

## CHAPTER ONE

## SURVIVAL JAPANESE

If you tire of toting around this phrasebook, tear out this chapter. You should be able to navigate your destination with only the terms found in the next 32 pages.

## BASIC GREETINGS

*For a full list of greetings, see p99.*

Hello.

こんにちは。

*kon nichi wa.*

How are you?

お元気ですか？

*ogenki desu ka.*

I'm fine, thanks.

元気です、どうもありがとう。

*genki desu, dōmo arigatō.*

And you?

あなたもお元気ですか？

*anata mo ogenki desu ka.*

My name is \_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_と申します。

*\_\_\_\_ to mōshimasu.*

And yours?

あなたのお名前は？

*anata no onamae wa.*

It's a pleasure to meet you.

あなたにお会いできて嬉しいです。

*anata ni oai dekite ureshii desu.*

Please.

どうぞ。

*dōzo.*

Thank you.

どうもありがとう。

*dōmo arigatō.*

Yes.

はい。

*hai.*

No.

いいえ。

*iie.*

Okay.

オッケー。

*okkei.*

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No problem.

いいですよ。

*ii desu yo.*

I'm sorry, I don't understand.

すみませんが、わかりません。

*sumi masen ga, wakari masen.*

Would you speak slower please?

もう少しゆっくり話していただい  
ませんか？

*mō sukoshi yukkuri hanashite*

*itadake masen ka.*

Would you speak louder please?

もう少し大きな声で話していただい  
ませんか？

*mō sukoshi ōkina koe de hanashite*

*itadake masen ka.*

Do you speak English?

英語を話しますか？

*eigo o hanashi masu ka.*

Do you speak any other languages?

他の国の言葉も話しますか？

*hoka no kuni no kotoba mo hanashi*

*masu ka.*

I speak \_\_\_\_ better than Japanese.

日本語よりも\_\_\_\_の方がうまく話  
します。

*nihongo yori mo \_\_\_\_ no hō ga*

*umaku hanase masu.*

Would you please repeat that?

もう一度繰り返していただけますか？

*mō ichido kuri kaeshite itadake*

*masu ka.*

Would you point that out in this dictionary?

この辞書でそれを指していただい  
ませんか？

*kono jisho de sore o sashite itadake*

*masen ka.*

## THE KEY QUESTIONS

With the right hand gestures, you can get a lot of mileage from the following list of single-word questions and answers.

Who?

誰？

*dare.*

What?

何？

*nani.*

When?

いつ

*itsu.*

Where?

どこ?

*doko.*

To where?

どこへ?

*doko e.*

Why?

なぜ?

*naze.*

How?

どう?

*dō.*

Which?

どれ?

*dore.*

How many? /

いくつ / いくら、どれくらい?

How much?

*ikutsu/ ikura, dorekurai*

## THE ANSWERS: WHO

*For full coverage of pronouns, see p23.*

I

私

*watashi*

you

あなた

*anata*

him

彼

*kare*

her

彼女

*kanojo*

us

私たち

*watashi tachi*

them

彼ら

*karera*

## THE ANSWERS: WHEN

*For full coverage of time-related terms, see p13.*

now

今

*ima*

later

後

*ato*

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in a minute	すぐ <i>sugu</i>
today	今日 <i>kyō</i>
tomorrow	明日 <i>ashita</i>
yesterday	昨日 <i>kinō</i>
in a week	1週間後に <i>isshū kango ni</i>
next week	来週 <i>raishū</i>
last week	先週 <i>senshū</i>
next month	来月 <i>raigetsu</i>
At _____	_____に <i>ni</i>
ten o'clock this morning.	今朝の10時 <i>kesa no jū ji</i>
two o'clock this afternoon.	今日の午後2時 <i>kyō no gogo ni ji</i>
seven o'clock this evening.	今晚7時 <i>konban shichi ji</i>

*For full coverage of numbers, see p6.*

## THE ANSWERS: WHERE

here	ここ <i>koko</i>
there	そこ <i>soko</i>
near	近い <i>chikai</i>
closer	もっと近い <i>motto chikai</i>

closest	一番近い <i>ichiban chikai</i>
far	遠い <i>tōi</i>
farther	もっと遠い <i>motto tōi</i>
farthest	一番遠い <i>ichiban tōi</i>
across from	の向かい <i>no mukai</i>
next to	の隣 <i>no tonari</i>
behind	の後ろ <i>no ushiro</i>
straight ahead	ここをまっすぐ <i>koko o massugu</i>
left	左 <i>hidari</i>
right	右 <i>migi</i>
up	上 <i>ue</i>
down	下 <i>shita</i>
lower	もっと低い <i>motto hikui</i>
higher	もっと高い <i>motto takai</i>
forward	前 <i>mae</i>
back	後ろ <i>ushiro</i>
around	周り <i>mawari</i>

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across the street	この道の向こう側 <i>kono michi no mukō gawa</i>
down the street	この道(の先) <i>kono michi (no saki)</i>
on the corner	角に <i>kado ni</i>
kitty-corner	斜め向かい <i>naname mukai</i>
_____ blocks from here	ここから_____目の角 <i>koko kara _____ me no kado</i>

*For a full list of numbers used for blocks, see the section “Generic Inanimate Objects” on p. 11.*

### THE ANSWERS: WHICH

this one	これ <i>kore</i>
that (that one, close by)	それ <i>sore</i>
(that one, in the distance)	あれ <i>are</i>
these	これら <i>korera</i>
those (those there, close by)	それら <i>sorera</i>

### NUMBERS & COUNTING

one	一 <i>ichi</i>	six	六 <i>roku</i>
two	二 <i>ni</i>	seven	七 <i>shichi/nana</i>
three	三 <i>san</i>	eight	八 <i>hachi</i>
four	四 <i>shi/yo/yon</i>	nine	九 <i>kyū</i>
five	五 <i>go</i>	ten	十 <i>jū</i>

eleven	十一 <i>jū ichi</i>	thirty	三十 <i>san jū</i>
twelve	十二 <i>jū ni</i>	forty	四十 <i>yon jū</i>
thirteen	十三 <i>jū san</i>	fifty	五十 <i>go jū</i>
fourteen	十四 <i>jū shi</i>	sixty	六十 <i>roku jū</i>
fifteen	十五 <i>jū go</i>	seventy	七十 <i>nana jū</i>
sixteen	十六 <i>jū roku</i>	eighty	八十 <i>hachi jū</i>
seventeen	十七 <i>jū shichi/jū nana</i>	ninety	九十 <i>kyū jū</i>
eighteen	十八 <i>jū hachi</i>	one hundred	百 <i>hyaku</i>
nineteen	十九 <i>jū kyū</i>	two hundred	二百 <i>ni hyaku</i>
twenty	二十 <i>ni jū</i>	one thousand	千 <i>sen</i>
twenty-one	二十一 <i>ni jū ichi</i>		

## COUNTERS

When counting objects, you need to use a counter. In English you simply put a number before the item you wish to count and pluralize it; for example, one car, two cars, etc. In Japanese, which has no plural form, you instead use a separate counter word that varies depending on the type of thing you wish to count. The item being counted comes first, followed by the number, which is in turn followed by the counter word. The counters vary according to the type, shape, or size of each item. The pronunciation of either the number or the counter will vary in some instances. Note that the numbers four (*shi*), seven (*shichi*) and nine (*kyu*) can also be *yon*, *nana*, and *ku* when counting objects.

**PEOPLE**

one person	一人 <i>hitori</i>
two people	二人 <i>futari</i>
three people	三人 <i>sannin</i>
four people	四人 <i>yonin</i>
five people	五人 <i>gonin</i>
six people	六人 <i>rokunin</i>
seven people	七人 <i>shichinin / nananin</i>
eight people	八人 <i>hachinin</i>
nine people	九人 <i>kyūnin or kunin</i>
ten people	十人 <i>jyūnin</i>

**MECHANICAL OBJECTS**

one mechanical object	一台 <i>ichidai</i>
two mechanical objects	二台 <i>nidai</i>
three mechanical objects	三台 <i>sandai</i>
four mechanical objects	四台 <i>yondai</i>
five mechanical objects	五台 <i>godai</i>
six mechanical objects	六台 <i>rokudai</i>
seven mechanical objects	七台 <i>nanadai</i>



eight mechanical objects	八台 <i>hachidai</i>
nine mechanical objects	九台 <i>kyūdai</i>
ten mechanical objects	十台 <i>jyūdai</i>

### FLAT OBJECTS

one flat object	一枚 <i>ichimai</i>
two flat objects	二枚 <i>nimai</i>
three flat objects	三枚 <i>sanmai</i>
four flat objects	四枚 <i>yonmai</i>
five flat objects	五枚 <i>gomai</i>
six flat objects	六枚 <i>rokumai</i>
seven flat objects	七枚 <i>nanamai</i>
eight flat objects	八枚 <i>hachimai</i>
nine flat objects	九枚 <i>kyūmai</i>
ten flat objects	十枚 <i>jyūmai</i>

### SMALL ANIMALS

one small animal	一匹 <i>ippiki</i>
two small animals	二匹 <i>nihiki</i>
three small animals	三匹 <i>sanbiki</i>

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four small animals	四匹 <i>yonhiki</i>
five small animals	五匹 <i>gohiki</i>
six small animals	六匹 <i>roppiki</i>
seven small animals	七匹 <i>nanahiki</i>
eight small animals	八匹 <i>happiki</i>
nine small animals	九匹 <i>kyūhiki</i>
ten small animals	十匹 <i>jyuppiki</i>

### CYLINDRICAL OBJECTS

one cylindrical object	一本 <i>ippon</i>
two cylindrical objects	二本 <i>nihon</i>
three cylindrical objects	三本 <i>sanbon</i>
four cylindrical objects	四本 <i>yonhon</i>
five cylindrical objects	五本 <i>gohon</i>
six cylindrical objects	六本 <i>roppon</i>
seven cylindrical objects	七本 <i>nanahon</i>
eight cylindrical objects	八本 <i>hachihon/happon</i>
nine cylindrical objects	九本 <i>kyūhon</i>
ten cylindrical objects	十本 <i>jyuppon</i>

**GENERIC INANIMATE OBJECTS**

one object	一つ <i>hitotsu</i>
two objects	二つ <i>futatsu</i>
three objects	三つ <i>mittsu</i>
four objects	四つ <i>yottsu</i>
five objects	五つ <i>itsutsu</i>
six objects	六つ <i>muttsu</i>
seven objects	七つ <i>nanatsu</i>
eight objects	八つ <i>yattsu</i>
nine objects	九つ <i>kokonotsu</i>
ten objects	十 <i>tō</i>

**MEASUREMENTS**

Measurements will usually be metric, though you may need a few American measurement terms.

inch	インチ <i>inchi</i>
foot	フット <i>futto</i>
mile	マイル <i>mairu</i>
millimeter	ミリメートル <i>miri mētoru</i>
centimeter	センチメートル <i>senchi mētoru</i>
meter	メートル <i>mētoru</i>

## A Little Tip

Double consonants in Japanese are *kk*, *ss*, *tt* and *pp*. They are pronounced as a single consonant preceded by a short pause. For example:

**bikkuri** (bee-(k)-koo-ree)

**zasshi** (zah-(s)-shee)

**matte!** (mah-(t)-teh!)

**ippai** (ee-(p)-pah-ee)

kilometer	キロメートル <i>kiro mētoru</i>
hectare	ヘクタール <i>hekutāru</i>
squared	平方形の <i>hēhōkei no</i>
short	短い <i>mijikai</i>
long	長い <i>nagai</i>

## VOLUME

milliliters	ミリリットル <i>miri rittoru</i>
liter	リットル <i>rittoru</i>
kilo	キロ <i>kiro</i>
ounce	オンス <i>onsu</i>
cup	カップ <i>kappu</i>
pint	パイント <i>painto</i>
quart	クォート <i>kuōto</i>

gallon

ガロン  
*garon***QUANTITY**

some

いくつか(の) / いくらか(の)  
*ikutsuka (no) / ikuraka (no)*

none

少しもない、全くない  
*sukoshi mo nai, mattaku nai*

all

すべて / すべての  
*subete/subete no*

many / much

沢山の  
*takusan no*a little bit (can be used for  
quantity or for time)少し  
*sukoshi*

dozen

ダース  
*dāsu***SIZE**

small

小さい  
*chiisai*the smallest (literally “the  
most small”)もっとも小さい  
*mottomo chiisai*

medium

中位の  
*chū kurai no*

big

大きい  
*ōkii*

fat

太った  
*futotta*

wide

広い  
*hiro*

narrow

狭い  
*semai***TIME**

Time in Japanese is referred to, literally, by the hour. What time is it? translates literally as “What hour is it?”

*For full coverage of number terms, see p6.*

## HOURS OF THE DAY

What time is it?	今何時ですか? <i>ima nan ji desu ka.</i>
At what time?	何時に? <i>nan ji ni.</i>
For how long?	どのくらい? <i>dono kurai.</i>
It's one o'clock.	1 時です。 <i>ichi ji desu.</i>
It's two o'clock.	2 時です。 <i>ni ji desu.</i>
It's two thirty.	2 時半 (2 時 30 分) です。 <i>ni ji han (ni ji san juppun) desu.</i>
It's two fifteen.	2 時 15 分です。 <i>ni ji jū go fun desu.</i>
It's a quarter to three.	2 時 45 分です。 <i>ni ji yon jū go fun desu.</i>
It's noon.	正午です。 <i>shōgo desu.</i>
It's midnight.	真夜中です。 <i>mayonaka desu.</i>
It's early.	早いです。 <i>hayai desu.</i>
It's late.	遅いです。 <i>osoi desu.</i>
in the morning	午前 <i>gozen</i>
in the afternoon	午後 <i>gogo</i>
at night	夜 <i>yoru</i>
dawn	夜明け <i>yo ake</i>

A.M.	午前 <i>gozen</i>
P.M.	午後 <i>gogo</i>

## DAYS OF THE WEEK

Sunday	日曜日 <i>nichi yō bi</i>
Monday	月曜日 <i>getsu yō bi</i>
Tuesday	火曜日 <i>ka yō bi</i>
Wednesday	水曜日 <i>sui yō bi</i>
Thursday	木曜日 <i>moku yō bi</i>
Friday	金曜日 <i>kin yō bi</i>
Saturday	土曜日 <i>do yō bi</i>
today	今日 <i>kyō</i>
tomorrow	明日 <i>ashita</i>
yesterday	昨日 <i>kinō</i>
the day before yesterday	おととい <i>ototoi</i>
one week	一週間 <i>issū kan</i>
next week	来週 <i>raishū</i>
last week	先週 <i>senshū</i>

## DAYS OF THE MONTH

When saying or writing the date in Japanese, the month always precedes the day.

1	<b>1 日</b> <i>tsuitachi</i>	17	<b>17 日</b> <i>jūshichi nichi</i>
2	<b>2 日</b> <i>futsuka</i>	18	<b>18 日</b> <i>jūhachi nichi</i>
3	<b>3 日</b> <i>mikka</i>	19	<b>19 日</b> <i>jūku nichi</i>
4	<b>4 日</b> <i>yokka</i>	20	<b>20 日</b> <i>hatsuka</i>
5	<b>5 日</b> <i>itsuka</i>	21	<b>21 日</b> <i>nijūichi nichi</i>
6	<b>6 日</b> <i>muika</i>	22	<b>22 日</b> <i>nijūni nichi</i>
7	<b>7 日</b> <i>nanoka</i>	23	<b>23 日</b> <i>nijūsan nichi</i>
8	<b>8 日</b> <i>yōka</i>	24	<b>24 日</b> <i>nijūyokka</i>
9	<b>9 日</b> <i>kokonoka</i>	25	<b>25 日</b> <i>nijūgo nichi</i>
10	<b>10 日</b> <i>tōka</i>	26	<b>26 日</b> <i>nijūroku nichi</i>
11	<b>11 日</b> <i>jūichi nichi</i>	27	<b>27 日</b> <i>nijūshichi nichi</i>
12	<b>12 日</b> <i>jūni nichi</i>	28	<b>28 日</b> <i>nijūhachi nichi</i>
13	<b>13 日</b> <i>jūsan nichi</i>	29	<b>29 日</b> <i>nijūku nichi</i>
14	<b>14 日</b> <i>jūyokka</i>	30	<b>30 日</b> <i>sanjū nichi</i>
15	<b>15 日</b> <i>jūgonichi</i>	31	<b>31 日</b> <i>sanjūichi nichi</i>
16	<b>16 日</b> <i>jūroku nichi</i>		



**MONTHS OF THE YEAR**

January	一月 <i>ichi gatsu</i>
February	二月 <i>ni gatsu</i>
March	三月 <i>san gatsu</i>
April	四月 <i>shi gatsu</i>
May	五月 <i>go gatsu</i>
June	六月 <i>roku gatsu</i>
July	七月 <i>shichi gatsu</i>
August	八月 <i>hachi gatsu</i>
September	九月 <i>ku gatsu</i>
October	十月 <i>jū gatsu</i>
November	十一月 <i>jū ichi gatsu</i>
December	十二月 <i>jū ni gatsu</i>

**SEASONS OF THE YEAR**

spring	春 <i>haru</i>
summer	夏 <i>natsu</i>
autumn	秋 <i>aki</i>
winter	冬 <i>fuyu</i>

## “JAPLISH”

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*Gairaigo* is not to be confused with what is often known as ‘Japlish,’ or badly misused English that is sometimes incomprehensible and often hilarious. While the prevalence of Japlish is decreasing as English is more widely used in Japan, it is still not unusual to encounter signs warning you to “Take care of your feet” (i.e., watch your step) or department store specials on “flying pans.”

Another form of Japlish is English words that are used strictly for their sound or even visual appearance as text, without regard for their literal meanings. This is a common practice among packagers and manufacturers. A popular soft drink bears the name Poccari Sweat; presumably, it does not reveal anything about the ingredients.

## Gairaigo (Japanese Loan Words)

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*Gairaigo* refers to Japanese terms that originated from words in foreign languages, mostly English. Though similar in pronunciation to the words of origin, their relationships to the original meanings are sometimes obscure. Here are some examples.

aisu (アイス): i.e., ‘ice’; ice cream, ice pop  
 baikingu (バイキング): i.e., ‘Viking’; buffet, smorgasbord  
 bebiikaa (ベビーカー): i.e., ‘baby car’; stroller, carriage  
 depāto (デパート): i.e., ‘department’; department store  
 eakon (エアコン): i.e., ‘air con’; air conditioning  
 furiidaiyaru (フリーダイヤル): i.e., ‘free dial’; toll-free call  
 igirisu (イギリス): i.e., Inglez in Portuguese; Englishperson; the UK  
 kasutera (カステラ): i.e., castela in Dutch; sponge cake  
 saabisu (サービス): i.e., ‘service’; gratis, free-of-charge  
 sumaato (スマート): i.e., ‘smart’ (British); slender, svelte  
 tabako (タバコ): i.e., ‘tobacco’; cigarette

## JAPANESE GRAMMAR BASICS

Compared to Western languages, little is known about the origins of Japanese or its connections to other tongues. The most popular theory places it in the family that includes Turkish, Mongolian, and Korean. Another theory links it to Polynesian and other languages in the South Pacific. In its present form, Japanese consists of native words as well as loan words from Chinese and Western languages such as English, Portuguese, and German (see page 18).

## PRONUNCIATION

Most Japanese syllables consist of either a single vowel, or a consonant + a vowel.

Vowels are either short or long. The sound does not change, only the length of the syllable. However, a short or long vowel can change the meaning of a word entirely. For instance, *shujin* (husband) vs. *shūjin* (prisoner).

## PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

### Vowels

a:	ah like the a in father; hana ( <i>hah-nah</i> )
ā:	elongated a (aah); okāsan ( <i>oh-kaah-sahn</i> )
i:	ee like the ee in feed; migi ( <i>mee-ghee</i> )
ī:	elongated i (eee); kīroi ( <i>keee-ro-ee</i> )
u:	oo like the u in blue; sugu ( <i>soo-ghoo</i> )
ū:	elongated u (ooo); kūkan ( <i>koook-kah-n</i> )
e:	eh like the e in bed; te ( <i>teh</i> )
ē:	elongated e (eeh); dēta ( <i>deeh-tah</i> )
o:	oh like the o in rose; omoi ( <i>oh-moh-ee</i> )
ō:	elongated o (ooh); ōkii ( <i>ooh-kee-ee</i> )

### Vowel Combinations

ai:	kaidan ( <i>kah-ee-dah-n</i> )
ae:	mae ( <i>mah-eh</i> )
ao:	aoba ( <i>ah-oh-bah</i> )
au:	kau ( <i>kah-oo</i> )
ue:	tsukue ( <i>tsoo-koo-eh</i> )

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- oi: oi (*oh-ee*)  
oe: koe (*koh-eh*)

### Consonants

- k: as in English, like the k in kick; kekkon (*keh-k-koh-n*)  
g: as in English, like the g in gum; genkan (*geh-n-kah-n*)  
s: as in English, like the s in see; sara (*sah-rah*)  
j: as in English, like the j in jump; jikan (*jee-kah-n*)  
z: as in English, like the z in zoo; zubon (*zoo-boh-n*)  
t: as in English, like the t in time; takai (*tah-kah-ee*)  
d: as in English, like the d in dog; daikon (*dah-ee-koh-n*)  
n: as in English, like the n in name, or at the end of a word, run; naka (*nah-kah*), hon (*hoh-n*)  
h: as in English, like the h in home; hashi (*hah-shee*)  
b: as in English, like the b in baby; ban (*bah-n*)  
p: as in English, like the p in pepper; pan (*pah-n*)  
f: softer than English f and closer to h, like hf; fūsen (*hfoo-seh-n*)  
m: as in English, like the m in man; manzoku (*mah-n-zoh-koo*)  
y: as in English, like the consonant y in yes; yama (*yah-mah*)  
r: closer to English l than r; tap the roof of your palate with your tongue; raku (*rah-koo*)  
w: as in English, like the w in woman; wakai (*wah-kah-ee*)

### Consonant Combinations

- ky: ki (*kee*) + ya (*yah*), yu (*yoo*) or yo (*yoh*), pronounced almost simultaneously; kyaku (*kee-yah-koo*), Kyōto (*kee-yooh-toh*), kyūkei (*kee-yooo-keh-ee*)  
sh: as in English, like sh in she; shabu-shabu (*shah-boo shah-boo*)  
ch: as in English, like the ch in cherry; chōcho (*chooh choh*)  
tsu: like ts at the end of hats in English, followed by u, although the u is nearly silent when it is followed by a consonant; tsukuru (*ts(oo)-koo-roo*)

**ry:** this is possibly the most difficult sound for non-native speakers to pronounce; *ri* (*ree*) + *ya* (*yah*), *yu* (*yoo*) or *yo* (*yoh*), pronounced almost simultaneously, remembering the *r* is closer to the English *l*; *ryaku* (*ree-yah-koo*), *ryūkō* (*ree-yooo-koo*); *ryōri* (*ree-yooh-ree*)

## WORD PRONUNCIATION

Japanese has no accented syllables, unlike English, which has accented and unaccented syllables (e.g., Is THIS the FACE that LAUNCHED a THOUsand SHIPS?). In spoken Japanese, all syllables receive the same level of stress. Some commonly mispronounced Japanese words or names

	Incorrect	Correct
karate	<i>kah-RAH-tee</i>	<i>kah-rah-teh</i>
sashimi	<i>sah-SHEE-mee</i>	<i>sah-shee-mee</i>
sayōnara	<i>SAH-yoh-NAH-rah</i>	<i>sah-yooh-nah-rah</i>
sukiyaki	<i>SOO-kee-YAH-kee</i>	<i>soo-kee-yah-kee</i>
Toyota	<i>toh-YOH-tah</i>	<i>toh-yoh-tah</i>

## SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

The basic sentence construction in English is:

subject – verb – object

i.e. I read a book.

In Japanese, the basic sentence structure is:

subject – object – verb

i.e. Watashi wa hon o yomimashita.

The position of subject and object can alternate (*Hon o watashi wa yomimashita*), but the verb always goes at the end of the sentence.

Subjects and objects are distinguished in the sentence by particles, or case markers, which follow them.

**Particles**

**wa / ga** (no English equivalent) subject **wah / gah**

**Watashi wa ringo o tabemashita.**

I ate an apple.

**Watashi ga ringo o tabemashita.**

It is I who ate the apple.

**o** (no English equivalent) direct object **oh**

**Jane wa hon o kaimashita.**

Jane bought a book.

Particles also specify such things as to, from, when and where an event is taking place.

**de** (in, by, with, at) how, where, in what **deh** circumstance

**Te de sētā o araimashita**

I washed the sweater by hand.

**Mary wa doitsu de kenkyū shite imasu**

Mary is doing research in Germany.

**Watashi wa mainichi basu de kayotteimasu.**

I commute by bus everyday.

**e** (to, toward) direction toward **eh**

**Otōsan wa nyū yōku e ikimasu ka?**

Is your father going to New York?

**ka** (or) or **kah**

**Kurīmu ka sato wa ikaga desu ka?**

Would you like cream or sugar?

**kara** (from) starting point **kah-rah**

**Kare wa bosuton kara unten shitekimashita.**

He drove from Boston.

**made** (up to, until) destination, end point **mah-deh**

**Kuji kara goji made shigoto o shimasu**

I work from nine until five.

**ni** (to, on, at) target; direction; when **nee**

**Okāsan ni hana o agemashita.**

I gave my mother flowers.

**Watashitachi wa furansu ni ryokō ni ikimasu.**

We are traveling to France.

**Asa rokuji ni okiru yotei desu.**

I plan to get up at six o'clock.

**to** (and) and **toh**

**Onīsan to Onēsan wa hawaii ni sunde imasu.**

My older brother and older sister live in Hawaii.

## PERSONAL PRONOUNS

I, me	<b>watashi</b>	wah-tah-shee
I, me	<b>boku</b> (male, informal)	boh-koo
I, me	<b>atashi</b> (female, informal)	ah-tah-shee
we, us	<b>watashitachi</b>	wah-tah-shee-tah-chee
you (sing.)	<b>anata</b>	ah-nah-tah
you (pl.)	<b>anatatachi</b>	ah-nah-tah-tah-chee
he, him	<b>kare</b>	kah-reh
she, her	<b>kanojo</b>	kah-noh-joh
they, them	<b>karera</b>	kah-reh-rah

**Anata** (you) is rarely used and can sound presumptuous and unnatural in the wrong context. For second-person direct address (you familiar), the safest bet is to use a proper name (either given or surname, depending on your relationship to that person) + *san*. With small children, *san* becomes *chan* or *kun* (see page 25). Or, if you are asking a question, you can drop the pronoun altogether and use just the interrogative verb form:

e.g., *Anata ga kimasu ka? Kimasu ka?*

Are you coming?

## POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

I becomes my, he becomes his and she becomes hers, etc., by adding the particle *no* (*noh*) after the pronoun.

I ( <i>watashi</i> )	my ( <i>watashi no</i> )	<i>watashi no kaban</i> (my bag)
he ( <i>kare</i> )	his ( <i>kare no</i> )	<i>kare no tokei</i> (his watch)
she ( <i>kanojo</i> )	her ( <i>kanojo no</i> )	<i>kanojo no kuruma</i> (her car)
we ( <i>watashitachi</i> )	our ( <i>watashitachi no</i> )	<i>watashitachi no resutoran</i> (our restaurant)
they ( <i>karera</i> )	their ( <i>karera no</i> )	<i>karera no ie</i> (their home)

### A Little Tip

Japanese people introduce themselves with the surname first, followed by the given name (e.g., Watanabe Ken, instead of Ken Watanabe). However, it isn't necessary for non-Japanese to follow suit (e.g., "I'm Smith John"), as most people understand the difference in Japanese and Western conventions.

## FORMS OF ADDRESS

As in English, the way you address another person in Japanese depends on your relationship, the context, and your relative social status. But for the most part, the question in English is whether to use a person's first name or last, in Japanese it is a bit more intricate. The honorific title is a suffix that is attached to a person's name (either given or surname).



Title	Appropriate for
-chan ( <i>chah-n</i> )	young children; used with given name
-kun ( <i>koo-n</i> )	boys' given name, 'subordinate' males
-sama ( <i>sah-mah</i> )	after superior's, VIP's or customer's surname; also used in letters
-san ( <i>sah-n</i> )	the most common and safest option, especially when meeting someone for the first time; can be used with either the given name or surname

As mentioned on page 23, the use of *anata* is not advisable in most situations. To politely address people whose names you do not know, you can use titles based on age and gender. See introductions on page 101.

## AGE- & GENDER-BASED FORMS OF ADDRESS

**bōya** (*booh-yah*) young boy  
**o-bocchan** (*oh-boh-t-chah-n*) young boy  
**ojō-san** (*oh-joooh-sah-n*) young girl  
**onī-san** (*oh-neeee-sah-n*) young man; lit. 'big brother'  
**onē-san** (*oh-neeh-sah-n*) young woman; lit. 'big sister'  
**oji-san** (*oh-jee-sah-n*) middle-aged man; lit. 'uncle'  
**oba-san** (*oh-bah-sah-n*) middle-aged woman; lit. 'aunt'  
**oji-san** (*oh-jeee-sah-n*) elderly man; lit. 'grandfather'  
**obā-san** (*oh-baah-sah-n*) elderly woman; lit. 'grandmother'

## PROFESSIONAL TITLES

**buchō** (*boo-chooh*) department manager  
**kachō** (*kah-chooh*) section chief; manager  
**kōchō** (*kooh-chooh*) school principal  
**sensei** (*seh-n-seh-ee*) teacher, professor; also, doctor  
**shachō** (*shah-chooh*) company president  
**tenchō** (*teh-n-chooh*) store manager

## VERBS

Unlike verbs in other languages, Japanese verbs are not conjugated according to person, gender, or number. Whether the subject is I, he, she, or they, the verb to walk is always *aruku*. Verbs are conjugated to show tense, negation, and level of completion or duration, as well as the status of the speaker or subject. In informal situations with family or friends, the plain, or dictionary, form of a verb is appropriate. In more formal settings, the polite, or *-masu*, form is called for.

Verbs consist of what is called a stem form, plus an ending. They are categorized according to the endings of their plain forms. The stem form does not change, except in the case of irregular verbs. They are conjugated by changing the endings, or adding a suffix.

### ‘U’ Verbs

These are verbs that end with ‘u,’ or [stem form] + u. They are conjugated by dropping the u and changing the syllable that immediately precedes it.

#### HANASU: ‘to speak’

Plain present	hanasu	hah-nah-soo
Plain past	hanashita	hah-nah-shee-tah
Plain present negative	hanasanai	hah-nah-sah-nah-ee
Plain past negative	hanasanakatta	hah-nah-sah-nah-kah-t-tah
Polite present affirmative	hanashimasu	hah-nah-shee-mah-soo
Polite past affirmative	hanashimashita	hah-nah-shee-mah-shee-tah
Polite present negative	hanashimasen	hah-nah-shee-mah-seh-n
Polite past negative	hanashimasen deshita	hah-nah-shee-mah-seh-n deh-shee-tah

**KIKU: to hear, listen**

Plain present	kiku	kee-koo
Plain past	kiita	kee-ee-tah
Plain present negative	kikanai	kee-kah-nah-ee
Plain past negative	kikanakatta	kee-kah-nah-kah-t-tah
Polite present affirmative	kikimasu	kee-kee-mah-soo
Polite past affirmative	kikimashita	kee-kee-mah-shee-tah
Polite present negative	kikimasen	kee-kee-mah-seh-n
Polite past negative	kikimasen deshita	kee-kee-mah-seh- n deh-shee-tah

**‘Ru’ Verbs**

These are verbs that end with ‘*ru*’, or [stem form] + *ru*. They are conjugated by dropping the *ru*.

**TABERU: ‘to eat’**

Plain present	taberu	tah-beh-roo
Plain past	tabeta	tah-beh-tah
Plain present negative	tabenai	tah-beh-nah-ee
Plain past negative	tabenakatta	tah-beh-nah-kah-t-tah
Polite present affirmative	tabemasu	tah-beh-mah-soo
Polite past affirmative	tabemashita	tah-beh-mah-shee-tah
Polite present negative	tabemasen	tah-beh-mah-seh-n
Polite past negative	tabemasen deshita	tah-beh-mah-seh- n deh-shee-tah

**MIRU: 'to see'**

Plain present	miru	mee-roo
Plain past	mita	mee-tah
Plain present negative	minai	mee-nah-ee
Plain past negative	minakatta	mee-nah-kah-t-tah
Polite present affirmative	mimasu	mee-mah-soo
Polite past affirmative	mimashita	mee-mah-shee-tah
Polite present negative	mimasen	mee-mah-seh-n
Polite past negative	mimasen deshita	mee-mah-seh- n deh-shee-tah

**IRREGULAR VERBS**

These are verbs whose stem and ending change in conjugation.

**SURU: 'to do'**

Plain present	suru	soo-roo
Plain past	shita	shee-tah
Plain present negative	shinai	shee-nah-ee
Plain past negative	shinakatta	shee-nah-kah-t-tah
Polite present affirmative	shimasu	shee-mah-soo
Polite past affirmative	shimashita	shee-mah-shee-tah
Polite present negative	shimasen	shee-mah-seh-n
Polite past negative	shimasen deshita	shee-mah-seh- n deh-shee-tah

**KURU: 'to come'**

Plain present	<b>kuru</b>	<b>koo-roo</b>
Plain past	<b>kita</b>	<b>kee-tah</b>
Plain present negative	<b>konai</b>	<b>koh-nah-ee</b>
Plain past negative	<b>konakatta</b>	<b>koh-nah-kah-t-tah</b>
Polite present affirmative	<b>kimasu</b>	<b>kee-mah-soo</b>
Polite past affirmative	<b>kimashita</b>	<b>kee-mah-shee-tah</b>
Polite present negative	<b>kimasen</b>	<b>kee-mah-seh-n</b>
Polite past negative	<b>kimasen deshita</b>	<b>kee-mah-seh- n deh-shee-tah</b>

**Te (or de) Form**

By itself, this verb form is used as an informal request. It is commonly combined with other verbs or suffixes. To denote either past or present, the second, or auxillary, verb is conjugated.

**U Verbs**

OYOGU	<b>oyoide</b> ( <i>oh-yoh-ee-deh</i> )	Swim.
KAKU	<b>kaite</b> ( <i>kah-ee-teh</i> )	Write it.

**Ru Verbs**

OKIRU	<b>okite</b> ( <i>oh-kee-teh</i> )	Wake up.
NERU	<b>nete</b> ( <i>neh-teh</i> )	Go to sleep.

**Irregular Verbs**

SURU	<b>shite</b> ( <i>shee-teh</i> )	Do.
KURU	<b>kite</b> ( <i>kee-teh</i> )	Come.

**Te + IMASU:** present progression; “to be doing”

Densha o matte imasu.	I am waiting for a train.
Terebi o mite imasu.	He is watching TV.
Kaban o sagashite imasu.	She is looking for her bag.

**Te + KUDASAI:** Please (do something); polite request

Namae o kaite kudasai	Please write your name.
Hayaku okite kudasai.	Please wake up early.
Yoku benkyō shite kudasai.	Please study well.

**Te + AGEMASU:** to do something for someone else; a favor to someone else.

**Musume ni puresento o katte agemasu.**

I will buy my daughter a present.

**Gohan o tsukutte agemashita.**

I made dinner (for them).

**Akachan no furo o junbi shite agemasu.**

I will draw the baby's bath.

**Note:** The *te agemasu* can sound patronizing unless it's used in a proper way. For instance, to say “I bought my daughter a present”, *katte agemasu* is OK, but if it is your mother, you would not use the *te-agemasu* form. Instead, you would simply say *Haha ni purezento o kaimashita*. (I bought my mother a present.) It should be used very carefully when speaking to someone senior or superior to you, or even among equals. It is best to avoid using it whenever in doubt.

**Te + MORAU:** someone doing something for you; a favor received

**Kare ni kuruma o aratte moraimasu.**

He is going to wash my car.

**Kanojo ni doa o akete moraimashita.**

She opened the door for me.

**Haha ni shukudai o mite moratte imasu.**

My mother is checking my homework.

**DESU: to be**

The word *desu* is a combination of the particle *de*, the verb *aru* (to exist) and the polite ending *masu*. It is used to express condition or identity, and like all verbs, appears at the end of a sentence.

Plain present	da	dah
Plain past	datta	dah-t-tah
Plain present negative	ja nai	jah-nah-ee
Plain past negative	ja nakatta	jah-nah-kah-t-tah
Polite present affirmative	desu	deh-soo
Polite past affirmative	deshita	deh-shee-tah
Polite present negative	de wa arimasen	deh-wah-ah-ree-mah-seh-n
Polite past negative	de wa arimasen deshita	deh-wah-ah-ree-mah-seh-n deh-shee-tah

**ADJECTIVES**

In Japanese the adjective appears either before the noun it is modifying, or at the end of the sentence preceding the word *desu* in conjugated form. For instance,

**Sore wa takai tokei desu.**

That's an expensive watch.

**Sono tokei wa takai desu.**

The watch is expensive.

There are two types of adjectives—the *I* adjectives, which are adjectives that end in *i*, and the *na* adjectives, which are combined with the suffix *-na* when modifying a noun (e.g., *jōzu na hito*, a skilled person). One exception is the word *kirei*, which means pretty or neat. Although it ends with the letter *i*, it is conjugated as a *na* adjective.

**I-Adjective****warui: 'bad'**

Plain present	warui	wah-roo-ee
Plain past	warukatta	wah-roo-kah-t-tah
Plain present negative	warukunai	wah-roo-koo-nah-ee
Plain past negative	warukunakatta	wah-roo-koo-nah-kah-t-tah
Polite present affirmative	warui desu	wah-roo-ee deh-soo
Polite past affirmative	warukatta desu	wah-roo-kah-t-tah deh-soo
Polite present negative	waruku arimasen	wah-roo-koo ah-ree-mah-seh-n
Polite past negative	waruku arimasen deshita	wah-roo-koo ah-ree-mah-seh-n deh-shee-tah

**Na-Adjective****damena: 'failed'**

Plain present	dame na	dah-meh nah
Plain past	dame datta	dah-meh dah-t-tah
Plain present negative	dame janai	dah-meh jah nah-ee
Plain past negative	dame janakatta	dah-meh jah nah-kah-t-tah
Polite present affirmative	dame desu	dah-meh deh-soo
Polite past affirmative	dame deshita	dah-meh deh-shee-tah
Polite present negative	dame de wa arimasen	dah-meh deh-wah ah-ree-mah-seh-n
Polite past negative	dame de wa arimasen deshita	dah-meh deh-wah ah-ree-mah-seh-n deh-shee-tah