it a multiple of ten: "ni juu go" = twenty five.

Example sentences:

- *nan sai desu ka* = how old are you?
- *ni juu yon sai desu* = I am twenty four
- *Otokono hito wa nijuuhassai desu* = He is 28 years old

Counters/words dealing with numbers

時間 jikan	hour
分 pun/bun	minute
日 ka	day
週間 shuukan	week
ヶ月 kagetsu	month(s) (duration)
年 nen	year
歳 sai	years old
番 ban	number (e.g. 一番 ^{number 1} ichiban)
第 dai	ordinal (e.g. 第二 ^{second} daini)
人 nin	people (e.g. 三人 ^{3 people will come} ga kimasu) Exceptions: 一人 ^{1 person} hitori 二人 ^{2 people} futari
目 me	turns (almost) any number into a cardinal number, e.g. 三人目 ^{the third person will come later} ga atode kimasu ^{first/best} 一番 ^{first in a set} vs 一番目 ^{sanninme ga atode kimasu} ichiban ichibanme
回 kai	Occurrences, number of times (frequent word)
前/今/次-回 zen/kon/ji-kai	last/this/next time
個 ko	Generic counter for item/article/thing/food
貫 kan	Counter for sushi (could also use 個 ^{ko})
つ	Counter for anything not in a category. Also used for numerals (<i>hito-</i> , <i>futa-</i> , etc.)
てん	Points (e.g. score), dots, pieces of a set
線 sen	line/wire/beam (e.g. train line)

Often, the pronunciation of the 3, 6, and 8 versions of items will change:

Number changes

Number	Hundreds	Thousands	Years old
one			
two			
three	<i>sanbyaku</i>	<i>sanzen</i>	
four			
five			
six	<i>roppyaku</i>		
seven			
eight	<i>happyaku</i>	<i>hassen</i>	<i>hassai</i>
nine			
ten			20 = <i>hatachi</i>

Number changes (time)

Number	Hours	Minutes
one		<i>ippun</i>
two		<i>nifun</i>
three		<i>sanpun</i>
four	<i>yoji</i>	<i>yonpun</i>
five		<i>gofun</i>
six		<i>roppun</i>
seven	<i>shichiji</i>	<i>nanafun</i>
eight		<i>hachifun/happun</i>
nine		<i>kyuufun</i>
ten		<i>juupun/jipun</i>

Other number words

数 kazu/-suu	number (also means a few days later “few” 数日後) suu jitsu go
数学 suugaku	mathematics
人数 ninzuu	number of people
頃 goro	about/approximately Used for a specific time, but not a period of time, e.g. I'll come home around 3:00 三時頃 帰る sanji goro kaeru
約 yaku ほど / くらい	about/approximately Used for periods of time or quantity. 約 is put before the quantity, the others after. e.g. I waited for about an hour (約) 一時間 (くらい) 待った (yaku) ichijikan (gurai) matta
最初 saisho	first/beginning (time)
初めて hajimete	first (for the first time)
先ず mazu	first of all/to start with
次 tsugi	next
最後 saigo	last
共 tomo	both (e.g. 二人共) futari tomo
度に tabi ni	every time
お釣り otsuri	change (after payment)
小銭 kozeni	small(er) change (than offered)

最初 is used to say “at first” whereas 初めて is used to say “for the very first time.” 先ず is used to say “first” in the case where there are steps. 先ず and 最初 can sometimes be interchangeable. Examples:

- 初めて 日本に行ったとき、帽子を買った
hajimete nihon ni itta toki, boushi o katta
= “When I went to Japan for the first time, I bought a hat”
- 最初 家に着いたとき、トイレに行った =
saisho ie ni tsuita toki, toire ni itta
“When I first arrived at home, I went to the bathroom”
- 先ず 肉を料理して、次に野菜を料理して
mazu niku o ryourishite, tsugi ni yasai o ryourishite
= “first cook the meat, next cook the veggies”

2 Phrases and sayings

2.1 Common sayings

Hellos/goodbyes

Hello (getting attention, like on the phone)

- もしもし
moshi moshi

Good morning (polite)

- おはよう (ございます)
Ohayou (gozaimasu)

Thank you (polite)

- ありがとう (ございます)
Arigatou (gozaimasu)

- どういたしまして = “You’re welcome”

- こんにちは = “Good afternoon”
konnichiwa

- こんにちは = “Good evening”
konbanwa

- お休み (なさい) = “Good night”
oyasumi (nasai)

- さようなら = “Good bye (long term, don’t use)”
sayounara

- じゃあまた = “See you soon (friends)”
jaa mata

- また = “Again”
mata

- またね = “See you later (lit. again, right?)”
mata ne

- また明日 = “See you tomorrow (lit. again, tomorrow)”
mata ashita morrow”

- 失礼します = “Good bye (professional) (lit. shitsurei shimasu sorry for being rude)”

- 申し訳ありません = “I’m sorry” (formal, often moushiwake arimasen used in stores when the clerk can’t do something for you)

- お先に失礼します = “Good bye (professional, osaki ni shitsure shimasu when you’re leaving first)”

- 行きます = “See you (later) (Actually: I’m ittekimasu leaving but will be right back)”

- いってらっしゃい = “Take care (Actually: itterasshai please go and come back)”

- ただいま = “I’m home (e.g. family)”
tadaima

- お帰りなさい = “Welcome home”
okaerinasai

- 久しぶり = “Long time, no see”
hisashiburi

- お邪魔します = “Sorry for the disturbance
ojamashimasu
(when entering a home)” (^{disturbance/obstacle} 邪魔 jama)

Meeting people

- お名前は 何 です か = “What is your name?”
onamae wa nan desu ka

- はじめまして = “Nice to meet you” (for the first
hajimemashite
time)

- 元気 です か = “How are you (feeling)?”
genki desu ka

- よろしく おねがいします = “Nice to meet
yoroshiku onegaishimasu
you/I look forward to working with you” (more formal, for introductions or asking favors)

- 暇 な 時 に 何 を する の = “What do you do in
hima na toki ni nani o suri no
your spare time?”

- 趣味 は 何 = “What is your hobby?”
shumi wa nani

- どの くらい やってる の = “How long have you
been doing it for?”

- 私達は 5年前 に 会って、以来 付き合っている
watashitachi wa gonenmai ni atte, irai tsukiatte iru
= “We met 5 years ago and have been dating
ever since”

- 君 に 会って 良かった = “I’m glad I met you”
kimi ni atte yokatta

- 何 の 話 を してるん です か = “What are you
nan no hanashi o shiterun desu ka
talking about?” (curiosity, not spite)

Common sentences

- 何 を お勧め します か = “What would you rec-
nani o osusumeshimasuka
ommend?”

- 5番 を ください = “I’ll take number 5, please”
goban o kudasai
(like menu item)

- 焼酎 の 第二 の 選択肢 を ください = “Give
shouchuu no daini no sentakushi o kudasai
me the second option of shochu”

- お茶を売りますか = “Do you sell tea?”
ocha o urimasuka
- いただきます = “Thank you for the meal” (before eating)
itadakimasu
- ご馳走様でした = “Thank you for the meal” (after eating)
gochisou sama deshita
- 聞いていただき/くれてありがとう = “Thank you for listening” (lit. thank you for giving me your listening)
kiite itadaki/kurete arigatou
- タクシー乗り場はどこですか = “Where is the taxi (place for boarding vehicles)?”
takushii noriba wa doko desu ka
- 私を手伝ってくれますか = “Can you please help me?”
watashi o tetsudatte kuremasuka
- このお金を円に変更してくれますか = “Could you change this money to yen, please?”
kono okane o en ni henkoushite kuremasuka
- 滞在期間は = “How long will you be staying (in Japan)?” (滞在 and 期間)
stay (noun) period/length of time
taizai kikan wa taizai kikan
- 僕の日本語の先生になれませんか = “Won’t you become my Japanese teacher?”
boku no nihongo no sensei ni naremasenka
- どっちかを選ぶっていうのは難しいはね = “It’s difficult to choose one or the other, huh?”
docchika erabu tte iu no wa muzukashii ha ne
- 準備できたか = “Are you ready?” (note use of できる)
junbi dekitaka
- あなたの電話を使ってくれますか = “Can I use your phone?”
anata no denwa o tsukatte kuremasuka
- 気を付けて = “Be careful”
ki o tsukete
- 仕方がない = “It cannot be helped”
shikatanai
- おめでとう = “Congratulations”
- 色々教えていただいてありがとう = “Thank you for teaching me all these (various) things.” Note the use of いただく to say “I’m receiving the teaching”
iroiro oshiete itadaite arigatou
- これまでの事、全部ありがとう = “Thank you for everything (up until now/so far)”
kore made no koto, zenbu arigatou
- あの女は何を言っていたか = “What was that woman saying?”
ano onna wa nani o itte ita ka
- 話すてどういう意味ですか = What does “話す” mean?
hanasu te dou iu imi desu ka
- 寿司に病み付き = “I am hooked on sushi”
sushi ni yamitsuki
- 確り食べて = “Eat well/eat your fill”
shikkari tabete
- ウニちょっと口に合わない = “I don’t like sea urchin” (lit. it doesn’t quite fit in my mouth)
uni chotto kuchi ni awanai
- 和食所に行く度に、割り箸を家へ持って帰ります = “Whenever I go to a Japanese restaurant, I bring the (disposable) chopsticks home”
washokusho ni iku tabi ni, waribashi o ie e motte kaerimasu
- 頭は確かか = “Are you insane?” (lit. are you sure of your head?)
atama wa tashika ka
- 頭が真白い = “Head went completely blank”
atama ga masshiroi
- ある意味で = In a sense
aru imi de
In a sense, I have a question
(ある意味で、質問がある)
aru imi de, shitsumon ga aru
- お腹が減ってて = “I am hungry” (lit. my stomach is decreasing/empty, could also use 腹)
onaka ga hette (i)te hara
- お腹空いた = “I am hungry” (lit. my stomach is void)
onaka suita
- 水族館に連れて行って = “Take me to the aquarium”
suizokukan ni tsurete itte
- お話があります = “We need to talk” (lit. there is/I have a story/something to say)
ohanashi ga arimasu
- 余計なお世話 = “None of your concern” (lit. too much help)
yokeina osewa
- あなたの自身をファック = “Fuck yourself”
anata no jishin o faku
- いらっしやいます = “Welcome (to our store)”
irasshaimasu
- すみません = “Excuse me, I’m sorry”
sumimasen
- ごめん(なさい) = “I’m sorry”
gomen (nasai)

- 助けてください = “Please help me”
tasukete kudasai
- 平気 = “no problem” (lit. unconcern)
heiki
- どうでも いい = “I don’t care/whatever”
dou demo ii
- 私は 現在 日本語 を 話す 方法 を 学んでいます
watashi wa genzai hanasu houhou o manande imasu
= “I’m currently learning how to speak Japanese”
- 日本 と 和食 が 好き だから 日本 に 住みたい
nihon to washoku ga suki dakara nihon ni sumitai
のですが、日本 に 住んだら 日本語 を 話さなきゃ
no desu ga, nihon ni sundara nihongo o hanasanakya
= “I like Japan and Japanese food so I want to
live in Japan, but if I live in Japan, I need to
speak Japanese”
- でも、熟練しません = “However, I am not
demo, jukurenshimasen
skilled (at it)”
- わかりました = “I understand”
wakarimashita
- わかりましたか = “Do you understand?”
wakarimashita ka
- わかりません = “I do not understand”
wakarimasen
- ゆっくり 言って ください = “Please go/speak
yukkuri itte kudasai
more slowly”
- もう 一度 言って ください = “Please repeat
mou ichido itte kudasai
once more” (一度 / ^{once} / ^{also/another/already/more} もう)
ichido mou
- ちょっと 待って ください = “Please wait a bit”
chotto matte kudasai
- 最近 大学院 を 済みました = “I recently fin-
saikin daigakuin o sumimashita
ished graduate school”
- 休暇 に 日本 に 来ました = “I came to Japan on
kyuuka ni nihon ni kimashita
vacation”
- 東京 の 行き方 を 教えてください = “Could
toukyou no ikikata o oshiete kudasai
you tell me the directions to Tokyo, please?”
- 料金は いくら ですか = “How much will it
ryoukin wa ikura desuka
cost?” (as in fees)
- バス乗車まで約15分待ち = “Wait approx-
basu jousha made yaku juugofun machi
imately 15 minutes to get on the bus” (lit. min-
utes until boarding the bus)
- 店は 開いて ありますか = “Is the shop open?”
mise wa aite arimasuka
- どこまで 行く の = “How far must we go?”
doko made iku no
- これで 時間 の 問題 だ = “It’s just a matter of
sore de jikan no mondai da
time now”
- なりゆきで = “It just happens” (not actually
nariyukide
100% certain of this)
- 既に 箸 を 持っています = “I already have
suden hashi o motte imasu
chopsticks”
- 聞いて ください = “Please listen”
kiite kudasai
- 十 ページ を 見て ください = “Please look at
juu peiji o mite kudasai
page 10”
- あの テレビ 番組 超 ウケる = “That TV show
ano terebi bangumi chou ukeru
is super funny”
- いつも 5 時 に 仕事 が 終わります = “I always
itsumo goji ni shigoto ga owarimasu
finish working at 5”
- 何 て 言ったら いい が 分からない = “I don’t
nan te ittara ii ga wakaranai
know what to say” (lit. I don’t know that which
would be good if I said it)
- やれやれ = “phew”
- 仕事 の こと で 頭 が いっぱい = “Work is con-
shigoto no koto de atama ga ippai
suming my thoughts/that’s all I can think about”
- アメリカ に 来て ください。案内しますよ
amerika ni kite kudasai. annai shimasu yo
= “You should visit America. I’ll show you
around!”
- 暗い 所 ちょっと 怖い んですが、まだ 行きます
kurai tokoro chotto kowai-n desu ga
= “I’m a little scared of the dark, but I’m still
going”
- キャップ の 切り口 で ケガ を する こと が あります
kyappu no kirikuchi de kega o suru koto ga arimasu
ので ご注意ください = “Please note that you
node gochuui kudasai
can hurt by the cut end of the cap”
- 部屋 が 汚い から 掃除 しなきゃ = “My room is
heya ga kitanai kara souji shinakya
dirty so I have to clean it”
- あの、私、残念ながら 小用 が ございます ので、
ano, watashi, zannen-nagara shouyou ga gozaimasu node,

このバーで失礼しますね = “Ah, unfortunately there’s a small matter I need to attend to, so I’ll take my leave from the bar”

- その悪い知らせは残念ながら本当だ =
sono warui shirase wa zannen-nagara hontou da
“Unfortunately, the bad news is true”
- 彼奴の事は気にしないよ = “Don’t worry
aitsu no koto wa ki ni shinai yo
about him”
- ふざけている暇はない = “We don’t have
fuzakete iru hima wa nai
time to fool around”

2.1.1 Conversation examples

Seeing a movie

- Did you see Star Wars?
スターウォーズを見たの
suta uoozu o mita no
- How was it? Was it interesting?
どうだった? 面白かった?
dou datta? omoshirokatta?
- It was boring. It would be good if you didn’t see it
つまらない。やめた方がいいよ
tsumaranai. yameta hou ga ii yo
- Maybe I’ll go see it, too?
私もその映画を見ようかな?
watashi mo sono eiga o miyou kana?
- 見に行ったら見ればいいよ = eh, you could
mi ni itte mireba ii yo
go see it if you want, but I don’t necessarily
recommend it/you’ll have to take responsibility
for seeing it (lit. It would be good if you tried
to go and see it)

Going to a restaurant

- What do you think about that restaurant?
あのレストランってどう思うの (って is
ano resutoran tte dou omou no
used to mean “about”)
- I think it’s meh
イマイチだと思う
imaichi da to omou
- Why do you think that?
何でそう思う?
nande sou omou?
- Because the food is good but the service is bad
食べ物美味しいけどサービスは悪いからね
tabemono wa oishii kedo saabisu wa warui kara ne
- Well, I’m treating you today
じゃ、今日は俺おごる
jya, kyou ha ore ogoru

No, you really don’t need to do that

- 無理しなくていいよ
muri shinakute ii yo
- When do you think would be good to go?
いつがいいと思うの
itsu ga ii to omou no
- I’m free now
今暇している
ima hima shiteiru
- Thank you for taking care (of me)
気にかけてくれてありがとう
ki ni kakete kurete arigatou
- It’s the thought that counts
その気持ちだけで十分
sono kimochi dake de juupun

Making a bet over a game

Would you like to make a bet (over this game)?

- 何か賭けるか
nanika kakeru ka
- I still don’t know what I will bet
まだ何を賭けるが分かりません
mada nani o kakeru ga wakarimasen
- I will explain everything from the beginning
最初から全て説明します
saisho kara subete setsumei-shimasu
- 「将棋王一度負ければ、普通の人になる」
“shougi ou ichido makereba, futsuu no hito ni naru”
というがあります
- There is a saying, “If the Shogi champion loses
even once, they become a normal person”
- In other words, losing is unacceptable (lit. unforgivable)
つまり一度も負けることは許せない
tsumari, ichido mo makeru koto wa yurusenai
- Well, can you just tell me already?
じゃもう教えてくれもいいんじゃねえか
ja mou oshiete kure mo ii n ja nee ka
- Can I just bet what I always bet?
いつも賭けている物ではだめですか
itsumo kakete iru mono dewa dame desuka
- More than that, (I’m more interested in learning) what you’d want if you win
それよりそちが勝った時に欲しい物があるか
sore yori sochi ga katta toki ni hoshii mono ga aru ka
- I haven’t really given much thought to anything other than Shogi
将棋のこと以外あまり考えたことはありません
Shogi no koto igai amari kangaeta koto ga arimasen
- I will (try to) think of something after I win
勝った後に考えてみます
katta ato ni kangaete mimasu

2.2 Expressions

Expressions

<i>nanji</i>	what time
<i>nanijin</i>	person of what nationality
<i>ano, etto</i>	“um” (to show uncertainty or hesitation, e.g. wanting to avoid being rude or interrupting someone)
<i>hai, ee, un</i>	yes (in decreasing formality)
<i>iee, iya, uun</i>	no (in decreasing formality) <i>iee</i> could also be “don’t mention it”
<i>sou</i>	so
<i>sou desu</i>	that is correct
<i>sou desu ka</i>	is that so?
<i>sou desu ne</i>	that’s right/let me see
<i>dou</i>	how
<i>— dou desu ka</i>	how about ...?/how is ...?
<i>いかが</i>	how about ...?
<i>demo</i>	but
<i>本当</i> <i>hontou</i>	true/truely
<i>ため</i> <i>tame</i>	for (as in for someone)
<i>用</i> <i>you</i>	for (as in for a purpose)
<i>-sai</i>	years old
<i>chigau</i>	that’s wrong (not polite)
<i>chigaimasu</i>	that’s wrong (polite)
<i>jaa</i>	well.../then, in that case, ...
<i>doumo</i>	indeed/very much (adverb) put in front of <i>arigato</i> or <i>sumimasen</i> , it emphasizes the second word. Alone, it means “thank you”
<i>— をください</i> <i>o kudasai</i>	please give me ____
<i>— をお願いします</i> <i>o onegaishimasu</i>	____ please (for more abstract concepts, e.g. repairs)
<i>douzo</i>	here it is (polite, e.g. menu); Also, when waiting for someone else to give over something (e.g. a phone operator would ask for your name) Also, “After you”
<i>お願いします</i> <i>onegaishimasu</i>	please
<i>tokorode</i>	by the way

Expressions continued

<i>だから</i> <i>dakara</i>	so/therefore
<i>つまり</i>	in other words
<i>方法</i> <i>houhou</i>	method
<i>まさか</i> <i>masaka</i>	__ 方法 = “how to __”
<i>又は</i> <i>matawa</i>	no way
<i>又</i> <i>matawa</i>	or
<i>ついて</i> <i>tsuite</i>	about/regarding <small>discussion about politics</small> 政治についての議論 <small>seiji ni tsuite no giron</small> What are you talking about? 何について話していますか <small>nani ni tsuite hanashite imasuka</small>
<i>半端ない</i> <i>hanpanai</i>	very good (lit. not half-assed)
<i>相変わらず</i> <i>aikawarazu</i>	as usual (e.g. as usual, I’m busy)
<i>面倒くさい</i> <i>mendoukusai</i>	omg/what a pain
<i>気を付けて</i> <i>ki o tsukete</i>	be careful/take care
<i>良かった</i> <i>yokatta</i>	good/oh good
<i>是非</i> <i>zeshi</i>	by all means/I’d love to/certainly
<i>のみ</i> <i>dake</i>	only only/just (e.g. お茶だけをください) just tea, please
<i>すら</i> <i>sura</i>	even Won’t you tell me even your name? e.g. 名すら教えていただけませんか <small>na sura oshiete itadakemasenka</small>
<i>しか</i> <i>shika</i>	nothing but (more intense version of “only”) Used with negative tense, e.g. You can only think about yourself 自分のことしか考えることができない <small>jibun no koto shika kangaeru koto ga dekinai</small>
<i>こうして</i>	thus (lit. in this way)
<i>自業自得</i> <i>jigoujitoku</i>	What goes around comes around You reap what you sow
<i>とにかく</i>	anyway (とにかく 買った) <small>I bought it anyway</small> <small>tonikaku kacchatta</small>
<i>関係ない</i> <i>kankeinai</i>	none of your business (関係) <small>relation</small> <small>kankei</small>

2.3 Saying “please”

Ways to say “please” from least to most formal:

Casual

- *ください* = Can be used when asking for an item (e.g. at a restaurant). Translates to “[command], please.” Note how you’re not actually asking, your commanding politely.
- *くれます* = Same as *ください*, except a bit more respectful. Still quite casual. It would be better to use *ください* because it is more

common and I don't completely understand くれ
れます

More Respectful

- くれますか = Translates to “Can you do ___,
kuremasuka
please?”
- もらえますか = More respectful. Also trans-
moraemasuka
lates to “Can you do ___, please?”

Most Respectful

- くださいますか = Translates to “Can you do
kudasaimasuka
___, please?”
- いただけますか = The most respectful. Also
itadakemasuka
translates to “Can you do ___, please?”

See how this mimics that of the Want section,
where ください < もらう < いただく. You can also
see how, for example, いただけますか uses *e* instead
of *i*, which is done when you are saying you can/can't
do something (see Potential form).

3 Adjectives/Adverbs

Adjectives

元気 genki	fine/healthy/good (state of being)
大丈夫 daijoubu	alright
いい ii	good
良い yo/i i	good (slightly more formal)
悪い warui	bad
大きい ookii	big
小さい chiisai	small
高い takai	high/tall/expensive (<i>taka</i> = “high”)
安い yasui	cheap (<i>yasu</i> = “low”)
低廉 teiren	inexpensive
早い hayai	early (or fast, depending on context)
遅い osoi	late (as in arrival)
沢山 / たくさん takusan takusan	a lot (for nouns) e.g. a lot of money
何分 / いくつか nanibun ikutsuka	some
凄い sugoi	amazing/great/terrible
難しい muzukashii	difficult
簡単 kantan	easy/simple
美味しい oishii	delicious
うまい umai	good/top-notch/splendid
最近 saikin	recently
約 / 頃 yaku koro	about/approximately (see <u>Numbers</u>)
ほど / くらい	
着々 chakuchaku	steadily (着) arrive
素晴らしい subarashii	wonderful
重要 juuyou	important

Comparisons/relativities

すぎる	too (much of something)
最悪 saiaku	worst (最 悪) bad most waru
抜き nuki	without (麵 抜き で) without noodles men nuki de

More adjectives

色々 iroiro	various (also: various things)
忙しい isogashii	busy
公共 koukyou	public
他 hoka/-ta	other (e.g. 他人 ^{other people} ta no hito)
別 betsu	different/separate/distinction
十分 juubun	sufficient/satisfactory/enough
確か tashika	sure/certain (確かに ^{certainly} tashikani)
大変 taihen	hard, grueling, tiring
イマイチ imaichi	meh
中級 chuukyuu	intermediate (level)
超 chou	super _
ウケる ukeru	funny
無駄 muda	useless/waste
無駄に muda ni	wastefully
無駄にする muda ni suru	to waste
必要 hitsuyou	necessary
無理 muri	impossible
大体 daitai	generally
実力者 jitsuryokusha	talented person
つまらない	boring
わざと	intentional
残念 ^{adj} / 残念ながら ^{adv} zannen / zannen na gara	unfortunate(ly)
微妙 (に) bimyou	subtle(ly)/slight(ly) slight negative connotation can be used as a response to ^{What do you think of these clothes?} e.g. この服はどう思う kono fuku ha dou omou

People/qualities

美 bi	beauty (noun)
美しい [—] utsuku shii	beautiful _
美しい髪 utsukushii kami	beautiful hair
美しい目 utsukushii me	beautiful eyes
美人 bijin	beautiful person
可愛い kawaii	cute
楽しい tanoshii	fun
優しい yasashii	kind/friendly
格好いい kakkouii	cool (stylish, etc.)
社交的 shakou teki	sociable
大人しい otonashii	shy/quite
健康的 kenkou teki	healthy (^{healthy food} 健康的な食べ物 ^{kenkoutekina tabemono})
見た目重視 mitame juushi	focus on appearances
顔食い menkui	only dates hot people (lit. face eater) mostly refers to men
美け bike	pretty/pretty face (mostly refers to girls)
不細工 busaiku	unsightly, homely, plain, ugly
人気 ninki	popular (^{popular person} 人気者 ^{ninkimono})

Emotions/states of being

気持ち kimochi	feeling/mood (emotional)
気分 kibun	feeling/mood (physical)
気持ち悪い komochi warui	Feeling bad (physically)
感じ kanji	(how one is) feeling I feel happy (嬉しいで感じ) ureshii de kanji from -ru verb 感じる
幸せ shiawase	happiness/good fortune
嬉しい ureshii	happy
悲しい kanashii	sad
怖い kowai	scared
寂しく sabishiku	lonely
忙しい isogashii	busy
酷い hidoi	terrible
キモい kimoi	bad/creepy (not physically) Made from an abbreviation of 気持ち悪い and is described as the opposite of 格好いい kakkouiii
空気読めない kuuki yomenai ケイワイ	airheaded/cannot read the situation
狂しい kuruoshii	crazy/insane/lunatic
金持ち kanemochi	rich
恥ずかしい hazukashii	embarrassed
懐かしい natsukashii	nostalgic

Temperature/environment

暑い atsui	hot
adj noun 冷たい / 寒い tsumetai samui	cold
暖かい ataakai	warm
暗い kurai	dark
自然 shizen	nature/natural
汚い kitanai	dirty

Note that らしい can sometimes be added to the end of words to say “like _”, e.g. それは君らしい
That is (so) like you
sore wa kimirashii

The kanji 良 can be read as both *yo* and *i* and can be written both as kanji or as hiragana. However, both the kanji form and the *yo* form are more formal

than the *i* form. There are also a few times when they can't be exchanged, such as in よかった (it was good/good (as a standalone statement)).

Adverbs

大抵 taitei	usually/almost/mostly
通常 tsuujou	normally
よく yoku	often
時々 tokidoki	sometimes
度に tabi ni	every time
現在 genzai	currently
しばらく shibaraku	for a while
かなり kanari	(is) quite/rather/pretty _ the pollen is pretty awful e.g. 花粉がかなり酷い kafun ga kanari hidoi
とても totemo	very [adverb] e.g. very quickly
すごく sugoku	very (interchangeable with とても) Used when things exceed expectations
ちょっと chotto	a little
少し sukoshi	a little/somewhat (more formal)
あまり + neg. verb amari	not very much
全然 + neg. verb zenzen	never/not at all
全 zen	all (part of word)
全部 zenbu	all (of something) e.g. 全部の猫 zenbu no neko Not used with “people”
全て subete	all (of something) used with “people” e.g. 全ての人
ゆっくり yukkuri	slowly
一人で hitori de	alone
一緒 issho	together
マジ maji	seriously awesome seriously (マジ半端ない) maji hanpanai
突然 totsuzen	suddenly/abruptly/all at once
確り shikkari	firm, steady, reliable
本来 honrai	originally/essentially/primarily
既に suden	already
以来 irai	since/henceforth

Note that 大抵 (^{taitei}“in general/usually”) is used when talking about *concepts* in general whereas よく (^{yoku}“often/usually”) is used when talking about *frequency*. They can be interchanged somewhat, and the usage isn’t all that strict, but you’ll notice 大抵 being used in cases such as “For the most part, blah blah blah.”

Examples:

- 通常, 子供は英語と日本語を学びます
tsuujou, kodomo wa eigo to nihongo o manabimasu
= “Normally, children learn English and Japanese”
- 週末はたいてい何をしますか
Shuumatsu wa taitei nani o shimasuka
= “What do you usually do on weekends?”
- 私はよく週末に居酒屋に行きます
watashi wa yoku shuumatsu ni izakaya ni ikimasu
= “I often go to bars on weekends”

通常 is used in the same context as 大抵, but 通常 means “normally” as opposed to “usually/in general/for the most part.”

4 Grammar

4.1 Particles

A particle is a part of speech that connects parts of sentences. It doesn’t usually do anything other than link words. For example, “up” in “tidy up the room” is a particle because “up” doesn’t mean anything but helps convey the meaning of the sentence.

Note that sometimes particles are dropped in spoken language.

Sentence structure is quite flexible and can be formatted in multiple different ways. Usually, noun-particle combinations are followed by adjectives/verbs, which are followed by a sentence-final particle, such as *ka*, *yo*, or *ne*. A typical sentence is structured like:

topic は time place で object を verb

I will study Japanese in the library today

e.g. 私は今日図書館で日本語を勉強します
Watashi wa kyou toshokan de nihongo o benkyoushimasu

Similarly,

topic は frequency time に goal へ verb

I often return home at around seven o'clock

e.g. 私はよく七時頃うちへ帰ります
Watashi wa yoku shichijigoro uchi e kaerimasu

4.1.1 は (wa)

Serves as the topic of discussion. Can often be interchanged with が (see “wa” vs “ga”). Cannot

follow question words, like *dore* or *nani*.

Examples:

- 車は私が運転しました = “As for the car, I was the one who drove it/I drove the car”
kuruma wa watashi ga untenshimashita
- たなかさんはお金を持っています = “Tanaka-san has money (he is rich)”
Tanaka-san wa okane o motte imasu

4.1.2 が (ga)

Used to show the subject of the sentence. A more in-depth discussion is shown in “wa” vs “ga”. Can also mean “but.”

Examples:

- あそこに図書館があります = “There is a library over there”
asoko ni toshokan ga arimasu
- たなかさんがお金を持っています = “Tanaka has money (on his person right now)”
Tanaka-san ga okane o motte imasu
- 行きたくないですが、まだ行っています = “I don’t want to go, but I’m still going”
ikitakunai desu ga, mada itte imasu

4.1.3 の (no)

Used to connect two nouns. Very versatile because it can be used to describe attributes of objects, show ownership, and so on. *no* also separates parts of phone numbers. When using の, the main idea comes after the qualifier. Also used for informal questions, in which case it’s placed at the end of the sentence like か.

Examples:

- New York daigaku no gakusei = “A student at New York University”
- Takeshi-san no denwa bangou = “Takeshi’s phone number”
- Daigaku no sensei = “College professor”
- Nihongo no gakusei = “A student who studies the Japanese language”
- Kaneki-kun no okaasan wa koukou no sensei desu = “Kaneki-kun’s mother is a high school teacher”
- Kyoushitsu no naka = “Inside the classroom” (*no naka* = “in/inside of”)
- Kono tatemono no naka ni wa ningen ga arimasen = “There are no humans in this building”

4.1.4 を (o)

Links verbs with direct objects. Placed after a direct object before the verb being done on it.

Examples:

- *watashi wa koohii o nomimasu* = “I drink coffee”
- *ongaku o kikimasu* = “I listen to music”
- *terebi o mimasu* = “I watch TV”

4.1.5 も (mo)

Means “too”, such as “Bob, too, is hungry” or “She bought shoes, too.” も replaces は, が, and を but not other particles like に.

Examples:

- ボブは日本人です。スーザンも日本人です。
Bob wa nihonjin desu. Suusan mo nihonjin desu.
= “Bob is Japanese. Susan is, too.”
- メアリーさんは昨日シャツを買いました。
Mary-san wa kinou shatsu o kaimashita.
靴も買いました = “Mary bought a shirt
Kutsu mo kaimashita
yesterday. She also bought shoes”
- トミーさんと私は先週京都に行きました。
Tommy-san to watashi wa senshuu ni ikimashita.
大阪にも行きました。 = “Tommy and I went
Osaka ni mo ikimashita.
to Kyoto last week. We went to Osaka, too.”

4.1.6 と (to)

Commonly used for “and” or “together with” e.g. “I took a book (together) with me” or “I bought a book and a pen”). It is also used to **quote** relative clauses, i.e. talk about what someone was saying or thinking. Note that って is used to mean “about.”

Examples:

With

- 私は本と鉛筆を買った = “I bought a book
watashi wa hon to enpitsu o katta
and a pen”
- 私はあなたと一緒にいきます = “I will go
watashi wa anata to issho ni ikimasu
(together) with you”

Quote

- 今日、僕は大学に行かないと思う = “I
kyou, boku wa daigaku ni ikanai to omou
think I will not go to college today”
- 彼はあなたに何と言ったか = “What did he
kare wa anata ni nani to ittaka
say to you?”
What do you think about that restaurant?
- あのレストランってどう思うの
ano resutoran tte dou omou no

4.1.7 で (de)

Indicates:

- Where the event described by the verb takes place.
- Says what instruments are used for the verb (e.g. with chopsticks).
- Says how much something cost (e.g. I bought this for 500 yen).
- “In” or “within” when talking about time (e.g. we’ll arrive in 1 hour) or scope (e.g. more than anything in the world).
- Used to mean “because of” or “due to” (e.g. I was absent because I had a cold).
- Used to say “and” for [noun *and* verb] sentences (e.g. I am a student and I study Japanese).

Examples:

- *watashi wa toshokan de hon o yomimasu* = “I read books at the library” (location)
- *watashi wa uchi de terebi o mimasu* = “I will watch TV at home” (location)
- 箸でご飯を食べます = “I eat my meals with
hashi de gohan o tabemasu
chopsticks” (instrument)
- 日本語で話します = “I talk in Japanese” (in-
nihongo de hanashimasu
strument)
- 私はバスで駅に行きました = “I went to the
watashi wa basu de eki ni ikimashita
station by bus” (instrument)
- テレビで映画を見ました = “I saw a movie on
terebi de eiga o mimashita
TV” (instrument)
- 私は学生で日本語を勉強します = “I am
watashi wa gakusei de nihongo o benkyoushimasu
a student and I study Japanese” (and)
- 私は二十分で着きます = “I will arrive in 20
watashi wa nijuupun de tsukimasu
minutes”

4.1.8 に (ni)

Multiple uses including:

- The goal towards which things move
- The time an event takes place
- The recipient of an action

Not used for:

In these cases, simply drop に and continue with sentence

- Regular intervals (e.g. sometimes, often, rarely)
- When using “when” (e.g. “When I go, ...”)
- Time relative to the present (e.g. today, tomorrow)

- When using ^{approximately} 頃 (頃 replaces に)

Optional for:

- Talking about parts of the day (e.g. this morning, at night, this weekend)

Note the difference between に and で: で shows where something *takes place* (e.g. “we will run at the park”) whereas に shows where something is *headed to* (e.g. “we will run to the park”).

Examples with に:

- 私は 今日 学校 に 行きません = “I will not go to school today” (movement)
watashi wa kyou gakkou ni ikimasen
- *watashi wa uchi ni kaerimasu* = “I will return home” (movement)
- *gogo juuichiji ni nemasu* = “I will go to bed at 11 o’clock PM” (time)
- 私は 毎日 午前 九 時半 に 起きます
watashi maichi ni gozen kyuuji wa o
= “I get up at 9:30 AM every day”
- *nichiyoubi ni Kyoto ni ikimasu* = “I will go to Kyoto on Sunday” (movement + time)
- 私は 友人 に 贈り物 を 与えた = “I gave my friend a gift” (recipient)
watashi wa yuujin ni okurimono o ataeta
- 来月 の 末 に 京都 へ 行きます = “I will go to Kyoto at the end of next month”
raigetsu no sue ni kyouto e ikimasu

Examples without に:

- 明日 来ます = “I will come tomorrow”
ashita kimasu
- 毎晩 テレビ を 見ます = “I watch TV every night/evening”
maiban terebi o mimasu
- いつ 行きますか = “When will you go?”
itsu ikimasu ka
- 午後 十一時 頃 寝ます = “I will go to bed around 11 o’clock PM.”
gogo juuichiji goro nemasu

Examples with optional に:

- 私は 朝 (に) 新聞 を 読みます = “I read the newspaper in the morning”
watashi wa asa (ni) shinbun o yomimasu
- あなた は 週末 (に) 何 を しますか = “What do (or will) you do on weekends?”
anata wa shuumatsu (ni) nani o shimasu ka

4.1.9 へ (e)

Also indicates the goal of movement (like the first objective of *ni*). Note the pronunciation is “e,” not “he.”

Examples:

- *watashi wa kyou gakkou e ikimasen* = “I will not go to school today” (movement)
- *watashi wa uchi e kaerimasu* = “I will return home” (movement)

4.1.10 か (ka)

Added at the end of a sentence, this makes the sentence a question. か can be thought of as the equivalent of a question mark. Example: どうです か = “How is it?”

4.1.11 ね (ne)

Added at the end of a sentence, this means “right?” like “This is cooked, right?” Also used in expressions when you imply you want some recognition (e.g. そうですね = “Is that so?”).

Examples:

- *Kore wa niku ja nai desu ne* = “This is not meat, is it?”
- *Lee san no senkou wa bungakou desu ne* = “Ms. Lee, your major is literature, right?”

4.1.12 よ (yo)

Added at the end of a sentence, this means “I tell you/let me assure you,” like “Mr. Smith is leaving, in case you were wondering.” Also, for exclamation (like “!”).

Examples:

- *Tonkatsu wa sakana ja nai desu yo* = “Let me assure you, ‘tonkatsu’ is not fish.”

4.1.13 でも (demo)

The word でも usually means “but,” however it can also be used as a particle. It’s meaning changes depending on what it’s placed after.

Noun/adjective/condition

- At (condition/adjective) (e.g. at least, at best)

I can read a book for at least an hour
 – 私は 最低 でも 一時間 本 を 読める
watashi wa saitei demo ichijikan hon o yomu
 least / lowest
 (最低)
 saitei

The meaning doesn’t matter/it doesn’t mean anything
 – どう いう こと でも ない (lit.
dou iu koto demo nai
 not whatever the meaning)

- Even (if)/no matter how

He works even on Sundays
- 彼は日曜日でも働きます
kare wa nichiyoubi demo hatarakimasu

I'm going to leave even if it's raining
- 雨でも出発します
ame demo shuppatsushimasu

Mt. Fuji can be seen even from Tokyo
- 東京からでも富士山見えます
toukyou kara demo fujisan miemasu

- Or something

I'd like to drink coffee or something
- コーヒーでも飲みたい
koohii demo nomitai

- How about (when making an offer)

How about going to a movie?
- 映画でも見ますか
eiga demo mimasu ka

Question/indefinite word

- ~ever (e.g. whatever, whenever)

Any time (whenever) is good
- いつでもいい
itsu demo ii

I don't care/however is good
- どうでもいい
dou demo ii

I will eat anything
- 何でも食べます
nandemo tabemasu

4.2 “wa” vs “ga”

The particle は actually marks the topic of discussion, not the subject. The topic is a *non-grammatical* concept, so it doesn't technically have an equivalent in English. The particle が, on the other hand, is the subject of the sentence. You should think of it such that words marked with が stake their claim on a sentence and shows its ownership. While は and が can often be used interchangeably while still being grammatically correct, they have different meanings/implications.

The topic is essentially what is being discussed. For example, one could say *Kaneki kun, shuumatsu wa taitei nani o shimasuka* (“Kaneki, what do you usually do on weekends?”) or *Kyou wa Kyoto ni ikimasu* (“I’m going to Kyoto today”). In this way, we can see that は can *promote other expressions* (in these examples, both were time expressions) as the topic of each sentence. It’s sort of like saying, for example, “Let’s talk about weekends; what do you do on weekends?” or “Let me say what I will do today; I will go to Kyoto” respectively. This is an important distinction for は. Likewise, は can be used in order to direct the listener’s attention, thereby inviting a comment/completion of the sentence by the listener. For example, *Bangohan wa* (“How about dinner?”)

does not stand as a subject or time (in fact, it’s a direct object), but its use before は means that it is inviting the listener to respond.

The subject, on the other hand, is what is doing the action. While は says what we’re talking about, が will pull out a particular object as being the highlight of the sentence or to show emphasis. For example, consider the sentences below:

“Who are you?”

私はデボンです
watashi wa Devon desu
“Who is Devon?”

私がデボンです
watashi ga Devon desu

Note how the first sentence is a general question and requires no emphasis. The answer to the second question, however, points out that “I am Devon (not the other person)”. Likewise, we could ask:

“What do you think of Japan?”

日本は面白いです (Japan is interesting)

nihon wa omoshiroi desu
“Which country is interesting?”

日本が面白いです
nihon ga omoshiroi desu

See how the second answer is implying that “it is Japan that’s interesting (as opposed to elsewhere).” This is why が is used for question words, like だれ が.

Further, は is often use when contrasting different things. For example, the sentence *watashi wa chikoku shita* would translate to “I was late” but it could have two different implications: (1) used in a discussion centered around the speaker, or (2) used when pointing out that some other person wasn’t late (or it wasn’t known if they were late). This seems confusing (and it is), but this is why topics are often left out of sentences if they can be. When they are included, sometimes the meaning of the speaker can be somewhat unclear.

A good example of this is to consider trying to give someone a compliment. If you were to say 目はきれいですね (your eyes are beautiful), that ^{me wa kirei desu ne} could imply that their other features were mediocre. However, if you said 目がきれいですね instead, it ^{me ga kirei desu ne} would just be a matter-of-fact statement and there would not be any room for confusion.

が is used when comparing different things. As opposed to は, which says “A has something, but B does not,” が instead says “A has something, and B may to a more/less degree.” This is why が is used in the common comparison phrase ^{B is more ... than A} AよりBのほうが... ^{A yori B no hou ga ...}

This difference of contrasting (は) and comparing (が)

is specifically why は has that added implication of that the opposite is true of something not mentioned in the sentence (like “I was late [but he wasn’t]” or “Your eyes are beautiful [but the rest of you isn’t].”)

When in doubt, you can use an (imperfect) test, the removal/comma test. For example, if you can remove the noun-particle part of a sentence without losing meaning or if you can add a comma without it sounding weird, then は is probably the right particle. If removing the noun-particle part loses critical meaning or adding a comma makes it sound weird, you should probably use が. Again, this test isn’t perfect, but it helps you get an intuition for which to use.

For example, (*watashi wa/ga*) *kuruma o untenshimasu* could have the *watashi wa/ga* removed and would still convey the correct meaning; likewise, *watashi, kuruma o untenshimasu* still makes sense, so は would likely be acceptable. However, *asoko ni (toshokan wa/ga) arimasu* would lose all its meaning if the pair were removed; likewise, “there a library, is” doesn’t really make sense, so we use が.

Summary

は

- Marks the topic of a sentence
- Contrasts one noun against others (that don’t have the first’s quality)
- Used when the noun-particle combo can be left out without losing meaning (e.g. when elaborating on things already known to the listener)
- Examples:
 - 車は私が運転しました = “As for *kuruma wa watashi ga untenshimashita* the car, I was the one who drove it/I drove the car”
 - たなかさんはお金を持っています = *Tanaka-san wa okane o motte imasu* “Tanaka has money (he is rich)”
 - 予定はありますか = “Do you have any *yotei wa arimasu ka* plans?”

が

- Marks the subject of a sentence
- Compares multiple nouns that may or may not all have the same qualities
- Used to bring one noun in particular out from a group or add emphasis on the subject; separates/calls out one noun from others
- Used when the noun-particle combo cannot be left out without losing meaning (e.g. when answering “who drove the car?”)
- Used when adding new things/information to a

conversation about a topic or when making a series of unrelated statements

- Used when describing things with adjectives or when using question words
- Marks objects of *potential-form* verbs (such as “can [verb]” or “able to [verb]”)
- Connects clauses with a meaning of “but” or “despite”
- Examples:

There is a library over there
– あそこ に 図書館 があります
asoko ni toshokan ga arimasu

Tanaka has money (on his person right now)
– たなかさん が お金 を 持っています
Tanaka-san ga okane o motte imasu

Do you have a plan?
– 予定 がありますか
yotei ga arimasu ka

When I was a child, I liked tempura more than sushi
– 子供の 時、寿司 より 天ぷら の ほうが 好き だった
kodomo no toki, sushi yori tempura no hou ga suki datta

4.3 And

“And” is somewhat tricky in Japanese because there is no single word to use. Rather, it depends on sentence structure:

Particles for *and*

Noun + noun	と
Verb + verb	~-te form of first verb Second verb’s tense defines first verb’s tense
Adjective + adjective	~te form of first adjective
Noun + verb	で
[Sentence]. And then, [sentence]	それから

Examples:

- 私は本と鉛筆を買った = “I bought a book *watashi wa hon to enpitsu o katta* and a pen”
- 私はあなたと一緒にいきます = “I will go *watashi wa anata to issho ni ikimasu* (together) with you”
- 私は晩御飯を食べてテレビを見ました = *watashi wa bangohan o tabete terebi o mimashita* “I ate dinner and watched TV”
- 私の犬は可愛くて小さいです = “My dog *watashi no inu wa kawaikute chiisai desu* is cute and small”
- 私は学生で日本語を勉強します = “I am *watashi wa gakusei de nihongo o benkyoushimasu* a student and I am studying Japanese”
- 我々は東京に行きました。
wareware wa Toukyou ni ikimashita.

Then, we went to Kyoto
それから、京都に行きました。
Sorekara, Kyouto ni ikimashita

4.4 Invitations

Invitations are formed using the negative present conjugation of a verb along with a question ending, i.e. *-masenka*. For example, to invite someone to lunch, you would say *Hirugohan o tabemasenka* = “Would you like to get lunch?” You would not use *-masuka* because that just becomes a question: *Hirugohan o tabemasuka* = “Do you eat lunch?”

4.5 Negations

There are many ways to do sentence negations, i.e. saying something is not the case. *ja nai desu* is the most colloquial. *Ja* is actually a contraction of *de wa*, and the phrase *nai desu* can be formally replaced with *imasen* or *arimasen*.

When negating a sentence of the form *X wa Y desu*, where *X* and *Y* are nouns, we can replace *desu* with *ja nai desu*. For example, *Yamada san wa gakusei ja nai desu* = “Mr. Yamada is not a student.”

The varying levels of formality mean that this sentence can also be written/spoken as:

Yamada san wa gakusei ja arimasen (more conservative speech style)

Yamada san wa gakusei de wa arimasen (formal, appropriate for writing)

Note that this does not work for adjectives, thus we cannot say *Oishii ja nai desu* when trying to say “That was not delicious.” Instead, we say *Oishii nai desu* (will be described in more detail later).

Examples:

- *Takeshi-san wa amari benkyoushimasen* = “Takeshi doesn’t study much”
- *Watashi wa zenzen terebi o mimasen* = “I never watch TV/I do not watch TV at all”

4.6 Questions

Question Words

何 nan/nani	what (e.g. <i>kore wa nan desuka</i>) nan is used before <i>desu</i> or a “counter”, such as <i>ji</i> . nani is used before a particle
どれ	which (one)
どの	which ____
どこ	where
だれ	who
だれの ____	whose ____
何故 / なんで naze	why (first is “what reason”)
どう	how/why/what (depends on context)
どうですか	how is it
どうして	what happened
何と	how
いつ	when
いくら	how much
いくつ	how many
どのぐらい	how long
どんな	what kind of

Adding a particle to the end of a question word converts it to a new word that answers the question with a particular amount. For the most part, the following particles have respective effects:

- も - all
- か - some
- でも - any

Some question words with particles

いつ	も	always (cannot mean “never”) To say never, use the past tense with <i>こと</i> (see examples)
いつ	か	someday/sometime
いつ	でも	whenever
何	も	nothing (isn’t used for “everything”)
何	か	something
何	でも	anything
誰	も	everybody
誰	か	somebody
誰	でも	anybody
いくつ	も	several
いくつ	か	some number of things
いくつ	でも	any number of things

Examples:

- How much is this?
• *これはいくらですか*
Kore wa ikura desu ka

- How much is this watch?
この時計はいくらですか
Kono tokei wa ikura desu ka

That watch is 3,500 yen
その時計は三千五百円です
Sono tokei wa sanzengohyaku en desu

- Which one is your bag?
どれがあなたのカバンですか
Dore ga anata no kaban desu ka

- Which bag is yours?
Dono kaban ga anata no desu ka

- Which bag is this?
これはどのカバンですか
Kore wa dono kaban desu ka

- Whose bag is this?
これはだれのカバンですか
Kore wa dare no kaban desu ka

That is Susan's bag.
それはスーザンのカバンです
Sore wa Suusan no kaban desu

- What is your phone number?
電話番号は何ですか
(Anata no) denwa bangou wa nan desu ka

- Excuse me. What time is it right now?
すみません、今何時ですか
Sumimasen. Ima nanji desuka

It is 8:30 AM.
午前八時半です
gozen hachiji han desu

- Have you ever been to Japan?
日本に行ったことがありますか
nihon ni itta koto ga arimasuka

- I have never been to Japan
日本に行ったことがない
nihon ni itta koto ga nai

- どのくらいやってるの = “How long have you been doing it for?”

- どうですか = “How is it?”

- どうでしたか = “How was it?”

- どうやって = “How do you do it?”

- どうした = “What happened?”

- これでどうかな = “How about this/how is this?”

- 話すてどういう意味ですか = What does
hanasu te dou iu imi desu ka
“話す” mean?

“To speak” という意味です = “It means to
“To speak” to iu imi desu
speak”

- どういうこと = “What do you mean/what is
dou iu koto
this/what is going on?”

- 彼らの事をどうと思いましたか = “What
karera no koto o dou to omoimashitaka
did you think of them?”

4.6.1 When

There are multiple words for “when” depending on the situation, described below.

When

<i>itsu</i>	Only for questions
<i>toki</i>	Specifying when something took place

For *toki*, the format is “<clause 1> *toki*, <clause 2>.” The first clause should always be the *when* clause; this means that the following two sentences are equivalent: “I ate a lot when I was in Japan” == “When I was in Japan, I ate a lot”.

Also, you **cannot** use either *desu* or the *masu* conjugation of a verb in the first clause.

Finally, since *toki* is a noun, use *no* to connect it to other nouns.

You don’t have to change clause 1 to be in the past tense if you don’t want to, but if you want to, you can using *datta*. Doing so, you will need to drop the *no*.

Examples:

itsu

- いつ日本に来ますか = “When will you come
Itsu nihon ni kimasuka
to Japan?”
- いつ日本語を勉強し始めたの = “When did
Itsu nihongo o benkyoushi hajimeta no
you start learning Japanese?”
- じゃあ、いつがいい = “Then, when is good for
Jaa, itsu ga ii
you?”
- いつから働きますか = “When do/will you
itsu kara hatarakimasu ka
start work?”
- いつまで日本にいるの = “How long/until
itsu made nihon ni iru no
when will you be in Japan?”

toki

- 雨のとき、よく家で本を読みます =
Ame no toki, yoku uchi de hon o yomimasu
“When it rains, I often read books at home”
- 私はあまり映画を見ません = “I don’t see
Watashi wa amari eiga o mimasen
many movies.”
- 映画を見るのとき、よく午後頃見ます =
Eiga o miru no toki yoku gogo goro mimasu
“When I watch movies, I usually go around the
afternoon.”
- 高いじゃないです。安いですよ = “It’s not
Takai jaa nai desu. Yasui desu yo.
expensive. It’s cheap!”

4.7 Comparisons

より means “more than” and is often used in comparisons. The position of the things being compared is opposite of that in English; e.g. “A is more _ than B” → “B より A _”.

Examples:

- It is better to leave than to stay
滞在するよりも出発する方がマシだ
taizai-suru yori mo shuppatsu-suru kata ga mashi da
- It was faster than I thought
それは思ったより早い
sore wa omotta yori hayai
- You are more of a problem than that
それより問題は お前だよ
sore yori mondai ha omae da yo

4.8 If

There are a few ways to say “if.” Essentially, they all follow the format:

“CONDITIONAL + *particle* + RESULT”

but the *particle* changes based on the context of the sentence and the *conditional*:

- **たら - Constant and hypothetical situations but not contextual**, and particularly good for making statements (e.g. if it’s not being talked about, you could say “if you drop the ball, it will fall” or “if you go to Japan, I will join you”). Is used for **requests, recommendations, prohibition, order, or when the result depends on the completion of the conditional**, and is kind of like saying **when** as well (“When it stops raining, let’s go jogging”). Has a sense of looking to the past (use of ~た), which is why it could possibly be translated to “when.”
 - たら uses the past tense of the verb,
e.g. 食べたたら
- **なら - Contextual hypothetical situations** (e.g. if someone is talking about going to Japan, you can say “If you go to Japan, I will join you”). Also, as たら is more past-looking, you could use なら to show **decisions, judgements, and opinions**. It *cannot* be used for requests, recommendations, etc. (the things that たら is used for).
 - なら uses the plain tense of the verb,
e.g. 食べるなら
- **と - Can replace either たら or なら; used for natural occurrences/constant results** (e.g. if you drop the ball, it will fall).
 - なら uses the plain tense of the verb,
e.g. 食べると

- **ば - Can replace either たら or なら**, but can only be used in **hypothetical** situations, not constant situations since you’d use と instead. Tends to be used to **emphasize the conditional part** of the sentence instead of the resulting part (e.g. “IF my friend goes, then I will go, too”) or to **make a suggestion** (e.g. “what if we tried it this way”). Technically, there are some other rules with ば but they get somewhat complicated (e.g. if the conditional and result both have the same subject, you can’t use this).

ば verb conjugations

Verbs 来る kuru	Change the <i>u</i> to <i>e</i> 来れば kureba
い-adjectives ない negatives 楽しい 死にたくない	Replace final い with ければ 楽しければ 死にたくないければ
Nouns な-adjectives 元気	Add であれば 元気であれば

Summary

- たら and なら tend to be the anchors of *if* and can be replaced with ば or と depending on the specific situation
- たら has the fewest restrictions, followed by ば and なら
- ば is used for recommendations, so it may come across as you telling someone to do something
- As a simple base to use while learning initially, **try to use たら in all situations except contextual, in which case use なら**. However, it’s clear that they overlap in a lot of areas, so you’ll just have to listen a lot to find out the common usages.

Summary

	Constant	Hypoth.	One-time	Contextual
と	X			
ば		X	X	X
たら	X	X	X	
なら	X	X		X

One last note: もし means “if by any chance” and is a supplementary addition to a sentence. It can’t be used for constant expressions and is added to the very beginning of the sentence.

Examples:

たら

If it's ok/you don't mind, would you like to meet again?

- もしよかったらまた会いませんか (could also be 会わないの)
moshi yokattara mata aimasen ka

When you go to Japan, would you please buy a souvenir

- 日本に行ったら、お土産を買ってください
nihon ni ittara, odosan o katte kudasai
- Note: request, so use たら

I will be happy if I can go

- 行けたら、嬉しいになります - Note: use of
iketara, ureshii ni narimasu
can/able to

なら

If you drink alcohol, then please don't drive

- 酒を飲むなら、運転しないでください
sake o nomunara, untenshinaide kudasai

If I were rich, I'd buy a car

- 私が金持ちなら、車を買います - Could be
watashi ga kanemochi nara, kuruma o kaimasu
either なら or たら using 金持ち だったら

If you drink this before drinking alcohol,

- 酒を飲む前にこれを飲むなら、
sake o nomu mae ni kore o nomu nara,
you'll feel better tomorrow

明日気分が良くなるです
ashita kibun ga yoku naru desu

What are you if you aren't a tool?

- 道具じゃないなら何だというのだの
dougai ja nai nara nanda to iu da no

ば

If you go by taxi, you could make the 6 o'clock train

- タクシーで行けば、6時の電車に乗れるでしょう
takushii de ikeba, rokouji no densha ni noreru deshou

I will go shopping *if* I can meet with my friend

- 友達に会えれば、買い物に行きます - Note:
tomodachi ni aereba, kaimono ni ikimasu
could also use たら

How can I become stronger?

- どうすればより強くなれるか - Note how
dou sureba yori tsuyoku nareru ka
this uses the comparison work より described in the previous section

If you win,

- そちが勝てば、
sochi ga kate ba,

I will give you whatever you ask

そちの望むもの何でも与えよう
sochi no nozomu mono nandemo ataeyou

If that is true, then the reason he went down below is

- 本当であれば、奴が下へ降りた理由は
hontou deareba, yatsu ga shita he orita riyuu wa
so he could kill me down there
下で俺に殺すためです
shita de ore ni korusu tame desu

Should I leave?

- 今から行けばいいのか
ima kara ikeba ii no ka

If you don't want to die, then run

- 死にたくなければ、逃げて
shinitakuna-kereba, nigete

4.9 Word specifics

4.9.1 Movement: *iku* vs *kuru*

The Japanese words for “come” (*kuru*) and “go” (*iku*) function slightly differently than in English. In English, “come” and “go” are in reference to the topic at hand (e.g. person A might say “come here” and person B would say “I’m coming”). In Japanese, these words are always in reference to the speaker; this means that most of the time, these words function the same as in English (“Come to my party” uses *kuru* and “Go to John’s party” uses *iku*). However, they function differently when there is a conversation about coming to the person speaking: if A says “come here”, then B says “I’m going”. Thus, the words always function in reference to the speaker, not the listener. When A speaks, B is *going* to A; when B speaks, B is *going* to A. Thus,

A: 来てください (*kite kudasai*) = “Please come”

B: 行きます (*ikimasu*) = “I’m coming”

4.9.2 A little: *chotto*

The Japanese word *chotto* literally means “little/a bit/a small amount,” e.g. *chotto kudasai* (“please give me a little”) and *chotto matte kudasai* (“please wait for a moment”). *Chotto* is commonly used for a polite refusal, where it would translate to “inconvenient/impossible/whatever.” In Japanese, people don’t usually refuse with *iie* because it sounds too direct.

Examples:

- *doyoubi ni eiga o mimasenka* = “Do you want to see a movie on Saturday?”
- *doyoubi, chotto* = “Saturday is not convenient for me”

4.9.3 Formality: *go-/o-* prefixes

It is common to add an extra お or ご before a word, e.g. *kaasan* would be mother, but *okaasan* is common to hear. The extra “go/o” is to make the word more formal. For example, お待って (*omatte*) would be said to make the request to “wait” more formal, as opposed to just saying まって (*matte*).

Depending on the word, “go” or “o” will be used.
Examples:

- お名前は 何ですか = “What is your name? (po-onamae wa nan desu ka
lite)”
- ご出身は どちら ですか = “Where are you
gosusshin wa dochira desu ka
from?”

4.9.4 Until: *made*

まで is the word used when trying to say *until*, *by*, or *made*
before. It is used commonly to say “We are open until
5” or “Please come in before 3.”

Examples:

- 今日は 何時 まで ですか =
kyou wa nanji made desu ka
“When do you close? (lit. Until when do you
exist?)”
- 六時 まで です =
rokuji made desu
“We are open until 6 (lit. until 6)”
- でも、五時半 まで に 来て ください =
demo, goji han made ni kite kudasai
“However, please come before 5:30 (lit. However,
please come in until 5:30)”

4.9.5 For (the purpose of): *you*

ため is used to say something is for *someone*; use the
particle の to say who/what the purpose is. There are
other times ため is used outside of for people, but it
is unclear what exactly at this time.

用 / よう is used to say phrases that point to the
you
purpose/reason for doing something. This includes
things like “be careful (for the purpose of) that you
don’t get sick” and “that (for this purpose) is how you
use it” (see examples below)

Examples:

ため

- あなた の ために これ を 買った
anata no tame ni kore o katta
I bought this for you
- その ため には 僕 準備 の 時間 が ほしい
sono tame ni wa, boku junbi no jikan ga hoshii
I want time to prepare for that

よう

- 二人 用 の 席 を ください
futa-ri you no seki o kudasai
Seat for two people, please
- 僕 は 考え ない よう に し て いる - lit. I am do-
boku wa kangaenai you ni shite iru
ing for the purpose of not thinking
You use it that way/that’s how you use it
- その よう に 使 う ン です ね - lit. you use it for
sono you ni tsukau-n desu ne
that purpose

Be careful not to get heat stroke

- 熱中症 にならない よう に 気 を 付けて
netsuchuuushou ni naranai you ni ki o tsukete
The next day, she made breakfast as usual/every day
- 次の 日、彼女 は いつも と 同じ よう に
tsugi no hi, kanojo wa itsumo to onaji you ni
朝ご飯 を 作りました
asagohan o tsukurimashita

4.9.6 Thing/Concept: *koto*

事 is a generic noun that is an “abstract thing”
koto
and is often used to turn words before it into a
substantive clause, i.e. nouns. For example, instead
of saying you read books, you could instead talk
about the action of reading books:

I read books It is fun to read books
本 を 読みます → 本 を 読む 事 は 楽しい です。
hon o yomimasu hon o yomu koto wa tanoshii desu

This is often used with “is able to” or “can.”

I can read books
For example, 本 を 読めます is equivalent to saying
hon o yomemasu
本 を 読む 事 が できます (see Potential form).
hon o yomu koto ga dekimasu

Otherwise, 事 is used to mean a variety of words
under the umbrella of “thing/concept.” Examples:

There was something I wanted to ask

- 一つ 聞きたい 事 が あった - Note how 事 is
hitotsu kikitai koto ga atta
used in how they say “something” instead of 何
か, lit. like saying “1 wanted-to-ask thing ex-
isted” which may tie into the Japanese cultural
way of being indirect with what you want
What do you mean/is the meaning of this
- どう いう こと
dou iu koto
It seems like that’s the case (lit. it is becoming such a thing)
- そう いう 事 に なっ て い ます
sou iu koto ni natte imasu
I don’t care about the bread anymore
- パン の こと は もう いい だ - here, it’s used
pan no koto wa mou iinda
to mean “the (this particular one)” (without it,
the sentence would say “I don’t care about bread
(in general)”)
 - That’s unheard of/never heard of it
- 聞いた こと が ない
kiita koto ga nai
Have you ever been to Japan?
- 日本 に 行っ た こと が あ り ま す か
nihon ni itta koto ga arimasuka
Did you come here just to say that?
- そんな 事 を 言う ため に こ こ に 来 た の か
sonna koto o iu tame ni koko ni kita no ka
If so, it was a wasted/useless trip
- だ と し た ら 無 駄 な 旅 だ っ た よ
datoshitara mudana tabi datta yo

4.9.7 I wonder: *kana*

かな is used to show uncertainty, wondering, or oth-
erwise not complete faith in what you’re saying. It’s
used in cases where you say something like “(That

sounds like a cool restaurant.) Maybe I should go there sometime.” It is used in casual settings, not really in formal situations. Examples:

- 明日 雪 が 降る かな = “I wonder if it will snow
ashita yuki ga furu kana
tomorrow?”
- これいくら かな = “I wonder how much this is”
kore ikura kana
- 音楽をやってみろかな = “I guess I’ll try out music”
ongaku o yatte miro kana
sic?”
- 音楽をやってみろかなと思って = “I thought
ongaku o yatte miro kana to omotte
that I should try out music”

4.9.8 Because: *kara/node*

To say “because,” use the format: “CAUSE + {BECAUSE} + EFFECT” where BECAUSE = から/ので. Often, a comma is placed after the BECAUSE word to further show separation.

Generally, から focuses more on the cause and ので focuses more on the effect. Less importantly, ので is used for factual/non-opinion-based things, whereas から is used for concepts based on personal opinion/suggestion/intention/speculation/request.

Examples:

- 明日 テスト がある ので 今夜 勉強しなきゃ =
ashita testo ga aru node konya benkyoushinakya
“I have to study tonight because I have a test tomorrow”
- 明日 仕事 に行かなくちゃ から、早く 寝なくちゃ
ashita shigoto ni ikanakucha kara, hayaku nenakucha
= “I have to go to sleep early because I have to go to work tomorrow”
- 暑い ので 気 を 付けて = “Be careful/take care
atsui node ki o tsukete
because it is hot”
- この二人 が いた から 助けたんだ = “Be-
kono futari ga ita kara tasuketta nda
cause these two people were there, I was able to save you”

4.9.9 To do: *suru* vs *garu*

Both する and やる mean “to do,” but they are used in different situations:

する

- ~する verbs
- Choosing items - これを する と 思う
I think I’ll pick this one
kore o suru to omou
- Wearing accessories
- Talking formally
- When talking about senses - 変な 匂い が する
There is a weird smell
henna nioi ga suru

やる

- Doing a physical action (in this case, する and やる are interchangeable) - ゲーム を やる
- When describing feelings
- When expressing joy or pride - やった!
- When giving to someone/something you look down on (like an animal)

4.9.10 Emphasis/Joking: *なんて*

The word なんて is used for two purposes: to emphasize the content of the sentence (usually the content placed before it) and to say just kidding. Emphasizing the content can be used to show a strengthened opinion, an exclamatory sentence, surprise, disappointment, excitement, etc. depending on the context. If used while quoting someone else, it’s common to put だ before なんて.

Examples:

- 田中 先生 なんて 聞いた こと ない
I’ve never heard of Tanaka sensei
tanaka sensei nante kiita koto nai
- 田中 先生 なんて 先生 は 聞いた こと ない
I’ve never heard of a teacher such as Tanaka sensei
tanaka sensei nante sensei wa kiita koto nai
- 最初 に 会った 時、なんて かわいい 女 の 子
When I first saw her/you, I thought “what a cute girl she was”
saisho ni atta toki, nante kawaii onna no ko
なんだろう と 思いました
nandarou to omoimashita
- 彼 の こと を 忘れる なんて こと は できない
There is no way I can forget him
kare no koto o wasureru nante koto wa dekinai
I can’t forget him
vs 彼 の こと を 忘れる こと は できない
kare no koto o wasureru koto wa dekinai
- 彼女は 私 の こと なんて 全然 知らない よ
Too bad she doesn’t know me at all
kanojo wa watashi no koto nante zenzen shiranai yo
- 彼女 が 私 の こと を 好きだ なんて
I had no idea she liked me
kanojo ga watashi no koto o suki da nante
- こんな かわいい 彼女 が できた なんて
I can’t believe I have such a cute girlfriend
konna kawaii kanojo ga dekita nante
- 彼 が そんな こと を する なんて 信じられない
I can’t believe he did such a thing
kare ga sonna koto o suru nante shinjirarenai
- なんて つまらない 本 なんだ よ
What a boring book
nante tsumaranai hon nandayo
- なんて 素晴らしい 先生 だ よ
What a great teacher!
nante subarashii sensei da yo
- 今 なんて 言った?
What did you just say?
ima nante itta

- I hate rain!
雨なんて嫌いだ
ame nante kirai da

- The word "friends" doesn't even come close to covering it
友達なんて言葉じゃ収まらない
tomodachi nante kotoba ja osamaranai
They're more, something I can't explain
もっと訳のわからないものだよ the word
motto wake no wakaranai mono da yo
'friends' doesn't even come close to covering
it, they're something more, something i can't
explain
- Just kidding
なんてね
nante ne

4.9.11 Way/method: 通 vs 道

Both 通 vs 道 mean "street, way" but they
too/-tsuu michi/dou
are used in different contexts. Both can be used in-
terchangeably for the physical "street, road, etc." but
they differ when used for conceptual things.

通 tends to be used for *way* or *as*, such as "as I
thought" or "as I was saying." 通 also seems to be
a way of saying こと with verbs to say "that which"
since こと would turn the verb into a gerund (e.g.
what you want
望む通り). On the other hand, 道 tends to be more
nozomu toori
like *method* or *teachings* such as "the way of the samu-
rai" or "the method of writing" or "the proper way to
write."

Examples:

- 通
That's right/that way
その通りです
sono toori desu
- Just as I thought
私の思った通りだ
watashi no omotta toori da
- Please do as I say
私の言う通りにしてください
watashi no iu toori ni shite kudasai
- Life doesn't go as expected
人生は思い通りにいかないものだ
jinsei wa omoi toori ni ikanai mono da
- Just as the teacher said, the test was difficult
先生が言った通り、試験は難しかった
sensei ga itta toori, shiken wa muzukashikatta
- What Tommy is saying is right
トミーの言う通りだ
tomii no iu toori da
- normally/usually
通常 - Note: has to be common occur-
tsuujou
rence (as opposed to an occasional thing that
usually happens a certain way)
- normal
普通 - As in, not abnormal
futsuu
- as usual
いつも通りだ
itsumo toori da
- I will do whatever you want
私は君の望む通りにする
watashi wa kimi no nozomu toori ni suru

- 道
tool, instrument, apparatus, device
道具
dougu
water supply, waterworks
- suidou
水道
Calligraphy
- shodou
書道
Tea ceremony
- sadou
茶道
I usually take this route
- 通常はこの道を通ります
tsuujou wa kono michi o toorimasu

5 Verbs

5.1 Overview

There are many types of verbs and conjugations in Japanese. There are “ru”-verbs, “u”-verbs, and irregular verbs. For every verb, there’s a base and a suffix. For example, *taberu* has the base *tabe* and suffix *ru* (it is a “ru” verb). Each verb base is used as a *stem* such that conjugations are appended after the base (e.g. *tabete* and *tabemasu*). **Note:** verb stems are often written using the tilde, “~” thought this isn’t the only use of the tilde.

Note that a **key difference** between “ru” and “u” verbs is that “ru” verb stems are just the base (verb - “ru”) whereas “u” verb stems are the base plus “i” (verb - “u” + “i”). i.e.
“verbru” → “verbmase”
“verbu” → “verbimasu”

Example verbs

	ru-verb	u-verb
dictionary	taberu (eat)	iku (to go)
base	tabe	ik
stems	tabe	iki
present (affirmative)	tabemasu	ikimasu
present (negative)	tabemasen	ikimasen

Conjugations depend on the tense in which the verb is used. For example, there is the dictionary form, which is used when talking about the word and occasionally in sentences (we can treat this like the unconjugated form of a verb). There is a *present tense (affirmative)*, which can also be used as the future tense. There is a *present tense (negative)*, to say you’re not doing something. The negative tense is often ended using *masen* but can sometimes be ended using *verb nai desu*. Most conjugations remain within the same letter category (e.g. *iku* only uses “k” syllables and never uses consonants other than “k”).

Note that just because a verb ends in “ru” or “u” doesn’t mean it is a “ru/u” verb; for example, *kaeru* is a “u”-verb whose base is *kaer* and present form is *kaerimasu*. Thus, you need to remember which are “ru” and “u” verbs.

Trick: with the exception of irregular verbs, if a verb has an “a”, “u”, or “o” right before the final *ru*, it’s definitely a “u”-verb. If a verb ends in “i” or “e” right before the final *ru*, it’s likely (though not guaranteed) to be a “ru”-verb. An example exception: *kaeru* is a “u”-verb.

There are also 2 irregular verbs that have odd effects, such as changing the vowel (e.g. in *kuru*, we replace the “u” in “ku” with “i”) upon conjugation (see

the table). Other words can be converted into a verb by adding *する* at the end (so technically more than 2 irregular verbs, but only 2 conjugations you need to remember).

Example irregular verbs

	(to do)	(to come)
dictionary	suru	kuru
stems	shi	ki
present (affirmative)	shimasu	kimasu
present (negative)	shimasen	kimasen

5.2 Tenses

5.2.1 Plain form/Simple present

The plain form (A.K.A. simple present) is used to mean either (1) a person regularly/habitually engages in the activity, or (2) a person will/plans to perform the activity in the future.

As briefly covered in [Overview](#), the formal conjugation of a plain form/simple present tense of a verb is *ます* or *います* for *る* and *う* verbs, respectively.
masu *imasu*
The informal conjugation is simply the verb as-is, so no conjugation.

Simple Present Conjugations

	Formal	Informal
る	ます	る
う	います	う

Examples include:

- 私はよくテレビを見ます = “I often watch television”
watashi wa yoku terebi o mimasu
- 私はときどき朝ご飯を食べません = “I sometimes don’t eat breakfast”
watashi wa tokidoki asagohan o tabemasen
- 私はあした京都に行きます = “I will go to Kyoto tomorrow”
watashi wa ashita Kyoto ni ikimasu
- 私は今日うちに帰りません = “I will not return home today”
watashi wa kyou uchi ni kaerimasen

5.2.2 Past tense

The past tense says something did/didn’t happen in the past (e.g. I ate yesterday). Note that the -ta form requires the same verb-ending changes as the -te form (see [-te form](#)). This also works for adjectives (see the examples below).

desu

	Affirmative	Negative
present tense	～です	～じゃないです
past tense	～でした	～じゃなかったです

The past tense of verbs (as opposed to です) follow a similar pattern:

Verbs

	Affirmative	Negative
present tense	～ます	～ません
past tense	～ました	～ませんでした
(colloquial past)	～た	～なかったです

Examples:

- あれは 日本 の 映画 じゃなかったです =
are wa nihon no eiga janakattadesu
“That was not a Japanese movie”
- メアリーさんは 午後 九時 頃 うち に 帰りました
Mearii-san wa gogo kyuuji goro uchi ni kaerimashita
= “Mary came back home around 9 PM”
- 私は 昨日 日本語 を 勉強 しませんでした = “I
Watashi wa kinou nihongo o benkyoushimasendeshita
did not study Japanese yesterday”
- トミーさんと 私は 先週 お寺 に 行きました
Tomii-kun to watashi wa senshuu otera ni ikimashita
= “Tommy and I went to a temple last week”
- 我々は 十時 に 帰ら なかったです = “We did
Wareware wa juuji ni kaeranakattadesu
not return at 10 (colloquial)”
- 忙しかった = “I have been busy”
isogashikatta

5.2.3 -te form

The -te form of verbs are very common and used in multiple different situations. The -te form is *tenseless*, in that it isn’t present, past, or future, however, it can be used in all three situations. Cases where it is used include:

- Requests/commands:
 - ～て = command
 - ～てください = request (do this please)
 - ～てくれますか = more formal question for superiors (would you please do this)
- Connecting two verb phrases with “and” (see [And](#))
- For saying “after __-ing, ...”
To do so, use ～て から
- Expressing that something is happening currently
- Asking permission to do something
- Used with 見る to mean “to try”

- Lots of other expressions (too detailed for right now), often which include some type of variation of two verbs together (e.g.
I will take a bus
バス に 乗って 行きます)
basu ni notte ikimasu

The verb-ending changes are listed below. Note that -ru verbs are always easy and -u verbs with different consonant endings are the main ones that change. The past tense -ta form is also made with these verb-ending changes.

Verb-ending changes

suru verbs	shite
kuru	kite
-ru verbs	～te
vowel + u	
tsu	～tte
ru	
mu	
nu	～nde
bu	
ku	～ite
gu	～ide
su	～shite
行く iku	行って

Examples:

- 助けて ください = “Please help”
tasukete kudasai
- 朝ごはんを 食べて、家を出ました = “I ate
asagohan o tabete, ie o demashita
breakfast and left the house”
- 卵を 食べて から、うち に 帰りました = “Af-
tamago o tabete kara, uchi ni kaerimashita
ter eating eggs, I returned home.”
- 飲んで います = “I am drinking”
nonde imasu
- 本を 読んで も いい です か = “Is it ok if I read
hon o yonde mo ii desu ka
a book?”
- 猫を 助けて みます = “I will try to help the cat”
neko o tasukete mimasu

In order to make the **negative -te form**, you just add *de* to the end of the *nai* form of the verb.

5.2.4 Casual negative form (nai)

While ません is the formal negative form of a verb, な い is the casual negative form. It follows the following format:

Nai form

Verb	Form
Ru-verbs	～る→ない
U-verbs	～(u→a)ない
Vowel+u	～(u→wa)ない
する	しない
くる	こない
ある	ない

5.2.5 Potential form

The potential form says that someone “is able” or “can” do something, such as (e.g. I can eat). To do this, you simply change the verb a bit, you don’t have to conjugate it differently:

Potential form

ru-verbs	～られる
u-verbs	～(u→e)る
する	～できる
来る	～こられる

This means that **all verbs become ru-verbs**. Note that for u-verbs, the final *u* becomes an *e*, e.g. 書く becomes 書ける.

When using the potential form, you **don’t** use the direct object particle, を. Instead, use は or が.

Another way to use the potential form is to use *unconjugated verb* + こと + が できる. Note how こと is used instead of 事. This means that there are two ways to say “can/can’t” (with example of eating):

食える ことが できます and 食べられます.
taberu koto ga dekimasu taberaremasu

Examples:

- 私は 読めます = “I can read books”
watashi wa yomemasu
- 今日 は 食べられません = “I can’t eat today”
kyou wa taberaremasen
- 友達のおかげ、私は 映画 を 見る ことが できた
tomodachi no okage, watashi wa eiga o miru koto ga dekita
 = “Thanks to my friend, I was able to see the movie”
- 友達のおかげ、私は 映画 を 見られます =
tomodachi no okage, watashi wa eiga o miraremasu
 (same as above)
- 私は 話す ことが できます、
watashi wa hanasu koto ga dekimasu,
 でも 聞く ことが できません = “I can speak
demo kiku koto ga dekimasen
 but can’t listen”
- 私は 話せます、でも 聞けません = (same as
watashi wa hanasemasu, demo kikemasen
 above)

- 自分に できる ことを やる = “Do what you
jibun ni dekiru koto o yaru
 can do”

5.2.6 Want

When describing what someone wants or wants to do, there are a whole bunch of ways to express it and a whole bunch of small technicalities for how to express that.

When wanting nouns

When talking about **yourself**, you say “<object> *ga* hoshii desu.” Note the usage of “ga” instead of “o.” Example: 私は お金 が 欲しい です = “I want
watashi wa okane ga hoshii desu
 money.” In informal settings, you can drop the *desu*.

When wanting to do something (verb)

When talking about yourself, you use “~tai desu” where ~ = verb stem. Example: 私は その 本 を 読みたいです = “I want to
watashi wa sono hon o yomitai desu
 read that book.” Alternatively, you can use “ga” instead of “o” to emphasize the subject (object? not sure). Again, in informal settings, you can drop the *desu*.

When to use ~tai

“~tai” is actually quite personal, so it can only be used for yourself and in question to a second person. **Do not** use it in question to a superior. Example: 何 が 食べたい ですか = “What do you want to
Nani ga tabetai desu ka
 eat?”

Third person

When talking about what someone in the third person wants, we use a similar method as what was used for yourself. The difference is that you write “hoshiigatte imasu” for objects and “~tagatte imasu” for verbs. Unlike when talking about yourself, you **only** use “o” for objects, never “ga.” Examples: 私のお兄さんは この 映画 を 見たがっています
watashi no oniisan wa kono eiga o mitagatte imasu
 = “My older brother wants to see this movie.”
 トミーくんは お金 を 欲しいがっています =
Tommy-kun wa okane o hoshiigatte imasu
 “Tommy wants money”

When wanting someone to do something for you

To express a desire for someone to do something, the verb will be “~te hoshii desu” and the other person is marked with “ni”. Example: これを 彼に 届けて 欲しい ですか = “Do you
kore o kare ni todokete hoshii desu ka
 want me to deliver this to him?”

In the same way, we could use the verb 貰う/もらう^{morau} (to get) to ask to receive something. To do this, we use “～te moraitai desu.” Example: 洋子に運転してもらいたいです = “I want Yoko to drive.”
Yoko ni untenshite moraitai desu

When wanting a superior to do something for you Same as “morau” except use “itadaku” in the form “itadakitai” Example: 田中先生に来ていただきたいです = “I want professor Tanaka to come.”
Tanaka-sensei ni kite itadakitai desu

Negative form of want

To say you/someone doesn't want something, add くな after ほし. Examples:

I don't want a dog
犬が欲しくありません
inu ga hoshikunai desu

Tommy didn't want to drink beer
トミイくんはビールを飲みたくなかった。
Tommy-kun wa biiru o nomitakunakatta

I don't want to eat alone
一人で食べたくない

Past tense

The past tense is pretty much the same as standard past tense: use ～かった for past positive and ～なかった for past negative, e.g. I wanted to talk
話したかった。
hanashitakatta

Summary

Self

Object	＿が欲しいです
Verb	～たいです
Negative	が欲しくない (object)

Third person

Object	＿を欲しいがっています
Verb	～たがっています
Negative	～たくない (verb)

Favor

[に] ～て {欲しい/もらいたい/いただきたい} です

Tenses

Present	～たい
Negative	～たくない
Past	～たかった
Negative	～たくなかった

5.2.7 Must

There are lots of ways to say you must/need to do something. They come from a round-about way of saying must: “it would be bad if I didn't do it.” The base form is ～なくては いけません which is like saying “(neg. verb) は can not do it.” More specifically, it follows the form:

ending = choice of だめ/いけない/ならない

- Negative te-form + は + ending
- Negative verb + と/ば + ending

However, this isn't generally used except in really formal situations, so some kind of abbreviation is used more often. This abbreviation is made by dropping the い in the ない form and adding either きゃ or くちゃ. You may also mix the abbreviation with いけない to show emphasis. There is no abbreviation for the past tense.

Examples:

- 毎日 学校に行かないとだめです =
mainichi gakkou ni ikanai to dame desu
毎日 学校に いかなきゃ
mainichi gakkou ni ikanakya
- 宿題をしなくては いけなかった = “I had to
shukudai o shinakute wa ikenakatta
do my homework”
- 明日 仕事に行かなくちゃ から、早く寝なくちゃ
ashita shigoto ni ikanakucha kara, hayaku nenakucha
= “I have to go to sleep early because I have to
go to work tomorrow”
- 色々 しなきゃ いけないんだよね = “I have a
iroiro shinakya ikenai-ndayone
lot of/various things to do”

5.2.8 Should/Let's

In English, “should” and “must” are basically the same thing. In Japanese, however, “should” is weaker than “must” and has slightly different meanings depending on how it's used:

- Let's
- Hedging your bets on if an action would be beneficial or not
- Would/probably/hopefully (when used with です/だ)
- To soften a question (in place of ね)

Examples:

- Let's go
行きましょう
ikimashou
- Maybe I should go see that movie, too?
私もその映画を見ようかな?
watashi mo sono eiga o miyou kana?

- It would (probably) be more convenient if I rode with you
 • あなたと一緒に乗って方が都合だろう
 anata to issho ni notte hou ga tsugou darou
- You're going to the party, too, right?
 • 君もパーティーに行くだろう?
 kimi mo paatii ni iku darou?
- Is he nervous?
 • 彼は緊張しているのだろうか
 kare wa kinchou shite iru no darou ka

5.3 *Imasu/Arimasu vs Desu*

Desu is a form of “to be,” meaning that it is used when it is saying that “[something] is [something]”, like “the cat is black” or “I like cheese” or “I am happy.”

Imasu/arimasu are meant to say something is in existence, like “the cat is there” or “there is plenty of cheese” or “do you have a green shirt?” Additionally, *arimasu* can be used to show ownership. For example, テレビがあります = “There is a TV/I have a
terebi ga arimasu

TV” whereas テレビです = “It is a TV.”
terebi desu

Note the other subtle differences between *arimasu* and *desu*:

- When talking about a location, あります uses the particle に instead of で which is used for です.
- When talking about a location, the place description usually comes at the beginning of the sentence.
- When using あります, you use が instead of は for the subject/thing description. Example: あそこ に テレビ があります = “There is a TV
asoko ni terebi ga arimasu
 over there” (note the particle に to describe location).

5.4 *Imasu vs Arimasu*

Imasu is usually used for living things while *arimasu* is for non-living things. Exceptions/edge-cases include dead bodies (*arimasu*), robots (*imasu*), and plants (*arimasu*). Sometimes, *arimasu* also shows possession, e.g. *Shukudai ga arimasu* = “There is/I have homework.”

5.5 List of verbs

RU-verbs (1)

いる (います) iru imasu	is/exists (animate)
食べる taberu	to eat
見る miru	to see/look at/watch Also means “to try”
夢見る yumemiru	to dream
起きる okiru	to get up
寝る neru	to sleep/go to sleep
始める hajimeru	to begin/start
辞める yameru	to quit (doing something)
止める tomeru	to stop an object (e.g. stop a car)
止まる tomaru	to stop (doing something temporarily)
生きる ikiru	to live (exist/survive) (Confusingly, this has the same conjugations as 行く)
できる dekiru	can/to be able to
考える kangaeru	to think about
助ける tasukeru	to help (as in a rescue)
着る kiru	to wear
信じる shinjiru	to believe
出る deru	to exit/come out/leave を = where you left from に = leaving <i>for</i> something I left the store 店を出ました mise o demashita I left for (to go to) class クラスに出ました kurasu ni demashita
離れる hanareru	to leave Used more for the case where you're separating from something, going away for a longer period of time, or when being a long way off
調べる shiraberu	to investigate
疲れる tsukareru	to fatigue/get tired
与える ataeru	to give
くれる kureru	someone giving to me
教える oshieru	to teach
似る niru	to resemble/be similar A is similar to B AはBに似ています A wa B ni nite imasu
逃げる nigeru	to escape/run away
増える fueru	to increase

Ru-verbs (2)

耐える taeru	to endure/bear
付ける tsukeru	to attach, apply, put on, wear
集める atsumeru	to collect/gather (猫集め) neko atsume
負ける makeru	to lose (a game)/to be defeated
巫山戯る fuzakeru	to fool around
出かける dekakeru	to go out (non-romantic)
連れる tsureru	to lead/take (with)
連れて行く tsureteiku	to bring/take along
入れる ireru	to put in/add
答える kotaeru	to answer
捕まえる tsukamaeru	to catch (e.g. catch a bug)
賭ける kakeru	to bet (e.g. money)
忘れる wasureru	to forget
見つける mitsukeru	to find/locate/discover
振られる furareru	to dump (dating)
別れる wakareru	to break up
借りる kariru	to borrow
任せる makaseru	to leave up to someone
告げる tsugeru	to tell/inform/reveal
遅れる okureru	to be late (バスに遅れる) basu ni okureru
覚える oboeru	to remember
見覚える mioboeru	to recognize/recollect
感じる kanjiru	to feel (emotions, experience)
伝える tsutaeru	to convey/communicate/report
惚れる horeru	to fall in love

U-verbs (1)

ある (あります) aru arimasu	is/exists (inanimate)
行く iku	to go
帰る kaeru	to go back/return
聞く kiku	to listen/hear/ask
言う iu	to say/tell
飲む nomu	to drink
読む yomu	to read
話す hanasu	to speak/talk (a language)
待つ matsu	to wait
歩く aruku	to walk
走る hashiru	to run
持つ motsu	to have/possess/carry
学ぶ manabu	to learn (in general)
習う narau	to learn (by study)
成る naru	to become
住む sumu	to live (inhabit/dwell, as in a house)
泳ぐ oyogu	swim
書く kaku	to write
知る shiru	to know
思う omou	to think
思い出す omoidasu	to remember
出す dasu	to put out/issue/produce/send
貰う morau	to receive/get
いただく itadaku	to receive/get (polite)
会う au	to meet/to see (a person)
買う kau	to buy
払う harau	to pay
売る uru	to sell
取る toru	to take (most general usage, so could be taking photos or taking a book with you. Not for stealing)
分かる wakaru	to understand (think <i>wakarimashita</i>)
手伝う tetsudau	to help (assist, be handy)
作る tsukuru	to create/make/prepare/build
遊ぶ asobu	to play
減る heru	to decrease

U-verbs (2)

乗る noru	ride/get on/board
向かう mukau	to head (towards)
入る hairu	to enter
座る suwaru	to sit
立つ tatsu	to stand
変わる kawaru	to change
代わる kawaru	to change (substitute)
使う tsukau	to use
着く tsuku	to arrive
到着する touchakusuru	
済む sumu	to finish/complete
終わる owaru	to finish/end/close/stop (but not necessarily complete)
続く tsuzuku	to continue
勝つ katsu	to win
許す yurusu	to forgive
笑う warau	to laugh
開く aku/hiraku	to open aku = from side (swing door) hiraku = center (flower/book/elevator) Ru-verb 開ける = alt. of aku akeru
置く oku	to put/place
返す kaesu	to return (an object)
動く ugoku	to move
選ぶ erabu	to choose/pick (an option) ^{option} 選択 ^{sentaku}
離す hanasu	to separate/let go of
降る furu	to fall (from the sky)
降りる oriru	to get off (e.g. bus)/to descend
消す kesu	to erase/delete/extinguish turn off/neutralize
取り消す torikesu	to take back/cancel/revoke Note 取る and 消す toru kesu
働く hataraku	to work
驚く odoroku	to be surprised (objective/over time)
落ち着く ochitsuku	to calm down (uses ^{to arrive} 着く) tsuku
通る tooru	to go through/pass through
経つ tatsu	to elapse/pass by (time)
死ぬ shinu	to die
殺す korosu	to kill
頑張る ganbaru	to do your best
泊まる tomaru	to stay at (e.g. for a trip, like a hotel)

U-verbs (3)

呼ぶ yobu	to call (e.g. name)/to invite
効く kiku	to work (correctly)/be effective
合う au	to fit (in a group/place) often combined with other verbs
付き合う tsukiau	to date (romantic)
間に合う ma ni au	to be in time
曲がる magaru	to turn (e.g. around a corner)
上がる agaru	to go up (e.g. stairs)
下がる sagaru	to go down
嗅ぐ kagu	to smell
貸す kasu	to lend
断る kotowaru	to refuse/decline
脱ぐ nugu	to take off (clothes)
残る nokoru	remain (be left over)
吸う suu	to suck/breathe in/smoke
触る sawaru	to touch/feel
泣く naku	to cry
収まる osamaru	to fit into (a category, box, etc.) to settle into (position, place, etc.) to be settled (dispute, accept answer)
ムカつく	to piss off

Irregular verbs (1)

来る kuru	to come
する suru	to do
勉強する benkyou suru	to study
料理する ryouri suru	to cook
運転する unten suru	to drive
出発する shuppatsu suru	to depart/leave
留学する ryuugaku suru	study abroad
練習する renshuu suru	to practice
成功する seikou suru	to succeed
お勧めする osusume suru	to recommend
販売する hanbai suru	to sell (販売) hanbai
購入する kounyuu suru	to purchase (購入) kounyuu
変更する henkou suru	to change
熟練する jukuren suru	to be skilled
指示する shiji suru	to instruct
注文する chuumon suru	to order (food)
準備する / 用意する junbi suru / youi suru	to prepare
信頼する shinrai suru	to trust/confide
心配する shinpai suru	to worry
安心する anshin suru	to relax (安心) anshin
約束する yakusoku suru	to promise
約束をやめる yakusoku o yameru	to break a promise (-ru verb)
要請すり yousei suru	to request
運動する undou suru	to exercise
掃除する souji suru	to clean
吃驚する bikkuri suru	to be surprised (instantaneously)
説明する setsume suru	to explain
連絡する renraku suru	to contact (communication)
観光する kankou suru	to sightsee/travel/explore
再開する saikai suru	to resume (再び) futatabi
翻訳する hon'yaku suru	to translate
感謝する kansha suru	to thank someone
期待する kitai suru	to expect
散歩する sanpo suru	to take a walk
公開する koukai suru	to publish/release to public

Irregular verbs (2)

招待する shoutai suru	to invite
外出する gaishutsu suru	to go out (on an outing)
案内する an'nai suru	to guide/show around
楽しみにする tanoshimi ni suru	to look forward to
出席する shusseki suru	to attend
参加する sanka suru	to participate
同居する dousei suru	to live together
無視する mushi suru	to ignore
緊張する kinchou suru	to get nervous

5.6 Verb Specifics

^{to leave}
離れる is typically used for longer term/greater
^{hanareru}
distance separation. For example:

I will be very lonely if you leave Japan
あなたが日本を離れると私はとても寂しくなります
anata ga nihon o hanareru to watashi ha totemo sabishiku narimasu

The policeman asked people to back off/leave
その警官は人々に後ろに下がって離れるように言った
sono keikan ha hitobito ni ushiro ni sagatte hanareru you ni itta

Be sure to extinguish the fire before you leave (it)
離れる前に必ず火を消しなさい
hanareru mae ni kanarazu hi o keshinasai

6 Kana

Japanese writing is termed *kana*, which is the combination of kanji, hiragana, and katakana.

Hiragana is used for native Japanese words and comprises all sounds in Japanese.

Katakana is used for new, non-native words (e.g. television) and also comprises all sounds in Japanese.

Kanji is the imported writing system from China, and is the bulk of what is written in Japanese.

Furigana is a combination of kanji and hiragana where the hiragana characters are shrunk and placed next to or above/below kanji. The purpose of the hiragana is to indicate pronunciation, e.g.

^{watashi} 私 or ^{iku} 行く
わたし い

6.1 Pronunciation

Japanese is actually quite easy to speak, in comparison to English, because every vowel and consonant has (almost) the same pronunciation, i.e. there are no two ways to pronounce the vowel “a,” there’s only the one. Each hiragana sound takes up one unit of pronunciation time, e.g. みんな would have the same amount of time to pronounce each letter.

6.1.1 Vowels

Vowel pronunciations are as follows:

- “A” – Always the short “ah” sound, as made in “blah”
- “I” – Always the long “e” sound, as made in “bee”
- “U” – Always the long “u” sound, as made in “spoon” (except when preceded with an “o” sound)
- “E” – Always the short “eh” sound, as made in “Meh”
- “O” – Always the long “o” sound, as made in “oh”

Vowel sounds only change when two vowel sounds are put together, e.g. to make the long “A” sound, one must add an い after a letter that ends in the “e” sound. “OI” and “UI” sound as expected, like “oink” and “goey.”

- “AI” – Long “I” sound, as in “Plight”
- “EI” – Long “A” sound, as in “freight train”
- “OU” – A prolonged “O” sound, as in “ohhh”

Example: えいが (movie) sounds like “A-gah”. はい sounds like “Hi.”

If two vowels are next to each other (or if there is a う after an “o” sound), then the vowel is prolonged.

6.1.2 Dropped Vowels

The vowels “i” and “u” are sometimes dropped when placed between voiceless consonants {k, s, t, p, h} or when at the end of an utterance of a word. For example, 好きです would be pronounced “ski des” and

話して would be pronounced “hanashte.”
suki desu
hanashite

6.1.3 On’yomi and Kun’yomi

Now, each kanji character has two or more pronunciations: on’yomi (Chinese) and kun’yomi (native Japanese). These two pronunciations were the combination of a spoken (Japanese) language that was adopting a written (Chinese) language. Sometimes, there are multiple onyomi or kunyomi pronunciations depending on the sounds next to the kanji (e.g. 日 onyomi could be “hi” or “bi”).

音読み (lit. “sound reading”) is the Chinese pronunciation of a word and is usually the pronunciation of kanji when multiple kanji are together because the pronunciation originated from Chinese, e.g. 富士山.

訓読み is the native Japanese pronunciation of a word and is usually used when the kanji is alone or (always when) combined with hiragana, e.g. 山.

There are exceptions to these two general rules (e.g. kunyomi is used for 手紙), so it doesn’t always work this way. For example, kunyomi is usually used for Japanese names (both of people and locations), even though they’re often written with multiple kanji.

6.2 Hiragana

Essentially, hiragana is used for particles, conjunctions, and other parts of sentences that aren’t necessarily represented by kanji. Note that particles (which exist alone (not inside words) in order to connect words, not used to spell words) are spelled differently than are pronounced. For example, *wa* is written like わ when it is inside/part of words, e.g. *Watashi*. However, *wa* is written like は for particles, e.g. *Anata wa*. The transformations are: {*wa*→は(ha), *e/we*→へ, *o/wo*→を}. This means that, e.g., the sentence *watashi wa tabete imasu* (I am eating) becomes 私は食べています instead of using わ.

Diacritic marks - The basic syllables can be expanded upon by adding two short diagonal strokes (”) to convert the letters {k→g, s→z, t→d, h→b}. Also, the consonant *h* changes to *p* when you add a small circle.

Diagraphs - Contractions of sounds into one syllable can be represented by placing a *small* character for either *ya* (や), *yu* (ゆ), or *yo* (よ) after the original character for which you’re trying to overwrite the sound. For example, *chan* will be a combination of *chi* and *ya* to result in the *cha* sound: ちゃん.

Double Consonants

Finally, there is another small letter that looks like *tsu* called the *sokuon*, っ. This is used to show repeated consonants. I’m pretty sure that, because all hiragana end in a vowel sound, that this only applies to the first consonant of the following hiragana character. This means that, for example, かった, which is *ka-つ-ta*, would come out to *katta* (won) as opposed to *kata* (shoulder). Note that this isn’t the case with double *n*’s, which use ん. Some examples include:

- かった - *katta* - won
- はっぱ - *happa* - leaf
- さっか - *sakka* - writer
- さんねん - *sannen* - three years

Hiragana Chart

•	w	r	y	m	h	n	t	s	k	
ん <u>n/m</u>	わ wa	ら ra	や ya	ま ma	は ha	な na	た ta	さ sa	か ka	あ a
		り ri		み mi	ひ hi	に ni	ち <u>chi</u>	し <u>shi</u>	き ki	い i
		る ru	ゆ yu	む mu	ふ fu	ぬ nu	つ <u>tsu</u>	す su	く ku	う u
		れ re		め me	へ he	ね ne	て te	せ se	け ke	え e
	を o	ろ ro	よ yo	も mo	ほ ho	の no	と to	そ so	こ ko	お o

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Figure 1: Basic hiragana syllables

が ga	ぎ gi	ぐ gu	げ ge	ご go
ざ za	じ ji	ず zu	ぜ ze	ぞ zo
だ da	*ぢ ji	*づ zu	で de	ど do
ば ba	び bi	ぶ bu	べ be	ぼ bo
ぱ pa	ぴ pi	ぷ pu	ぺ pe	ぽ po

*ぢ (ji) and づ (zu) are pronounced the same as じ (ji) and ず (zu), respectively, and have limited use.

Figure 2: Hiragana diacritics

r	m	p	b	h	n	ch	j	sh	g	k	
り	み	ぴ	び	ひ	に	ち	じ	し	ぎ	き	ya
り	ゆ	ぴ	び	ひ	に	ち	じ	し	ぎ	き	yu
り	よ	ぴ	び	ひ	に	ち	じ	し	ぎ	き	yo

Figure 3: Hiragana contractions

6.3 Katakana

Katakana is used for new words that didn't exist in Japan previously, including company names, scientific terms, and technology. Often, if you don't know the Japanese version of a word, you can say an English version of the word (e.g. *ginkou* for bank could be understood with *banku* instead). While hiragana is more curvy, katakana is more angular in nature.

Katakana has diacritics and conjunctions, too. It also uses the sokuon letter, ツ, which is a small version of the letter for *tsu*, ツ.

Katakana also allows other small letter combinations (e.g. “halloween” → ハロウイーン where ウ is harowiin *u* and *イ* is *i*) in order to allow for sounds that aren't in the Japanese alphabet.

Long vowels are written with the ー symbol. When writing vertically, the ー symbol is rotated 90 degrees, too.

Practice

てテ	ちチ	こコ	らラ	をヲ	りリ	くク
なナ	ふフ	もモ	せセ	ひヒ	よヨ	
ぬヌ	るル	さサ	ゆユ	すス	みミ	ほホ
れレ	にニ	のノ	むム	とト	たタ	まマ
っツ	へヘ	わワ	めメ	しシ	ねネ	やヤ
はハ	きキ	そソ	けケ	かカ	じジ	ろロ
あア	いイ	うウ	えエ	おオ	んン	

Katakana Chart

•	w	r	y	m	h	n	t	s	k	
ン <u>n/m</u>	ワ wa	ラ ra	ヤ ya	マ ma	ハ ha	ナ na	タ ta	サ sa	カ ka	ア a
		リ ri		ミ mi	ヒ hi	ニ ni	チ <u>chi</u>	シ <u>shi</u>	キ ki	イ i
		ル ru	ユ yu	ム mu	フ fu	ヌ nu	ツ <u>tsu</u>	ス su	ク ku	ウ u
		レ re		メ me	ヘ he	ネ ne	テ te	セ se	ケ ke	エ e
	ヲ o	ロ ro	ヨ yo	モ mo	ホ ho	ノ no	ト to	ソ so	コ ko	オ o

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Figure 4: Basic katakana syllables

r	m	p	b	h	n	ch	j	sh	g	k	
リャ	ミャ	ピャ	ビャ	ヒャ	ニャ	チャ	ジャ	シャ	ギャ	キャ	ya
リュ	ミュ	ピュ	ビュ	ヒュ	ニュ	チュ	ジュ	シュ	ギュ	キュ	yu
リョ	ミョ	ピョ	ビョ	ヒョ	ニョ	チョ	ジョ	ショ	ギョ	キョ	yo

Figure 5: Katakana contractions