

Japanese Grammar

Second Edition

by

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Preface

This book is one of a new series of handy grammar reference guides designed for students, businesspeople, and others who want to improve their knowledge of Japanese grammar. It enables you to reflect on what you already know, to reinforce your skills, and to fill in the gaps.

Whether you are just beginning your study of Japanese or have some basic Japanese and want to refresh your memory, this book is for you. Previous knowledge has not been taken for granted; definitions and explanations are simple and concise, and examples use and reuse a core of basic vocabulary.

The book is divided into three sections: The Basics, Parts of Speech, and Special Topics.

- In the Basics section you will find a nontechnical and easy-to-follow discussion of Japanese sounds, spelling conventions, and word-order patterns.
- In the Parts of Speech section you will find the nouns, pronouns, particles, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs that make up the Japanese language.
- In the Special Topics section you will find numbers, expressions for telling time, useful words and phrases, borrowed words, synonyms, antonyms, and more.

New to this edition is a list called Japanese–English Vocabulary, where you will find all the Japanese words in the book along with their English meaning. Also new is the use of color to highlight important points of grammar or vocabulary; another feature is the use of tips to help the understanding of the Japanese language and culture.

We would like to thank the following people for their invaluable help with this project: Masako Nanto, School of Language Studies, Foreign Service Institute, Department of

State; Diane Roth, Editor, and Dimitry Popow, Languages
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And many thanks to the teachers and students of
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and supportive comments about the first edition of this book.

Nobuo Akiyama
Carol Akiyama

How To Use This Book

In the chapters that follow, a numerical decimal system has been used with the symbol § in front of it. This was done so that you may find quickly and easily the reference to a particular point in basic Japanese grammar when you use the index. For example, if you look up the entry "particles" in the index, you will find the reference given as §6. Sometimes additional § reference numbers are given when the entry you consulted is mentioned in other areas in the chapter §.

The Basics

§1.

Pronunciation Guide

§1.1 WHAT ARE VOWELS AND CONSONANTS?

There are two kinds of sounds in any language.

- *Vowels* are produced by air passing out through the mouth without being blocked. The letters that represent these sounds are **a, e, i, o, u**.
- *Consonants*, on the other hand, are produced by blockage (partial or complete) of the air. The remaining alphabet letters are used to represent consonant sounds: **b, c, d, etc.**

Japanese isn't difficult to pronounce if you follow a few simple guidelines. Take the time to read this section, and try out each sound presented.

§1.2 VOWELS

Tip

If you have studied Spanish, it may help you to know that Japanese vowels are more like those of Spanish than English.

The following vowels are short and pure, with *no glide*—that is, they are not diphthongs.

2 The Basics

JAPANESE VOWEL	ENGLISH EQUIVALENT	EXAMPLE
a	as in father	akai (<i>ah-kah-ee</i>) red
e	as in men	ebi (<i>eh-bee</i>) shrimp
i	as in see	imi (<i>ee-mee</i>) meaning
o	as in boat	otoko (<i>oh-toh-koh</i>) male
u	as in food	uma (<i>oo-mah</i>) horse

The following vowels are like the ones above, but lengthened.

JAPANESE VOWEL	ENGLISH EQUIVALENT	EXAMPLE
ā	as in father, but lengthened	batā (<i>bah-tah</i>) butter
ei	as in men, but lengthened	eigo (<i>eh-goh</i>) English
ii	as in see, but lengthened	iiharu (<i>ee-hah-roo</i>) insist
ō	as in boat, but lengthened	ōsama (<i>oh-sah-mah</i>) king
ū	as in food, but lengthened	yūbin (<i>yoo-been</i>) mail

Macrons

A *macron*, or bar, above a vowel means it should be lengthened.

Example

butter / batā / bah-tāh

In the above word, the macron above the second vowel means you should hold the sound twice as long as you normally would.

And keep in mind these points:

- Long vowels are important. Pronouncing a long vowel incorrectly can result in a different word or even an unintelligible one.

For example,

obasan (oh-bah-sahn)	means aunt
obāsan (oh-bāh-sahn)	means grandmother
ojisan (oh-jee-sahn)	means uncle
ojiisan (oh-jēē-sahn)	means grandfather
seki (seh-kee)	means seat
seiki (sēh-kee)	means century

(For more examples, see §19.)

- Sometimes the **i** and the **u** aren't pronounced. This usually occurs between voiceless consonants (**p, t, k, ch, f, h, s, sh**), or at the end of a word following a voiceless consonant.

Examples

sukiyaki (skee-yah-kee)

This word for a popular Japanese dish begins with **skee**, not **soo**. The **u** is not pronounced.

tabemashita (tah-beh-mahsh-tah) **I ate**

The **i** is not pronounced.

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§1.3 CONSONANTS

With a few exceptions, Japanese consonants are similar to those of English. Note those that are different:

- f** The English **f** is pronounced with a passage of air between the upper teeth and the lower lip. To make the Japanese **f**, blow air lightly between your lips as if you were just beginning a whistle.
- g** Always as in **go**, never as in **age**. You may also hear it pronounced as the **ng** sound in **sing** but not at the beginning of a word.
- r** This is different from the English **r**. To make the Japanese **r**, lightly touch the tip of your tongue to the bony ridge behind the upper teeth, almost in the English **d** position. It's more like the Spanish **r**, but it's not trilled.
- s** Always hissed, as in **so**, never voiced, as in **his** or **or pleasure**.

And note the following points as well:

- If you have trouble making a consonant the Japanese way, your English pronunciation will still be intelligible.
- Some Japanese consonants are doubled. In English, this is just a feature of spelling and often doesn't affect pronunciation. In Japanese, the doubling is important and may change the meaning of a word.

Example

Kite kudasai (kee-teh koo-dah-sah-ee) means
“Please put it (clothing) on.”

Kitte kudasai (*Keet-teh koo-dah-sah-ee*) means
“Please cut it.”

(For more examples, see §20.)

Tip

In a word with a doubled consonant, don't say the consonant twice—simply hold the sound longer.

§2.

The Japanese Writing System

§2.1 DIRECTION AND CHARACTERS

Traditionally, Japanese is written from top to bottom and from right to left. But it is also written horizontally and from left to right, as in English.

Japanese writing uses three kinds of characters:

kanji (<i>kahn-jee</i>)	漢字
hiragana (<i>hee-rah-gah-nah</i>)	ひらがな
katakana (<i>kah-tah-kah-nah</i>)	カタカナ

Hiragana and katakana are also called **kana** (*kah-nah*). All three are used together in Japanese writing.

§2.2 KANJI

Chinese and Japanese are completely different languages. But beginning in the fourth or fifth century, Japanese adopted written symbols and many vocabulary items from Chinese. In Japan, these symbols or Chinese characters are called **kanji**. They represent both meaning and sound, and often one kanji has more than one pronunciation (or reading, as it's commonly called) and meaning.

Japanese people learn about 2,000 kanji by the end of junior high school. Those are the basic characters used in newspapers, magazines, and school textbooks. Most Japanese know several thousand additional kanji as well.

Kanji range from simple, with one or two strokes, to complex, with many strokes needed to make one character. Some

look like pictures, or line drawings, of the words they represent.

Examples

mountain yama (*yah-mah*) 山

river kawa (*kah-wah*) 川

These two together form Yamakawa, 山川 a family name. Here are some more kanji:

Japan	Nihon (<i>nee-hon</i>)	日本
--------------	--------------------------	----

person	hito (<i>hee-toh</i>)	人
	jin (<i>jeen</i>)	

Japanese	Nihonjin (<i>nee-hon-jeen</i>)	日本人
-----------------	----------------------------------	-----

§2.3 HIRAGANA AND KATAKANA

Hiragana and **Katakana** symbols represent the sounds of syllables. Hiragana is used for native Japanese words and grammatical elements, and katakana is mainly for words of foreign origin. Each is a kind of alphabet, or syllabary, of 46 basic characters or sounds.

The following example will show you how the elements are used together.

Sumisu san, Nihon e yōkoso. / **Welcome to Japan, Mr. Smith.** スミスさん、日本へようこそ。

Smith	Mr.	Japan	to welcome
Sumisu	san	Nihon	e yōkoso
スミス	さん	日本	へ ようこそ
katakana	hiragana	kanji	hiragana

8 The Basics

The **hiragana** and **katakana** charts provided here will be useful if you continue your study of Japanese.

HIRAGANA									
あ a (ah)	い i (ee)	う u (oo)	え e (eh)	お o (oh)					
か ka (kah)	き ki (kee)	く ku (koo)	け ke (keh)	こ ko (koh)					
さ sa (sah)	し shi (shee)	す su (soo)	せ se (seh)	そ so (soh)					
た ta (tah)	ち chi (chee)	つ tsu (tsoo)	て te (teh)	と to (toh)					
な na (nah)	に ni (nee)	ぬ nu (noo)	ね ne (neh)	の no (noh)					
は ha (hah)	ひ hi (hee)	ふ fu (foo)	へ he (heh)	ほ ho (hoh)					
ま ma (mah)	み mi (mee)	む mu (moo)	め me (meh)	も mo (moh)					
や ya (yah)		ゆ yu (yoo)		よ yo (yoh)					
ら ra (rah)	り ri (ree)	る ru (roo)	れ re (reh)	ろ ro (rah)					
わ wa (wah)				を o (oh)					
ん n									
が ga (gah)	ぎ gi (gee)	ぐ gu (goo)	げ ge (geh)	ご go (goh)					
ざ za (zah)	じ ji (jee)	づ zu (zoo)	ぜ ze (zeh)	ぞ zo (zoh)					
だ da (dah)	ぢ ji (jee)	づ zu (zoo)	で de (deh)	ど do (doh)					
ば ba (bah)	び bi (bee)	ぶ bu (boo)	べ be (beh)	ぼ bo (boh)					
ぱ pa (pah)	ぴ pi (pee)	ぷ pu (poo)	ペ pe (peh)	ぽ po (poh)					
きゃ kya (kyah)		きゅ kyu (kyoo)		きょ kyo (kyoh)					
しゃ sha (shah)		しゅ shu (shoo)		しょ sho (shoh)					
ちゃ cha (chah)		ちゅ chu (choo)		ちょ cho (choh)					
にゃ nya (nyah)		にゅ nyu (nyoo)		にょ nyo (nyoh)					
ひゃ hya (hyah)		ひゅ hyu (hyoo)		ひょ hyo (hyoh)					
みゃ mya (myah)		みゅ myu (myoo)		みょ myo (myoh)					
りゃ rya (ryah)		りゅ ryu (ryoo)		りょ ryo (ryoh)					
ぎゃ gya (gyah)		ぎゅ gyu (gyoo)		ぎょ gyo (gyoh)					
じゃ ja (jah)		じゅ ju (joo)		じょ jo (joh)					
びゃ bya (byah)		びゅ byu (byoo)		びょ byo (byoh)					
ぴゃ pya (pyah)		ぴゅ pyu (pyoo)		ぴょ pyo (pyoh)					

KATAKANA

ア a (ah)	イ i (ee)	ウ u (oo)	エ e (eh)	オ o (oh)
カ ka (kah)	キ ki (kee)	ク ku (koo)	ケ ke (keh)	コ ko (koh)
サ sa (sah)	シ shi (shee)	ス su (soo)	セ se (seh)	ソ so (soh)
タ ta (tah)	チ chi (chee)	ツ tsu (tsoo)	テ te (teh)	ト to (toh)
ナ na (nah)	ニ ni (nee)	ヌ nu (noo)	ネ ne (neh)	ノ no (noh)
ハ ha (hah)	ヒ hi (hee)	フ fu (foo)	ヘ he (heh)	ホ ho (hoh)
マ ma (mah)	ミ mi (mee)	ム mu (moo)	メ me (meh)	モ mo (moh)
ヤ ya (yah)		ユ yu (yoo)		ヨ yo (yoh)
ラ ra (rah)	リ ri (ree)	ル ru (roo)	レ re (reh)	ロ ro (roh)
ワ wa (wah)			ヲ o (oh)	
ン n				
ガ ga (gah)	ギ gi (gee)	グ gu (goo)	ゲ ge (geh)	ゴ go (goh)
ザ za (zah)	ジ ji (jee)	ズ zu (zoo)	ゼ ze (zeh)	ゾ zo (zoh)
ダ da (dah)	ヂ ji (jee)	ヅ zu (zoo)	ヂ de (deh)	ド do (doh)
バ ba (bah)	ビ bi (bee)	ブ bu (boo)	ベ be (beh)	ボ bo (boh)
パ pa (pah)	ピ pi (pee)	пу pu (poo)	ペ pe (peh)	ポ po (poh)
ファ fa (fah)	フィ fi (fee)	フ fu (foo)	フェ fe (feh)	フォ fo (foh)
キャ kya (kyah)		キュ kyu (kyoo)		キョ kyo (kyoh)
シャ sha (shah)		шу shu (shoo)		ショ sho (shoh)
チャ cha (chah)		チュ chu (choo)		チョ cho (choh)
ニャ nya (nyah)		ニュ nyu (nyoo)		ニョ nyo (nyoh)
ヒャ hya (hyah)		ヒュ hyu (hyoo)		ヒョ hyo (hyoh)
ミャ mya (myah)		ミュ myu (myoo)		ミョ myo (myoh)
リャ rya (ryah)		リュ ryu (ryoo)		リョ ryo (ryoh)
ギャ gya (gyah)		ギュ gyu (gyoo)		ギョ gyo (gyoh)
ジャ ja (jah)		ジュ ju (joo)		ジョ jo (joh)
ビャ bya (byah)		ビュ byu (byoo)		ビョ byo (byoh)
ピャ pya (pyah)		ピュ pyu (pyoo)		ピョ pyo (pyoh)

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§2.4 ROMAJI

The commonly used expression for the romanization of Japanese words is **romaji**. Although there are several systems of romaji, the most widely used, and the one used in this book, is a modified version of the Hepburn system.

§3.

Word Order

§3.1 WHAT IS A SENTENCE?

A *sentence* is an organized series of words which enables us to make a statement, ask a question, express a thought, offer an opinion, and so forth. In writing, an English sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a period, a question mark, or an exclamation mark. In writing (using romaji), a Japanese sentence starts with a capital letter, and ends with a period, not a question mark or an exclamation mark.

Examples

Yoko is Japanese. / Yōko san wa Nihonjin desu.
(statement)

Is Yoko Japanese? / Yōko san wa Nihonjin desu ka.
(question)

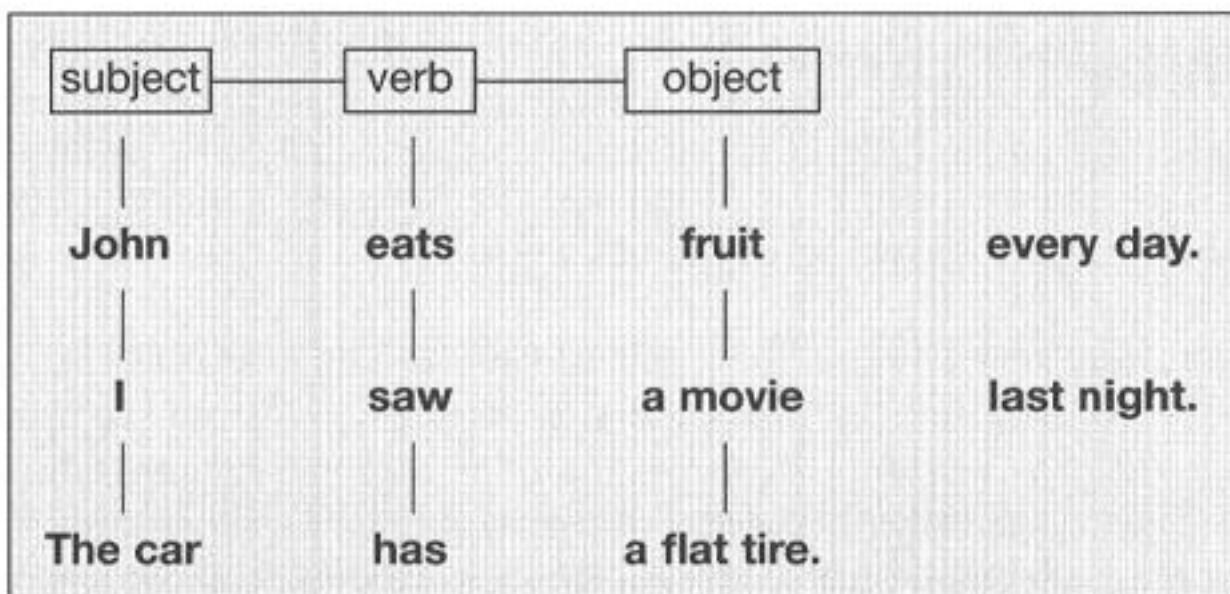
Yoko, be careful! / Yōko san ki o tsukete kudasai.
(exclamation)

§3.2 THE ENGLISH SENTENCE

English is a *Subject-Verb-Object* language. (So are French, German, Spanish, and Italian.) This means that in a typical sentence (a statement, not a question), the subject comes first, the verb next, and the object last. This kind of word order sequence for the sentence is sometimes referred to by the initials **SVO** (an SVO language).

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Examples

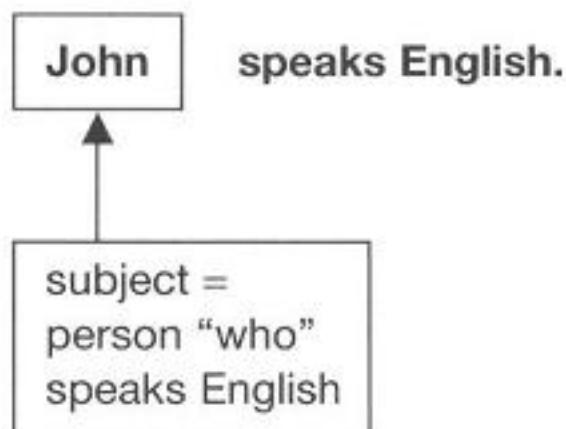


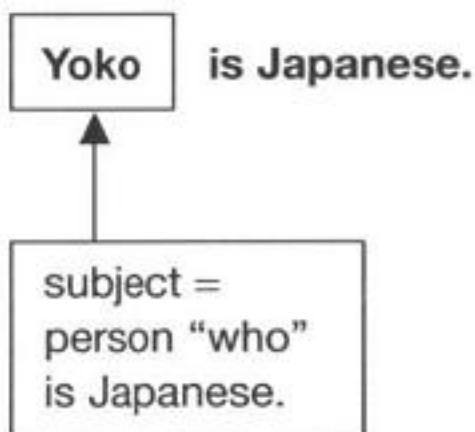
Understanding this principle of word order is important because, as we shall see in §3.3, the word order in Japanese is different.

English sentences have two basic parts, a *subject* and a *predicate*.

- The subject is “who” or “what” the sentence is about. A subject must contain a noun or pronoun. In a statement, the subject is usually the first element in the sentence.

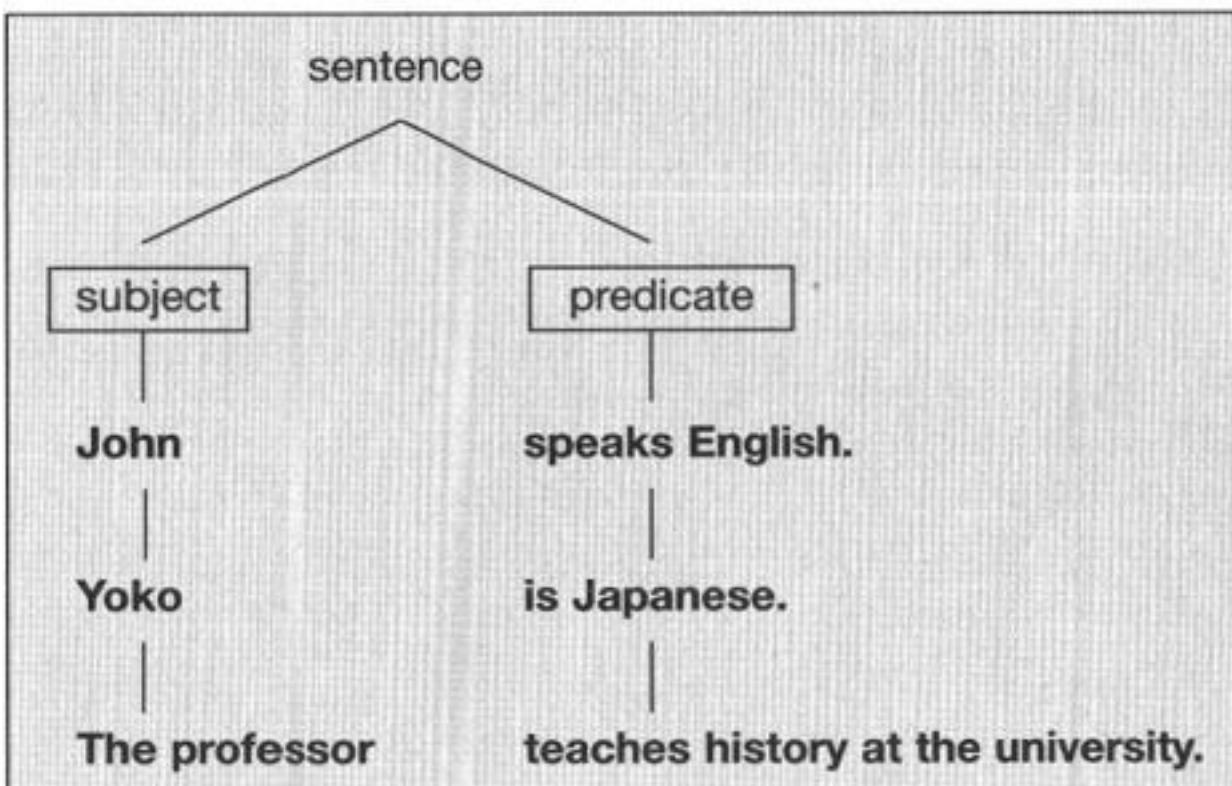
Examples





- The predicate is that part of the sentence that expresses what is said about the subject. It usually can be found directly after the subject, it must include a verb, and it includes everything remaining in the sentence that is not part of the subject.

Examples

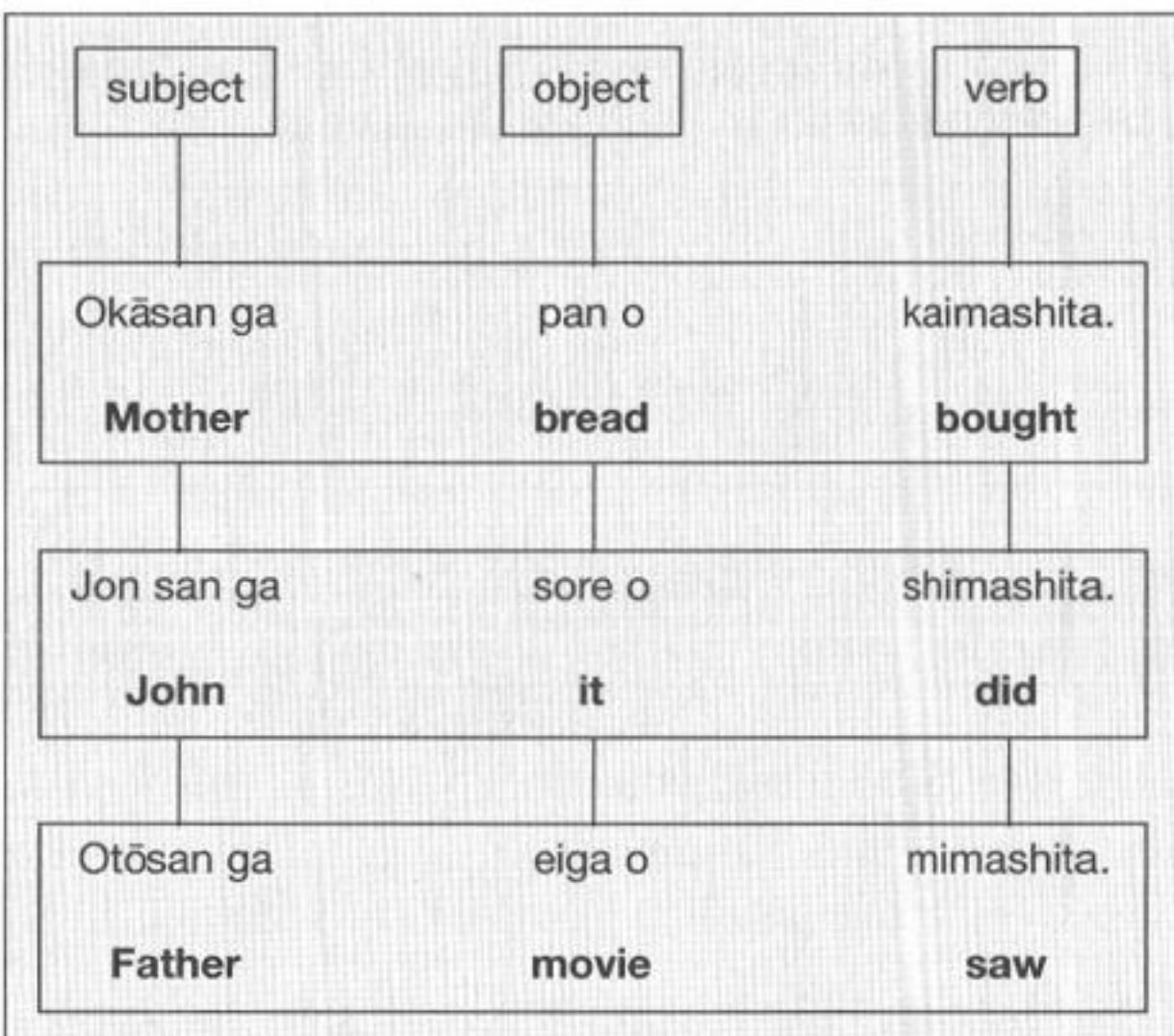


§3.3 THE JAPANESE SENTENCE

§3.3-1 Subject-Object-Verb Sentences

Japanese is a *Subject-Object-Verb* language. (So are Korean, Mongolian, and Turkish.) Thus, in a typical sentence, the subject comes first, the object next, and the verb last. This kind of word order sequence for the sentence is sometimes referred to by the initials **SOV** (an SOV language).

Examples



The significant difference from English here is that the verb must come at the end of the sentence.

- What about questions? The word order remains the same. But remember: Japanese does not use question marks. A sentence becomes a question by adding the particle *ka* at the end. You can think of *ka* as a question mark. (Particles, an important Part of Speech in Japanese, will be discussed in §6.)

Examples

Subject	Object	Verb
Okāsan ga	pan o	kaimashita ka. / Did mother buy bread?
Jon san ga	sore o	shimashita ka. / Did John do it?
Otōsan ga	eiga o	mimashita ka. / Did father see a movie?

§3.3–2 Subject and Predicate

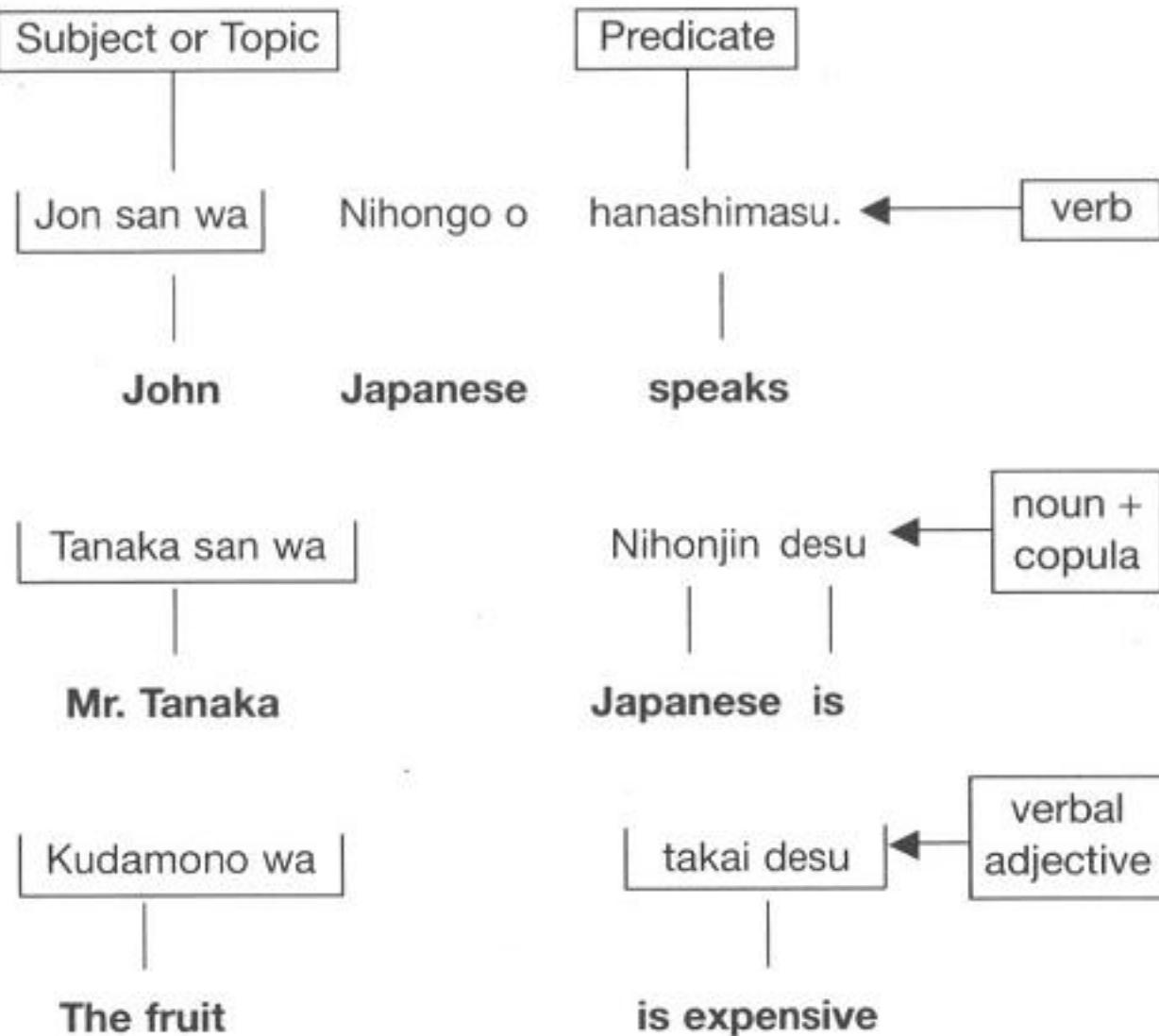
Tip

Japanese sentences *may* have a subject or a topic, but they *must* have a predicate. (The subject is followed by the particle *ga*, and the topic by the particle *wa*. See §6.)

- The *predicate* is the core of the Japanese sentence. It comes at the end, and it must be a verb or a verbal form. In Japanese, a verbal form may be a noun plus copula (like English **is** or **are**. See §7.6), or a verbal adjective.

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Examples



- In addition to the *subject* or topic, there may, of course, be other elements in the sentence—*object*, *indirect object*, *adverb*, and so forth. They come before the predicate, and are not considered part of it.
- Two principles hold true for word order in a Japanese sentence:

The predicate must come at the end of the sentence.
A particle must immediately follow the word or words it marks.
- Other than this, word order is not rigid. The subject or topic usually comes first, although an adverb of time may pre-

cede it or follow it. Expressions of time usually precede expressions of place. Most modifiers precede the words they modify.

Examples

Kare wa mainichi uchi de shinbun
 | | | | |
 he topic every day home at newspapers
 marker

o takusan yomimasu.
 | | |
 obj. many reads
 marker

Kono kodomotachi wa Nihonjin desu.
 | | | | |
 these children topic Japanese are
 marker

Shinbun ga tēburu no ue ni arimasu.
 | | | | |
 newspaper subj. table 's top on (there) is
 marker

Kyō Jon san wa Tōkyō kara Kyōto ni ikimasu.
 | | | | |
 Today John topic from to will go
 marker

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Kanojo wa honya de hon o kaimashita.
| | | | | |
she topic **bookstore** at **book** obj. **bought**
marker marker

- With a question, the word order is the same. As you now know, the particle *ka* at the end of the sentence makes a statement into a question.

Example

Kanojo wa honya de hon o kaimashita ka. / **Did she buy a book at the bookstore?**
| |
she topic
marker

- If a question uses a question word (*when*, *who*, *what*, etc.), it normally comes after the subject or topic, but this is not rigid.

Examples

Kanojo wa itsu honya de hon o kaimashita ka. /
| | |
she topic **when**
marker

When did she buy a book at the bookstore?

Kanojo wa naze honya de hon o kaimashita ka. /
| | |
she topic **.why**
marker

Why did she buy a book at the bookstore?

Dare ga honya de hon o kaimashita ka. / **Who bought a book at the bookstore?**
| |
who subj.
marker

Sore	wa	donna hon desu ka. / What kind of book is it?
it	topic marker	what kind of

§3.3–3 Incomplete Sentences

In most languages, words that can be understood or implied from the context of the situation can be left out of a sentence. In Japanese, it is the subject or topic that is omitted, not the predicate. If the situation is clear without the subject or topic, Japanese tend to leave it out.

Example

Kore wa nan desu ka. / **What is this?**

Kore wa hon desu. / **This is a book.**

or

Hon desu.

book	is
------	----

In English, this question could be answered with just the noun: **A book.**

In Japanese, the copula, or verb **to be** is needed too. Remember, a Japanese sentence must have a predicate, or verb form. Look at some more examples.

Example

Anata wa nani o kaimashita ka. / **What did you buy?**

you	what	did buy
-----	------	---------

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Tip

Although this sentence is grammatically correct, the Japanese prefer to omit the **you** which would be obvious from the context.

Example

Nani o kaimashita ka. / **What did (you) buy?**

Hon o kaimashita. / **(I) bought a book.**

In a sense, these shouldn't be called "incomplete sentences" because, to the Japanese, they are quite complete!

Parts of Speech

§4.

Nouns

§4.1 WHAT ARE NOUNS?

A *noun* is a word that names or refers to a person, a place, or a thing. A thing may be a quality or a concept.

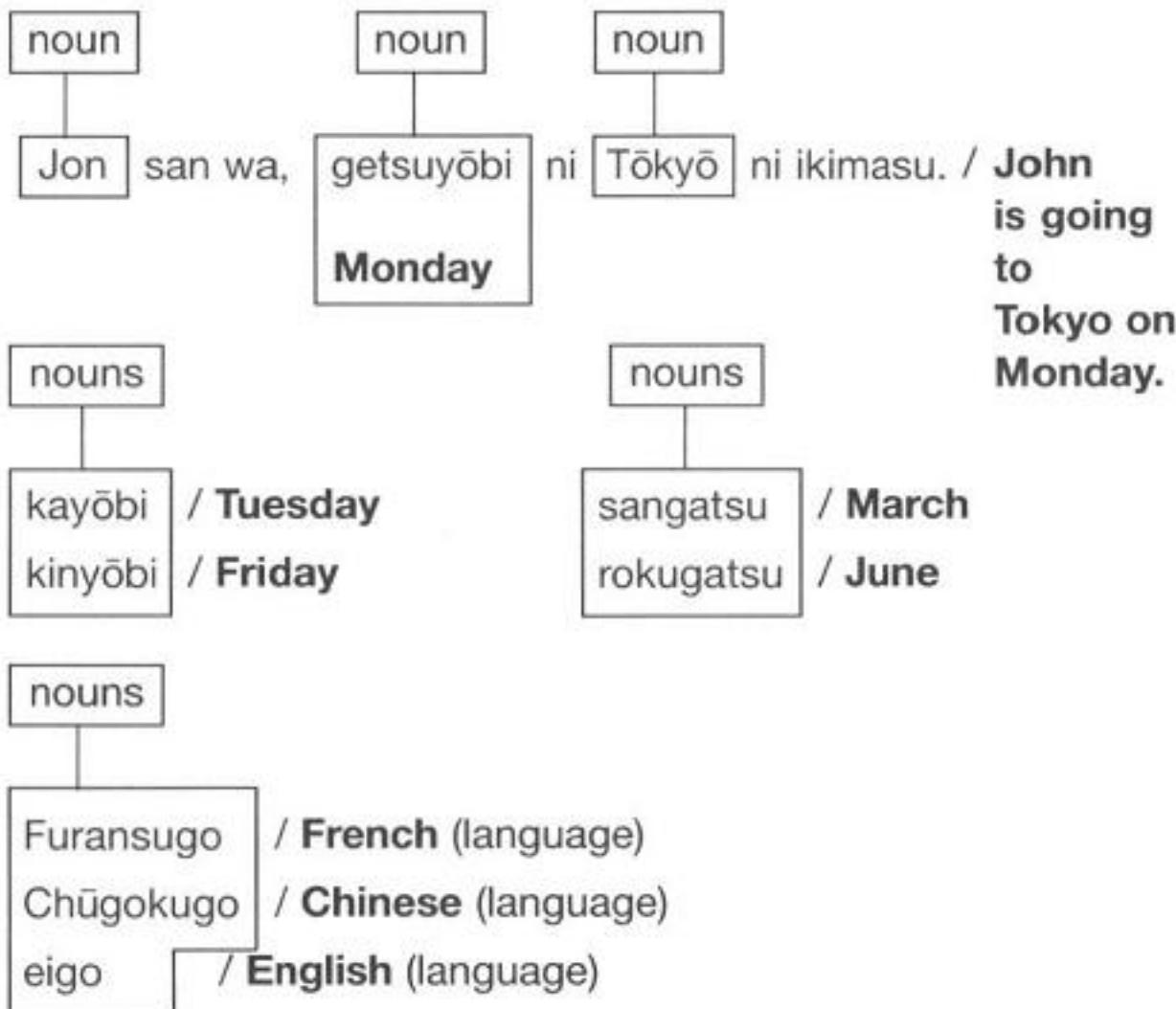
There are two main types of nouns:

- A *proper noun* names a particular person, place, or thing. In English, all proper nouns are capitalized. The Japanese concept of proper nouns is more limited. In romaji (see §2.4), names of persons or places, for example, are capitalized, but days of the week and months of the year are not. The words for other languages are capitalized, but not the word for English: *eigo*

Examples



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- A *common noun* does not name a particular person, place, or thing.

Examples

hon / book otokonoko / boy onnanoko / girl

§4.2 GENDER

Japanese nouns do not have *gender*. There are no special endings to show masculine, feminine, or neuter forms.

§4.3 ARTICLES

Japanese does not use *articles* before nouns. There are no words to correspond to English *a*, *an*, or *the*.

§4.4 NUMBER

Number means that a word can be *singular* (referring to one person, thing, etc.) or *plural* (referring to more than one). With most Japanese nouns, number is not an issue. *The same word is used for one or for more than one.*

Examples

hon / **book, books**

uchi / **house, houses**

shinbun / **newspaper, newspapers**

ki / **tree, trees**

te / **hand, hands**

kuruma / **car, cars**

Hon o motte imasu. / **I have a book.**

Hon o motte imasu. / **I have some books.**

- For nouns referring to people, the plural suffix *-tachi* may be used, although it isn't required.

Examples

kodomo / **child, children**

kodomotachi / **children**

otokonoko / **boy, boys**

otokonokotachi / **boys**

onnanoko / **girl, girls**

onnanokotachi / **girls**

hahaoya / **mother, mothers**

hahaoyatachi / **mothers**

sensei / **teacher, teachers**

senseitachi / **teachers**

- When *-tachi* is used with someone's name, it usually refers to the person and his or her family or group.

Examples

Tanaka san tachi / **Mr. Tanaka and his family**

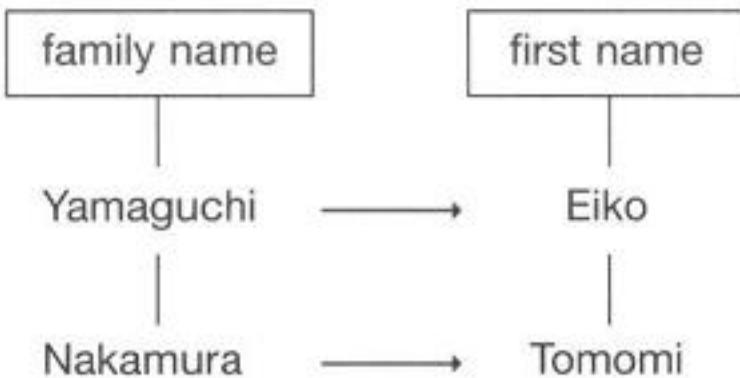
Tomoko san tachi / **Tomoko and her group**

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§4.5 NAMES

Japanese use *family names first*, and *first names last*.

Examples



When Japanese introduce themselves to each other, they say the family name first. However, they know that English speakers do it the opposite way.

Tip

Japanese prefer family names, not first names. Japanese adults rarely use first names. Even among friends, family names are the rule, first names the exception. Unless a Japanese specifically asks you to use his or her first name, you should use the family name.

With children, it's different. Japanese use young children's first names followed by the title *chan*, older children's first names followed by *san* (see §4.6).

§4.6 TITLES

The Japanese word that corresponds to English **Mr.**, **Mrs.**, **Miss**, and **Ms.** is *san*. The Japanese always use *san* (or other, more formal titles of respect) with proper names. Even among family members or close personal friends who use first names with each other, *san* follows the name.

Tip

Be sure to use *san* in direct address (when speaking directly to someone), and when referring to someone else. Never use *san* to refer to yourself.

Examples

Tanaka san, kōhī wa ikaga desu ka. / **Mr. Tanaka, would you like some coffee?**

Merī san wa, kyō gakkō ni imasu ka. / **Is Mary at school today?**

But note the following:

Watakushi wa, John Smith desu. / **I'm John Smith.**

§4.7 POLITENESS

The prefix *o-* before certain nouns expresses *politeness*. (This is also used with verbs and adjectives. See §7 and §8.)

Examples

namae, onamae / **name**

sake, osake / **rice wine**

hashi, ohashi / **chopsticks**

kane, okane / **money**

furo, ofuro / **bath**

tegami, otegami / **letter**

A variation of this form is *go-*, which is used with words of Chinese origin.

hon, gohon / **book**

kekkon, gokekkon / **marriage**

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Note the following about the prefixes o- and go-:

- Although both men and women may use the above forms, in some cases, these prefixes would be used only by women, as in the “o” forms in examples below.

Examples

niku, oniku / **meat** yasai, oyasai / **vegetables**

- Some words are *always* used with the polite prefix. The o- and go- are now part of the words:

Examples

ocha / **Japanese tea** gohan / **cooked rice, meal**

Tip

- These prefixes cannot be used with all nouns. It's best to use them only when you are certain they are correct, as with the examples above.

§4.8 COMPOUND NOUNS

When two nouns are used together to make a *compound noun*, they are usually joined by the particle *no*.

Examples

rekishi no kurasu / **history class**
eigo no sensei / **English teacher**
apāto no biru / **apartment building**

Some compound nouns may be formed *without* the *no*, however.

Examples

kōhī jawan / **coffee cup**

kankō basu / **tour bus**

bōeki gaisha / **trading company**

§4.9 NOUN SUFFIXES

- The suffix *-ya*, when added to a noun, means the place or shop where that thing is sold, or the person or shopkeeper who sells it.

Examples

niku / **meat** → nikuya / **butcher shop,
butcher**

hon / **book** → honya / **bookstore, clerk,
owner**

kamera / **camera** → kameraya / **camera shop,
clerk, owner**

- When referring to the clerk or shopkeeper, the title *san* is used:

Examples

nikuya san / **butcher**

kameraya san / **camera shop clerk**

- The suffix *-ka*, when added to a noun, means a person with expertise or special knowledge on that subject.

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Examples

seiji / **politics** → seijika / **politician**

hyōron / **commentary** → hyōronka / **critic,**
commentator

shōsetsu / **novel** → shōsetsuka / **novelist**

geijutsu / **art** → geijutsuka / **artist**

§5.

Pronouns

§5.1 WHAT ARE PRONOUNS?

A *pronoun* is a word that takes the place of a noun. Here are some common English pronouns: **I, you, he, she, it, we, they**. These are personal pronouns used as *subjects*. Other common English pronouns are **me, him, her, us, them**. These are personal pronouns used as *objects*. **You** and **it**, of course, may be subjects or objects. In addition to these, there are other kinds of pronouns, such as *possessive* (**mine, yours, his**, etc.), *demonstrative* (**this, that**), and *interrogative* (**who, where, what**, etc.)

Japanese pronoun usage is quite different from that of English, as you will see from the following discussion.

§5.2 PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Personal pronouns in Japanese refer to people, not things or ideas. Japanese has no equivalent to the English **it** in this category.

Tip

- When the meaning can be understood from the context, the Japanese prefer *not* to use personal pronouns. Use these with care, and be sure to read the information that follows.

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Singular	Plural
watakushi / I, me	watakushitachi / we, us
anata / you	anatatachi / you anatagata / you (polite)
kare / he, him	karera / they, them (all male or male and female)
kanojo / she, her	kanojotachi / they, them (female) kanojora / they, them (female)

Tip

Informal usage

watashi / **I, me**

atashi / **I, me** (female)

§5.2-1 Special Usage

anata / you

- Avoid using this whenever possible. When speaking to someone directly, try to use the person's name and *san* instead.

Example

Sumisu san, nani o kaimashita ka. / **Mr. Smith, what did you buy?**

Smith	Mr.	what	did buy	?
			obj.	
			marker	

- When speaking to a teacher, a doctor, a dentist, or a member of the Diet (the Japanese legislature), use the word *sensei*, either alone, or after the person's last name. *Sensei*, which literally means "teacher," may also be used with others not listed above. A teacher can be one who has achieved success or earned respect in his or her field. You can use *sensei*, for example, to address an artist, writer, architect, musician, or other talented person.

Example

Sensei, ogenki desu ka. / Sir (teacher), how have you been?

If you are speaking to a group, you can use the following expressions for "you" (plural):

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Example

mina san / **everyone (you all)** mina sama / **everyone (you all)**

mina / **everyone** + san

or

sama

(very polite, and
more formal than san)

Examples

Mina san, ohayō gozaimasu. / **Good morning, everyone.**

Mina sama, sayōnara. / **Goodbye, everyone!**

kare / **he** kanojo / **she**

- Whenever possible, when referring to a third person, use the person's name.

Example

Sumisu san wa Nyūyōku kara kimashita ka. / **Is Mrs. Smith from New York?**

This is better than saying, "Is *she* from New York?" Of course, if it is clear who the subject is, it can be left out entirely.

- Several other terms can be used instead of the pronouns *kare*, *kanojo*, and their plural forms. The Japanese prefer these:

Singular	Plural
ano hito / that person	ano hitotachi / those persons
ano kata / that person (polite)	ano katagata / those persons (polite)

Examples

Kinō |ano hito| ni aimashita ka. / **Did you see him (that person) yesterday?**
 that person

|Ano katagata| wa kinō irasshaimashita. / **They (those persons) were here yesterday.**
 those persons

§5.2–2 Case

Case refers to the form of a pronoun which shows its relationship to other words in a sentence.

In English, the personal pronouns have three cases: the *nominative* (used for the subject of a sentence or clause), the *objective* (used for the object of a sentence, indirect object, or object of a preposition), and the *possessive* (showing ownership). English has a different set of personal pronouns for each of these cases.

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Examples

He lives here. *He* = nominative case (subject of the sentence)

I see *him*. *him* = objective case (object of the verb)

His car is here. *His* = possessive case (shows ownership)

In Japanese, the personal pronouns function with all three cases, but the words stay the same. The case is shown by a *particle*, or postposition, that comes after the pronoun.

Note that in the following examples of how one pronoun, *watakushi*, is used for different grammatical functions, the topic marker *wa*, rather than the subject marker *ga*, is preferred. This will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on Particles (see §6).

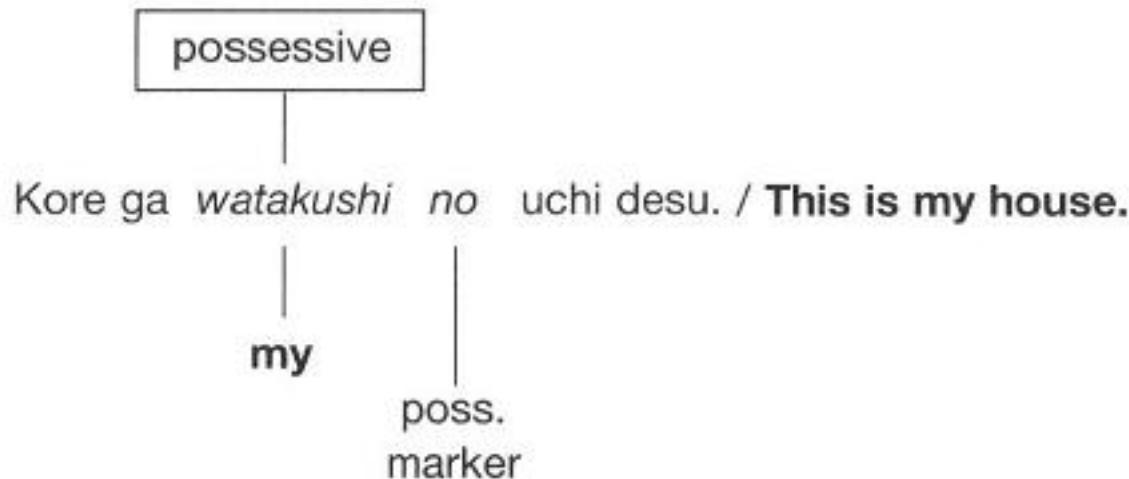
Examples



|
|
topic
marker



me obj.
marker



§5.3 INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS

Although some are pronouns and some are other parts of speech in Japanese, these are all interrogative words.

- dare / **who**
- dō / **how**
- doko / **where** (place)
- donna / **what kind of**
- dochira / **where, which** (direction, preference)
- dore / **which** (persons, things)
- dotchi / **which** (of two choices)
- donata / **which person, who** (polite)
- dōshite / **why**
- nan, nani / **what**
- nannin / **how many people**
- ikura / **how much**
- ikutsu / **how many**
- itsu / **when**

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§5.4 INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

dareka / someone	daremo / no one
donataka / someone (polite)	donatamo / no one (polite)
doreka / something	doremo / nothing
dokoka / somewhere	dokomo / nowhere
nanika / something	nanimo / nothing
ikuraka / some, a little	ikuramo / not much
nandemo / anything	nannimo / nothing

- Note that the expressions listed on the right side of the preceding chart take *negative* verbs in order to have a negative meaning.

Examples

Dareka kimashita. / **Someone came.**

 | |
 | |
someone **came**

Daremo kimasen deshita. / **No one came.**

 | |
 | |
no one **didn't come**

§5.5 DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

The *demonstrative* words (some are pronouns and some are adjectives or adverbs) form a pattern of prefixes:

ko- / **here** (close to the speaker)
 so- / **there** (away from the speaker)
 a- / **over there** (some distance from the speaker)
 do- / **question**

The last one, *do-*, can be seen in §5.3 above.

Here are the rest:

	ko- / here	so- / there	a- / over there
Pronoun	kore / this	sore / that	are / that
Adjective	kono / this	sono / that	ano / that
Adjective	konna / this kind of	sonna / that kind of	anna / that kind of
Adverb	kō / in this manner	sō / in that manner	ā / in that manner
Adverb, Pronoun	koko / here	soko / there	asoko / over there
Adverb, Pronoun	kochira / here, this	sochira / there, that	achira / there, that

This form is politer usage than the one above.

§5.6 RELATIVE PRONOUNS

The *relative* pronouns in English are **who**, **whom**, **whose**, **which**, **where**, and **that**. Because relative clauses in

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Japanese precede, rather than follow, the words they modify, Japanese does not have words that correspond to these pronouns.

Example

Kyō	tsuita	hito	wa	Yamada san desu.	/ The man
					who arrived
today	arrived	man	topic	is	today is
			marker		Mr. Yamada.

Notice that the Japanese sentence has no word to correspond to the relative pronoun “who” in the English sentences.

This will be explained further in the section on Verbs (see §7).

§5.7 REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

The reflexive pronouns in English are words such as **myself**, **yourself**, **himself**, **yourselves**, and so forth. Japanese has only one word to correspond to these pronouns. You might call it an all-purpose reflexive pronoun. Its meaning is both singular and plural, masculine and feminine. It can be used for humans and for warm-blooded animals. It cannot be used for fish, reptiles, insects, or inanimate objects.

jibun / one's self

This is commonly followed by particles such as *de* or *no* (see §6).

Examples

Jibun de ikimasu. / **I'm going myself.**

Jibun de shinasai. / **Do it yourself.**

Jibun no koto wa jibun de shinasai. / **Do your own work
by yourself.**

Meri san wa, jibun de benkyō shite imasu. / **Mary is
studying by
herself.**

§6.

Particles

§6.1 WHAT ARE PARTICLES?

A particle is a word that shows the relationship of a word, a phrase, or a clause to the rest of the sentence. Some particles show grammatical function—subject, object, indirect object. Some have meaning themselves, like English prepositions. But since they always *follow* the word or words they mark, they are *postpositions*.

The lists that follow include some of the more common particles, and some of their uses.

§6.2 PARTICLES USED WITH WORDS OR PHRASES

wa	de	made ni
ga	e	mo
o	hodo	shika
no	ka	to
ni	kara	ya
dake	made	yori

wa

topic marker

How do you decide if an expression is a topic, marked with *wa*, or a subject, marked with *ga*? Both look like the subject of an English sentence!

Think of the topic as a comment on something that has already been introduced into the conversation, or that is part of general or shared knowledge. As such, *wa* can mean

“Speaking of (the) . . .” or “As for (the).”

Examples

Kimura san wa, gakusei desu. / **Mr. Kimura is a student.** (Speaking of Mr. Kimura, he's a student.)

topic	student	is
marker		

Nihonjin wa, hashi o tsukaimasu. / **The Japanese use chopsticks.** (As for the Japanese, they use chopsticks.)

topic	chopsticks	obj.	use
marker		marker	

- Note that *wa* as a topic marker can also follow what in English may look like an object, a phrase, or a clause.

Examples

Asagohan wa hachiji ni tabemashita. / **I ate breakfast at 8 o'clock.** (Speaking of breakfast, I ate at 8 o'clock.)

breakfast	topic	8	at	ate
		o'clock		

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Hachiji ni wa asagohan o tabemashita.
| | | |
8 at topic object
o'clock marker marker

/ I ate breakfast at 8 o'clock. (Speaking of 8 o'clock,
I ate breakfast then.)

Asagohan o tabeta no wa hachiji deshita. / I ate
| | | |
ate topic was **breakfast**
nominalizer marker at 8
nominalizer o'clock.
(The time
I ate
breakfast
was 8
o'clock.)

contrast

Wa can follow a noun to show contrast. The thing being contrasted may or may not be stated, but with this usage, the contrast is implied.

Examples

Sakana wa tabemasu ga, niku wa

| | | |
fish eat but meat

tabemasen. / I eat fish, but I don't eat meat.

don't eat

Terebi wa mimasen. / I don't watch television.
 |
 Television don't watch

ga

subject marker

Ga marks what the Japanese call the grammatical *subject* of a sentence. Think of the subject in the following two ways:

- First, in neutral descriptions of observable actions or situations.

Examples

Tegami ga kimashita. / The mail came.

| | |
 mail subj. came
 marker

Ame ga hutte imasu. / It's raining. (The rain is falling.)
 | |
 rain subj. is falling
 marker

Note that in the negative counterparts of these sentences, *wa*, not *ga*, must be used.

Tegami wa kimasen deshita. / The mail didn't come.

- Second, for special emphasis, to distinguish a particular person or thing from all others.

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Examples

Watakushi ga shimashita. / I did it. (I am the one who did it.)

Tōkyō ga ōkii desu. / Tokyo is big. (It is Tokyo that is big.)

- When an interrogative pronoun is used as the subject of a sentence, *ga* must always be used too.

Example

Dare ga, kore o shimashita ka. / Who did this?
| | | | | |
who subj. this obj. did ?
marker marker
(Who is the
one who did
this?)

object marker

O usually marks the object. But *ga* marks the object of certain non-action verbs and certain verbal adjectives and adjectival nouns (see §8).

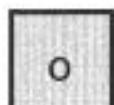
Examples

Yōko san wa, eigo ga wakarimasu. / Yoko
| | | |
topic English obj. understands
marker marker
understands English.

Nihongo ga dekimasu ka. / Can you speak
| |
obj. can do?
marker Japanese?

Hon ga hoshii desu. / I want a book.
 | | |
book obj. want
 marker

Merī san wa, tenisu ga jōzu desu. / **Mary is good at tennis**
 | | | |
 topic obj. good at is
 marker marker



direct object marker

Examples

Senshū sono hon o yomimashita. / **I read that book last week.**
 | | | |
 last week that book read

Jon san wa eiga o mimashita. / **John saw a movie.**
 | |
 movie saw

through, along, in

The particle **o** is used with verbs such as **walk, run, drive, go through**, etc., when speaking of continuous motion and a finite place or distance.

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Examples

Tanaka san wa, Gobangai o arukimashita. / Mr. Tanaka
walked along
Fifth Avenue.

Fifth Avenue walked

Kōen o hashirimashita. / I ran through the park.

park ran

no

possessive marker

Think of this like the English apostrophe plus s.

Examples

Watakushi no inu wa, pūdoru desu. / My dog is a poodle.

My dog poodle is

Kodomo no kao ga yogorete imasu. / The child's face
is dirty.

Child's face dirty is

noun modification

This usage of no is similar to the possessive, but it is seen more with compound nouns or noun phrases.

Examples

Sūgaku no kurasu wa, muzukashii desu. / **The math class is difficult.**

math class difficult is

Amerika no tabemono wa, oishii desu. / **American food is delicious.**

American food delicious is

appositive

No links the noun or pronoun to the appositive that follows.

Examples

Nikuya no Doi san wa, okanemochi desu. / **The butcher, Mr. Doi, is rich.**

The butcher Mr. Doi rich is

Amerikajin no Jon san wa, Shikago kara
John, the American from
kimashita. / **The American, John, is from Chicago.**

came

- For the nominalization use of *no*, see §7.19 and §8.5.



indirect object marker

Examples

Yamada san ni hanashimashita. / I talked to Ms. Yamada.

| |
to talked

Hon o watakushi ni kudasai. / Please give me the
book. (Please give
me the book.)

| | |
book me to please give

- Note that some Japanese verbs, such as **ask** and **meet**, take an indirect object, although their English counterparts do not.

Examples

Watakushi wa, Tanaka san ni kikimashita. / I asked Mr.
Tanaka.

| |
to asked

Tomodachi ni aimashita. / I met my friend.

| | |
friend to met

location

With stative (non-action) verbs meaning **there is/are**, *imasu* for people, *arimasu* for things, *ni* means **in**, **at**, or **on**, and so forth.

Examples

Merī san wa, Kyōto ni imasu. / **Mary is in Kyoto.**

Ginza wa Tōkyō ni arimasu. / **Ginza is in Tokyo.**

Haha wa depāto ni imasu. / **My mother is at the department store.**

| |
my department
mother store

For location, the equivalents of English expressions **near**, **under**, **inside**, **on top of**, etc. are useful. Note how they are formed in Japanese. First look at the following words:

ue / top	shita / bottom
mae / front	ushiro / back
naka / inside	soto / outside
chikaku / nearby	tonari / next to

These words are nouns in Japanese. To form a locational phrase, the particle *no* links another noun to one of these, and then the particle *ni* follows.

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tēburu no ue ni / **on top of the table**
| | | |
table 's top on

Hon wa, tēburu no ue ni arimasu. / **The book is on top of the table.**

uchi no naka ni / **inside the house**
| | | |
house 's inside in

Jon san wa, uchi no naka ni imasu. / **John is inside the house.**

eki no chikaku ni / **near the station**
| | | |
station 's nearby at

Yūbinkyoku wa, eki no chikaku ni arimasu. / **The post office is near the station.**

direction

With verbs of motion, *ni* means **to** or **toward**.

Examples

Nakamura san wa, mainichi Tōkyō
|
every day

ni ikimasu. / **Mrs. Nakamura goes to Tokyo every day.**

| | |
to goes

Ano hito wa, Amerika ni kaerimashita. / **He returned to America.**

Ano hito	wa, Amerika ni	kaerimashita.	/	He returned to America.
He		to returned		

specific time

With expressions of specific time, *ni* means **at** (clock time), **in** (month, year), or **on** (day).

Examples

ichiji ni / **at one o'clock**
gogo jūichiji ni / **at 11 P.M.**

Ano hitotachi wa, shichiji han ni tsukimashita. / **They arrived at 7:30.**

Ano hitotachi	wa,	shichiji han	ni	tsukimashita.	/	They arrived at 7:30.
They		7:30	at	arrived		

rokugatsu ni / **in June**
kugatsu ni / **in September**
senkyūhyakukyūjū nen ni / **in (the year) 1990**

Ano hito wa, shigatsu ni umaremashita. / **He was born in April.**

Ano hito	wa, shigatsu ni	umaremashita.	/	He was born in April.
	April	in	was born	

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Watakushi wa, 1991 nen ni Nihon ni
| | | |
year in Japan to

ikimashita. / I went to Japan in 1991.

went

getsuyōbi ni / on Monday
kinyōbi ni / on Friday

Getsuyōbi ni shigoto o hajimemasu. / I begin work on
Monday.

Monday on work begin

Kayōbi ni sore o shimashō. / Let's do it on Tuesday.

Tuesday on it let's do

notion of per

Ni, is used with expressions such as **per hour, per day, per person**, etc.

Examples

ichijikan ni san doru / three dollars per hour
| | | |
hour per three dollars

Isshūkan ni yonjūhachi jikan hatarakimasu. / I work 48

week	per	48	hours	work	hours a week.
------	-----	----	-------	------	---------------

Sandoitchi o hitori ni futatsu tsukurimasu.

Sandwiches	person	per	two	will make	will make
------------	--------	-----	-----	-----------	-----------

/ I'll make two sandwiches per person.

For some other uses of *ni*, see §7.12 and §7.13.

dake

limitation

Dake translates English words such as **only**, **all**, **just**, **no more than**, **as many as**, and **as much as**.

Examples

Sore dake desu ka. / Is that all?

that	all	is	?
------	-----	----	---

Terebi wa, nyūsu bangumi dake mimasu. / On television I watch only the news.

news	program	only	watch	television
------	---------	------	-------	------------

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Suki na dake tabete kudasai. / Please eat as
| | | |
want as much as eat please

de

place of action

This use of *de* means **in**, **at**, **on**, and so forth. It is used with action verbs, or with *arimasu* when action is implied.

Example

Panya de kaimashita. / I bought it at the bakery.
| | |
bakery at bought

means

De translates **by**, or **by means of**, **with**, **in**, etc.

Examples

Takushi de ikimashita. / I went by taxi.
| | |
taxi by went

Jisho de shirabemashita. / I checked it in the
| | |
dictionary in checked

totalizing

This use of *de* connotes a **unit**, a **certain number** or amount, or **together**.

Examples

futari de / (by) two people

Futari de shimasu. / **Two of us (together) will do it.**

will do

Nihon ni futari de ikimasu. / **Two of us will go to Japan.**

Japan to two people will go

Zenbu de sen en desu. / **All together it's 1,000 yen.**

all together 1,000 yen is

time limit

The meaning of *de* here is **within** or **in** for a given length of time.

Examples

Nishūkan de dekimasu. / **I can do it within two weeks.**

two weeks within can do

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Ichijikan de ikemasu. / You can go in one hour.

one hour in can go

scope

Here *de* means **among, of, within**, etc., referring to extent or range.

Examples

Kudamono de, nani ga ichiban suki desu ka.
fruit of which most like ?

/ Which of the fruit do you like the most?

Amerika de, doko ni ikitai desu ka. / Where in America do you want to go?
within where want to go ?

material

Here *de* means **of** or **from** in made of or made from expressions.

Examples

Kono tēburu wa, ki de dekite imasu. / This table is made of wood.
table wood of is made

Kore wa, gin de tsukurimashita. / I made it of silver.

| | |
silver of made

e

direction

Like *ni*, *e* is used with verbs of motion to indicate **to** or **toward**.

Example

Kariforunia e ikimasu ka. / Are you going to California?
|
are going

hodo

extent or degree

Hodo means **as much as**, or **as . . . as**, and it is often used in negative constructions, although the meaning is positive.

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Examples

Watakushi wa, anata hodo

| | |
| you as much as

isogashiku arimasen. / I'm not as busy as you are.

not busy

Kore hodo oishii mono wa arimasen. / There's

this

delicious thing

**There's
nothing as
delicious as
this.**

Ashi ga

feet

began

to the

walked

I walked so much that my feet hurt.

about, approximately

With things that can be counted, *hodo* means **about** or **approximately**.

Examples

Sen en hodo desu. / It's about 1,000 yen.

1,000 yen about is

Isshūkan hodo de dekimasu. / It can be done in
| | | |
a week about in can be done

ka

enumerative

The meaning of *ka* here is **or**, that is, listing parallel things and then choosing.

Examples

Banana ka ringo o kaimashō. / **Let's buy bananas or apples.**
| | |
or apples **let's buy**

Kōhī ka, kōcha ka, kokoa wa
coffee or tea or cocoa
ikaga desu ka. / Would you like
or cocoa?
how about ?

- Note that *ka*, like many particles, has several meanings. In the example above, it is also used as the question marker at the end of the sentence.

kara

place of departure, origin

The meaning of *kara* here is **from**.

Examples

Kono kisha wa, Kyōto kara kimashita. / This train
 | | | |
 this train from came
 came from Kyoto.

Watakushi wa, Nihon kara kimashita. / I am from Japan.

| |
 I from

starting time

The meaning of *kara* here would be expressed by **at** in English, but in Japanese, the meaning is **from a certain time and continuing on**. In other words, it is the beginning of a period of time. It differs from the use of the particle *ni*, which means at a precise time. (Meet me at one o'clock.)

Examples

Gēmu wa, ichiji kara hajimarimasu. / The game
 | | | |
 game one o'clock from begins begins
 begins at one o'clock.

Getsuyōbi kara isogashiku narimasu. / Starting Monday, I'll be busy.
 | | | |
 Monday from busy become

source

Kara also means **from** in the sense of **origin**.

Examples

Tanaka san kara kikimashita. / I heard it from Mrs. Tanaka.
 | |
 from heard

Kono hon wa, toshokan kara karimashita. / I borrowed this book from the library.
 | | | |
 this book library from borrowed library.

made

target time or place

Made means **until, as far as**. It is often combined with *kara* in a sentence.

Example

Yūgata made benkyō shimashita. / I studied until evening.
 | |
 evening until studied

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Tsugi no kado made arukimashō. / Let's walk as far as the next corner.
next corner as far as let's walk

Gakkō wa, kuji kara sanji made
school 9 o'clock from 3 o'clock until

desu. / School is from 9 until 3 o'clock.

is

made ni

time limit

Unlike the time limit usage of the particle *de* (within), *made ni* means **by** (the time given), or **not later than**.

Examples

Goji made ni dekimasu ka. / Can you do it by 5 o'clock?
5 o'clock by can do

Kayōbi made ni hitsuyō desu. / I need it by Tuesday.
Tuesday by need

mo

including, excluding

Mo means **also** or **too**. Depending on which word it follows in a sentence, *mo* can replace *wa*, *ga*, or *o*. When used with a negative verb, the meaning is **(not) either, or neither . . . nor**.

Examples

Watakushi mo ikitai desu. / I want to go too.
 | | |
 I too want to go

Gohan mo suki desu. / I also like rice.
 | | |
 rice also like

Yōko san wa, niku mo sakana mo
 | | | |
 meat neither fish nor
 tabemasen. / Yoko eats neither meat nor fish.
 |
 doesn't eat

emphasis

This meaning of *mo* is **even** in the sense of emphasis.

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Examples

Ano Amerikajin wa, sashimi mo

raw fish even

tabemasu. / That American even eats raw fish.

eats

Ichi doru mo arimasen. / I don't even have one dollar.

one dollar even there isn't

shika

limitation

Shika means **only, just**. Although the meaning is affirmative, it takes the negative form of the verb.

Examples

Eigo shika shirimasen. / I only know English.

English only don't know

Shinbun shika yomimasen. / I only read newspapers.

newspapers only don't read

to

complete listing

To means **and** when stating all possible items in a list. The implication is **and nothing more**.

Examples

Jon san to Merī san ga kimashita. / **John and Mary came.**

Enpitsu to, nōto to, jōgi o
 | | | |
 pencils and notebook and ruler

kaimashita. / **I bought pencils, a notebook, and a ruler.**

|
bought

involvement

Here, *to* means **together with**.

Examples

Satō san to honya e ikimashita. / **I went to the bookstore with Mr. Sato.**

| | | |
with bookstore to went

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Tomu san to issho ni hon o kakimashita. / I wrote
| | | |
with together book wrote
**a book
with Tom.**

quotation

To follows both direct and indirect quotations.

Examples

Ono san wa, “Watakushi ga shimasu,”
|
I will do
to iimashita. / “I’ll do it,” said Mr. Ono.
|
said

Ono san wa, kare ga suru to iimashita. / Mr. Ono said
| | |
he would do said
that he
would do it.

ya

partial listing

Ya is used for **and** when stating a sample of, or some of the items in, a list. The implication is **and others, among others, or such things as**; that is, something has been left out.

Examples

Jon san ya Merī san ga kimashita. / **John and Mary came.**

Enpitsu ya, nōto ya, jōgi o

pencil and notebook and ruler

kaimashita. / **I bought a pencil, a notebook, and a ruler.**

bought

yori

comparison

Used when comparing things, *yori* means **than**. Think of it as the **than** in expressions such as **bigger than**, **smaller than**, **better than**, **worse than**, **rather than**, etc. It is often used in combination with *hō*(contrast) (see §8).

Examples

Kore yori sore o kudasai. / **Please give me that rather than this.**

this rather than that please give

Pan yori gohan no hō ga

bread more than rice

suki desu. / **I like rice more than bread.**

like

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§6.3 PARTICLES USED WITH CLAUSES

ga node
kara noni
keredo to
nagara

ga

contrary reasoning

Ga means **but**, or **although**. The implication is **despite the circumstances**.

Examples

Samui desu ga, dekakemashita. / Although it's cold,
I went out.
| | | |
cold **is** **although** **went out**

Byōki desu ga, shigoto ni ikimasu. / I'm sick, but I'm going to work.

| | | | | |
sick am but work to go

- *Ga* is often used at the end of a clause with the final clause implied but unsaid. This has a softening effect on the exchange, with both speakers understanding the meaning of what has been left unspoken.

Examples

Ikitakatta desu ga . . . / I wanted to go but . . .
(I couldn't).

| |
wanted to go but

neutral connector

Here, *ga* means **and**.

Examples

Hawai ni ikimashita ga, subarashikatta desu. / I went to Hawaii, and it was wonderful.

| | |
went and was wonderful

Sono hon o yomimashita ga, omoshirokatta desu.

| |
read and was interesting

/ I read that book, and it was interesting.

kara

reason

Here, *kara* means **because** or **since**.

Examples

Isogashii kara ikemasen. / **Because I'm busy, I can't go.**

busy because can't go

Ame da kara uchi ni imasu. / **Since it's raining, I'll stay home.**

rain is since home at stay

sequential action

The meaning of *kara* here is **after**, **since**, **ever since**.

Examples

Tabete kara shigoto o shimasu. / **After eating, I'll do some work.**

eating after work will do

Kekkonshite kara shiawase desu. / **Ever since he got married, he has been happy.**

getting married since happy is

keredo

neutral connector

Keredo means **and**.

Examples

Depāto ni itta keredo, konde imashita.

| | | | | |
 department to went and crowded was
 store

/ I went to the department store, and it was crowded.

Takushī ni notta keredo, takakatta desu. / I took a taxi,
 and it was expensive.

| | | | |
 taxi on got and was expensive

contrary reasoning

Here, *keredo* means **but, although, however**.

Examples

Yonda keredo, wakarimasen deshita. / I read it, but I
 didn't understand it.

| |
 read but didn't understand

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Eiga wa omoshirokatta keredo,

| | |

movie was interesting although

nete shimaimeshita.

/ Although the movie was
interesting, I fell asleep.

fell asleep

nagara

simultaneous action

Nagara means **while** or **as**.

Examples

Aruki nagara, hanashimashita. / **While walking, we
talked.**

| | |

walking while talked

Gohan o tabe nagara, terebi o mimasu. / **As I'm eating,
I watch television.**

| | | |

eating as TV watch

node

cause and effect

Node means **since** or **because** when followed by an "effect" clause.

Examples

Kumotte iru node, umi ni ikimasen. / Since it's cloudy, I'm not going to the beach.

cloudy is since beach to not going

Hashitta node, tsukaremashita. / Because I ran, I got tired.

ran because got tired

noni

contrast

Noni means **in spite of** or **although**, with strong contrast between the two clauses implied.

Examples

Tabetakunai noni, tabemashita. / Although I didn't want to eat it, I ate it.

didn't want although ate

Takai noni, kaimashita. / Although it was expensive, I bought it.

expensive although bought

to

condition

When discussing under what condition, or under which circumstance, *to* means **if** or **when**.

Examples

Kangaeru to wakarimasu. / If you think, you'll understand it.

| |
 think if will understand

Kuji ni iku to, Sano san ni aemasu. / If you go there at 9, you can see Mr. Sano.

| | |
 9 at go if can see

Tōkyō ni tsuku to, ame ga futte imashita. / When I arrived in Tokyo, it was raining.

| | | |
 arrived when rain falling was

§6.4 PARTICLES USED WITH SENTENCES

The following particles are used at the end of sentences.

ka	yo
ne	wa

ka

question marker

Ka is like the English question mark at the end of a sentence. In Japanese, however, the word order of a statement does not change when a question is formed.

Examples

Horiguchi san wa, kirei desu. / **Mrs. Horiguchi is beautiful.**
 | |
 beautiful is

Horiguchi san wa, kirei desu ka. / **Is Mrs. Horiguchi beautiful?**
 | |
 is ?

Imōto san wa, sensei desu ka. / **Is your sister a teacher?**
 | | | |
 sister teacher is ?

Doko de ban gohan o tabetai desu ka. / **Where do you want to eat dinner?**
 | | | |
 where dinner want to eat ?

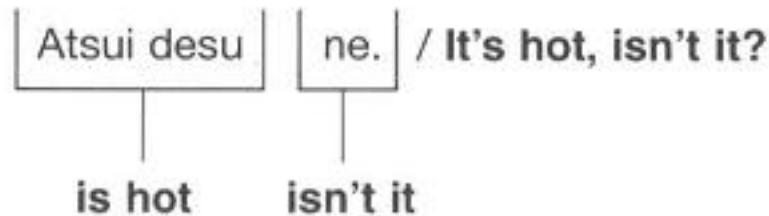
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confirmation

Ne is similar to the English tag questions **don't you think so**, or **isn't it?** It calls for the listener to agree with or confirm what the speaker has said.

Examples



yo

emphatic

One usage of *yo* is similar to the English exclamation point. In that sense, it conveys emotion or strong feeling. It can also be an expression of emphasis, such as **I'm certain** (of what has

just been said). Because men and women use *yo* differently, and because it can be assertive, beginners should use it with care.

Examples

Benkyō shinasai yo. / **Study!**

study

Fujisan wa, kirei desu yo. / **Mt. Fuji is beautiful!**

Mt. Fuji beautiful is !

wa

female sentence ending

Used only by women, *wa* doesn't translate easily. It can have both an emphatic function and a softening effect.

Examples

Totemo atsui wa. / **It's very hot.**

very is hot

Watakushi ga suru wa. / **I'll do it.**

will do

§7.

Verbs

§7.1 WHAT ARE VERBS?

Verbs are words that describe an action, a process, or a state of being.

Verbs have different forms which enable you to express time, intention, feelings, politeness, etc. Japanese verbs express these things too, but in different ways from those of English and other Indo-European languages. As you have seen in §3, for example, the main verb of a Japanese sentence must be at the end. In this section, you will see other differences, as well as some similarities.

§7.2 AGREEMENT

In English a verb must agree with its subject in person and number. In the present tense, for example, a subject in the first person takes a different verb form from a subject in the third person. And a plural subject in the third person takes a different verb form from a singular subject.

Examples

Person	Singular	Plural
First Person	I go	we go
Second Person	you go	you go
Third Person	he/she/it goes	they go

- In Japanese, agreement is not an issue. Verbs do not have different forms to indicate person, number, or gender. The same verb form is used no matter what the subject. This is true for all tenses.

Examples

Person	Singular	Plural
First Person	ikimasu / I go	ikimasu / we go
Second Person	ikimasu / you go	ikimasu / you go
Third Person	ikimasu / he/she/it goes	ikimasu / they go

Tip

This principle is easy to understand if you remember the following: If the meaning is clear from the context in a Japanese sentence, a pronoun is not necessary. Therefore, *Ikimasu* is both a verb and a sentence.

- In English, except for the imperative, or command form, a sentence consisting of a verb alone is not possible.

§7.3 VERB CONJUGATIONS

Japanese verbs can be classified into two major groups, or conjugations. The only exceptions are two irregular verbs: *suru*, **to do**, and *kuru*, **to come**.

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These groupings are a basic key to the Japanese verb system. They enable you to change the verb forms for different tenses and moods.

In a dictionary, an English verb is listed in its infinitive, or **to** form: **(to) go**, **(to) see**, etc. A Japanese verb, on the other hand, is listed in what is called its “dictionary form.” The dictionary form is the basis for categorizing a verb into one of the two major conjugations.

The two groups differ in how they form their stems and their infinitives. The stem is the most important inflectional base, which may change, or to which different suffixes, or endings, are added, to show tense, mood, and politeness level. The infinitive is the second most important inflectional base.

§7.3–1 The Consonant Conjugation

In this group, the verb stems end in a consonant. Therefore, they may be called **c-stem** verbs, as we shall do here. Because the stems are formed by dropping the final **u**, this is also referred to as the **u-dropping conjugation**, and the verbs may be called **u-dropping verbs**.

How can you tell a Consonant Conjugation verb?

- If the dictionary form ends in anything but *-eru* or *-iru*, it belongs in this group.

How do you form the stem?

- To form the stem of the verb, drop the final *-u*.

Examples

DICTIONARY FORM	STEM	ENGLISH
isogu	isog-	to hurry
kaku	kak-	to write
nuru	nur-	to paint
tobu	tob-	to fly
shinu	shin-	to die
yomu	yom-	to read

- For a few verbs, certain sound changes are necessary:

If a verb ends in *-su*, the stem ends in *sh* before a suffix beginning with *i*, or *s* before other suffixes.

If a verb ends in *-tsu*, the stem ends in *ch* before a suffix beginning with *i*, or *t* before other suffixes. For example:

DICTIONARY FORM	STEM	ENGLISH
dasu	das- dash-	to take out
kasu	kas- kash-	to lend
matsu	mat- mach-	to wait
tatsu	tat- tach-	to stand

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If a verb ends in *-au*, *-iu*, or *-ou*, it is still considered a c-stem verb, and it belongs in this group, even though a vowel remains after the *u* is dropped. The reason is that a missing “*w*” is considered the final consonant of the stem. That *w*, although not used in the affirmative forms, is needed for some of the negative forms. For example:

DICTIONARY FORM	STEM	ENGLISH
shimau	shima(w)-	to put away
kau	ka(w)-	to buy
iu	i(w)-	to say
omou	omo(w)-	to think

- Some verbs that end in *-eru* and *-iru* belong to the c-stem verb group. Here are a few examples:

DICTIONARY FORM	STEM	ENGLISH
hairu	hair-	to enter
kaeru	kaer-	to return
shiru	shir-	to know
kiru	kir-	to cut
iru	ir-	to need

Note that *kiru*, **to cut**, is a c-stem verb. When pronounced, the first syllable is stressed. The verb *kiru*, **to wear**, is a v-stem verb (see §7.3–2). When pronounced, the second syllable is stressed.

§7.3–2 The Vowel Conjugation

In this group, the verb stems end in a vowel. Therefore, they may be called **v-stem** verbs, as we shall do here. Because the stems are formed by dropping the final **ru**, this is also referred to as the **ru-dropping conjugation**, and the verbs may be called **ru-dropping verbs**.

How can you tell a Vowel Conjugation verb?

- Most verbs with dictionary forms which end in *-eru* and *-iru* belong in this group. (For some exceptions, see §7.3–1.)

How do you form the stem?

- To form the stem of the verb, drop the final *-ru*.

Examples

DICTIONARY FORM	STEM	ENGLISH
ageru	age-	to give, to raise
dekiru	deki-	to be able
hajimeru	hajime-	to begin
iru	i-	to be
kangaeru	kangae-	to think
miru	mi-	to see
neru	ne-	to sleep
taberu	tabe-	to eat
kiru	ki-	to wear

§7.4 THE INFINITIVE

The infinitive is also an important base for constructing other verb forms. To form the infinitive, do the following:

- for c-stem verbs, add *-i* to the stem. For example:

DICTIONARY FORM	STEM	INFINITIVE
isogu	isog-	isogi-
kaku	kak-	kaki-
nuru	nur-	nuri-
tobu	tob-	tobi-
shinu	shin-	shini-
yomu	yom-	yomi-

- for v-stem verbs, add *nothing* to the stem. (In this conjugation, the stem and the infinitive are the same.) For example:

DICTIONARY FORM	STEM	INFINITIVE
ageru	age-	age-
dekiru	deki-	deki-
hajimeru	hajime-	hajime-
iru	i-	i-
kangaeru	kangae-	kangae-
miru	mi-	mi-

- For the irregular verbs, the forms are as follows:

DICTIONARY FORM	INFINITIVE
kuru	ki-
suru	shi-

§7.5 PLAIN AND POLITE FORMS

The Japanese use different sets, or levels, of verb forms, depending on the politeness requirements of the situation, and the relationship among the speakers. For non-Japanese, using the different politeness levels correctly takes a great deal of experience with the Japanese language and culture.

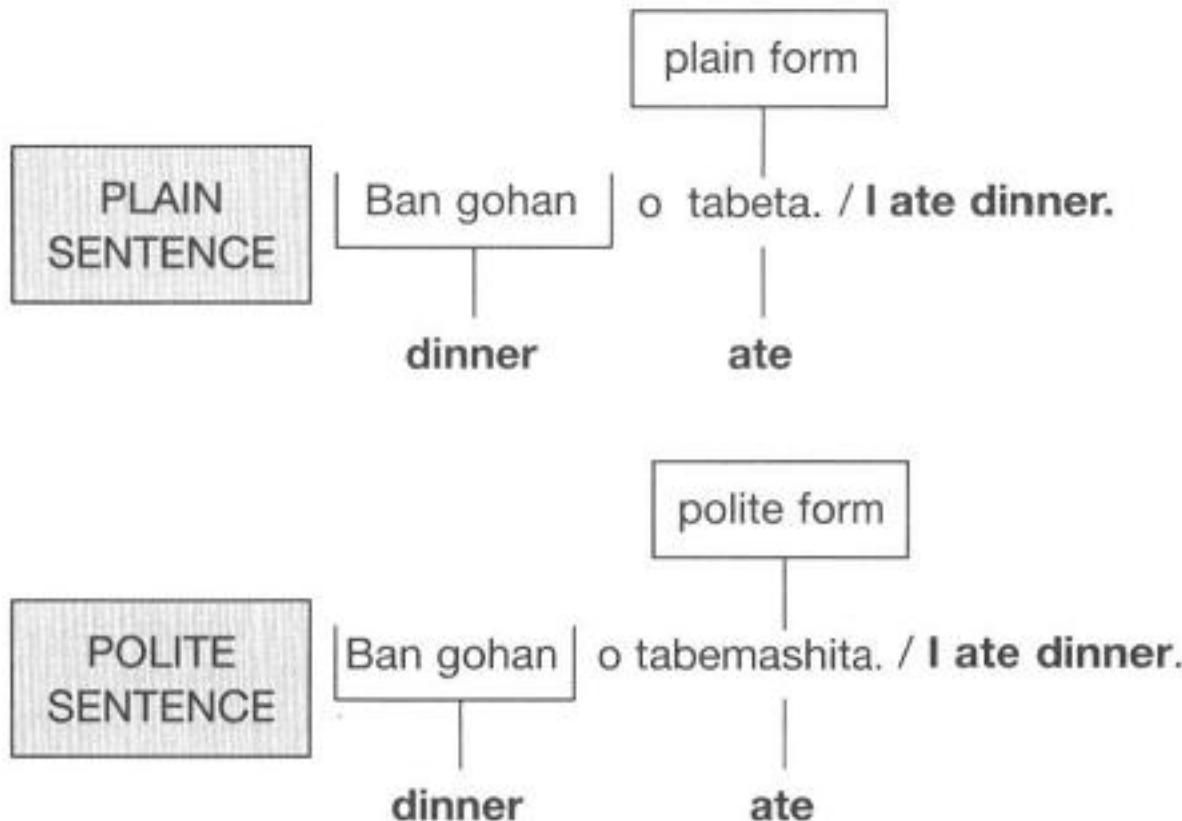
The two most common levels are called *plain* and *polite*. The plain verb forms are used with immediate family members and close friends and associates. The polite forms have a wider range, and are more appropriate for general use, especially for students of Japanese.

The examples below show two ways of saying the same thing, one plain style, and one polite style. Note the different verb forms.

Plain	Present Past	da / dictionary form datta / -ta, -da
Polite	Present Past	desu / -masu deshita / -mashita

- Both plain and polite forms are introduced with new verbs throughout this chapter.

Examples

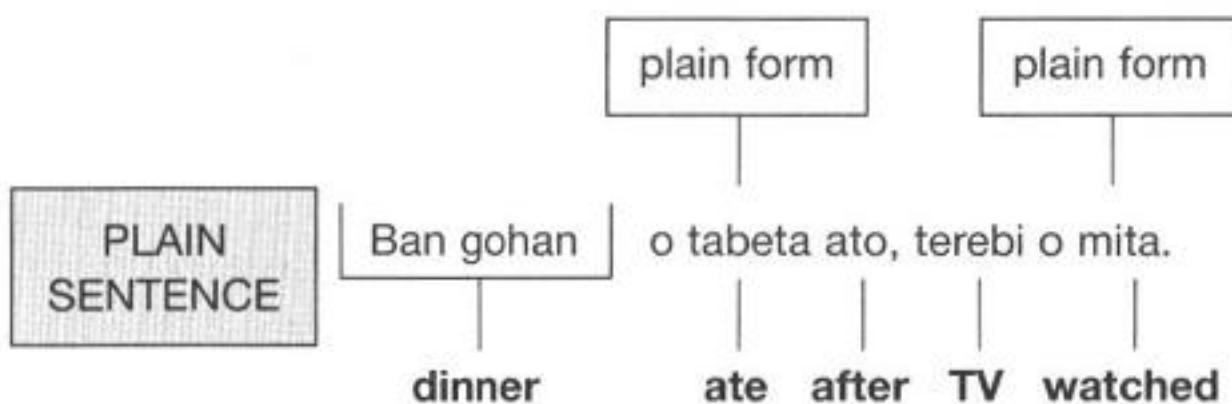


Tip

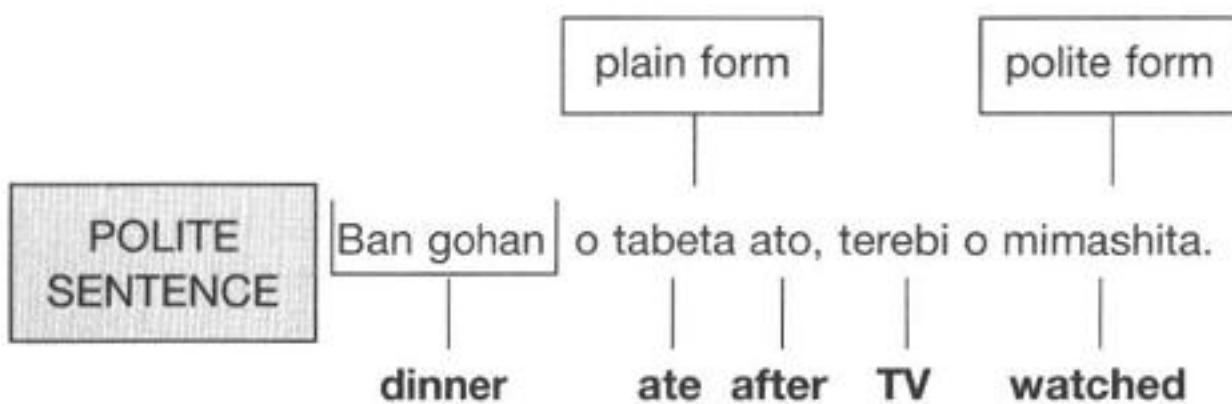
Although readers of this book should use the polite level, both forms must be learned. This is because the plain form can function other than as the main verb. When the main verb of the sentence, the one at the end, is in the polite form, other verbs earlier in the same sentence usually take the plain form.

The following examples show two sentences that say the same thing, one plain style, the other polite. Note that both sentences use a plain verb form, *tabeta*, for **ate**. And keep in mind that the verb at the end determines the politeness level for the entire sentence.

Examples



/ After I ate dinner,
I watched TV.



/ After I ate dinner,
I watched TV.

In the sections on verbs that follow, both the plain and polite forms will be given. Although there are other, more formal verb forms, these two levels should be appropriate for the reader's needs.

§7.6 THE “TO BE” VERBS

English has one verb to express the meaning **to be**, although that verb takes several forms (**am, is, are, was, were**, etc.). Japanese has three different words, each expressing a particular aspect of the meaning of **to be**: *desu*, *arimasu*, and *imasu*.

desu

Often called the copula, *desu* is used when you want to indicate such things as condition, quality, number, characteristics, or identity. You can understand it more easily if you think of *desu* as meaning not only **is**, but also **equals**, especially with two nouns or noun phrases. If you can substitute **equals** for **is** in an English sentence such as **This equals/is a book** or **Mrs. Smith equals/is my best friend**, *desu* is the word you want.

Although the polite forms *desu* (present) and *deshita* (past) are the ones you will use most often, you should know the following forms as well.

<i>desu / is, equals</i>		Affirmative	Negative
Present	Plain	da	dewa nai
	Polite	desu	dewa arimasen
Past	Plain	datta	dewa nakatta
	Polite	deshita	dewa arimasen deshita
Probable	Plain	darō	dewa nai darō
	Polite	deshō	dewa nai deshō

- For informal or familiar usage, *ja* can replace *dewa*

Examples

Kore wa, hon desu. / **This is a book.**

| | |
this book is

Tanaka san wa, sensei desu. / **Mr. Tanaka is a teacher.**

teacher

Otenki ga, ii desu. / **The weather is good.**

weather good

Otenki ga, warui deshō. / **The weather will probably be bad.**

bad will probably be

Ano hito wa, kinō byōki deshita. / **He was sick yesterday.**

he yesterday sick was

arimasu

Arimasu means **is** or **exists** for the location of inanimate things. It also expresses the idea of English **to have**. If you think of the meaning as **(something) exists/is located (somewhere)**, *arimasu* is the word you want. Because *arimasu* is a stative (non-action) verb, the particle *ni* is used with expressions of location.

Example

Hon wa, tēburu no ue ni arimasu. / **The book is on the table.**

table 's top on

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In the **to have** meaning of *arimasu*, the thing possessed is the subject of the sentence, and takes the particle *ga*.

Examples

Okane ga arimasu ka. / **Do you have any money?**

 | |
money is
(As for you, does money exist?)

Hai, arimasu. / **Yes, I do. (Yes, it exists.)**

 |
yes

Here are the other forms of *arimasu*:

<i>arimasu / is, exists</i>		Affirmative	Negative
Present	Plain	aru	nai
	Polite	arimasu	arimasen
Past	Plain	atta	nakatta
	Polite	arimashita	arimasen deshita
Probable	Plain	aru darō	nai darō
	Polite	aru deshō	nai deshō

Examples

Fujisan wa, Nihon ni arimasu. / **Mt. Fuji is in Japan.**

 | |
in is

Ginza ni, sūpāga arimasu ka. / **Is there a supermarket in Ginza?**

supermarket

Eki wa, doko ni arimasu ka. / **Where is the station?**

station where

Jisho ga arimasu ka. / **Do you have a dictionary?**

dictionary

Iie, arimasen. / **No, I don't (have a dictionary).**

Koko ni kōen ga arimashita. / **There was a park here.**

here park was

imasu

Imasu is also a stative (non-action) verb used to express **is** or **exists** for location. But *imasu* is used for living things—people, animals, insects (*not* plants). The particle *ni* is used with *imasu* when the location is specified.

Imasu is also used as an auxiliary verb to form the progressive tenses, where it functions just like the English **is: He is going, I was going**, etc. Because this meaning of *imasu* is discussed in §7.7–4 and §7.7–5, the examples below will deal with only the locational meaning. First, here are the other forms of *imasu*:

<i>imasu / is, exists</i>		Affirmative	Negative
Present	Plain Polite	iru imasu	inai imasen
Past	Plain Polite	ita imashita	inakatta imasen deshita
Probable	Plain Polite	iru darō iru deshō	inai darō inai deshō

Examples

Tanaka san wa imasu ka. / **Is Mr. Tanaka here?**

Hai, imasu. / **Yes, he is.**

Kinō Tōkyō ni imashita ka. / **Were you in Tokyo yesterday?**

| |
yesterday were

Neko wa doko ni imasu ka. / **Where is the cat?**

| |
cat where

Meri san wa, raigetsu Nihon ni

next month

iru deshō. / **Mary will probably be in Japan next month.**

will probably
be

§7.7 THE INDICATIVE MOOD

The indicative mood allows you to express ordinary, objective statements, questions, etc. Tense refers to the time of the action or state expressed by the verb.

Tip

Sometimes Japanese is described as having just two tenses: the past and the non-past. At first, this sounds strange; on second thought, it can be a useful concept. What does it mean? It means that Japanese *does not have a separate future tense*. The past is the past, the non-past is everything else—that is, present and future. Here we will use more conventional terms (present and past), however.

Keep in mind as you look at the different tenses and moods that Japanese verbs do not change their form for gender and number.

§7.7-1 Present Tense

The present tense meanings in Japanese are similar to those of English: incomplete or habitual actions or states. The present tense is used for future time as well; Japanese has no separate future tense.

The plain form of the present tense is the same as the dictionary form, the one from which the stem is derived. The dictionary form was discussed in §7.3, Verb Conjugations.

plain form, c-stem verbs (see §7.3-1)

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iku / I go, you go, he/she/it goes, we go, they go,
I will go, you will go, he/she/it will go, we will go,
they will go

yomu / I read, you read, he/she/it reads, we read, they
read,
I will read, you will read, he/she/it will read, we
will read, they will read

plain form, v-stem verbs (see §7.3–1)

miru / I see, you see, he/she/it sees, we see, they see,
I will see, you will see, he/she/it will see, we will
see, they will see

taberu / I eat, you eat, he/she/it eats, we eat, they eat,
I will eat, you will eat, he/she/it will eat, we will
eat, they will eat

- To form the negative of the plain form, do the following:

c-stem verbs: add *-anai* to the stem.

iku / ikanai
yomu / yomanai

go / don't go
read / don't read

- Note that for c-stem verbs ending in *-au*, *-iu*, or *-ou*, you must add a *w* to the stem before adding *-anai* (see §7.3–1).

shimau / shimawanai
kau / kawanai
iu / iwanai
omou / omowanai

put away / don't put away
buy / don't buy
say / don't say
think / don't think

v-stem verbs: add *-nai* to the stem

hajimeru / hajimenai	begin / don't begin
kangaeru / kangaenai	think / don't think
taberu / tabenai	eat / don't eat
ageru / agenai	give / don't give
miru / minai	see / don't see

Tip

The polite present is sometimes referred to as the *masu* form. It can be constructed in two different ways.

Either:

Add *-masu* to the infinitive. (See §7.4.)

c-stem verbs	isogi + masu kaki + masu nuri + masu tobi + masu shini + masu yomi + masu	isogimasu / hurry kakimasu / write nurimasu / paint tobimasu / fly shinimasu / die yomimasu / read
v-stem verbs	age + masu hajime + masu kangae + masu mi + masu ki + masu ori + masu	agemasu / give hajimemasu / begin kangaemasu / think about mimasu / see kimasu / wear orimasu / get off

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Or:

For c-stem verbs, add *-imasu* to the stem.

isogu isog + imasu
kaku kak + imasu
nuru nur + imasu

isogimasu / **hurry**
kakimasu / **write**
nurimasu / **paint**

For v-stem verbs, add *-masu* to the stem.

hajimeru hajime + masu
kangaeru kanga + masu
miru mi + masu

hajimemasu / **begin**
kangaemasu / **think about**
mimasu / **see**

- To form the polite negative, do the following:

For all verbs, simply change the ending from *masu* to *masen*.

ikimasu / ikimasen
wakarimasu / wakarimasen

kakimasu / kakimasen
mimasu / mimasen
oshiemasu / oshiemasen

go / don't go
understand /
don't understand
write / don't write
see / don't see
teach / don't teach

Here are a few verbs in their present tense conjugations:

Verb	Affirmative	Negative
taberu / eat Present Plain Polite	taberu tabemasu	tabenai tabemasen
nomu / drink Present Plain Polite	nomu nomimasu	nomanai nomimasen
suru / do Present Plain Polite	suru shimasu	shinai shimasen

And some present tense sentences:

Examples

Watakushi wa, kōhī o nomimasen. / I don't drink coffee.

coffee don't drink

Tanaka san wa, sushi o mainichi tabemasu. / Mr. Tanaka eats sushi every day.

every day eat

Ano hitotachi wa, terebi o mimasen. / They don't watch television.

they television don't watch

Nihongo ga wakarimasu ka. / **Do you understand Japanese?**

understand

Kyōto ni ashita ikimasu. / **I'll go to Kyoto tomorrow.**

tomorrow will go

§7.7–2 Past Tense

Like English, the past tense is used for actions completed in the past (**I ate**, **I studied**, etc.). It is also used to express the equivalent of the English present perfect (**I have walked**, **I have eaten**, etc.).

Forming the plain past tense is easy for v-stem verbs, more complex for c-stem verbs.

For plain form, v-stem verbs: add *-ta* to the stem.

taberu / tabeta
oshieru / oshietu
miru / mita
ageru / ageta

eat / ate
teach / taught
see / saw
give / gave

For plain form, c-stem verbs: do the following:

- Look at the *final* syllable in the plain present form (dictionary form) of the verb. Find the syllable in column A below. Change it to the syllable in column B.

A

B

change this → to this		
omou	u → tta	omotta / thought
motsu	tsu → tta	motta / held
nuru	ru → tta	nutta / painted
nomu	mu → nda	nonda / drank
shinu	nu → nda	shinda / died
tobu	bu → nda	tonda / flew
kiku	ku → ita	kiita / asked
oyogu	gu → ida	oyoida / swam
hanasu	su → shita	hanashita / talked

- To form the negative of the plain past tense, do the following:

c-stem verbs: add *-anakatta* to the stem

iku	itta / ikanakatta	went / didn't go
yomu	yonda / yomanakatta	read / didn't read
kau(w)	katta / kawanakatta	bought / didn't buy
isogu	isoida / isoganakatta	hurried / didn't hurry

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v-stem verbs: add *-nakatta* to the stem.

hajimeru	hajimeta / hajimenakatta	began / didn't begin
taberu	tabeta / tabenakatta	ate / didn't eat
ageru	ageta / agenakatta	gave / didn't give
miru	mita / minakatta	saw / didn't see

For the polite past tense, change the present tense ending from *masu* to *mashita*.

ikimasu / ikimashita	go / went
mimasu / mimashita	see / saw
kaimasu / kaimashita	buy / bought
wakarimasu / wakarimashita	understand / understood
tabemasu / tabemashita	eat / ate
shimasu / shimashita	do / did
kimasu / kimashita	come / came

- For the negative of the polite past, add the word *deshita* to the polite present negative.

tabemasen / tabemasen deshita	don't eat / didn't eat
ikimasen / ikimasen deshita	don't go / didn't go
hashirimasan / hashirimasan deshita	don't run / didn't run
kaimasan / kaimasan deshita	don't buy / didn't buy

Here are a few verbs in their past tense conjugations:

Verb	Affirmative		Negative
kiru / to put on (clothes)			
Past	Plain	kita	kinakatta
	Polite	kimashita	kimasen deshita
yomu / to read			
Past	Plain	yonda	yomanakatta
	Polite	yomimashita	yomimasen deshita
suru / to do			
Past	Plain	shita	shinakatta
	Polite	shimashita	shimasen deshita

And some past tense sentences:

Examples

Itsū kimashita ka. / When did you come?

when came

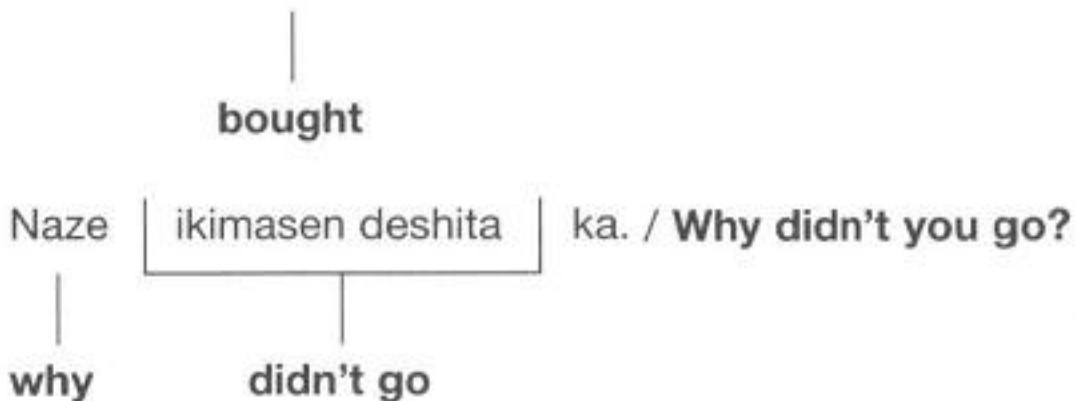
Kinō shimasen deshita. / I didn't do it yesterday.

yesterday didn't do

Owarimashita. / It's finished.

finished

Doko de kaimashita ka. / **Where did you buy it?**



§7.7–3 The Gerund

Often referred to as the “-te form,” the gerund is a useful form of the Japanese verb. Alone, it does not have tense or mood. But it combines with other verb forms to create tenses and moods, such as the continuous tenses and the imperative mood, for example. It has other uses as well.

Tip

One caution: The term “gerund” may be misleading. In English, a gerund is the -ing form of a verb when functioning as a noun (**I like swimming, Reading is my favorite hobby**, etc. For this use, see §7.19). The Japanese gerund is a verb form, *not* a noun. Indeed, in the progressive tenses, it functions much like the English -ing form.

Gerunds are regular in form and easy to construct.

Start with the plain past tense (see §7.7–2), and change the final -a to -e.

Present	Past	Gerund
aruku / walk	aruita	aruite
kiku / ask, listen	kiita	kiite
taberu / eat	tabeta	tabete
hanasu / speak	hanashita	hanashite
yomu / read	yonda	yonde

Note that for the copula, *desu*, the plain past tense is *datta* and the gerund is *de*.

One important use of the gerund is when listing actions in a neutral sequence (with no strong contrast or emphasis) within a sentence. All but the last verb are gerunds.

Example

Sūpā ni itte, niku o katte, uchi ni

| | |
went meat bought

kaerimashita. / I went to the supermarket, bought some meat, and returned home.

|
returned

§7.7–4 Present Progressive

Japanese uses the present progressive for action in progress or continuous action, state of being, and also to express the meaning of the English present perfect.

Unlike English, it cannot be used to express future meaning (**Tomorrow he's going to New York, or I'm getting my degree next year, etc.**).

To form the present progressive, start with the gerund, and add the appropriate form of the verb *iru*. The plain form is used in informal conversation, of course. The polite form, appropriate for general use, is given here. Note that *iru* when used alone as a verb can only refer to living things. With the gerund, it is used for inanimate things as well.

Affirmative	Negative
aruite imasu / walking	aruite imasen / not walking
kiite imasu / listening	kiite imasen / not listening
tabete imasu / eating	tabete imasen / not eating
hanashite imasu / speaking	hanashite imasen / not speaking
yonde imasu / reading	yonde imasen / not reading
nonde imasu / drinking	nonde imasen / not drinking
motte imasu / holding	motte imasen / not holding
oyoide imasu / swimming	oyoide imasen / not swimming

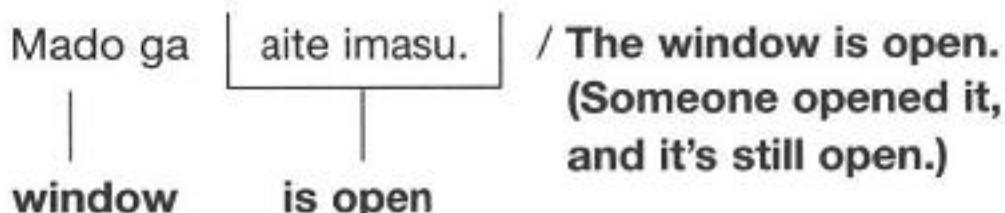
When the meaning of this tense is an action in progress, the verb is often transitive (a verb that takes an object). This is similar to the English present progressive.

Examples

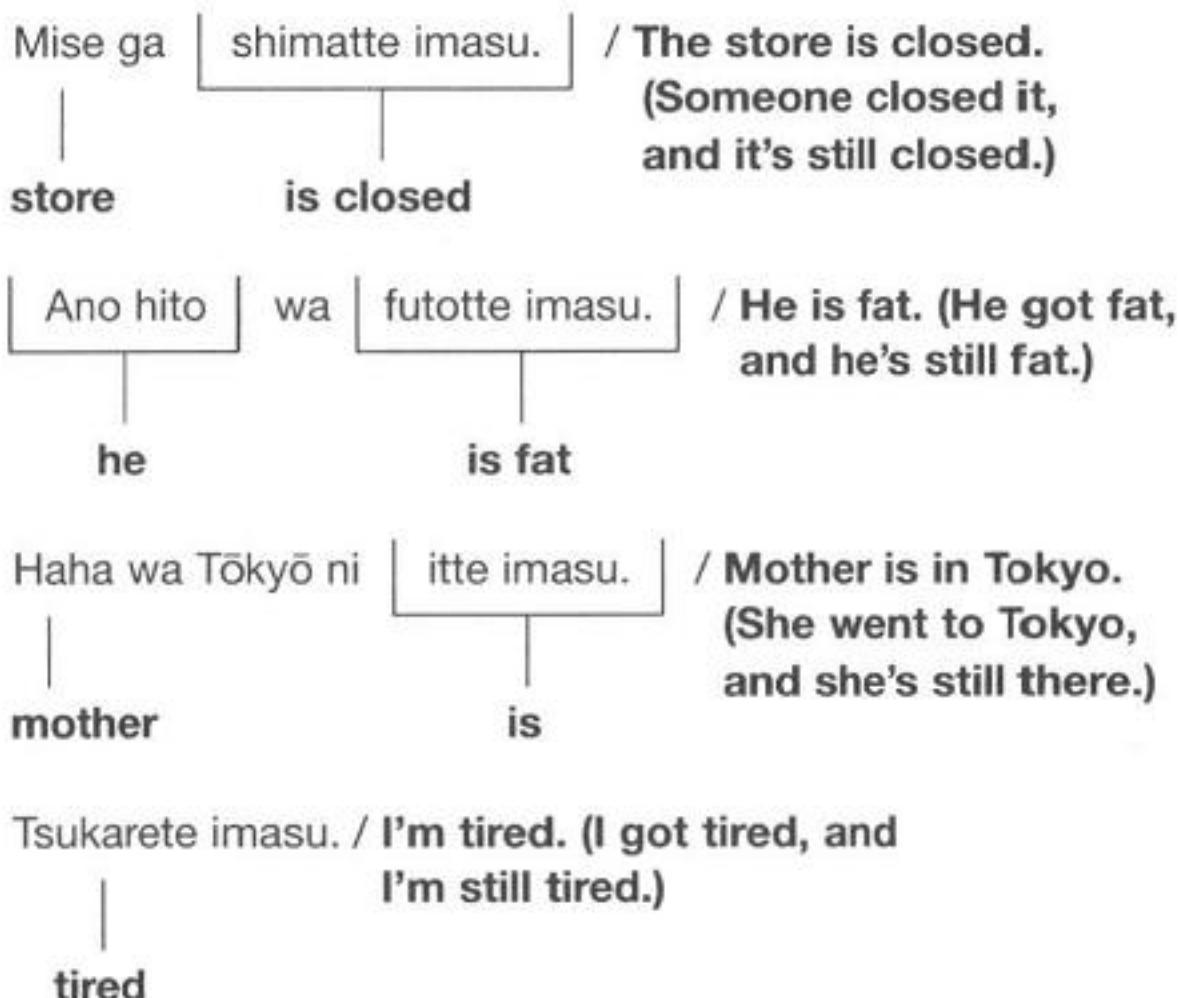


When the meaning is a state of being, the verb is often intransitive (a verb that doesn't take an object). This is not like an English progressive tense usage; the explanations after the examples below should help clarify the meanings.

Examples

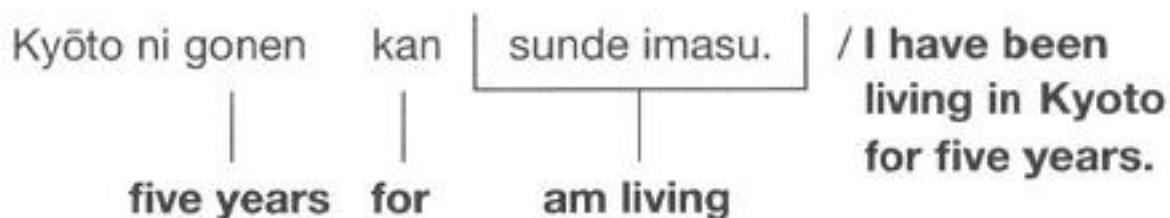


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The present progressive can express the English present perfect tense—an action that began in the past and continues through the present. In the following sentences, notice how the time element, **for five years**, results in a present perfect meaning. Without it, the meaning is simply continuous action.

Examples



Kyōto ni sunde imasu. / I'm living in Kyoto.

§7.7–5 Past Progressive

The past progressive is used for past continuous action or state of being.

The form is easy: start with the gerund, and change *imasu* to the past form: *imashita*. The negative is the gerund plus the negative past of *imashita*, which is *imasen deshita*.

Affirmative	Negative
aruite imashita / was walking	aruite imasen deshita / wasn't walking
kiite imashita / was listening	kiite imasen deshita / wasn't listening
tabete imashita / was eating	tabete imasen deshita / wasn't eating
hanashite imashita / was speaking /	hanashite imasen deshita / wasn't speaking
yonde imashita / was reading	yonde imasen deshita / wasn't reading
nonde imashita / was drinking	nonde imasen deshita / wasn't drinking
motte imashita / was holding	motte imasen deshita / wasn't holding
oyoide imashita / was swimming	oyoide imasen deshita / wasn't swimming

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Here are some examples of past continuous action.

Examples

Haha wa, ban gohan o tsukutte imashita. / Mother was preparing dinner.
was making

Chichi wa, hataraitē imasen deshita. / Father wasn't working.
father wasn't working

Kyonen Nihongo o benkyō shite imashita. / Last year I was studying Japanese.
last year was studying

Neko ga, isu no ue de nete imashita. / The cat was sleeping on the chair.
cat chair's top was sleeping

The following examples show past states of being.

Examples

Denki ga tsuite imashita. / The light was on.
light was on

Doa ga aite imashita. / The door was open.
door was open

Ano hito wa yasete imashita. / She was thin.
|
was thin

Tsukarete imasen deshita. / I wasn't tired.
|
tired

§7.8 THE PRESUMPTIVE MOOD

Sometimes called the “probable” mood, this has no exact equivalent in English, although it is important in Japanese. It enables speakers to use a verb form that can express *probability*, *belief*, or *intention* without being too direct. This mood has two sets of forms, one indicating probability, the second indicating intention.

darō, deshō form

This form expresses the speaker’s belief that something will probably happen. It is easily constructed by adding *darō* or *deshō* (plain and polite, respectively) to the plain, or dictionary form, of the verb. This works for the negative of the plain form as well, and also for the past forms.

Present	
Plain	Polite
kuru darō	kuru deshō / will probably come
iku darō	iku deshō / will probably go
taberu darō	taberu deshō / will probably eat
Negative	
konai darō	konai deshō / will probably not come
ikanai darō	ikanai deshō / will probably not go
tabenai darō	tabenai deshō / will probably not eat
Past	
kita darō	kita deshō / probably came
itta darō	itta deshō / probably went
tabeta darō	tabeta deshō / probably ate
Negative	
konakatta darō	konakatta deshō / probably didn't come
ikanakatta darō	ikanakatta deshō / probably didn't go
tabanakatta darō	tabanakatta deshō / probably didn't eat

The examples below show some expanded dimensions of these forms, which can also be translated as **suppose**, **wonder**, **guess**, etc.

Examples

Ano hito wa, Nihon ni iku deshō. / **He'll probably go to Japan.**
 will probably go

Konban yuki ga furu darō. / **Tonight it will probably snow.**
 tonight snow will probably fall

Merī san wa, Nihon de Nihongo o
 | | |
 Japan in Japanese
 hanashita deshō ka. / **I wonder if Mary spoke Japanese in Japan.**
 wonder if spoke

Jon san wa, tsukareta deshō. / **I suppose John got tired.**
 suppose got tired

Tegami wa, jūji ni kuru deshō. / **I guess the mail will come at 10.**
 mail 10 at guess will come

-ō, -yō / -mashō forms

These differ somewhat in the plain and polite forms.

First consider the plain form, -ō, -yō. As a final verb at the end of a sentence, it expresses the speaker's intention. Considered abrupt, it is used mostly by men. It can also mean "Let's (do something)," but for this, the *-mashō* form is preferred. As a medial verb (not at the end of the sentence), it expresses intention or probability. The forms are made as follows:

- For c-stem verbs, start with the plain, or dictionary form, and change the final *-u* to *-ō*

Present	Presumptive
nuru / paint	nurō / will probably paint, will/let's paint
kiku / ask	kikō / will probably ask, will/let's ask

- For v-stem verbs, start with the stem, and add *-yō*

Present	Stem	Presumptive
taberu / eat	tabe-	tabeyō / will probably eat, will/let's eat
miru / see	mi-	miyō / will probably see, will/let's see

- The irregular verb forms are as follows:

suru / do	shiyō / will probably do, will/let's do
kuru / come	koyō / will probably come, will/let's come

- The negative forms, infrequently used, are not needed here.
- Note how the ō and yō forms are used in medial and final position, and the differences in meaning.

Examples

Konban hayaku

neyō

tonight early probably go to sleep

to omoimasu. / I think I'll probably go to sleep
early tonight.

that think

Watakushi ga ikō. / I will go.

will go

Tabeyō. / Let's eat.

Now look at the polite form, -mashō. This can express several things: the speaker's intention to do something, a polite description of the probability of someone else's doing something, or, most common, the idea of "Let's" or "Shall we?"

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To construct this form, add *-mashō* to the infinitive of the verb.

Plain	Infinitive	<i>-mashō</i> Form
yomu / read	yomi-	yomimashō / let's read
miru / see	mi-	mimashō / let's see
taberu / eat	tabe-	tabemashō / let's eat
iku / go	iki-	ikimashō / let's go

Here are some examples of some common uses of this form:

Examples

Ginza ni ikimashō. / **Let's go to Ginza.**

let's go

Ban gohan o tabemashō ka. / **Shall we eat dinner?**

dinner

shall we eat

Uchi ni kaerimashō. / **Let's return home.**

home

let's return

Watakushi ga shimashō. / **I'll do it.**

will do

Jon san ga kimashō. / John will probably come.

will probably come

- Note that the last sentence above would mean the same thing using the *deshō* form. For example:

Jon san ga kuru deshō. / John will probably come.
will probably come.

§7.9 THE IMPERATIVE MOOD

The true imperative or command form in Japanese is too abrupt for most usage. However, you should recognize it.

The imperative is formed by adding *-e* to the stem of c-stem verbs, and *-ro* to the stem of v-stem verbs. To form the negative imperatives, add *-na* to the plain present form of the verb.

Plain	Imperative	Imperative (Negative)
iku / go	ike / go!	ikuna / don't go!
kiku / listen	kike / listen!	kikuna / don't listen!
taberu / eat	tabero / eat!	taberuna / don't eat!
miru / look	miro / look!	miruna / don't look!

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A somewhat less harsh form is made by adding *-nasai* to the infinitive form of the verb. This is not used with negative forms.

iku / go	ikinasai / go
taberu / eat	tabenasai / eat

Examples

Yukkuri hanashinasai. / **Speak slowly.**

| |
slowly speak

Koko ni kinasai. / **Come here.**

| |
here come

The form of the imperative commonly used for polite requests or commands is the gerund, or *-te* form, with the word *kudasai*.

kuru / come	Kite kudasai. / Please come.
taberu / eat	Tabete kudasai. / Please eat.
suwaru / sit down	Suwatte kudasai. / Please sit down.
kiku / listen	Kiite kudasai. / Please listen.
hanasu / speak	Hanashite kudasai. / Please speak.

Examples

Ryōkō ni tsuite hanashite kudasai. / Please tell me about your trip.

trip about please tell

Tegami o dashite kudasai. / Please mail the letter.

letter please mail

Takushi o yonde kudasai. / Please call a taxi.

taxi please call

For the negative of this structure, add *-de kudasai* to the negative of the plain present form.

Ikanaide kudasai. / Please don't go.

Shinpai shinaide kusasai. / Please don't worry.

Kudasai can also be used when requesting an object. In this usage another verb form is not needed.

Examples

Hon o kudasai. / Please give me a book.

book please give

Kōhī o kudasai. / Please give me some coffee.

coffee please give

§7.10 THE CONDITIONAL MOOD

In Japanese, there are several ways of conveying the conditional, or “if” meaning. Although they can, in many cases, be used interchangeably, there are slight differences in meaning.

-eba form

This is sometimes called the “provisional” form, because it means “if” in the sense of “provided something happens (now or in the future).” In the negative form, it can mean “unless.”

For the -eba form, drop the final *-u* of the dictionary form of the verb and add *-eba*. For the negative, drop the final *-i* of the plain negative form and add *-kereba*.

Plain	Conditional
kuru / come	kureba / if, provided I (you, etc.) come konakereba / if I don't come, unless I come
miru / see	mireba / if, provided I see minakereba / if I don't see, unless I see
yomu / read	yomeba / if, provided I read yomanakereba / if I don't read, unless I read
taberu / eat	tabereba / if, provided I eat tabenakereba / if I don't eat, unless I eat

Examples

Isshōkenmei	benkyō sureba,	Nihongo o
hard	if study	Japanese
oboemasu. / If you study hard, you'll learn Japanese.		
	will learn	
Ano hito	ni aereba	shiawase desu. / If I meet him, I'll be happy.
him	if meet	will be happy
Yasumanakereba	byōki ni narimasu. / Unless you rest you'll be sick.	
unless rest	sick	become

With verbal adjectives (-i adjectives), drop the -i and add *kereba*. For the negative, use the adverbial form (*yasuku*) [see §8.2–3] and add *nakereba*. For example:

Adjective	Conditional
yasui / cheap	yasukereba / if it's cheap, if it were cheap yasukunakereba / if it's not cheap, unless it's cheap

Examples

Yasukereba, kaimasu. / If it's cheap, I'll buy it.

if cheap buy

Samukereba, koto o kimasu. / If it's cold, I'll put on an overcoat.

if cold coat put on

Omoshirokereba, yomimasu. / If it's interesting,
I'll read it.

if interesting read

-tara form

The *-tara* form can express a wide range of conditional “when” and “if” meaning: past occurrence, hypothetical conditions in the past, future or habitual action. (See the forms below.)

To construct the *-tara* form, start with the plain past verb form and add *-ra*.

tabetara / if I (you, etc.) **should eat (it)**

if I (you, etc.) were to eat (it)

when I (you, etc.) eat (it)

when I (you, etc.) ate (it)

For the negative, do the same: **tabenakattara** / If I (you, etc.) **didn't eat (it)**.

Examples

Honya ni **ittara,** **shimatte imashita.** / When I went to the bookstore, it was closed.

bookstore when went was closed

Benkyō shitara, **wakatta deshō.** / If I had studied, I would have understood.

if had studied

understood

Kōhī o nondara, **neraremasen.** / When I drink coffee, I can't sleep.

coffee when drink can't sleep

Notice the use of -tara forms with -i and -na adjectives and with nouns.

Examples

Takakattara **kaimasen.** / If it's expensive, I won't buy it.

if it is expensive won't buy

Soko ga **shizuka dattara** **ikimasu.** / If it were quiet there, I would go.

there if it were quiet would go

Li hon **dattara,** **kaimasu.** / If it were a good book, I would buy it.

good if it were would buy

Other useful conditional forms are *nara* and *to*.

nara

with verbs	Present: iku nara / if I (you, etc.) go Past: itta nara / if I had gone
with verbal adjectives	Present: ōkii nara / if it is / were big Past: ōkikatta nara / if it had been big
with adjectival nouns	Present: kirei nara / if it is / were pretty Past: kirei datta nara / if it had been pretty
with nouns	gakusei nara / if I am / were a student

Similar to the *-tara* forms in meaning, *nara* can be used for **if** and **after**. In some uses, it has a strong contrary-to-fact element, like the subjunctive mood of English.

Examples

Watakushi ga kanemochi nara yotto o

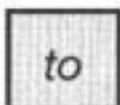
Rich person if sailboat

kaimasu. / If I were rich, I would buy a sailboat.

would buy

Isogu nara, chikatetsu de ikinasai. / **If you're in a hurry,**

hurry if subway take a subway.



To is used with the present forms of verbs and verbal adjectives, adjectival nouns, and with nouns. In many cases, the meaning is the same as that of the *-tara* or *-eba* forms.

Examples

Sake o nomu to, nemuku narimasu. / Whenever
 | | | |
 drink whenever sleepy become I drink
 | | | |
 weather good when/if park sleepy.
 | | | | |
 weather good when/if park go I become
 | | | |
 weather good when/if park go sleepy.

Tenki ga ii to, kōen ni ikimasu. / When/if
 | | | |
 weather good when/if park go the weather
 | | | |
 weather good when/if park go is good, I go/
 | | | |
 weather good when/if park go will go to
 | | | |
 weather good when/if park go the park.

§7.11 THE POTENTIAL MOOD

To express the idea of capability or possibility (**can** or **be able to** in English), add *-eru* (plain) or *-emasu* (polite) to the stem of c-stem verbs, and *-rareru* (plain) or *-raremasu* (polite) to the stem of v-stem verbs. The negatives are formed regularly: Add *-enai* / *-emasen* to the stem of c-stem verbs, and *-rarenai* / *-raremasen* to the stem of v-stem verbs.

Examples

Merī san wa, Nihongo ga hanasemasu. / Mary can speak
 | |
 Japanese can speak Japanese.

Nanji ni aemasu ka. / What time can I see you?

what time can see

Kyō ikenai nara, ashita ikemasu ka. / If you
 today can't go if tomorrow can go ?
 can't go today, can you go tomorrow?

Another way to express the potential is as follows:

- Place the appropriate form of the verb *dekiru* / **can do** after a noun (plus the particle *ga*).

Examples

Nihongo ga dekimasu. / I can speak Japanese.

Japanese can do

Tenisu ga dekimasu. / I can play tennis.

tennis can do

Ryōri ga dekimasen. / I can't cook.

cooking can't do

A verb form can be used with this structure as well, but it must first be nominalized, or made into a noun form. To nominalize a verb, do the following:

- Add the word *koto* to the plain, or dictionary form, of the verb. Then it can be used with *ga* and *dekiru / dekimasu*.

Examples

Nihongo o yomu koto ga dekimasu. / I can read
 | | |
 Japanese read can do

Merī san wa, oyogu koto ga dekimasen. / Mary can't
 | |
 swim can't do

Kinō, Tanaka san ni au koto ga dekimashita.
 | | |
 yesterday see could do

/ Yesterday, I could see Ms. Tanaka.

§7.12 THE PASSIVE VOICE

Japanese has two ways of using the passive. The first is with transitive verbs, as in English. In such sentences, the “doer” may or may not be expressed. (**My wallet was stolen, or My wallet was stolen by a pickpocket.**)

- To form the passive, add *-areru, -aremasu* to the stems of c-stem verbs, and *-rareru, -raremasu* to the stems of v-stem verbs. For the negative, add *-arenai, -aremasen* to the stems of c-stem verbs, and *-rarenai, -raremasen* to the stems of v-stem verbs.

nusumu / **steal**, nusumareru, nusumaremasu / **is stolen**
oikakeru / **chase**, oikakerareru, oikakeraremasu / **is chased**

Examples

Kuruma ga nusumaremashita. / **My car was stolen.**

car was stolen

Karate wa, Amerika de yoku | shirarete imasu.
well | is known

/ Karate is well-known in the United States.

Sono hon wa kyonen kakaremashita. / The book was
written last year.
| | |
book last year was written

Neko wa, inu ni oikakeraremashita. / **The cat was chased by a dog.**
| | | |
cat dog by was chased

So mirarete imasu. / It is seen that way.
|
that way it is seen

- Note that the use of this type of passive is more limited in Japanese than in English. While passive forms are grammatically possible for many verbs, the resulting sentences may be awkward.

The second way of using the passive in Japanese, for which English has no corresponding use, may be called the “adversity” passive. You can think of it as the “too bad” or “regrettably” passive. This means that something happened to someone and it had an adverse effect on that person. The verb may be transitive or intransitive. Because this is quite unlike English, read the following sentences carefully, especially the translations.

- Note the use of *ni* in the passive sentences below.

Examples

Active

Merī san no okāsan ga shinimashita. / **Mary's mother died.**

Mary 's mother died

Passive

Merī san wa okāsan ni shinaremashita. / Mary's mother died (on her). (Lit: Mary was died by her mother.)

Active

Ame ga furimashita. / It rained. (The rain fell.)

rain	fell
------	------

Passive

Tanaka san wa ame ni furaremashita. / Mr. Tanaka

rain	by	was fallen	was caught in the rain. (Lit: Mr. Tanaka was fallen by rain.)
------	----	------------	--

§7.13 THE CAUSATIVE

The causative forms in Japanese express the idea of making or causing someone to do something: **I made my brother clean his room.** It also can mean **let** or **allow**: **Please let me go.**

- To form the causative, add *-aseru*, *-asemasu* to the stem of c-stem verbs (*-asenai*, *-asemasen* for the negative), and add *-saseru*, *-sasemasu* to the stem of v-stem verbs (*-sasenai*, *-sasemasen* for the negative).

yomu / **read**, yomaseru, yomasemasu / **make (someone) read**

let (someone) read

taberu / **eat**, tabesaseru, tabesasemasu / **make (someone) eat**
let (someone) eat

Examples

Merī san o mise ni ikasemashita. / I made Mary go to
the store.

store to made go

Okāsan wa, kodomo o nekasemashita. / The mother
made the child
go to bed.

Watakushi ni harawasete kudasai. / Please let me pay.

let pay please

Otōto ni benkyō sasemashita. / I made my younger
brother study.

young brother made study

§7.14 THE CAUSATIVE PASSIVE

The causative passive form expresses the idea that the subject of the sentence is made to do something in the sense of being forced.

- To form the causative passive, add *-aserareru*, *-aseraremasu* to the stem of c-stem verbs (*-aserarenai*, *-aseraremasen* for the negative), and add *-saserareru*, *-saseraremasu* to the stem of v-stem verbs (*-saserarenai*, *-saseraremasen* for the negative).

iku / go

ikaserareru, ikaseraremasu /

be made to go

taberu / eat

tabesaserareru, tabesaseraremasu /

be made to eat**Examples**

Kyōkasho o kawaseraremashita. / I was made to buy
 textbook was made to buy

Kodomo wa, miruku o nomaseraremashita. / The child
 child milk was made to drink
 was made to drink (his) milk.

Jon san wa, asa gohan o tsukuraseraremashita.
 breakfast was forced to make
 / John was forced to make breakfast.

§7.15 THE GIVING AND RECEIVING VERBS

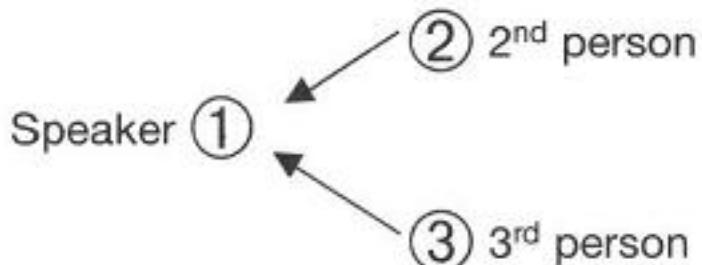
Japanese has several verbs for conveying the meaning of *giving* and *receiving*. Choosing which one to use involves the relative status of the giver and receiver. It also involves the direction of the action, in the sense of giving to and receiving from.

- The following verbs are used to describe someone's giving something to you, the speaker, or to someone in your in-group, as in the diagram below the box.

To say to give kindly (to me or my in-group: family, friends, etc.), use:

kureru

kudasaru (use for referring to superiors)



Examples

Haha ga watakushi ni kuremashita. / **My mother gave it to me.**

my mother me to gave

Kore wa tomodachi ga kureta hon desu. / **This is the book my friend gave me.**

Sensei ga jisho o kudasaimashita. / **The teacher gave me a dictionary.**

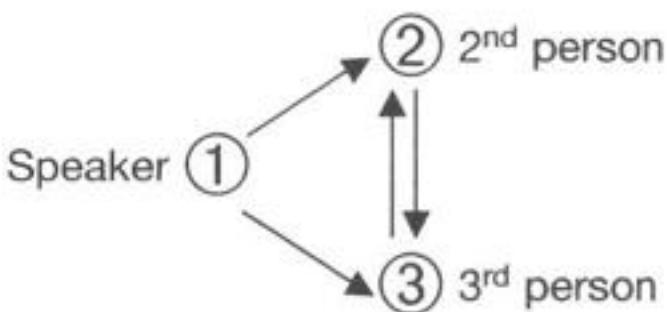
teacher dictionary gave

- The following verbs are used for **I give, he gives**, etc., as in the diagram below the box.

To say **give**, use:

ageru

sashiageru (use for speaking to or referring to superiors)



Examples

Chichi ni ocha o agemashita. / **I gave my father some tea.**

father tea gave

Merī san wa, Jon san ni chizu o agemashita. / **Mary gave John a map.**

map gave

Tanaka san wa, shachō ni hana o sashiagemashita.

company flowers gave
president

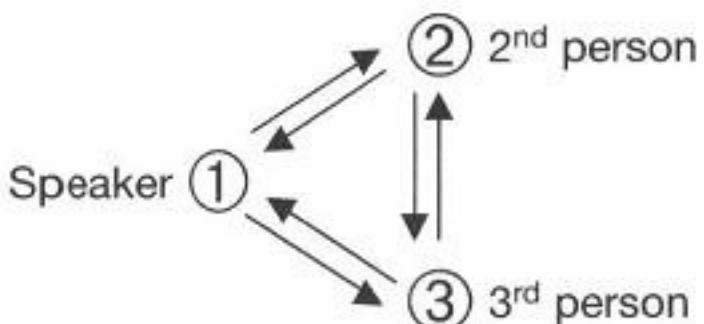
/ **Mrs. Tanaka gave flowers to the company president.**

- The following verbs are used for **receive**, as in the diagram below the box.

To say **receive**, use:

morau

itadaku (use for speaking to or referring to superiors)



Examples

Jon san wa, tomodachi ni rekōdo o moraimashita.

friend	from record	received
--------	-------------	----------

/ John received a record from his friend.

Chichi wa, kaisha kara bōnasu o moraimashita.

father	company	from	bonus	received
--------	---------	------	-------	----------

/ Father received a bonus from the company.

Sensei kara tegami o itadakimashita. / I got a letter

teacher	from	letter	got	from the teacher.
---------	------	--------	-----	-------------------

The giving and receiving verbs are often used as auxiliaries after the gerund, or -te form of another verb. In this usage, the relationship between the giver and the receiver is as described in the verbs given above. When speaking to or about a superior, be sure to use the appropriate verb.

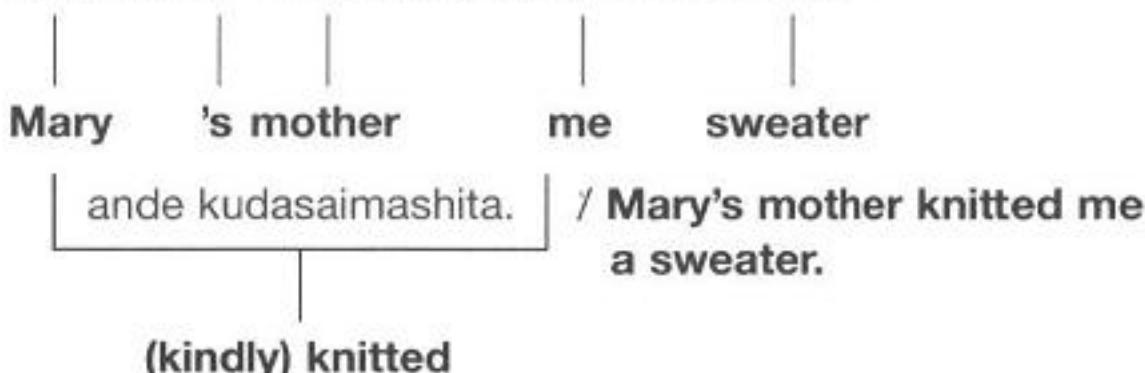
- Keep in mind that these forms can mean not just giving or receiving something tangible, but also giving or receiving the action or sense of the verb.

tsukuru / make *tsukutte kureru, tsukutte kudasaru*

Examples



Merī san no okāsan ga, watakushi ni sētā o



kau / buy katte ageru, katte sashiageru

Examples

Tanaka san ga, Jon san ni sore o

|
it

katte agemashita. / **Mr. Tanaka bought it for John.**
 |
bought

Suzuki san wa, shachō ni nekutai o

| |
company necktie
president

katte sashiagemashita. / **Mr. Suzuki bought the company president a tie.**
 |
bought

iku / go itte morau, itte itadaku

Examples

Ane ni kaimono ni itte moraimashita. / **I had my elder sister go shopping for me.**
 | |
 elder shopping had go
 sister

Honda san ni yūbinkyoku e itte itadakimashita.
 |
 post office had go

/ **I had Mr. Honda go to the post office for me.**

§7.16 THE HONORIFIC AND HUMBLE FORMS

Using the correct language to reflect relationships is important to the Japanese. This means expressing the appropriate degree of respect or deference to the listener, and the appropriate degree of humility about oneself or one's family. The speaker's attitude toward the listener or the person being spoken about is the key. Honorific language elevates someone else; humble language lowers oneself.

Tip

Using the honorific and humble verb forms confidently takes a good deal of experience with Japanese culture, but the forms themselves are not difficult to learn.

The honorifics of verbs take several forms.

- One honorific form is the passive form itself (see §7.12).

Plain Form	Passive and Honorific Form
aruku / walk	arukareru
kaeru / change	kaerareru
suru / do	sareru
kuru / come	korareru

- Another set of honorific forms can be made as follows:

o + infinitive + desu

yobu / call *oyobi desu* (honorific form)

Examples

Shachō ga oyobi desu. / The company president is calling you.
company is calling
president

Shachō ga oyobi deshita. / The company president was calling you.

Infinitive + ni naru

Examples

Shachō ga oyobi ni naramashita. / The company president called you.
called

Hon o oyomi ni narimashita ka. / Have you read this book?
book read

o + infinitive + kudasai / Please (do it).

Examples

Tanaka san o [oyobi kudasai.] / Please call Mr. Tanaka.
 |
 please call

Shōshō [omachi kudasai.] / Please wait a moment.
 |
 a little |
 | please wait

- The humble forms can be constructed as follows:

o + infinitive + suru

Examples

Watakushi ga Tanaka san o [oyobi shimasu.] / I'll call Mr. Tanaka.
 |
 will call

Hiru made ni [onaoshi shimasu.] / I'll fix it by noon.
 | |
 noon by |
 | will fix

o + infinitive + itasu

Examples

Sugu [omochi itashimasu.] / I'll bring it immediately.
 |
 |
 immediately will bring

Kasa o okashi itashimashō ka. / Shall I lend you an umbrella?
 | |
 umbrella shall lend

- Some verbs have special honorific and humble forms. Following are a few commonly used examples.

Verb	Honorific	Humble
iku / go	irassharu	mairu
kuru / come	irassharu	mairu
iru / be	irassharu	oru
suru / do	nasaru	itasu
iu / say	ossharu	mōsu
taberu / eat	meshiagaru	itadaku
miru / see	goran ni naru	haiken suru

§7.17 CLAUSES

Dependent Clauses

Unlike English, independent clauses in Japanese cannot be strung together in one sentence and joined by a conjunction like “and.” In Japanese, the main or independent clause comes at the end of the sentence, and other clauses are *dependent*. Following are some basic ways in which dependent clauses are linked to the main, or independent clause.

... -te/de

- The -te or gerund form of the verb can be used to indicate sequential, parallel, or causal relationships of dependent clauses. Verbal adjectives (the -kute form) and adjectival nouns (with the de form of the copula) can also be used this way (See §8), as can nouns (with the de form of the copula). Look at the examples.

Sequential:

As the name implies, this form is used for actions that occur in a time sequence: **first**, **then**, **then**, etc.

Example

Ginza e itte kaimono o shite, uchi e kaerimashita.

| | | | |
went shopping did home returned

/ I went to Ginza, did some shopping, and returned home.

Parallel:

The action or meaning here is parallel, or can take place at the same time.

Examples

Yamada san wa Ginza e itte, watakushi wa Shinjuku e

went

ikimashita. / **Mrs. Yamada went to Ginza, and I went to Shinjuku.**

went

Kono heya wa, hirokute akarukute rippa desu.

this room is spacious is bright gorgeous is

/ **This room is spacious and bright and gorgeous.**

Causal:

The dependent clause shows the cause, the main clause shows the effect. The cause-effect relationship need not be a strong one, however, for the -te form to be used.

Examples

Sensō ga owaranai ureshii desu. / **I'm glad because the war is over.**

war is over am glad

Yamada san wa, byōki de kimasen. / **Ms. Yamada isn't coming because she's sick.**

sick is isn't coming

Kono heya wa akarukute kimochi ga ii desu. / I feel
good because this room is bright.

... -tari ... -tari

- This form is used for **do** things like . . . or sometimes this, sometimes that.

Examples

Shūmatsu wa, nani o shimasu ka. / **What do you do on
weekends?**

Eiga o mitari, tenisu o shitari shimasu. / I do things like seeing a movie and/or playing tennis.

Haha no ryōri wa, oishikattari mazukattari shimasu.
| | | | | |
mother's cooking sometimes sometimes does
 good bad

/ My mother's cooking is sometimes good,
sometimes bad.

... -shi ... -shi

- This form is used for and in addition, and what's more.

Examples

Kono shūmatsu wa iroiro shimashita. / I did various things this weekend.

this	weekend	various	did
things		things	

Kaimono o shita shi, kuruma o aratta shi, Nihongo mo benkyō shimashita. / I went shopping, washed my car, and studied Japanese.

shopping	did and	car	washed and
			studied

Kono shūmatsu wa, totemo taihen deshita. / This weekend was awful (very bad).

this	weekend	very	bad	was	weekend
car					was awful (very bad).

Kuruma o nusumareta shi, saifu o nakushita shi, kamaremashita. / My car was stolen, I lost my wallet, and what's more, I was bitten by a dog.

car	was stolen	and	wallet	lost	and
inu ni					what's more
dog by	was bitten				

Relative Clauses

Japanese does not have relative pronouns like the English **who**, **that**, **which**, for use in relative clauses such as **The man who arrived is my friend**. Instead, the relative clause, ending with the plain form of the verb, comes before the word it modifies.

Examples

Watakushi ^{ga/}_{no} itsumo iku restoran wa, Ginza
| | | |
I always go restaurant

ni arimasu. / **The restaurant that I always go to is in Ginza.**
| |
in is

Kondo no ryokō de itta tokoro wa, Amerika to
| | | |
this trip went places
time

Kanada deshita. / **The places that I went to on this trip were America and Canada.**
| |
Canada were

§7.18 COMMON EXPRESSIONS WITH VERBS AND ADJECTIVES

The following forms are useful, some with verbs, some with both verbs and adjectives. If you use the *-de*, *demo*, or *dewa* forms, they can be used with nouns or adjectival nouns as well.

*-temo ii desu / It's okay if ...
You may ...*

Examples

Takakutemo | ii desu. / **It's okay (even) if it's expensive.**
 | |
 if expensive is okay

Tabetemo | ii desu. / **You may eat.**
 | |
 if eat is okay

*-nakutemo ii desu / It's okay even if it's not ...
You don't have to ...*

Examples

Yasukunakutemo | ii desu. / **It's okay even if it's not cheap.**
 | |
 even if not cheap is okay

Tabenakutemo | ii desu. / **You don't have to eat.**
 | |
 if don't eat is okay

-tewa ikemasen / must not

Examples



-nakutewa ikemasen, -nakereba narimasen / must

Examples



beki desu / should (obligation), ought to**Examples**

Motto benkyō suru beki desu. / **You should study more.**
 | | |
more **study** **should**

Motto ganbaru beki desu. / **You should try harder.**
 | |
more try hard **should**

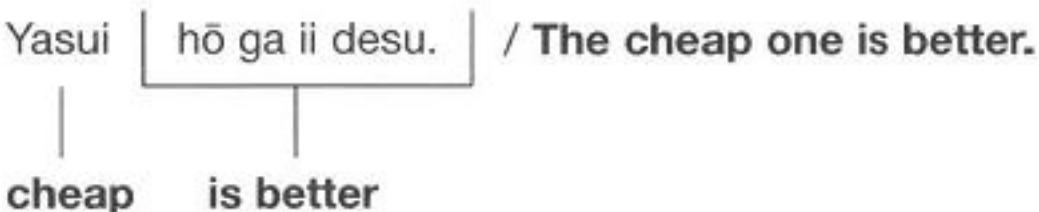
hazu desu / is expected (no moral obligation), supposition**Examples**

Mada nete iru hazu desu. / **He should still be sleeping.**
 | | |
still **is sleeping** **should**

Kotoshi no natsu Nihon e iku
 | | |
this year's summer **go**
hazu deshita. / **I was supposed to go to Japan this summer.**
 |
was supposed to

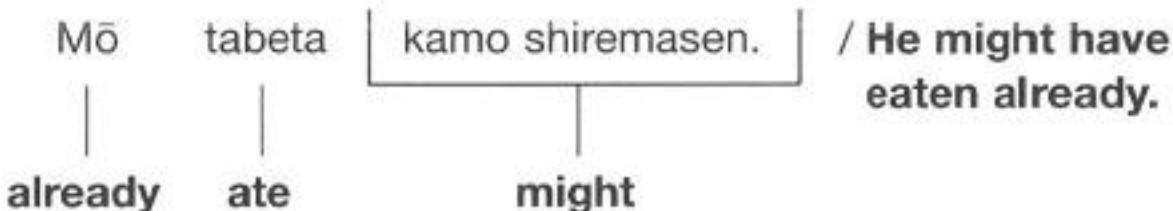
hō ga ii desu / It's better (that) ...

Examples



kamo shiremasen / might, probably

Examples



hoshii desu / want, need

Examples



**Examples**

Sushi ga tabetai desu. / I want to eat sushi.

want to eat

Sakana wa tabetaku arimasen. / I don't want to eat fish.

don't want to eat

§7.19 NOMINALIZATION

Verbs or clauses can be nominalized, or made into nouns, by using *no* or *koto* immediately after. Note that *koto* is more formal and can be used in the predicate; *no* is less formal and cannot be used in the predicate (see §3.3–2).

Examples

Watakushi wa taberu no ga daisuki desu. / I like eating very much.

eating

150 Parts of Speech



§7.20 VERB CHARTS

In the following charts you will find conjugated forms of a sample of Japanese verbs.

hanasu / to speak

Stem: hanas-		Transitive	
		Affirmative	Negative
Present:	Plain	hanasu	hanasanai
	Polite	hanashimasu	hanashimasen
Past:	Plain	hanashita	hanasanakatta
	Polite	hanashimashita	hanashimasen deshita
Gerund (-te form):		hanashite	hanasanaide hanasanakute
Presumptive:	Plain	hanasu darō	hanasanai darō
	Polite	hanasu deshō	hanasanai deshō
	Plain	hanasō	hanasumai
	Polite	hanashimashō	
Imperative:	Plain	hanase	hanasuna
	Polite	hanashite kudasai	hanasanaide kudasai
Conditional:		hanaseba hanashitara	hanasanakereba hanasanakattara
Plain Affirmative			
Potential:	hanaseru	Honorific:	ohanashi ni naru
Passive:	hanasareru		ohanashi nasaru
Causative:	hanasaseru	Humble:	ohanashi suru ohanashi itasu
Causative Passive:	hanasaserareru		

iku / to go

Stem: ik-		Intransitive	
Present:	Plain Polite	Affirmative iku ikimasu	Negative ikanai ikimasen
Past:	Plain Polite	itta ikimashita	ikanakatta ikimasen deshita
Gerund (-te form):		itte	ikanade ikanakute
Presumptive:	Plain Polite	iku darō iku deshō	ikanai darō ikanai deshō
	Plain Polite	ikō ikimashō	ikumai
Imperative:	Plain Polite	ike itte kudasai	ikuna ikanade kudasai
Conditional:		ikeba ittara	ikanakereba ikanakattara
Plain Affirmative			
Potential:	ikeru	Honorific:	irassharu
Passive:	ikareru		
Causative:	ikaseru	Humble:	mairu
Causative Passive:	ikaserareru		

kaeru / to return

Stem: kaer-		Intransitive	
		Affirmative	Negative
Present:	Plain	kaeru	kaeranai
	Polite	kaerimasu	kaerimasen
Past:	Plain	kaetta	kaeranakatta
	Polite	kaerimashita	kaerimasen deshita
Gerund (-te form):		kaette	kaeranaide kaeranakute
Presumptive:	Plain	kaeru darō	kaeranai darō
	Polite	kaeru deshō	kaeranai deshō
	Plain	kaerō	kaerumai
	Polite	kaerimashō	
Imperative:	Plain	kaere	kaeruna
	Polite	kaette kudasai	kaeranaide kudasai
Conditional:		kaereba	kaeranakereba
		kaettara	kaeranakattara
Plain Affirmative			
Potential:	kaereru	Honorific:	okaeri ni naru
Passive:	kaerareru		okaeri nasaru
Causative:	kaeraseru	Humble:	_____
Causative Passive:	kaeraserareru		

kau / to buy

Stem: ka-		Transitive	
Present:	Plain Polite	Affirmative kau kaimasu	Negative kawanai kaimasen
Past:	Plain Polite	katta kaimashita	kawanakatta kaimasen deshita
Gerund (-te form):		katte	kawanaide kawanakute
Presumptive:	Plain Polite	kau darō kau deshō	kawanai darō kawanai deshō
	Plain Polite	kaō kaimashō	kaumai
Imperative:	Plain Polite	kae katte kudasai	kauna kawanaide kudasai
Conditional:		kaeba kattara	kawanakereba kawanakattara
Plain Affirmative			
Potential:	kaeru	Honorific:	okai ni naru
Passive:	kawareru		okai nasaru
Causative:	kawaseru	Humble:	okai suru
Causative Passive:	kawaserareru		okai itasu

kiku / to listen, to ask, to hear

Stem: kik-		Transitive	
		Affirmative	Negative
Present:	Plain	kiku	kikanai
	Polite	kikimasu	kikimasen
Past:	Plain	kiita	kikanakatta
	Polite	kikimashita	kikimasen deshita
Gerund (-te form):		kiite	kikanaide kikanakute
Presumptive:	Plain	kiku darō	kikanai darō
	Polite	kiku deshō	kikanai deshō
	Plain	kikō	kikumai
	Polite	kikimashō	
Imperative:	Plain	kike	kikuna
	Polite	kiite kudasai	kikanaide kudasai
Conditional:		kikeba	kikanakereba
		kiitara	kikanakattara

Plain Affirmative			
Potential:	kikeru	Honorific:	okiki ni naru
Passive:	kikareru		okiki nasaru
Causative:	kikaseru	Humble:	ukagau (to ask)
Causative Passive:	kikaserareru		okiki suru (to ask)

kuru / to come

Stem: ku-			Intransitive
Present:	Plain	Affirmative	Negative
	Polite	kuru	konai
Past:	Plain	kimasu	kimasen
	Polite	kimashita	deshita
Gerund (-te form):		kite	konaide konakute
Presumptive:	Plain	kuru darō	konai darō
	Polite	kuru deshō	konai deshō
	Plain	koyō	kurumai
	Polite	kimashō	
Imperative:	Plain	koi	kuruna
	Polite	kite kudasai	konaide kudasai
Conditional:		kureba	konakereba
		kitara	konakattara

Plain Affirmative

Potential:	korareru	Honorific:	irassharu
Passive:	korareru		oide ni naru
Causative:	kosaseru	Humble:	mairu
Causative Passive:	kosaserareru		

miru / to look at, to see

Stem: mi-		Transitive	
		Affirmative	Negative
Present:	Plain	miru	minai
	Polite	mimasu	mimasen
Past:	Plain	mita	minakatta
	Polite	mimashita	mimasen deshita
Gerund (-te form):		mite	minaide minakute
Presumptive:	Plain	miru darō	minai darō
	Polite	miru deshō	minai deshō
	Plain	miyō	mimai
	Polite	mimashō	
Imperative:	Plain	miro	miruna
	Polite	mite kudasai	minaide kudasai
Conditional:		mireba	minakereba
		mitara	minakattara

Plain Affirmative			
Potential:	mirareru	Honorific:	goran ni naru
Passive:	mirareru		goran nasaru
Causative:	misaseru	Humble:	haiken suru
Causative Passive:	misasereru		haiken itasu

nomu / to drink

Stem: nom-			Transitive
		Affirmative	Negative
Present:	Plain	nomu	nomanai
	Polite	nomimasu	nomimasen
Past:	Plain	nonda	nomanakatta
	Polite	nomimashita	nomimasen deshita
Gerund (-te form):		nonde	nomanade nomanakute
Presumptive:	Plain	nomu darō	nomanai darō
	Polite	nomu deshō	nomanai deshō
	Plain	nomō	nomumai
	Polite	nomimashō	
Imperative:	Plain	nome	nomuna
	Polite	nonde kudasai	nomanade kudasai
Conditional:		nomeba	nomanakereba
		nondara	nomanakattara

	Plain Affirmative		
Potential:	nomeru	Honorific:	onomi ni naru
Passive:	nomareru		onomi nasaru
Causative:	nomaseru	Humble:	itadaku
Causative Passive:	nomaserareru		

suru / to do, to make

Stem: su-		Transitive	
		Affirmative	Negative
Present:	Plain	suru	shinai
	Polite	shimasu	shimasen
Past:	Plain	shita	shinakatta
	Polite	shimashita	shimasen deshita
Gerund (-te form):		shite	shinaide shinakute
Presumptive:	Plain	suru darō	shinai darō
	Polite	suru deshō	shinai deshō
	Plain	shiyō	surumai
	Polite	shimashō	
Imperative:	Plain	shiro	suruna
	Polite	shite kudasai	shinaide kudasai
Conditional:		sureba	shinakereba
		shitara	shinakattara
Plain Affirmative			
Potential:	dekiru	Honorific:	nasaru
Passive:	sareru		
Causative:	saseru	Humble:	itasu
Causative Passive:	saserareru		

taberu / to eat

Stem: tabe-		Transitive	
		Affirmative	Negative
Present:	Plain	taberu	tabenai
	Polite	tabemasu	tabemasen
Past:	Plain	tabeta	tabenakatta
	Polite	tabemashita	tabemasen deshita
Gerund (-te form):		tabete	tabenaide tabenakute
Presumptive:	Plain	taberu darō	tabenai darō
	Polite	taberu deshō	tabenai deshō
	Plain	tabeyō	tabemai
	Polite	tabemashō	
Imperative:	Plain	tabero	taberuna
	Polite	tabete kudasai	tabenaide kudasai
Conditional:		tabereba	tabenakereba
		tabetara	tabenakattara

Plain Affirmative			
Potential:	taberareru	Honorific:	meshiagaru
Passive:	taberareru		otabe ni naru
Causative:	tabesaseru		otabe nasaru
Causative Passive:		Humble:	itadaku
	tabesaserareru		

wakaru / to understand

Stem: wakar-		Intransitive	
		Affirmative	Negative
Present:	Plain	wakaru	wakaranai
	Polite	wakarimasu	wakarimasen
Past:	Plain	wakatta	wakaranakatta
	Polite	wakarimashita	wakarimasen deshita
Gerund (-te form):		wakatte	wakaranaide wakaranakute
Presumptive:	Plain	wakaru darō	wakaranai darō
	Polite	wakaru deshō	wakaranai deshō
	Plain	wakarō	wakarumai
	Polite	wakarimashō	
Imperative:	Plain	wakare	
	Polite	wakatte kudasai	
Conditional:		wakareba	wakaranakereba
		wakattara	wakaranakattara

Plain Affirmative			
Potential:	_____	Honorific:	owakari ni naru
Passive:	_____		owakari nasaru
Causative:	wakaraseru	Humble:	_____
Causative Passive:	wakaraserareru		

§8.

Adjectives

§8.1 WHAT ARE ADJECTIVES?

English speakers define *adjectives* as “words which modify or describe nouns.”

The Japanese adjective, however, does not fit neatly into the definition of the English adjective. Therefore, speakers of English must be prepared for new ways of looking at adjectives, which in Japanese are quite unlike their English counterparts.

What are the major differences? To put it simply, Japanese adjectives fall into two groups: one group has verb-like characteristics, and the other group has noun-like characteristics. Both groups may function like English adjectives, that is, to modify nouns that follow. With this concept in mind, Japanese adjectives can be understood easily.

One group may be called *verbal adjectives*, the other *adjectival nouns*. We shall look at each group separately. First, the verbal adjectives.

§8.2 VERBAL ADJECTIVES

Adjectives in this group, in their dictionary form, end only in *-ai*, *-ii*, *-oi*, or *-ui*. Thus, they are often referred to as *-i* adjectives.

Here are some common *-i* adjectives.

<i>-i</i> Adjectives	
chiisai / small	takai / expensive
yasui / inexpensive, cheap	ōkii / big
oishii / delicious	ii / good, nice
yasashii / easy	warui / bad
atarashii / new	muzukashii / difficult
omoshiroi / interesting	amai / sweet
suzushii / cool	wakai / young
hayai / fast, early	itai / painful
kuroi / black	shiroi / white

§8.2-1 Noun Modifiers

The *-i* adjective in the forms listed above can modify a noun that follows, just as an English adjective does:

Examples

chiisai kuruma / **small car**

kuroi kutsu / **black shoes**

omoshiroi hon / **interesting book**

ii hito / **good person**

Atarashii kuruma o [kaimasu.] / I will buy a new car.



Oishii kudamono o tabemashita. / We ate some delicious fruit.



§8.2–2 Verbal Forms

The forms given in §8.2 are the dictionary form of the verbal adjectives. As verbal forms, they have the characteristics of verbs, as you will see below.

They have stems.

To form the stem, drop the final *-i*. This is the form used to make all the other forms of the adjective.

-i Adjective	Stem
akai / red	aka-
omoshiroi / interesting	omoshiro-
nagai / long	naga-
yasui / cheap	yasu-

As is, they form the predicate.

Tip

Since the dictionary form is the plain present form of the verb, you can think of the verbal adjective as already containing in itself the grammatical form of the copula, or *is*. And, since a Japanese sentence requires a predicate but not a subject if the context is clear, each verbal adjective can constitute a sentence. There can, of course, be other elements in the sentence.

Note that these are plain forms.

ExamplesSuzushii. / **It's cool.**Muzukashii. / **It's difficult.**Atama ga itai. / **My head hurts.**Kono hon wa, omoshiroi. / **This book is interesting.**

They conjugate, or change form, for different tenses and moods.

- To form the plain past tense, add *-katta* to the stem.

Plain	
Present	Past
suzushii / is cool	suzushikatta / was cool
oishii / is delicious	oishikatta / was delicious
chiisai / is small	chiisakatta / was small
wakai / is young	wakakatta / was young
osoi / is slow	osokatta / was slow

- To form the negative of the plain present and past, add *-ku* to the stem. Then, as with regular plain past verbs, add the appropriate form of *nai*

Plain Negative	
Present	Past
suzushiku nai / isn't cool	suzushikunakatta / wasn't cool
chiisaku nai / isn't small	chiisakunakatta / wasn't small

- For the polite forms, add *desu* to the plain form for the present and the past.

Polite	
Present	Past
suzushii desu / is cool	suzushikatta desu / was cool
chiisai desu / is small	chiisakatta desu / was small

- To form the polite negative, use the *-ku* form, and add *arimasen* to the present, and *arimasen deshita* to the past.

Polite Negative	
Present	Past
suzushiku arimasen / isn't cool	suzushiku arimasen deshita / wasn't cool
chiisaku arimasen / isn't small	chiisaku arimasen deshita / wasn't small

- A variation of the polite negative forms may be formed by adding *desu* to the plain negative forms:

suzushiiku nai desu / isn't cool	suzushikunakatta desu / wasn't cool
chiisaku nai desu / isn't small	chiisakunakatta desu / wasn't small

- To form the gerund, add *-kute* to the stem.

Example

Kono hon wa omoshirokute | tanoshii desu. / **This book is interesting and enjoyable.**

| |
book is interesting is enjoyable

- For other verb moods, the verbal adjective forms can be expanded as follows:

Presumptive: atsui deshō / **will probably be hot**

Conditional: atsukereba / **if it were hot**

atsukunakereba / **if it were not hot**

atsukutemo / **even if it's hot**

and so forth (see §7).

The following examples illustrate some uses of the verbal adjective forms presented in this section.

Examples

Kono kutsu wa, [chiisai desu.] / **These shoes are small.**

| |
shoes are small

Ano hon wa, [yasukatta desu.] / **That book was cheap.**

|
was cheap

Hiru gohan wa, [oishikatta desu.] / **Lunch was delicious.**

| |
lunch was delicious

Shiken wa [yasashikatta desu.] / **The exam was easy.**

| |
exam was easy

Kono kuruma wa, [atarashiku nai desu.] / **This car isn't new.**

| |
car isn't new

Sono eiga wa, **omoshiroku arimasen deshita.** / That movie wasn't interesting.
 |
 movie wasn't interesting

Heya wa, **suzushikunakatta desu.** / The room wasn't cool.
 |
 room wasn't cool

§8.2–3 Adverbial Forms

To form adverbs from the *-i* adjectives, just add *-ku* to the stem. Or, to put it another way, change the final *-i* to *-ku*.

Adjective	Adverb
omoshiroi / interesting	omoshiroku / interesting
hayai / quick	hayaku / quick, quickly
warui / bad	waruku / bad, badly
ii / good	yoku* / well
takai / expensive	takaku / expensive
kuroi / black	kuroku / black

*This is an irregular form.

Note how the adverbs are used in sentences. Look at the kinds of verbs typically used with adverbs, especially *naru*, **become**.

Examples

Shōsetsu ga, omoshiroku narimashita. / **The novel became interesting.**

| | |
novel interesting became

or

I have become interested in novels.

Hayaku ikinasai. / **Go quickly.**

| |
quickly go

Hayaku arukimashita. / **I walked quickly.**

Tenki ga waruku narimashita. / **The weather became bad.**

| | |
weather bad became

Tarō san wa, yoku benkyō shimashita. / **Taro studied well.**

| |
well studied

Yachin ga takaku narimashita. / **The rent became expensive.**

| | |
rent expensive became

Doa o kuroku nurimashita. / **I painted the door black.**

| | |
door black painted

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Ano hito wa, eigo ga yoku wakarimasu. / He understands English well.

English well understands

Yoku nemashita. / I slept well.

well slept

§8.3 ADJECTIVAL NOUNS

Words in this group have noun-like characteristics and can convey adjectival meanings. When they modify nouns, they are followed by the suffix *-na*. Thus, they are often referred to as *-na* adjectives.

Here are some common *-na* adjectives.

-na Adjectives	
shizuka / quiet	kirei / pretty
genki / well, healthy	benri / convenient
shinsetsu / kind	yūmei / famous
jōzu / good at	heta / not good at
dame / no good	suki / like
fuben / inconvenient	iroiro / various
shōjiki / honest	teinei / polite

Tip

You may notice that these words, as translated, do not fit neatly into the English notion of adjectives. The following sections should help clarify their usage.

§8.3–1 Noun Modifiers

With the addition of *-na*, the words in the preceding chart can modify a noun that follows, just as an English adjective does. Notice that for some of the words, the English translation is adjusted slightly to fit this context.

Examples

- shizukana heya / **quiet room**
- kireina hana / **pretty flowers**
- genkina hito / **healthy person**
- benrina dōgu / **convenient tool**
- shinsetsuna sensei / **kind teacher**
- yūmeina joyū / **famous actress**
- jōzuna kashu / **talented singer**
- hetana untenshu / **bad driver**
- damena hito / **no good person, bad person**
- sukina tabemono / **favorite food**
- fubenna jikan / **inconvenient time**
- iroirona kuni / **various countries**
- shōjikina seijika / **honest politician**
- teineina aisatsu / **polite greetings**

Tip

This noun modifier construction is similar in form to that of the noun + *no* + noun pattern used to make compound nouns (see §4.8): *eigo no sensei* / **English teacher**, etc. With the adjectival nouns, of course, *-na* is used instead of *no*. Otherwise, the pattern is the same. This is one of the noun-like characteristics of the adjectival nouns.

Now look at some examples of this usage in sentences.

Examples

Shizukana heya ga hoshii desu. / I want a quiet room.
 | | |
 quiet room want

Sushi wa, watakushi no sukina tabemono desu. / Sushi
 | |
 is my favorite food food.

Sore wa fubenna jikan desu. / That's an inconvenient
 | |
 time.
 inconvenient time

Iroirona kuni ni ikimashita. / I have visited various
 | | |
 various countries visited

§8.3–2 Predicate Forms

The adjectival nouns form a predicate as nouns do, by adding the appropriate form of the copula, *desu* / **is**, **equals** (see §7.6).

Here are the basic forms of *desu*:

<i>desu / is, equals</i>		Affirmative	Negative
Present	Plain	da	dewa nai
	Polite	desu	dewa arimasen
Past	Plain	datta	dewa nakatta
	Polite	deshita	dewa arimasen deshita
Presumptive (Probable)	Plain	darō	dewa nai darō
	Polite	deshō	dewa nai deshō

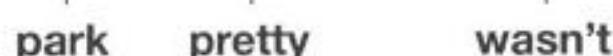
The following examples illustrate how the adjectival nouns plus a form of *desu* constitute the predicate.

Examples

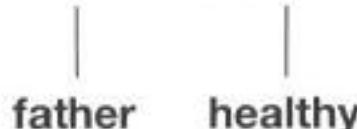
Kono heya wa, shizuka desu. / **This room is quiet.**



Kōen wa, kirei dewa arimasen deshita. / **The park wasn't pretty.**



Chichi wa, genki desu. / **My father is healthy.**



Ano hito wa, supōtsu ga heta desu. / **She isn't good at sports.**



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Ano yakyū no senshu wa, yūmei desu. / That baseball player is famous.

baseball player famous

Sakana wa, suki dewa arimasen. / I don't like fish.
(Fish isn't likable.)

fish don't like

Jon san wa, Nihon ga suki desu. / John likes Japan. (To John, Japan is likable.)

Niku wa dame desu. / I don't eat meat. (Meat is no good.)

meat is no good

§8.3–3 Adverbial Forms

To form adverbs from the *-na* adjectives, use the particle *ni* after the adjective.

-na Adjective	Adverb
shizuka / quiet	shizuka ni / quiet, quietly
kirei / pretty	kirei ni / pretty
genki / healthy, well	genki ni / healthy, well
shinsetsu / kind	shinsetsu ni / kindly
teinei / polite	teinei ni / politely
jōzu / good at	jōzu ni / good at, well

Look at the adverbial forms in sentences. They are often used with the verbs *naru* / **become** and *suru* / **do**.

Examples

Kanojo wa, shizuka ni arukimasu. / **She walks quietly.**

quietly walks

Ano hito wa, teinei ni hanashimashita. / **He spoke politely.**

politely spoke

Kanja wa, genki ni narimashita. / **The patient became healthy.**

healthy became

Satō san wa, eigo ga jōzu ni narimashita. / **Ms. Sato became good at English.**

good at

Satō san wa, eigo o jōzu ni hanashimasu. / **Mr. Sato speaks English well.**

well speaks

Shizuka ni shinasai. / **Please be quiet.**

quiet do

§8.4 COMPARISONS

To compare things in Japanese, the adjectives themselves do not change. Instead, there is a special pattern to learn. This pattern works for both *-i* adjectives and *-na* adjectives.

To say **A is bigger than B**, the pattern is as follows:

A wa B yori ōkii desu.

than big is

To say **A is cheaper than B**, the pattern is the same:

A wa B yori yasui desu.

than cheap is

Examples

Budō wa, meron yori yasui desu. / **Grapes are cheaper than melons.**

grapes melons than cheap are

Tōkyō wa, Kyōto yori ōkii desu. / **Tokyo is bigger than Kyoto.**

than big is

Kyōto wa, Tōkyō yori chiisai desu. / **Kyoto is smaller than Tokyo.**

than small is

Tip

To understand clearly which is which in the comparison, the key is the word *yori* / **than**. Focus on this word and the English meaning, and you can quickly sort it out. If you want to say **Oranges are cheaper than apples**, start with **than apples** in English. In Japanese it becomes *ringo yori / apples than*, and you can see that **apples** takes the **B** slot in the pattern. The full sentence is as follows:

Orenji wa, ringo yori yasui desu. / **Oranges are
cheaper than
apples.**
 | | | |
 oranges apples than cheap are

Another phrase is often used with this pattern, although the meaning remains the same. The words are *no hō*, plus the particle *ga*. The *no* is like the possessive particle used to link the nouns with whatever follows, and *hō* can be translated as **side** or **direction**. The pattern looks like this:

Amerika yori, Nihon no hō ga chiisai desu. / **Japan is
smaller
than
America.**
 | | | |
 than 's side small is

Niku yori, sakana no hō ga oishii desu. / **Fish is
more
delicious
than
meat.**
 | | | | | |
 meat than fish 's side delicious is

Examples

Shikago to Tōkyō to, dochira ga suki

| | |
or or which

desu ka. / Which do you like better, Chicago or
Tokyo?

Tōkyō no hō ga suki desu. / I like Tokyo better.

| | | |
's side like is

Jon san to Tomu san to, dare no hō ga wakai

| | | |
or or whose side younger

desu ka. / Who is younger, John or Tom?

|
is

Jon san no hō ga, wakai desu. / John is younger.

| | | |
's side young is

Notice the particle and word order changes in the following two sentences. In the first one, *no hō ga* is used, in the second, *yori* is used alone. Both sentences have the same meaning, but including *no hō ga* makes for stronger contrast in the comparison.

Examples

Basu yori, chikatetsu no hō ga benri desu. / **The subway is more convenient than the bus.**

Chikatetsu wa, basu yori benri desu. / **The subway is more convenient than the bus.**

| | |
subway **bus than**

Another way to answer questions about comparisons is with a simple statement.

Examples

Ringo to momo to, dochira ga suki desu ka.
 | | | | |
apples or peaches or which like

/ **Which do you like better, apples or peaches?**

Ringo ga suki desu. / **I like apples better.**

Another option is to use the word *motto*, which means **more**, for emphasis. It connotes **much (more, better, etc.)**. If you use this with *no hō ga*, the emphasis is even stronger.

Examples

Ringo ga motto suki desu. / **I like apples much more.**

Ringo no hō ga, motto suki desu. / **I like apples much more.**

To convey a superlative meaning, use the word *ichiban* / **most, -est, etc.**

Examples

Dono kudamono ga ichiban suki desu ka. / **Which fruit do you like best?**
 | | | |
which fruit best like

Banana ga ichiban suki desu. / **I like bananas best.**

Nihon de wa, dono tsuki ga ichiban samui desu ka.
 | |
month cold

/ **Which month is the coldest in Japan?**

§8.5 NOMINALIZATION

Adjectives can be *nominalized*, or made into nouns, by a simple device for each of the two kinds.

For *-i* adjectives, add *-no* to the basic, or dictionary, form.

-i Adjective	Noun Form
ōkii / big	ōkiino / big one
atarashii / new	atarashiino / new one
hayai / fast	hayaino / fast one
shiroi / white	shiroino / white one
amai / sweet	amaino / sweet one
akai / red	akaino / red one
kiroi / yellow	kiroiino / yellow one

As with English, this form usually occurs in a context, that is, answering a question, or referring to something mutually understood.

Examples

Ringo o kudasai. / I want some apples.

Akaino to kiiroino to, dochira ga ii desu ka.
 | | | |
 red ones or yellow ones or which

/ Which do you want, red ones or yellow ones?

Look at two ways of saying the same thing. Note the difference in emphasis.

Atarashii eiga o mitai desu. / I want to see a new film.

| |
 new film

Eiga wa, atarashiino o mitai desu. / (As for a film), I
 want to see a
 new one.

film new one

Here are some more examples of nominalized adjectives used in sentences:

Examples

Kēki wa, amaino o kudasai. / (As for the cake), give me
the sweet one.

cake sweet one

Hoteru no heya wa, chiisaino ga hoshii desu. / (As for
a hotel room), I want a small one.

For -na adjectives, add -no to the -na form.

-na Adjective, -na Form	Noun Form
shizukana / quiet	shizukanano / quiet one
kireina / pretty	kireinano / pretty one
yūmeina / famous	yūmeinano / famous one
sukina / like, favorite	sukinano / favorite one
benrina / convenient	benrinano / convenient one
teineina / polite	teineinano / polite one, politeness
hetana / not good at	hetanano / unskillful one

Here are some sentences with these forms. The uses are the same as for the -i adjective sentences above.

Examples

Kisha wa, benrinano ni noritai desu. / (As for trains), I want to take a convenient one.

train convenient one want to take

Kireinano ga ii desu. / I want pretty ones.

pretty ones want

Teineinano wa taisetsu desu. / Politeness is important.

politeness important

§9.

Adverbs

§9.1 WHAT ARE ADVERBS?

Adverbs are words which modify or describe verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. They indicate *time*, *place*, *manner*, and *degree*. They answer such questions as **when**, **where**, **how**, and **to what extent**.

As in English, some words in Japanese that are adverbs in one sentence can be a different part of speech in another sentence.

Examples

Kyō Tōkyō ni ikimasu. / Today I'm going to Tokyo.

Today

adverb

Kyō wa nichi'yōbi desu. / Today is Sunday.

Today

noun

§9.2 ADVERBS OF PLACE

Some of the demonstrative pronouns (see §5.5) function as adverbs of place.

koko / **here**

soko / **there**

asoko / **over there**

Examples

Jon san ga, koko ni kimashita. / **John came here.**

| |
here came

Soko ni ikitai desu. / **I want to go there.**

| |
there want to go

Gakkō wa, asoko ni arimasu. / **The school is over there.**

| |
school over there

§9.3 ADVERBS OF TIME

- kinō / **yesterday**
- kyō / **today**
- ashita / **tomorrow**
- mainichi / **every day**
- maiasa / **every morning**
- maiban / **every night**
- ima / **now**
- saikin / **recently**
- yagate / **soon**
- sugu / **immediately**
- mada / **yet, still**

Examples

Mainichi	shinbun	o	yomimasu.	/ I read a newspaper every day.
every day	newspaper		read	
Sugu	kite kudasai.		/ Please come immediately.	
immediately	please come			

Tegami wa, mada desu. / The mail isn't here yet.
| |
mail not yet

Yagate haru ga kimasu. / **Spring** will come soon.
| | |
soon spring come

§9.4 ADVERBS OF MANNER AND DEGREE

As in English, adjectives can be made into adverbs of manner and degree:

Adjective	Adverb
hayai / quick	hayaku / quick, quickly
warui / bad	waruku / bad, badly
shizuka / quiet	shizuka ni / quiet, quietly
shinsetsu / kind	shinsetsu ni / kindly

See §8.2–3 and §8.3–3 for more information on the adverbial forms of adjectives.

Some of the demonstrative pronouns are adverbs of manner (see §5.5).

kō / **this way, like this**
 sō / **that way, like that**
 ā / **that way, like that**
 dō / **how**

Examples

Kō shimashō. / **Let's do it this way.**

this way let's do

Sō shite kudasai. / **Please do it that way.**

that way please do

Ā suru to yoku dekimasu. / **If you do it that way, you can do better.**

Ā	suru	to	yoku	dekimasu.
				/ If you do it that way, you can do better.
that way	if	better	can do	

Ōsaka ni wa, dō ikimasu ka. / **How do you get to Osaka?**

Ōsaka	ni	wa,	dō	ikimasu	ka.	/ How do you get to	Osaka?
how			go				

Here are some other adverbs of manner and degree

amari / not much, not often	sukoshi / a little, few
bakkari / only	tabitabi / often
chotto / a little, for a moment	tabun / maybe, perhaps, probably
dandan / gradually	taihen / very (in the sense of extreme degree, positive or negative), greatly
futsū / usually	taitei / generally, mainly, perhaps, probably
hotondo / almost, all but, hardly	takusan / a lot
ikaga / how	tamani / occasionally
itsumo / always	tokidoki / sometimes
kitto / certainly, surely	totemo / very
mata / again	yoku / well, often, much
minna / all	yukkuri / slowly
mō / more, already	zenzen / at all (with negative verbs)
motto / more	zuibun / rather, quite
nakanaka / quite, rather, completely, at all	

Examples

Pan wa, amari suki dewa arimasen. / I don't like
 | |
 much don't like

Chotto matte kudasai. / Wait a moment, please.
 | |
 a moment wait

Merī san wa, itsumo hataraitē imasu. / Mary is
 | |
 always is working

Mata Amerika e ikitai desu. / I want to go to
 | |
 again want to go

Mō bangohan o tabemashita. / I ate dinner
 | | |
 already dinner ate

Motto arukimashō. / Let's walk some more.

| |
 more let's walk

Doitsugo o sukoshi shitte imasu. / I know German a
 | |
 German little know

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Taihen | omoshirokatta desu. / It was very interesting.
|
very was interesting

Ano hito wa, takusan hanashimasu. / He talks a lot.
| |
a lot talks

Tokidoki Tōkyō ni ikimasu. / I sometimes go to Tokyo.
| |
sometimes go

Totemo | oishikatta desu. / It was very delicious.
|
very was delicious

Rokugatsu wa, ame ga yoku furimasu. / It rains often
in June.
| | | |
June rain often falls

Yukkuri | hanashite kudasai. / Please speak slowly.
|
slowly speak

Eiga wa, zenzen omoshiroku | arimasen deshita.
| | |
movie at all Interesting wasn't
/ The movie wasn't interesting at all.

Special Topics

§10.

Numbers

§10.1 CARDINAL NUMBERS

Zero to One Hundred Million

From 1 to 10 only, there are two sets of numbers. The set on the right, of Japanese origin, stops at 10. The set on the left, of Chinese origin, continues indefinitely.

rei	0	
ichi	1	hitotsu
ni	2	futatsu
san	3	mittsu
shi/yon	4	yottsu
go	5	itsutsu
roku	6	muttsu
shichi/nana	7	nanatsu
hachi	8	yattsu
ku/kyū	9	kokonotsu
jū	10	tō

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To form numbers from 11 to 19, start with *jū*, 10, and then add the number you need from the column on the left in the preceding chart.

11 jūichi	12 jūni	13 jūsan	14 jūshi/yon	15 jūgo
16 jūroku	17 jūshichi / nana		18 jūhachi	19 jūku

The rest is easy. Twenty is two tens, or *ni jū*, and for 21, just add the 1: *ni jū ichi*.

20 nijū	30 sanjū	40 yonjū	50 gojū
21 nijūichi	31 sanjūichi	41 yonjūichi	51 gojūichi
60 rokujū	70 nanajū	80 hachijū	90 kyūjū
61 rokujūichi	71 nanajūichi	81 hachijūichi	91 kyūjūichi

With 100, *hyaku*, and 1,000, *sen*, the pattern is basically the same, but there are some sound changes, as you will see in the chart below:

100	hyaku	1,000	sen
200	nihyaku	2,000	nisen
300	sanbyaku	3,000	sanzen
400	yonhyaku	4,000	yonsen
500	gohyaku	5,000	gosen
600	ropphyaku	6,000	rokusen
700	nanahyaku	7,000	nanasen
800	happyaku	8,000	hassen
900	kyūhyaku	9,000	kyūsen

Japanese uses 10,000 as a counting unit. Each unit of 10,000 is called *man*.

So 10,000 is *ichiman*, 20,000 is *niman*, 100,000 is *juman*, 200,000 is *nijuman*, 1,000,000 is *hyakuman* (100 units of 10,000). This continues until 100,000,000, *ichioku*.

§10.2 ORDINAL NUMBERS

The ordinal numbers are formed by adding *banme* to the cardinal numbers.

first	ichibanme	sixth	rokubanme
second	nibanme	seventh	nanabanme
third	sanbanme	eighth	hachibanme
fourth	yonbanme	ninth	kyūbanme
fifth	gobanme	tenth	jūbanme

To continue, follow the pattern for the cardinal numbers, adding *banme*. **Eleventh** is *jūichibanme*, **twelfth** is *jūnibanme*, and so forth.

§11.

Telling Time

To express time in Japanese, we start with a list of the **hours**, then a list of the **minutes**, and then we put them together.

Here are the **hours**:

1 o'clock	ichiji	7 o'clock	shichiji
2 o'clock	niji	8 o'clock	hachiji
3 o'clock	sanji	9 o'clock	kuji
4 o'clock	yoji	10 o'clock	jūji
5 o'clock	goji	11 o'clock	jūichiji
6 o'clock	rokuji	12 o'clock	jūniji

Now the **minutes**:

1 minute	ippun	7 minutes	nanafun
2 minutes	nifun	8 minutes	happun
3 minutes	sanfun	9 minutes	kyūfun
4 minutes	yonfun	10 minutes	juppun
5 minutes	gofun	11 minutes	jūppun
6 minutes	roppun	12 minutes	jūnifun

13 minutes	jūsanpun	21 minutes	nijūippun
14 minutes	jūyonpun	22 minutes	nijūnifun
15 minutes	jūgofun	23 minutes	nijūsanpun
16 minutes	jūroppun	24 minutes	nijūyonpun
17 minutes	jūnanafun	25 minutes	nijūgofun
18 minutes	jūhappun	30 minutes	sanjuppun
19 minutes	jūkyūfun	40 minutes	yonjuppun
20 minutes	nijūppun	50 minutes	gojuppun

Now we can put them together. Say the hour first, then the minutes, then add *desu*:

Examples

Nanji desu ka. / **What time is it?**

Jūji jūgofun desu. / **It's 10:15.**

- Using *sugi*, which means **past** or **after**, is optional.

Jūji jūgofun *sugi* desu. / **It's 10:15.**

|
after

- At 15 minutes before the hour, start using *mae*, which means **to** or **before**.

Jūji jūgofun *mae* desu. / **It's a quarter to ten.**

|
before

- *Han* means **half**, as in **half past** the hour.

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Goji desu.	It's 5 o'clock.
Goji gofun desu.	It's 5:05.
Goji juppun desu.	It's 5:10.
Goji jūgofun desu.	It's 5:15.
Goji nijuppun desu.	It's 5:20.
Goji nijūgofun desu.	It's 5:25.
Goji han desu.	It's 5:30.
Goji sanjūgofun desu.	It's 5:35.
Goji yonjuppun desu.	It's 5:40.
Goji yonjūgofun desu.	It's 5:45.
Rokuji jūgofun mae desu.	It's a quarter to six.
Rokuji juppun mae desu.	It's 5:50/ten to six.
Rokuji gofun mae desu.	It's 5:55/five to six.

- Gozen is **A.M.** Gogo is **P.M.** Say them *before* you say the hour.

Examples

Gozen kuji desu. / **It's 9 A.M.**



A.M.

Gogo jūji desu. / **It's 10 P.M.**



P.M.

Tip

For time schedules, as in railway and airline timetables, numbers 1 to 59 are used for minutes, **not a quarter to or ten to** the hour.

Transportation timetables are based on the 24-hour clock. Airline and train schedules are expressed in terms of a point within a 24-hour sequence.

Examples

Watakushi no kisha wa, jūsanji yonjūhappun ni demasu.
/ My train departs at 13:48.

Watakushi no hikōki wa, jūji gojūsanpun ni tsukimasu.
/ My plane arrives at 10:53.

§12.

Classifiers

To count things in Japanese, you use special classifiers, or counters. Here are some of the most common ones:

Counting Different Kinds of Things

People				
1 hitori	2 futari	3 sannin	4 yonin	5 gonin
6 rokunin	7 nananin	8 hachinin	9 kunin	10 jūnin

Long, thin objects (pencils, bottles, trees, etc.)				
1 ippon	2 nihon	3 sanbon	4 yonhon	5 gohon
6 roppon	7 nanahon	8 happen	9 kyūhon	10 jūppon

Bound objects (books, magazines, notebooks, etc.)				
1 issatsu	2 nisatsu	3 sansatsu	4 yonsatsu	5 gosatsu
6 rokusatsu	7 nanasatsu	8 hassatsu	9 kyūsatsu	10 jussatsu

Thin, flat objects (paper, bills, cloth, tickets, dishes, etc.)				
1 ichimai	2 nimai	3 sanmai	4 yomai	5 gomai
6 rokumai	7 nanamai	8 hachimai	9 kyūmai	10 jūmai

Liquid or dry measures (glasses or cups of water, coffee, tea, etc.)

1 ippai	2 nihai	3 sanbai	4 yonhai	5 gohai
6 roppai	7 nanahai	8 happai	9 kyūhai	10 juppai

Houses, buildings, etc.

1 ikken	2 niken	3 sangen	4 yonken	5 goken
6 rokken	7 nanaken	8 hakken	9 kyūken	10 jukken

Floors of buildings

1 ikkai	2 nikai	3 sangai	4 yonkai	5 gokai
6 rokkai	7 nanakai	8 hakkai	9 kyūkai	10 jukkai

Animals, fish, insects

1 ippiki	2 nihiki	3 sanbiki	4 yonhiki	5 gohiki
6 roppiki	7 nanahiki	8 happiki	9 kyūhiki	10 juppliki

**Small objects not in categories listed above
(apples, candy, etc.)**

1 ikko / hitotsu	2 niko / futatsu	3 sanko / mittsu
4 yonko / yottsu	5 goko / itsutsu	6 rokko / muttsu
7 nanako / nanatsu	8 hakko / yattsu	9 kyūko / kokonotsu
10 jukko / tō		

Tip

To form the question word for the classifiers, do the following:

- Start with the word for counting three of anything.
- Instead of *san*, use *nan*.

For example:

sangen becomes *nangen*/**how many houses, buildings, etc.**

sanbai becomes *nanbai*/**how many glasses, cups, etc.**

§13.

Days, Months, Seasons, the Weather

§13.1 DAYS OF THE WEEK

getsuyōbi / Monday	mokuyōbi / Thursday
kayōbi / Tuesday	kinyōbi / Friday
suiyōbi / Wednesday	doyōbi / Saturday
nichiyōbi / Sunday	
asa / morning	gogo / afternoon
yūgata / evening	yoru / night

Related Expressions

Kyō wa, nani yōbi desu ka. / **What day is today?**

Kyō wa, _____ desu. / **It's _____.**

ichinichi / a day	ashita / tomorrow
kyō / today	asatte / the day after tomorrow
kinō / yesterday	
ototoi / the day before yesterday	shū / week
raishū / next week	konshū / this week
isshūkan / for one week	yūgata / in the early evening
nishūkan / for two weeks	yoru / in the evening, at night
isshūkan de / in one week	asa made ni / by morning
	kayōbi made ni / by Tuesday

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nishūkan de / in two weeks	heijitsu / weekday
futsuka kan / for two days	shūmatsu / weekend
ichi nichi de / in one day	mainichi / every day
futsuka de / in two days	kyō kara isshūkan go / a week from today
mikka mae / three days ago	kyō kara / from today on
kesa / this morning	yasumi / day off
kyō no gogo / this afternoon	kyūjitsu / holiday
konban / tonight, this evening	shigoto bi/ work day
ashita no ban / tomorrow night	ichinichi ni tsuki / per day
gozen chū / in the morning	kyō jū ni / during the day
gogo / in the afternoon	konshū jū ni / during the week

§13.2 MONTHS OF THE YEAR

ichigatsu / January	shichigatsu / July
nigatsu / February	hachigatsu / August
sangatsu / March	kugatsu / September
shigatsu / April	jūgatsu / October
gogatsu / May	jūichigatsu / November
rokugatsu / June	jūnigatsu / December

nan gatsu / **which month**

§13.3 DAYS OF THE MONTH

tsuitachi / 1st	jūrokunichi / 16th
futsuka / 2nd	jūshichinichi / 17th
mikka / 3rd	jūhachinichi / 18th
yokka / 4th	jūkunichi / 19th
itsuka / 5th	hatsuka / 20th
muika / 6th	nijūichinichi / 21st
nanoka / 7th	nijūninichi / 22nd
yōka / 8th	nijūsannichi / 23rd
kokonoka / 9th	nijūyokka / 24th
tōka / 10th	nijūgonichi / 25th
jūichinichi / 11th	nijūrokunichi / 26th
jūninichi / 12th	nijūshichinichi / 27th
jūsannichi / 13th	nijūhachinichi / 28th
jūyokka / 14th	nijūkunichi / 29th
jūgonichi / 15th	sanjūninichi / 30th
	sanjūichinichi / 31st

nan nichi / **which day**

§13.4 COUNTING DAYS

ichinichi / one day	nanoka / seven days
futsuka / two days	yōka / eight days
mikka / three days	kokonoka / nine days
yokka / four days	tōka / ten days
itsuka / five days	jūichinichi / eleven days
muika / six days	jūninichi / twelve days

Related ExpressionsNikagetsu mae / **2 months ago**sengetsu / **last month**kongetsu / **this month**raigetsu / **next month**_____ gatsu chū ni / **during the month of** __________ gatsu irai / **since the month of** __________ gatsu ni / **for the month of** _____mai tsuki / **every month**ikkagetsu ni tsuki / **per month**ikkagetsu / **one month**sūkagetsu / **a few months**Kyō wa, nan nichi desu ka. / **What's today's date?**Kyō wa, _____ desu. / **Today is** _____.gogatsu tsuitachi, getsuyōbi / **Monday, May 1**rokugatsu futsuka, kayōbi / **Tuesday, June 2**

Note: For these expressions, use the days of the month listed in §13.3.

§13.5 SEASONSfuyu / **winter**natsu / **summer**haru / **spring**aki / **fall****Related Expressions**Fuyu desu. / **It's winter.**Haru desu. / **It's spring.**Natsu desu. / **It's summer.**Aki desu. / **It's fall.**

§13.6 THE WEATHER

Tenki wa dō desu ka. / **How's the weather?**

Samui desu. / **It's cold.**

Totemo samui desu. / **It's very cold.**

Yuki ga futte imasu. / **It's snowing.**

Atatakai desu. / **It's warm.**

Hi ga tette imasu. / **It's sunny.**

Atsui desu. / **It's hot.**

Shikke ga takai desu. / **It's humid.**

Mushiatsui desu. / **It's hot and humid.**

Hi tenki desu. / **It's a beautiful day.**

Ame ga futte imasu. / **It's raining.**

Arashi desu. / **It's stormy.**

Kaminari ga natte, inazuma ga hikatte imasu. / **It's thundering and lightning.**

Suzushii desu. / **It's cool.**

Kiri desu. / **It's foggy.**

Ame ga, hageshiku futte imasu. / **It's raining heavily.**

§14.

Family Relationships

Choose a term from the appropriate column in the chart below when talking about family members. In Japanese, the terms for family relationships differ according to whether you are talking about your own family to someone else, or about the other person's family. You refer to your own family with a set of neutral forms, to another person's family with a set of honorific terms.

Family Member	Talking about Your Family	Talking about Another's Family
grandfather	sofu	ojiisan
grandmother	sobo	obāsan
father	chichi	otōsan
mother	haha	okāsan
husband	otto/shujin	goshujin
wife	tsuma	okusan
uncle	oji	ojisan
aunt	oba	obasan
son	musuko	musukosan
daughter	musume	ojōsan
cousin	itoko	itoko

elder brother	ani	oniisan
younger brother	otōto	otōtosan
elder sister	ane	onēsan
younger sister	imōto	imōtosan

§15.

Useful Words and Phrases

You will find this section useful in communicating with the Japanese. Just find the category you want, and choose the expression you need!

§15.1 GREETINGS

To begin, you should know that Japanese does not have a word that is the equivalent of the English word **Hello**. Instead, use the words for **Good morning**, **Good afternoon**, etc.

Ohayō gozaimasu. / **Good morning.**

Konnichiwa. / **Good afternoon.**

Konbanwa. / **Good evening.**

Oyasuminasai. / **Good night.** (This is used at the end of the evening, or at bedtime.)

Sayōnara. / **Goodbye.**

Japanese has no equivalent for the English expression **How are you?** that is used as a daily greeting. The following expression is used only when you have not seen someone for a while.

Ogenki desu ka. / **How are you?**

Hai, okagesama de. / **Fine, thank you.**

§15.2 COMMON EXPRESSIONS

You will find these expressions handy in daily life.

Hai. / **Yes.**

lie. / **No.**

san / **Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.**

Dōmo arigatō. / **Thank you.**

lie, dō itashimashite. / **You're welcome.**

Sumimasen. / **Excuse me**
(to get someone's
attention).

Gomennasai. / **I'm sorry**
(apology).

Onegai shimasu. / **Please**
(request).

Dōzo. / **Please** (go ahead,
begin).

Moshi moshi. / **Hello.** (This is
used for telephone calls, or
for getting someone's
attention.)

Sumimasen ga. / **Pardon me,**
but ____.

Daijōbu desu. / **It's all right.**

Yorokonde. / **With pleasure.**

Li desu yo. / **I don't mind.**

Ā, sō desu ka. / **Oh, I see.**

Ikimashō ka. / **Shall we go?**

Sā. / **Let's (go/eat/etc.)**

lie, kekkō desu. / **No, thank you.**

Sō da to omoimasu. / **I think so.**

Sō omoimasen. / **I don't think so.**

Omoshiroi desu. / **It's interesting.**

Owarimashita. / **It's over / I'm finished.**

Hai, sō desu. / **Yes, it is.**

lie, chigaimasu. / **No, it isn't.**

Chotto, matte kudasai. / **Just a moment, please.**

Sugu, onegai shimasu. / **Right away** (request).

Soredewa nochī hodo. / **See you later.**

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Soredewa mata ashita. / See you tomorrow.	Mō ichido onegai shimasu. / Could you repeat it, please?
Wakarimasu ka. / Do you understand?	Mō sukoshi, yakkuri hanzite kudasai. / Please speak slowly.
Hai, wakarimasu. / Yes, I understand.	Eigo o hanashimasu ka. / Do you speak English?
Iie, wakarimasen. / No, I don't understand.	Kore wa, Nihongo de nan to iimasu ka. / What's this called in Japanese?
Eigo ga wakarimasu ka. / Do you understand English?	Kore wa, nan to iimasu ka. / What do you call this?
Nihongo ga, sukoshi hanasemasu. / I speak a little Japanese.	Sumimasen ga, tasukete itadakemasen ka. / Excuse me, could you help me, please?
Nihongo wa, wakarimasen. / I don't understand Japanese.	

§15.3 SOME QUESTIONS AND QUESTION WORDS

Dō ka, shimashita ka. / What's the matter?	Naze. / Dōshite. / Why?
Kore wa, nan desu ka. / What's this?	Dare. / Donata. / Who?
Itsu. / When?	Dore. / Dochira. / Which?
Doko. / Where?	Nani. / What?
	Dono kurai. / How much?
	Ikura. / How much (money)?

§15.4 YOUR PERSONAL CONDITION

Nodo ga, kawaite imasu. / I'm thirsty.
 Onaka ga, suite imasu. / I'm hungry.
 Onaka ga, ippai desu. / I'm full.
 Tsukarete imasu. / I'm tired.
 Nemui desu. / I'm sleepy.
 Byōki desu. / I'm sick.
 Genki desu. / I'm fine.
 Daijōbu desu. / I'm all right.

§15.5 INTRODUCTIONS

Tip

Proper introductions are important in Japan. When possible, it's preferable to have a Japanese friend introduce you to another Japanese. If not, you will find the expressions you need below.

Ano kata wa, donata desu ka. / **Who is that?**

Ano kata wa, donata ka gozonji desu ka. / **Do you know who that is?**

Ano kata ni, ome ni kakaritai no desu ga. / **I would like to meet him / her.**

Ano kata ni, shōkai shite itadakemasen ka. / **Would you introduce me to him / her?**

Totsuzen shitsurei desu ga, jiko shōkai shitemo yoroshii desu ka. / **Pardon me, may I introduce myself?**

Watakushi no nāmae wa ____ desu. / **My name is ____**

Onamae o ukagaemasu ka. / **May I ask your name?**

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Hajimemashite. Dōzo yoroshiku. / **How do you do?**

Hajimemashite. Kochira koso yoroshiku. / **How do you do?**
(reply)

Ome ni kakarete, kōei desu. / **I'm honored to meet you.**

Yoroshiku onegai shimasu. / **I'm glad to meet you.**

meishi / **business card**

Meishi o dōzo. / **Here's my card.**

Arigatō gozaimasu. / **Thank you very much.**

Watakushi no mo dōzo. / **Here's mine.**

Meishi o chōdai dekimasu ka. / **May I have your card?**

§16.

Borrowed Words

Countless words borrowed from English are in everyday use in Japan. But even for an English speaker, there are pitfalls. Why? With borrowed words in Japan, you can never assume that they have made the trip across the Pacific intact.

Trust These!

Tip

These words are what they seem. If you can understand the pronunciation, you have the meaning.

orenji / **orange**

kōhī / **coffee**

poketto / **pocket**

takushi / **taxi**

rajio / **radio**

banana / **banana**

kukki / **cookie**

reinkōto / **raincoat**

bīru / **beer**

pinku / **pink**

gasorin / **gasoline**

basu / **bus**

tomato / **tomato**

batā / **butter**

sūpu / **soup**

beddo / **bed**

Careful!

Tip

Some element in each of these words connects it to the original meaning.

wāpuro / **word processor**

pasokon / **personal computer**

waishatsu / **dress shirt**

sūpā / **supermarket**

basuke / **basketball**

puro / **professional**

depāto / **department store**

hankachi / **handkerchief**

irasuto / **illustration**

amefuto / **American football**

Made in Japan!

Tip

With words like these, all bets are off. Don't even think of them as coming from English. How different are they? If you are invited for *mōningu baikingu*, don't put on your biking clothes. You are going for a smorgasbord breakfast, *not* morning biking!

baikingu / **smorgasbord (Viking)**

mōningu baikingu / **smorgasbord breakfast**

kēki baikingu / **dessert smorgasbord**

manshon / **condominium, modern apartment**

manshon rifōmu / **condominium renovations**

spaman / **condominium at a hot springs resort**

(spa + mansion)

wanpisu / **dress (one piece)**

Here are some more borrowed words. The meaning in parentheses lets you see the origin. Enjoy them, but remember the tips you have just seen!

anime / **animation**

baburu (keizai) / **bubble economy**

bakansu / **vacation** / (vacances—French)

bea / **wage hike** / (base-up)

bigguban / **financial reform** / (big bang)

defure supairaru / **deflationary spiral**

dejikame / **digital camera**

esute / **total beauty care** / (esthetique—French)

furītā / **free-lancer** / (free + Arbeiter—German)

kānabi / **car navigation system**

koin randorī / **laundromat** / (coin laundry)

konbini / **convenience store**

meiku / **makeup**

nego / **negotiation**

nōto pasokon / **notebook computer**

panku / **flat tire** / (puncture)

pansuto / **pantyhose** / (panty stockings)

pokeberu / **beeper** / (pocket bell)

poruno / **pornography**

rafu / **casual (fashion)** / (rough)

reshipi / **recipe**

rifōmu / **alteration, renovation** / (reform)

rinyūaru / **store renovation** / (renewal)

risutora / **restructuring of business** / (restructuring)

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sekuhara / **sexual harassment**

sumāto / **stylish, slim / (smart)**

supakon / **supercomputer**

uirusu / **virus**

wakuchin / **vaccine**

wan puraisu shoppu / **dollar shop / (one-price shop)**

wanrūmu manshon / **studio apartment / (one-room mansion)**

zenekon / **general contractor**

§17.

Synonyms

Synonyms are words with the same or nearly the same meaning.

- benkyō suru / manabu / **to study**
- betsu no / chigatta / **different**
- chōshoku / asagohan / **breakfast**
- chūshoku / hirugohan / **lunch**
- daidokoro / okatte / **kitchen**
- denwa suru / denwa o kakeru / **to telephone**
- depāto / hyakkaten / **department store**
- furoba / yokushitsu / **bathroom**
- genzai / ima / **now**
- hajime / saisho / **beginning**
- hashiru / kakeru / **to run**
- hataraku / shigoto suru / **to work**
- henna / okashina / **strange**
- honya / shoten / **bookstore**
- isu / koshikake / **chair**
- kaeru / modoru / **to return**
- kaiko sareru / kubi ni naru / **to be fired**
- katazukeru / seiton suru / **to clean up**
- kau / kōnyū suru / **to buy**
- keikan / omawarisan / **police officer**

keredomo / dakedo / **but**
ki o tsukeru / chūi suru / **to be careful**
kireina / utsukushii / **beautiful**
komu / konzatsu suru / **to be crowded**
kūkō / hikōjō / **airport**
kuruma / jidōsha / **car**
mata / futatabi / **again**
michi / dōro / **road**
muzukashii / konnan na / **difficult**
nakusu / ushinau / **to lose**
nedan / kakaku / **price**
Nihon ryōri / washoku / **Japanese food**
otearai / toire / **toilet**
otozureru / hōmon suru / **to visit**
owari / saigo / **ending**
seiyō ryōri / yōshoku / **western food**
shikujiru / shippai suru / **to fail**
shinsetsuna / yasashii / **kind**
shuppatsu suru / deru / **to depart**
sotto / shizuka ni / **quietly**
sugu ni / tadachi ni / **immediately**
tabi / ryokō / **travel**
tada no / muryō no / **free (cost)**
tasu / kuwaeru / **to add**
tōchaku suru / tsuku / **to arrive**
tomaru / shukuhaku suru / **to stay (overnight)**
totemo / hijō ni / **very**

uchi / ie / **house**

wakaru / rikai suru / **to understand**

waribiku / makeru / **to discount**

yakkyoku / kusuriya / **pharmacy**

yamai / byōki / **illness**

yasumu / kyūkei suru / **to rest**

yūshoku / bangohan / **dinner**

§18.

Antonyms

Antonyms are words with opposite meanings.

agaru / to rise	sagaru / to fall
akarui / bright	kurai / dark
atsui / hot (weather)	samui / cold (weather)
atsui / hot	tsumetai / cold
atsui / thick	usui / thin
futoi / thick	hosoi / thin
genki / well	byōki / ill
hajimaru / to begin	owaru / to end
hashiru / to run	aruku / to walk
hayai / early	osoi / late
hayai / fast	osoi / slow
hirou / to pick up	suteru / to discard
ii / good	warui / bad
jōzu / good at	heta / poor at
katai / hard	yawarakai / soft
kiru / to put on	nugu / to take off
manabu / to study	asobu / to play
mitsukeru / to find	nakusu / to lose
nagai / long	mijikai / short
noboru / to climb	kudaru / to descend
noru / to get on	oriru / to get off

omoi / heavy	karui / light
onaji / same	chigau / different
sannsei suru / to agree	hanntai suru / to oppose
seikō suru / to succeed	shippai suru / to fail
shizuka / quiet	urusai / noisy
shuppatsu suru / to depart	tōchaku suru / to arrive
surudoī / sharp	nibui / dull
takai / high	hikui / low
takai / expensive	yasui / cheap
tsukeru / to turn on	kesu / to turn off
warau / to laugh	naku / to cry
yasashii / easy	muzukashii / difficult
yorokobu / to be pleased	kanashimu / to be sad

§19.

Short Vowel, Long Vowel

Although the words in the two columns look alike, a closer look shows those on the right contain one or more long vowel. Hold these vowel sounds twice as long as the short vowels.

goi / vocabulary	gōi / agreement
jōho / concession	jōhō / information
josei / woman	jōsei / situation
kokyō / hometown	kōkyō / public
koritsu / isolation	kōritsu / publicly funded
koru / to get into	kōru / to freeze
koshō / breakdown	kōshō / negotiation
kuki / stem	kūki / air
kyoka suru / to permit	kyōka suru / to strengthen
roka suru / to filter	rōka suru / to age
sato / village	satō / sugar
seito / student	seitō / political party
shochi suru / to deal with	shōchi suru / to consent
shoki no / early	shōki no / sane
shomei suru / to sign	shōmei suru / to prove
soshiki / organization	sōshiki / funeral
suji / plot	sūji / figure
teki / enemy	teiki / regular
toki / time	tōki / registration

toru / to take

toshi / year

tsuchi / soil

yōji / four o'clock

yuki / snow

yume / dream

tōru / to go through

tōshi / investment

tsūchi / notice

yōji / business

yūki / courage

yūmei / famous

§20.

Double Consonants

Although the words in the two columns look similar, those on the right contain a double consonant. Don't say the consonant twice: just hold the sound twice as long.

boshū suru / to recruit	bossū suru / to confiscate
bushi / samurai	busshi / goods
dakai suru / to break through	dakkai suru / to regain
fukyū suru / to become widespread	fukkyū suru / to be restored
futō / unfair	futtō / boiling
gashō / art dealer	gasshō / chorus
haken suru / to dispatch	hakken suru / to discover
haki suru / to cancel	hakki suru / to display
jikan / time	jikkan / sense of reality
jiken / incident	jikken / experiment
jikō / matters	jikkō / execution
jitai / situation	jittai / actual condition
kaki / summertime	kakki / vigor
keshō / makeup	kesshō / finals
kokyō / hometown	kokkyō / border
koshi / hips	kosshi / gist
machi / town	macchi / matches
maki / firewood	makki / the last stage

niki / two terms	nikki / diary
oto / sound	otto / one's own husband
saka / slope	sakka / writer
sasuru / to stroke	sassuru / to guess
seken / society	sekken / soap
shiki / four seasons	shikki / lacquerware
shisaku suru / to contemplate	shissaku suru / to make a mistake
shoki / the early stage	shokki / tableware
shuchō suru / to assert	shucchō suru / to go on a business trip

§21.

Same Pronunciation, Different Meaning

These words have the same pronunciation but different meanings. Note that they are not homonyms. Although the romaji and hiragana spellings are the same, the kanji, or Japanese characters, are different.

en / yen / relation
ha / tooth / leaf
hana / flower / nose
han-ei / reflection / prosperity
hi / fire / day
kai / shellfish / meeting
kakeru / to hang / to run
kami / paper / hair
kawa / leather / river
kaze / wind / cold
ki / spirit / tree
kiji / article / cloth
kikai / opportunity / machine
kiku / to listen to / to be effective
kōgyō / industry / mining
kōtei / school yard / affirmation
kumo / cloud / spider

kyōchō suru / to emphasize / to coordinate

me / eye / bud

nami / wave / ordinary

shima / island / stripe

shita / under / tongue

tomaru / to stay (overnight) / to stop

utsu / to hit / to shoot

utsusu / to transfer / to photograph

§22.

Pitch Accent: Different Pitch, Different Meaning

English uses stress, or emphasis, to accent syllables; Japanese uses pitch, or tone. The standard dialect has two pitch levels, high and low. For the English speaker learning Japanese, this takes practice. The lists below show you one aspect of how pitch accent works. On the left, pronounce the syllables at about the same level. On the right, use a higher pitch, or tone, for the capitalized syllables. This difference in pitch results in a different meaning.

ame	(ah-meh) / candy	(AH-meh) / rain
asa	(ah-sah) / morning	(ah-SAH) / linen
fuku	(foo-koo) / to wipe	(FOO-koo) / to blow
hashi	(hah-shee) / end	(HAH-shee) / chopsticks (hah-SHEE) / bridge
ima	(ee-mah) / now	(ee-MAH) / living room
kakeru	(kah-keh-roo) / to lack	(kah-KEH-roo) / to gamble
kaki	(kah-kee) / persimmon	(KAH-kee) / oyster
kami	(kah-mee) / paper	(KAH-mee) / god
	(kah-mee) / hair	
kau	(kah-oo) / to buy	(KAH-oo) / to keep
kiru	(kee-roo) / to cut	(kee-ROO) / to put on
kisha	(kee-shah) / train	(KEE-shah) / reporter

michi	(mee-chee) / street	(MEE-chee) / unknown
sake	(sah-keh) / sake	(SAH-keh) / salmon
saku	(sah-koo) / to bloom	(SAH-koo) / to tear
seki	(seh-kee) / seat	(seh-KEE) / cough
shiro	(shee-roh) / white	(shee-ROH) / castle

Japanese- English Vocabulary

Abbreviations: (adj.) adjective; (adv.) adverb; (conj.) conjunction; (excl.) exclamation; (n.) noun; (p.) particle; (ph.) phrase; (pron.) pronoun; (v.) verb.

ā (adv.), (pron.) in that manner, like that, that way	asatte (n.) the day after tomorrow
achira (adv.), (pron.) there, that	ashi (n.) foot
ageru (v.) to give	ashita (adv.), (n.) tomorrow
ageru (v.) to raise	asoko (adv.), (pron.) over there
aisatsu (n.) greeting	atama (n.) head
akai (adj.) red	atarashii (adj.) new
akarui (adj.) bright	ato (n.) after, the following
aki (n.) autumn	atsui (adj.) hot
aku (v.) to open	au (v.) to meet, to see
amai (adj.) sweet	bakari, bakkari (adv.) only
amari (adv.) not much, not often	banana (n.) banana
ame (n.) rain	bangohan (n.) dinner
amu (v.) to knit	basu (n.) bus
anata (pron.) you	batā (n.) butter
anatagata (pron.) you (polite)	benkyō suru (v.) to study
anatatachi (pron.) you (plural)	benri (adj.) convenient
ane (n.) elder sister (one's own)	biru (n.) building
anna (adj.) that kind of	bōeki gaisha (n.) trading company
ano (adj.) that	bōnasu (n.) bonus
ano hito (ph.) that person	budō (n.) grapes
ano hitotachi (ph.) those persons	byōki (n.) illness, sickness
ano kata (ph.) that person (polite)	chichi (n.) father (one's own)
ano katatachi (ph.) those persons (polite)	chiisai (adj.) small
apāto (n.) apartment	chikatetsu (n.) subway
arau (v.) to wash	chizu (n.) map
are (pron.) that	chotto (adv.) a little, for a moment
aru (v.) (there) is/are, to be located, to exist, to have	Chūgokugo (n.) Chinese (language)
aruku (v.) to walk	da (v.) to be, plain form of desu
asa (n.) morning	dame (adj.) no good

dandan (adv.) gradually	gakkō (n.) school
dare (pron.) who	ganbaru (v.) to try hard
dareka (pron.) someone	geijutsu (n.) art
daremo (pron.) no one	geijutsuka (n.) artist
dasu (v.) to take out	gēmu (n.) game
de (p.) among, at, from, made from, made of, of, within	genki (adj.) healthy, well
dekakeru (v.) to go out	getsuyōbi (n.) Monday
dekiru (v.) to be able	gin (n.) silver
denki (n.) light	gogo (n.) afternoon
desu (v.) is, are	gohan (n.) cooked rice, meal
dō (adv.), (pron.) how	gohon (n.) book (polite)
doa (n.) door	gokekkon (n.) marriage (polite)
dochira (pron.) where, which (direction, preference)	gozen (n.) (in the) morning
dōgu (n.) tool	
Doitsugo (n.) German (language)	hahaoya (n.) mother, mothers
doko (pron.) where (place)	hahaoyatachi (n.) mothers
dokoka (pron.) somewhere	hairu (v.) to enter
dokomo (pron.) nowhere	hajimeru (v.) to begin
donata (pron.) which person (polite)	han (n.) half past
donataka (pron.) someone (polite)	hana (n.) flower
donatamo (pron.) no one (polite)	hanasu (v.) to speak, to talk
donna (pron.), (adj.) what kind of	harau (v.) to pay
dore (pron.) which (persons, things)	haru (n.) spring
doreka (pron.) something	hashi (n.) chopsticks
doremo (pron.) nothing	hashiru (v.) to run
dōshite (pron.) why	hataraku (v.) to work
doyōbi (n.) Saturday	hayai (adj.) early, fast, quick
e (p.) to, toward	hayaku (adv.) early, quick, quickly
ebi (n.) shrimp	heta (adj.) bad at
eiga (n.) movie	heya (n.) room
eigo (n.) English	hiragana (n.) hiragana, one kind of Japanese syllabary
eki (n.) station	hiroi (adj.) spacious
enpitsu (n.) pencil	hito (n.) person
fuben (adj.) inconvenient	hitsuyō (n.) need
Fujisan (n.) Mt. Fuji	hodo (p.) as . . . as, as much as
Furansugo (n.) French (language)	hon (n.) book
furo (n.) bath	honya (n.) bookstore, bookstore clerk, bookstore owner
furu (v.) to fall (rain, snow, etc.)	hoshii (adj.) need, want
futoru (v.) to get fat	hoteru (n.) hotel
futsū (adv.) usually	hotondo (adv.) all but, almost, hardly
fuyu (n.) winter	hyōron (n.) commentary
ga (p.) and	hyōronka (n.) critic
ga (p.) although, but	
ga (p.) subject marker	ichiban (adv.), (n.) the best, most
	ii (adj.) good, nice, okay

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iiharu (v.) to insist	Kanada (n.) Canada
ikaga (adv.) how, how about?, would you like?	kane (n.) money
ikeru (v.) can go	kanemochi (n.) rich person
iku (v.) to go	kangaeru (v.) to think
ikura (pron.) how much	kanji (n.) <i>kanji</i> , Chinese characters
ikuraka (pron.) some, a little	kankō (n.) tour, sightseeing
ikuramo (pron.) not much	kanojo (pron.) she, her
ikutsu (pron.) how many	kanojora (pron.) they, them (female)
ima (adv.), (n.) now	kanojotachi (pron.) they, them (female)
imi (n.) meaning	kara (p.) from
imōto (n.) younger sister	kara (p.) because, since
inu (n.) dog	kara (p.) after, ever since, since
iroiro (adj.) various	kare (pron.) he, him
iru (v.) to need	karera (pron.) they, them (all male or male and female)
iru (v.) to be, to exist	kariru (v.) to borrow
isogashii (adj.) busy	kasa (n.) umbrella
isogu (v.) to hurry	kashu (n.) singer
issho ni (adv.) together	kasu (v.) to lend
isshōkenmei (adv.) hard	katakana (n.) <i>katakana</i> , one kind of Japanese syllabary
isu (n.) chair	kau (v.) to buy
itadaku (v.) to receive (from superiors)	kawa (n.) river
itai (adj.) painful	kayōbi (n.) Tuesday
itsu (pron.) when	kēki (n.) cake
itsuka (pron.) sometime	kekkon (n.) marriage
itsumo (adv.), (pron.) always	kekkon suru (v.) to get married
iu (v.) to say	keredo (p.) and
ji (n.) o'clock	keredo (p.) although, but, however
jikan (n.) time	ki (n.) tree, wood
jōgi (n.) ruler	kiroi (adj.) yellow
joyū (n.) actress	kiku (v.) to hear, to listen, to ask
ka (p.) question marker	kimochi (n.) feeling
ka (p.) or	kinō (adv.), (n.) yesterday
kado (n.) corner	kinyōbi (n.) Friday
kaeru (v.) to change	kirei (adj.) beautiful
kaeru (v.) to return	kiru (v.) to put on (clothing)
kaimono (n.) shopping	kiru (v.) to cut
kaisha (n.) company	kisha (n.) train
kaku (v.) to write	kitto (adv.) certainly, surely
kamera (n.) camera	kō (adv.), (pron.) in this manner, like this, this way
kameraya (n.) camera shop, camera shop clerk	kōcha (n.) tea
kamu (v.) to bite	kochira (adv.), (pron.) here, this
kan (n.) period	kodomo (n.) child, children
	kodomotachi (n.) children
	kōen (n.) park

kōhī (n.) coffee	mo (p.) also, too
koko (adv.), (pron.) here	mo (p.) (not) either, neither . . . nor
kokoa (n.) cocoa	mo (p.) even
komu (v.) to be crowded	mō (adv.) already, more
kondo (n.) this time	mokuyōbi (n.) Thursday
konna (adj.) this kind of	momo (n.) peach
kono (adj.) this, these	mono (n.) thing
konshū (n.) this week	morau (v.) to receive
kore (pron.) this	motsu (v.) to hold
kōtō (n.) coat	motto (adv.) more, much more
kotoshi (n.) this year	muzukashii (adj.) difficult
kudamono (n.) fruit	
kudasai (v.) to give (me), please	nagai (adj.) long
kudasaru (v.) to give kindly (to me or my in-group) (polite)	nagara (p.) as, while
kumoru (v.) to get clouded	nakanaka (adv.) at all, completely, quite, rather
kuni (n.) country	nakusu (v.) to lose
kerasu (n.) class	namee (n.) name
kureru (v.) to give kindly (to me or my in-group)	nan (pron.) what
kuroi (adj.) black	nandemo (pron.) anything
kuru (v.) to come	nani (pron.) what
kuruma (n.) car	nanika (pron.) something
kutsu (n.) shoes	nanimo, nannimo (pron.) nothing
kyō (adv.), (n.) today	nannin (pron.) how many people
kyōkasho (n.) textbook	naosu (v.) to fix
kyonen (n.) last year	naru (v.) to become
	natsu (n.) summer
mada (adv.) (not) yet, still	naze (adv.) why
made (p.) as far as, until	ne (p.) Don't you think so?, Isn't it?
made ni (p.) by, no later than	neko (n.) cat
mado (n.) window	nekutai (n.) necktie
mae (adv.), (n.) before	nemui (adj.) sleepy
maiasa (adv.), (n.) every morning	neru (v.) to sleep
maiban (adv.), (n.) every night	neteshimau (v.) to fall asleep
mainichi (adv.), (n.) every day	ni tsuite (ph.) about
mata (adv.) again	ni (p.) on, to
matsu (v.) to wait	nichiyōbi (n.) Sunday
meron (n.) melon	Nihon (n.) Japan
minasama (n.) everyone, you all (very polite)	Nihongo (n.) Japanese (language)
minasan (n.) everyone, you all (polite)	Nihonjin (n.) Japanese
minna (adv.), (n.) all, everyone, you all	niku (n.) meat
miru (v.) to see, to watch	nikuya (n.) butcher, butcher shop
miruku (n.) milk	no (p.) possessive marker
mise (n.) store	node (p.) because, since
	nomu (v.) to drink
	noni (p.) although, in spite of
	noru (v.) to get on

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nōto (n.) notebook	pan (n.) bread
nuru (v.) to paint	purezento (n.) gift
nusumu (v.) to steal	
o (p.) object marker	raigetsu (n.) next month
obasan (n.) aunt (someone else's)	raishū (n.) next week
obāsan (n.) grandmother (someone else's)	rekishi (n.) history
oboeru (v.) to learn	rekōdo (n.) record
ocha (n.) Japanese tea	resutoran (n.) restaurant
ofuro (n.) bath (polite)	ringo (n.) apple
ohashi (n.) chopsticks (polite)	rippa (adj.) gorgeous
ohayō gozaimasu (ph.) Good morning (polite)	rokugatsu (n.) June
ohayō (excl.) Good morning	rōmaji (n.) <i>romaji</i> , roman letters
oikakeru (v.) to chase	ryokō (n.) trip
oishii (adj.) delicious	ryōri (n.) cooking
ojiisan (n.) grandfather (someone else's)	saifu (n.) wallet
ojisan (n.) uncle (someone else's)	saikin (adv.) recently
okane (n.) money (polite)	sakana (n.) fish
okāsan (n.) mother (someone else's)	sake (n.) sake, rice wine
ōkii (adj.) big	samui (adj.) cold (weather)
omochi suru (v.) to bring (polite)	san (n.) Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.
omoshiroi (adj.) good, interesting	sangatsu (n.) March
omou (v.) to think	sashiageru (v.) to give (to superiors)
onamae (n.) name (polite)	sashimi (n.) <i>sashimi</i> , raw fish
oniku (n.) meat (polite)	seiji (n.) politics
onnanoko (n.) girl, girls	seijika (n.) politician
onnanokotachi (n.) girls	seiki (n.) century
orenji (n.) orange	seki (n.) seat
oriru (v.) to get off	sensei (n.) teacher, teachers
osake (n.) sake, rice wine (polite)	senseitachi (n.) teachers
ōsama (n.) king	senshu (n.) player
oshieru (v.) to teach	sensō (n.) war
osoi (adj.) slow	sētā (n.) sweater
otegami (n.) letter (polite)	shachō (n.) company president
otenki (n.) weather (polite)	shiawase (adj.), (n.) happy, happiness
otoko (n.) male	shigoto (n.) work
otokonoko (n.) boy, boys	shika (p.) just, only
otokonokotachi (n.) boys	shiken (n.) exam
otōsan (n.) father (someone else's)	shimaru (v.) to close
otōto (n.) younger brother	shimau (v.) to put away
ototoi (n.) the day before yesterday	shinbun (n.) newspaper
owaru (v.) to finish	shinpai suru (v.) to worry
oyasai (n.) vegetables (polite)	shinsetsu (adj.) kind
oyogu (v.) to swim	shinsetsu ni (adv.) kindly
	shinu (v.) to die
	shiroi (adj.) white
	shiru (v.) to know

shizuka (adj.) quiet	tegami (n.) letter
shizuka ni (adv.) quiet, quietly	teinei (adj.) polite
shōjiki (adj.) honest	tenisu (n.) tennis
shōsetsu (n.) novel	tenki (n.) weather
shōsetsuka (n.) novelist	terebi (n.) TV
shū (n.) week	to (p.) together with
shūmatsu (n.) weekend	to (p.) if, when
sō (adv.), (pron.) in that manner, like that, that way	to (p.) and
sochira (adv.), (pron.) there, that	tobu (v.) to fly
soko (adv.), (pron.) there	tokidoki (adv.) sometimes
sonna (adj.) that kind of	tokoro (n.) place
sono (adj.) that	toshokan (n.) library
sore (pron.) it, that	totemo (adv.) very
subarashii (adj.) wonderful	tsugi (n.) next
sugi (adv.), (n.) after, past	tsukareru (v.) to get tired
sugu (adv.) immediately	tsuki (n.) month
suiyōbi (n.) Wednesday	tsuku (v.) to arrive
suki (adj.) to like	tsukuru (v.) to make
sukiyaki (n.) sukiyaki	uchi (n.) home, house
sukoshi (adv.) a little, few	ue (n.) top
sumu (v.) to live	uma (n.) horse
sūpā (n.) supermarket	umi (n.) beach, sea
supōtsu (n.) sports	untenshu (n.) driver
suru (v.) to do	ureshii (adj.) glad
sushi (n.) sushi	wa (p.) topic marker
suwaru (v.) to sit down	wa (p.) (emphatic and softening effect)
suzushii (adj.) cool	wakai (adj.) young
tabemono (n.) food	wakaru (v.) understand
taberu (v.) to eat	warui (adj.) bad
tabitabi (adv.) often	waruku (adv.) bad, badly
tabun (adv.) maybe, perhaps, probably	watakushi (pron.) I, me
tachi (suffix) plural marker	watakushitachi (pron.) we, us
taihen (adj.), (n.) awful, bad	ya (p.) and
taihen (adv.) greatly, very (extreme degree, positive or negative)	yachin (n.) rent
taisetsu (n.) importance	yagate (adv.) soon
taitei (adv.) generally, mainly, perhaps, probably	yakyū (n.) baseball
takai (adj.) expensive, high	yama (n.) mountain
takusan (adv.) a lot, many	yasai (n.) vegetables
tamani (adv.) occasionally	yasashii (adj.) easy
tara (adv.) if, when	yaseru (v.) to get thin
tatsu (v.) to stand	yasui (adj.) cheap
te (n.) hand	yasumu (v.) to rest
tēburu (n.) table	yo (p.) (emphatic)
	yobu (v.) to call

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yōkoso (excl.) welcome	yūgata (n.) evening
yoku (adv.) better, much, often, well	yuki (n.) snow
yomu (v.) to read	yukkuri (adv.) slowly
yorī (p.) than	yūmei (adj.) famous
yoru (n.) night	zenzen (adv.) at all (with negative verbs)
yotto (n.) sailboat	zuibun (adv.) quite, rather
yūbin (n.) mail	
yūbinkyoku (n.) post office	