**Here are a few Japanese pronouns you might encounter early on:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | English | Japanese | | |
| 1st Person Singular | I, me | わたし | watashi | formal, gender neutral |
| わたくし | watakushi | humble, neutral |
| ぼく | boku | informal, male |
| あたし | atashi | informal, female |
| 2nd Person Singular | you | あなた | anata | formal |
| きみ | kimi | informal/intimate |
| 3rd Person Singular | he, she, him, her | かれ | kare | male |
| かのじょ | kanojo | female |
| あのひと | ano hito | “that person” |

Note that each word has a literal meaning – the original meaning of the noun. For example, watashi and atashi are both derived from watakushi, which means “private”.

Most of the pronouns also have alternate uses. Kare and kanojo are more frequently used to mean “boyfriend” and “girlfriend” respectively, and anata and kimi are often used to address one’s husband or wife, respectively (like English “dear” and “honey”).

The Plural Suffix “Tachi”

The suffix *-tachi* can be loosely translated as “and company”. It can be attached to any noun or pronoun to make a quasi-plural representing a group of people.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| きむらさんたち | Kimura-san-tachi | Kimura and company |
| わたしたち | watashi-tachi | we, us (I and company) |
| あなたたち | anata-tachi | you, you guys (you and company) |
| \*かれら | \*karera | they, them |

True Plurals

Some nouns do have an explicit plural form, created by *reduplicating* the base word.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ひとびと | hitobito | people |
| やまやま | yamayama | mountains |

Words to Remember

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Hiragana** | **Romaji** | **Class** | **English** |
| わたし | watashi | pron. | I/me |
| -たち | -tachi | suffix | “pluralizer” |

The Question Marker “Ka”

Unlike in English, no change in word order is necessary to turn a Japanese sentence into a question; simply add the particle か “ka” at the end.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| やまださんは　にほんじんです。 | Yamada-san wa Nihon-jin desu. | Yamada is Japanese. |
| やまださんは　にほんじんですか。 | Yamada-san wa Nihon-jin desu ka? | Is Yamada Japanese? |