

## II Particles

Creating longer sentences in Japanese typically involves inserting different kinds of information in between the subject and predicate. Grammatical units known as “**particles**” help simplify this process.

Japanese particles are similar to English prepositions, words like “**in**” and “**at**”. As shown below, while English uses prepositions, which precede the noun, clause, or phrase they modify, Japanese uses postpositions, which come after the clause or phrase.

Kare no heya **de** bangohan o tabemashita.  
Maiasa roku-ji **ni** okimasu.

We had dinner **in** his room.  
I wake up **at** six o'clock every morning.

Although particles themselves do not carry any meaning, they provide an important role in sentence formation.

For example, English does not use particles and thus relies on word order within a sentence. Changing the order of words in an English sentence can result in a completely different meaning.

I gave her my dog. ≠ \*I gave my dog her.

However, what is crucial in a Japanese sentence is not word order, but the units of information made up of a particle and the noun, clause, or phrase it modifies.

Watashi wa kanojo **ni** inu **o** ageta. = Watashi wa inu **o** kanojo **ni** ageta. (I gave her my dog.)

Even if the words of a sentence appear in a different order, as long as the particles remain the same, the meaning of the sentence does not change.

There are different types of particles. Take a look at the different particles and their functions below.

### 1. **wa**

#### **[Subject]**

Watashi **wa** Tai-jin desu.  
Kore **wa** gohyaku-en desu.

I am a Thai person.  
This costs 500 yen.

#### **[Topic]**

Kinō **wa** izakaya ni ikimashita.  
Natsu-yasumi **wa** nani o shimashita ka.

Yesterday I went to an izakaya.  
What did you do over the summer break?

#### **[Comparisons]**

Sushi **wa** suki desu ga, sashimi **wa** kirai desu. I like sushi, but I don't like sashimi.