

# A Japanese Guide to Japanese Grammar

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<http://www.guidetojapanese.org/>



## Summary

This document explains Japanese grammar in a systematic step-by-step process and is released under the Creative Commons License. It was created as a resource for those who want to learn Japanese grammar in a rational, intuitive way that makes sense in Japanese. The explanations are focused on how to make sense of the grammar not from English but from a Japanese point of view. To learn more about this guide, go to the introduction page and start learning this intriguing and unique language!




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## Errors

This document was not translated from the HTML by the author, Tae Kim, but by a volunteer beginning Japanese language student. The furigana is especially at risk for introduced errors. *Please report any problems found in the text so that future students may benefit.*

## Trivia

This document uses the beautiful and readable *Gentium* font<sup>3</sup> for the body of English text and *Hiragino Mincho Pro W3* font for the Japanese text. Produced using NeoOffice 2.0 Aqua Beta 3, a port of OpenOffice to OS X.

Adapted from the official *Guide* as of 2006年12月07日.

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# Part 1: Introduction

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## The Problem with Conventional Textbooks

The problem with conventional textbooks is that they often have the following goals.

1. They want readers to be able to use functional and polite Japanese as quickly as possible.
2. They don't want to scare readers away with terrifying Japanese script and Chinese characters.
3. They want to teach you how to say English phrases in Japanese.

Traditionally with romance languages such as Spanish, these goals presented no problems or were nonexistent due to the similarities to English. However, because Japanese is different in just about every way down to the fundamental ways of thinking, these goals create many of the confusing textbooks you see on the market today. They are usually filled with complicated rules and countless number of grammar for specific English phrases. They also contain almost no kanji and so when you finally arrive in Japan, lo and behold, you discover you can't read menus, maps, or essentially anything at all because the book decided you weren't smart enough to memorize Chinese characters.

The root of this problem lies in the fact that these textbooks try to teach you Japanese with English. They want to teach you on the first page how to say, "Hi, my name is Smith," but they don't tell you about all the arbitrary decisions that were made behind your back. They probably decided to use the polite form even though learning the polite form before the dictionary form makes no sense. They also might have decided to include the subject even though it's not necessary and excluded most of the time. In fact, the most common way to say something like "My name is Smith" in Japanese is to say "am Smith." That's because most of the information is understood from the context and is therefore excluded. But does the textbook explain the way things work in Japanese fundamentally? No, because they're too busy trying to push you out the door with "useful" phrases right off the bat. The result is a confusing mess of "use this if you want to say this" type of text and the reader is left with a feeling of confusion about how things actually work.

The solution to this problem is to explain Japanese from a Japanese point of view. Take Japanese and explain how it works and forget about trying to force what you want to say in English into Japanese. To go along with this, it is also important to explain things in an order that makes sense in Japanese. If you need to know [A] in order to understand [B], don't cover [B] first just because you want to teach a certain phrase.

Essentially, what we need is a Japanese guide to learning Japanese grammar.

## A Japanese Guide to Learning Japanese Grammar

This guide is an attempt to systematically build up the grammatical structures that make up the Japanese language in a way that makes sense in Japanese. It may not be a practical tool for quickly learning immediately useful Japanese phrases (for example, common phrases for travel). However, it will logically create grammatical building blocks that will result in a solid grammatical foundation. For those of you who have learned Japanese from textbooks, you may see some big differences in how the material is ordered and presented. This is because this guide does not seek to forcibly create artificial ties between English and Japanese by presenting the material in a way that makes sense in

English. Instead, examples with translations will show how ideas are expressed in Japanese resulting in simpler explanations that are easier to understand.

In the beginning, the English translations for the examples will also be as literal as possible to convey the Japanese sense of the meaning. This will often result in grammatically incorrect translations in English. For example, the translations might not have a subject because Japanese does not require one. In addition, since the articles “the” and “a” do not exist in Japanese, the translations will not have them as well. And since Japanese does not distinguish between a future action and a general statement (such as “I will go to the store” vs. “I go to the store”), no distinction will necessarily be made in the translation. It is my hope that the explanation of the examples will convey an accurate sense of what the sentences actually mean *in Japanese*. Once the reader becomes familiar and comfortable thinking in Japanese, the translations will be less literal in order to make the sentences more readable and focused on the more advanced topics.

Be aware that there are advantages and disadvantages to systematically building a grammatical foundation from the ground up. In Japanese, the most fundamental grammatical concepts are the most difficult to grasp and the most common words have the most exceptions. This means that the hardest part of the language will come first. Textbooks usually don't take this approach; afraid that this will scare away or frustrate those interested in the language. Instead, they try to delay going deeply into the hardest conjugation rules with patchwork and gimmicks so that they can start teaching useful expressions right away. (I'm talking about the past-tense conjugation for verbs in particular) This is a fine approach for some, however; it can create more confusion and trouble along the way much like building a house on a poor foundation. The hard parts must be covered no matter what. However, if you cover them in the beginning, the easier bits will be all that easier because they'll fit nicely on top of the foundation you have built. Japanese is syntactically much more consistent than English. If you learn the hardest conjugation rules, most of remaining grammar builds upon similar or identical rules. The only difficult part from there on is sorting out and remembering all the various possible expressions and combinations in order to use them in the correct situations.

## What Is Not Covered in This Guide?

The primary principle in deciding what to cover in this guide is by asking myself, “What cannot be looked up in a dictionary?” or “What is poorly explained in a dictionary?” In working on this guide, it soon became apparent that it was not possible to discuss the unique properties of each individual word that doesn't correspond well to English. (I tried making vocabulary lists but soon gave up.) Occasionally, there will be a description of the properties of specific words when the context is appropriate and the property is exceptional enough. However, in general, learning the nuance of each and every word is left to the reader. For example, you will not see an explanation that the word for “tall” can either mean tall or expensive, or that “dirty” can mean sneaky or unfair but cannot mean sexually perverted. The edict dictionary, which can be found [here](#)<sup>1</sup> (mirrors also available) is an extensive dictionary that not only contains much more entries than conventional dictionaries in bookstores, it also often contains example sentences. It will help you learn vocabulary much better than I ever could. I also suggest not wasting any money on buying a Japanese-English, English-Japanese paper dictionary as most currently in print in the US market are woefully inadequate. (Wow, it's free and it's better! Remind anyone of open-source?)

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1 <http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/jwb/wwwjdic>

## Suggestions

My advice to you when practicing Japanese: if you find yourself trying to figure out how to say an English thought in Japanese, save yourself the trouble and quit because you won't get it right almost 100% of the time. You should always keep this in mind: *If you don't know how to say it already, then you don't know how to say it.* Instead, if you can, ask someone right away how to say it in Japanese including a full explanation of its use and start your practice *from Japanese*. Language is not a math problem; you don't have to figure out the answer. If you practice from the answer, you will develop good habits that will help you formulate correct and natural Japanese sentences.

This is why I'm a firm believer of learning by example. Examples and experience will be your main tools in mastering Japanese. Therefore, even if you don't get something completely the first time right away, just move on and keep referring back as you see more examples. This will allow you to get a better sense of how it's used in many different contexts. Unfortunately, writing up examples takes time and is slow going. (I'm trying my best!) But lucky for you, Japanese is everywhere, especially on the web. I recommend practicing Japanese as much as possible and referring to this guide only when you cannot understand the grammar. The Internet alone has a rich variety of reading materials including websites, bulletin boards, and online chat. Buying Japanese books or comic books is also an excellent (and fun) way to increase vocabulary and practice reading skills. Also, I believe that it is impossible to learn correct speaking and listening skills without a model. Practicing listening and speaking skills with fluent speakers of Japanese is a must if you wish to master conversational skills. While listening materials such as tapes and T.V. can be very educational, there is nothing better than a real human with which to learn pronunciation, intonation, and natural conversation flow. If you have specific questions that are not addressed in this guide, you can discuss them at the [Japanese grammar guide forum](#).<sup>2</sup>

Don't feel discouraged by the vast amount of material that you will need to master. Remember, every new word or grammar learned is one step closer to mastering the language!

## Requirements<sup>3</sup>

Don't worry about having to manually look up all the Kanji and vocabulary. You can go to the [WWWJDIC](#)<sup>4</sup> and paste all the examples there to quickly look up most of the words.

All the material presented here including examples is original except for some of the common terminology and when explicitly stated otherwise. I hope you enjoy this guide as much as I enjoyed writing it. Which is to say, frustrating and time-consuming yet somehow strangely mixed with an enormous feeling of satisfaction.

There are bound to be (many) small errors and typos especially since I wrote this in ed, haha, just kidding! (Sorry, nerd joke). I actually wrote this in Notepad which has no spell check, so please forgive the numerous typos! Please post any feedback, corrections, and/or suggestions at the [Japanese Grammar Guide Forum](#).<sup>5</sup>

Well, no more chit-chat. Happy learning! -Tae Kim

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2 <http://www.guidetojapanese.org/forum/>

3 Some material excised as it is only relevant to using the *Guide* on-line.

4 <http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/jwb/wwwjdic?9T>

5 <http://www.guidetojapanese.org/forum/>

# Part 2: The Writing System

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*Japanese (n): The devil's own tongue designed to thwart the spread of Christianity*

## The Alphabets

Japanese consists of two alphabets (or kana) called *hiragana* and *katakana*, which are two versions of the same set of sounds in the language. Hiragana and katakana consist of a little less than 50 “letters,” which are actually simplified Chinese characters adopted to form a phonetic alphabet.

Chinese characters, called *kanji* in Japanese, are also heavily used in the Japanese writing. Most of the words in the Japanese written language are written in kanji (nouns, verbs, adjectives). There exists over 40,000 kanji where about 2,000 represent over 95% of characters actually used in written text. There are no spaces in Japanese so kanji is necessary in distinguishing between separate words within a sentence. Kanji is also useful for discriminating between homophones, which occurs quite often given the limited number of distinct sounds in Japanese.

Hiragana is used mainly for grammatical purposes. We will see this as we learn about particles. Words with extremely difficult or rare kanji, colloquial expressions, and onomatopoeias are also written in hiragana. It's also often used for beginning Japanese students and children in place of kanji they don't know.

While katakana represents the same sounds as hiragana, it is mainly used to represent newer words imported from western countries (since there are no kanji associated with words based on the roman alphabet). The next three sections will cover hiragana, katakana, and kanji.

## Intonation

As you will find out in the next section, every character in hiragana (and the katakana equivalent) corresponds to a [vowel] or [consonant + vowel] syllable sound with the single exception of the 「ん」 and 「ん」 character (more on this later). This system of letter for each syllable sound makes pronunciation absolutely clear with no ambiguities. However, the simplicity of this system does not mean that pronunciation in Japanese is simple. In fact, the rigid structure of the fixed syllable sound in Japanese creates the problem of intonation in place of the difficulties that exist in separate consonant and vowel alphabets such as the English alphabet.

Please note that half brackets like these: 「」 are the Japanese version of quotation marks.

Intonation of high and low pitches is a crucial aspect of the spoken language. For example, homophones can have different pitches of low and high resulting in a slightly differently sounding of the word even if it is written with the same sounds. The largest barrier to proper and natural sounding speech is incorrect intonation. Many students often speak without paying attention to the correct enunciation of pitches making speech sound unnatural (the classic foreigner's accent). It is not practical to memorize or attempt to logically create rules for pitches, especially since it can change depending on the context or the dialect. The only practical approach is to get the general sense of pitches by mimicking native Japanese speakers with careful listening and practice.



## **Lessons covered in this section**

- Hiragana — The main Japanese phonetic alphabet. It is used mostly for grammatical purposes. It can also be used to show the reading for rare or obsolete kanji or as a substitute altogether. This lesson will go over all the letters in hiragana.
- Katakana — An alphabet used generally to distinguish non-native words that does not have any kanji associated with it. This lesson will go over all the letters in katakana.
- Kanji — An adaptation of the Chinese writing system for Japanese. This lesson describes some general properties of kanji as well as some strategies for learning kanji (correctly).

# Hiragana

## What Is Hiragana?

Hiragana is the basic Japanese phonetic alphabet. It represents every sound in the Japanese language. Therefore, you can theoretically write everything in hiragana. However, because Japanese is written with no spaces, this will create nearly indecipherable text.

Here is a table of hiragana and similar-sounding English consonant-vowel pronunciations. It is read up to down and right to left, which is how most Japanese books are written. In Japanese, writing the strokes in the correct order and direction is important, especially for kanji. Because handwritten letters look slightly different from typed letters (just like how “a” looks totally different when typed) you will want to find a source such as a website or textbook that will show you how to write the characters. I must also stress the importance of correctly learning how to pronounce each sound. Since every word in Japanese is composed of these sounds, learning an incorrect pronunciation for a letter can severely damage the very foundation on which your pronunciation lies.

**Hiragana Table**

n	w	r	y	m	h	n	t	s	k		
ん	わ	ら	や	ま	は	な	た	さ	か	あ	a
	ゐ*	り		み	ひ	に	ち (chi)	し (shi)	き	い	i
		る	ゆ	む	ふ (fu)	ぬ	つ (tsu)	す	く	う	u
	ゑ*	れ		め	へ	ね	て	せ	け	え	e
	を	ろ	よ	も	ほ	の	と	そ	こ	お	o

\* = **obsolete (i.e. no longer used)**

Hiragana is not too tough to master or teach and as a result, there are a variety of web sites and free programs that are already available on the web. I strongly urge you to go to [this web site](#)<sup>1</sup> to hear the pronunciations of each character. The relevant sections are 2.1 to 2.11. I also suggest recording yourself and comparing the sounds to make sure you're getting it right.

When practicing writing hiragana by hand, the important thing to remember is that the stroke order and direction of the strokes ***matter***. There, I underlined, italicized, bolded, and highlighted it to boot. Trust me, you'll eventually find out why when you read other people's hasty notes that are nothing more than chicken scrawls. The only thing that will help you is that everybody writes in the same order and so the “flow” of the characters is fairly consistent. I *strongly* recommend that you pay close attention to stroke order from the beginning starting with hiragana to avoid falling into bad habits. Go to [this web site](#)<sup>2</sup> to see little animated GIFs of stroke order and practice from there.

※ As an aside, an old Japanese poem called 「いろは」 was often used as the base for ordering of the hiragana alphabet until recent times. The poem contains every single letter of the hiragana alphabet

1 <http://www.sf.airnet.ne.jp/~ts/japanese/cover.html>

2 <http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Shrine/7047/hboth.htm>

except for 「ん」 which probably did not exist at the time it was written. You can check out this poem for yourself in [this Wikipedia article](#).<sup>3</sup> As the article mentions, this order is still sometimes used in ordering lists so you may want to spend some time checking it out.

### Notes

1. Except for 「し」、「ち」、「つ」、and 「ん」、you can get a sense of how each letter is pronounced by matching the consonant on the top row to the vowel. For example, 「き」 would become / ki / and 「ゆ」 would become / yu / and so on.
2. Go to [this web site](#)<sup>4</sup> to hear the pronunciations of each hiragana character. The relevant sections are from 2.1 to 2.11.
3. As you can see, not all sounds match the way our consonant system works. As written in the table, 「ち」 is pronounced “chi” and 「つ」 is pronounced “tsu.”
4. The / r / or / l / sound in Japanese is quite different from any sound in English. It involves more of a roll and a clip by hitting the roof of your mouth with your tongue. Pay careful attention to that whole column.
5. Pay careful attention to the difference between / tsu / and / su /.
6. The 「ん」 character is a special character because it is rarely used by itself and does not have a vowel sound. It is attached to another character to add a / n / sound. For example, 「かん」 becomes “kan” instead of “ka,” 「まん」 becomes “man” instead of “ma,” and so on and so forth.
7. You must learn the correct stroke order and direction! Go to [this web site](#)<sup>5</sup> to learn.

## The Muddied Sounds

Once you memorize all the characters in the hiragana alphabet you’re done learning the alphabet but not all the sounds. There are five more possible consonant sounds that are possible by either affixing two tiny lines similar to a double quotation mark called *dakuten* (濁点) or a tiny circle called *handakuten* (半濁点). This essentially creates a “muddy” or less clipped version of the consonant (technically called a voiced consonant or 「濁り」, which literally means to become muddy). All the possible combinations of muddied consonant sounds are given in the table below.

### Muddied Consonant Sounds

p	b	d	z	g	
ぱ	ば	だ	ざ	が	a
ぴ	び	ぢ (ji)	じ (ji)	ぎ	i
ぷ	ぶ	づ (dzu)	ず	ぐ	u
ぺ	べ	で	ぜ	げ	e
ぽ	ぼ	ど	ぞ	ご	o

3 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iroha>

4 <http://www.sf.airnet.ne.jp/~ts/japanese/cover.html>

5 <http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Shrine/7047/hboth.htm>

## The Small 「や」、 「ゆ」、 and 「よ」

You can also combine a consonant with a / ya / yu / yo / sound by attaching a small 「や」、 「ゆ」、 or 「よ」 to the / i / vowel character of each consonant.

### All possible small や、ゆ、 and よ combinations

p	b	j	g	r	m	h	n	c	s	k	
ぴや	びや	じや	ぎや	りや	みや	ひや	にや	ちや	しや	きや	ya
ぴゆ	びゆ	じゆ	ぎゆ	りゆ	みゆ	ひゆ	にゆ	ちゆ	しゆ	きゆ	yu
ぴよ	びよ	じよ	ぎよ	りよ	みよ	ひよ	によ	ちよ	しよ	きよ	yo

#### Notes

1. The above table is the same as before. Match the top consonants to the vowel sound on the right. Ex: きや = kya.
2. Go to [this web site](#)<sup>6</sup> again to hear the pronunciations of these new sounds. The author has decided to include 「ぢや」、 「ぢゆ」、 and 「ぢよ」 but these combinations are actually never used in favor of 「じや」、 「じゆ」、 and 「じよ」.
3. Also note that since 「じ」 is pronounced / ji /, all the small 「や」、 「ゆ」、 「よ」 sounds are also based off of that, namely; / jya / jyu / jyo /.
4. The same thing also applies to 「ち」 which becomes / cha / chu / cho / and 「し」 which becomes / sha / shu / sho /. (Though arguably, you can still think of it as / sya / syu / syo /.)

## The Small 「つ」

A small 「つ」 is inserted between two characters to carry the consonant sound of the second character to the end of the first. For example, if you inserted a small 「つ」 between 「び」 and 「く」 to make 「びつく」, the / k / consonant sound is carried back to the end of the first character to produce “bikku.” Similarly, 「はっば」 becomes “happa,” 「ろっく」 becomes “rokku” and so on and so forth. I have provided my own simple [mp3 file](#)<sup>7</sup> to illustrate the sound difference between 「もと」 and 「もっと」. And in case you're wondering, both are actual words and yes, both mean different things.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.sf.airnet.ne.jp/~ts/japanese/double.html>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.guidetojapanese.org/motomotto.mp3>

## Notes

1. A small 「つ」 is used to carry the consonant sound of the second character to the end of the first. Ex: 「がつき」 = “gakki.”
2. Download [this mp3 file](http://www.guidetojapanese.org/motomotto.mp3)<sup>8</sup> file to hear the difference between 「もと」 and 「もつと」.
3. The addition of another consonant almost always creates the characteristic clipping sound. But make sure you're clipping with the right consonant (the consonant of the second character).

## The Long Vowel Sound

Whew! You're almost done. In this last portion, we will go over the long vowel sound which is simply extending the duration of a vowel sound. You can extend the vowel sound of a character by adding either 「あ」、 「い」、 or 「う」 depending on the vowel in accordance to the following chart.

### Extending Vowel Sounds

Vowel Sound	Extended by
/ a /	あ
/ i / e /	い
/ u / o /	う

For example, if you wanted to create an extended vowel sound from 「か」, you would add 「あ」 to create 「かあ」. Other examples would include: 「き → きい」, 「く → くう」, 「け → けい」, 「こ → こう」, 「さ → さあ」 and so on. The reasoning for this is quite simple. Try saying 「か」 and 「あ」 separately. Then say them in succession as fast as you can. You'll notice that soon enough, it just sounds like you're dragging out the / ka / for a longer duration than just saying / ka / by itself. You can try this exercise with the other vowel sounds if you like. Try to remember that you are, in fact, saying two characters with blurred boundaries. In fact, you may not even have to consciously think about long vowels and simply pronounce the letters together quickly to get the correct sound.

In addition, while the / e / vowel sound followed by 「い」 is usually considered to a long vowel sound, the pronunciation is actually a slurred connection of the / e / and / i / vowel sounds. In other words, it should be pronounced like / ay / (as in “acorn”) and not just a long / e /.

It's important to make sure you hold the vowel sound long enough because you can be saying things like “here” (ここ) instead of “High School” (こうこう) or “middle-aged lady” (おばさん) instead of “grandmother” (おばあさん) if you don't stretch it out correctly!

There are rare exceptions where an / e / vowel sound is extended by adding 「え」 or an / o / vowel sound is extended by 「お」. Some examples of this include 「おねえさん」、 「おおい」、 and 「おおきい」. Pay careful attention to these exceptions but don't worry, there aren't too many of them.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.guidetojapanese.org/motomotto.mp3>

# Katakana

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## What Is Katakana?

As mentioned before, katakana is mainly used for words imported from foreign languages. It can also be used to emphasize certain words similar to the function of italics. For a more complete list of usages, refer to the [Wikipedia entry on katakana](#).<sup>9</sup>

Katakana represents the same set of phonetic sounds as hiragana except, of course, all the characters are different. Since foreign words must fit into this set of [consonants+vowel] combinations, they undergo many radical changes resulting in the case where English speakers can't understand words that are supposed to have been derived from English! As a result, the use of katakana is extremely difficult for English speakers because they expect English words to sound like... well... English. Instead, it is better to completely forget the original English word, and treat the word as an entirely separate Japanese word, otherwise you can run into the habit of saying English words with English pronunciations (whereupon a Japanese person may or may not understand what you are saying).

### Katakana Table

n	w	r	y	m	h	n	t	s	k		
ン	ワ	ラ	ヤ	マ	ハ	ナ	タ	サ	カ	ア	a
	ヰ*	リ		ミ	ヒ	ニ	チ	シ	キ	イ	i
		ル	ユ	ム	フ	ヌ	ツ	ス	ク	ウ	u
	ヱ*	レ		メ	ヘ	ネ	テ	セ	ケ	エ	e
	ヲ*	ロ	ヨ	モ	ホ	ノ	ト	ソ	コ	オ	o

\* = **obsolete or rarely used**

Katakana is significantly tougher to master compared to hiragana because it is only used for certain words and you don't get nearly as much practice as you do with hiragana. To learn the proper stroke order (and yes, you need to), here is the same web site as before except it is for [katakana](#).<sup>10</sup>

Also, since Japanese doesn't have any spaces, sometimes the symbol 「・」 is used to show the spaces like 「ロック・アンド・ロール」 for “rock and roll.” Using the symbol is completely optional so sometimes nothing will be used at all.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katakana#Usage>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Shrine/7047/kboth.htm>

## Notes

1. All the sounds are identical to what they were for hiragana.
2. As you will find out later, since 「を」 is only ever used as a particle and all particles are in hiragana, you will almost never need to use 「ヲ」 and therefore it can be safely ignored. (Unless you are reading very old telegrams or something.)
3. The four characters 「シ」、「ン」、「ツ」、and 「ソ」 are fiendishly similar to each other. Basically, the difference is that the first two are more “horizontal” than the second two. The little lines are slanted more horizontally and the long line is drawn in a curve from bottom to top. The second two have almost vertical little lines and the long line doesn’t curve as much as it is drawn from top to bottom. It is almost like a slash while the former is more like an arc. These characters are hard to sort out and require some patience and practice.
4. The characters 「ノ」、「メ」、and 「ヌ」 are also something to pay careful attention to, as well as, 「フ」、「ワ」、and 「ウ」. Yes, they all look very similar. No, I can’t do anything about it.
5. *You must learn the correct stroke order and direction!* Go to this [web site](#)<sup>11</sup> to learn.
6. Sometimes 「・」 is used to denote what would be spaces in English.

## The Long Vowel Sound

Everything else works exactly the same way as hiragana, you just need to substitute the equivalent katakana characters. However, one thing that is different is that long vowels have been radically simplified in katakana. Instead of having to muck around thinking about vowel sounds, all long vowel sounds are denoted by a simple dash like so: ー.

### Summary

1. All long vowel sounds in katakana are denoted by a dash. For example, “cute” would be written in katakana like so: 「キュート」.

## The Small 「ア、イ、ウ、エ、オ」

Due to the limitations of the sound set in hiragana, some new combinations have been devised over the years to account for sounds that were not originally in Japanese. Most notable is the lack of the / ti / di / and / tu / du / sounds (because of the / chi / tsu / sounds), and the lack of the / f / consonant sound except for 「ふ」. The / sh / j / ch / consonants are also missing for the / e / vowel sound. The decision to resolve these deficiencies was to add small versions of the five vowel sounds. This has also been done for the / w / consonant sound to replace the obsolete characters. In addition, the convention of using the little double slashes on the 「ウ」 vowel (ヴ) with the small 「ア、イ、エ、オ」 to designate the / v / consonant has also been established but it’s not often used probably due to the fact that Japanese people still have difficulty pronouncing / v /. For instance,

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Shrine/7047/kboth.htm>

while you may guess that “volume” would be pronounced with a / v / sound, the Japanese have opted for the easier to pronounce “bolume” (ボリューム) . In the same way, vodka is written as “wokka” (ウオッカ) and not 「ヴオッカ」 . You can write “violin” as either 「バイオリン」 or 「ヴァイオリン」 . It really doesn’t matter however because almost all Japanese people will pronounce it with a / b / sound anyway. The following table shows the added sounds that were lacking with a highlight. Other sounds that already existed are reused as appropriate.

### Additional sounds

v	w	f	ch	d	t	j	sh	
ヴァ	ワ	ファ	チャ	ダ	タ	ジャ	シャ	a
ヴィ	ウィ	フィ	チ	ディ	ティ	ジ	シ	i
ヴ	ウ	フ	チュ	ドウ	トウ	ジュ	シュ	u
ヴェ	ウェ	フェ	チェ	デ	テ	ジェ	シェ	e
ヴォ	ウォ	フォ	チョ	ド	ト	ジョ	ショ	o

#### Notes

1. Notice that there is no / wu / sound. For example, the katakana for “woman” is written as “u-man” (ウーマン) .
2. While the / tu / sound (as in “too”) can technically be produced given the rules as 「トウ」 , foreign words that have become popular before these sounds were available simply used / tsu / to make do. For instance, “tool” is still 「ツール」 and “tour” is similarly still 「ツアー」 .
3. Back in the old days, without these new sounds, there was no choice but to just take characters off the regular table without regard for actual pronunciation. On old buildings, you may still see 「ビルヂング」 instead of the modern spelling 「ビルディング」 .<sup>12</sup>

### Some Examples of Words in Katakana

Translating English words into Japanese is a knack that requires quite a bit of practice and luck. To give you a sense of how English words become “Japanified,” here are a few examples of words in katakana. Sometimes the words in katakana may not even be correct English or have a different meaning from the English word it’s supposed to represent. Of course, not all katakana words are derived from English.

<sup>12</sup> Incidentally, this is the case for the old Shin-Marui building across from Tokyo Station where I work. It is, however, soon slated for a complete rebuild and we will be moving out shortly. Ironically, Shin-Marui (新丸) has the character for “new” in it (the original one was rebuilt and is now newer).



## Sample Katakana Words

English	Japanese
America	アメリカ
Russia	ロシア
cheating	カンニング (cunning)
tour	ツアー
company employee	サラリーマン (salary man)
Mozart	モーツァルト
car horn	クラクション (klaxon)
sofa	ソファ or ソファー
Halloween	ハロウィーン
French fries	フライドポテト (fried potato)

## What Is Kanji?

In Japanese, nouns and stems of adjectives and verbs are almost all written in Chinese characters called kanji. Adverbs are also fairly frequently written in kanji as well. This means that you will need to learn Chinese characters to be able to read essentially almost all the words in the language. Not all words are written in kanji however. For example, while the verb “to do” technically has a kanji associated with it, it is always written in hiragana. Individual discretion and a sense of how things are normally written is needed to decide whether words should be written in hiragana or kanji. However, a majority of the words in Japanese will be written in kanji almost always. (Children’s books or any other material where the audience is not expected to know a lot kanji is an exception to this.)

This guide begins using kanji from the beginning to help the reader read “real” Japanese as quickly as possible. Therefore, we will go over some properties of kanji and discuss some strategies of learning it quickly and efficiently. Mastering kanji is not easy but it is by no means impossible. The biggest part of the battle is mastering the skills of *learning kanji* and *time*. In short, memorizing kanji past short-term memory must be done with a great deal of study and, most importantly, for a long time. And by this, I don’t mean studying five hours a day but rather reviewing how to write a kanji once every several months until you are sure you have it down for good. This is another reason why this guide starts using kanji right away. There is no reason to dump the huge job of learning kanji at the advanced level. By studying kanji along with new vocabulary from the beginning, the immense job of learning kanji is divided into small manageable chunks and the extra time helps settle learned kanji into permanent memory. In addition, this will help you learn new vocabulary, which will often have combinations of kanji you already know. If you start learning kanji later, this benefit will be wasted or reduced.

## Learning Kanji

All the resources you need to begin learning kanji are on the web for free at [Jim Breen’s WWWJDIC](http://www.jwb.com.au/wwwjdic.html).<sup>13</sup> In addition to its huge dictionaries, it has stroke order diagrams for the 1,945 jouyou kanji (essentially almost all the kanji you will need to know). Especially for those who are just starting to learn, you will want to repeatedly write out each kanji to memorize the stroke order. Another important skill is learning how to balance the character so that certain parts are not too big or small. So make sure to copy the characters as close to the original as possible. Eventually, you will naturally develop a sense of the stroke order for certain types of characters allowing you to bypass the drilling stage. All the kanji used in this guide can be easily looked up by copying and pasting to the WWWJDIC.

## Reading Kanji

Almost every character has two different readings called 音読み (おんよみ) and 訓読み (くんよみ). 音読み is the original Chinese reading while 訓読み is the Japanese reading. Kanji that

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~jwb/wwwjdic.html>

appear in a compound or 熟語 is usually read with 音読み while one kanji by itself is usually read with 訓読み. For example, 「力」 (ちから) is read with the 訓読み while the same character in a compound word such as 「能力」 is read with the 音読み (which is 「りよく」 in this case).

Certain characters (especially the most common ones) can have more than one 音読み or 訓読み. For example, in the word 「怪力」, 「力」 is read here as 「りき」 and not 「りよく」. Certain compound words also have special readings that have nothing to do with the readings of the individual characters. These readings must be individually memorized. Thankfully, these readings are few and far in between.

訓読み is also used in adjectives and verbs in addition to the stand-alone characters. These words often have a string of kana (called okurigana) that come attached to the word. This is so that the reading of the Chinese character stays the same even when the word is conjugated to different forms.

For example, the past form of the verb 「食べる」 is 「食べた」. Even though the verb has changed, the reading for 「食」 remain untouched. (Imagine how difficult things could get if readings for kanji changed with conjugation or even worse, if the kanji itself changed.) Okurigana also serves to distinguish between intransitive and transitive verbs (more on this later).

Another concept that is difficult to grasp at first is that the actual readings of kanji can change slightly in a compound word to make the word easier to say. The more common transformations include the / h / sounds changing to either / b / or / p / sounds or 「つ」 becoming 「っ」.

Examples include: 「一本」 (いっぽん)、 「徹底」 (てっぺい)、 and 「格好」 (かっこう).

Yet another fun aspect of kanji you'll run into are words that practically mean the same thing and use the same reading but have different kanji to make just a slight difference in meaning. For example 「聞く」 (きく) means to listen and so does 「聴く」 (きく). The only difference is that 「聴く」 means to pay more attention to what you're listening to. For example, listening to music almost always prefers 「聴く」 over 「聞く」. 「聞く」 can also mean “to ask,” as well as, “to hear” but 「訊く」 (きく) can only mean “to ask.” Yet another example is the common practice of writing 「見る」 as 「観る」 when it applies to watching a show such as a movie. Yet another interesting example is 「書く」 (かく) which means “to write” while 「描く」 (かく) means “to draw.” However, when you're depicting an abstract image such as a scene in a book, the reading of the same word 「描く」 becomes 「えがく」. There's also the case where the meaning and kanji stays the same but can have multiple readings such as 「今日」 which can be either 「きょう」、「こんじつ」, or 「こんにち」. In this case, it doesn't really matter which reading you choose except that some are preferred over others in certain situations.

Finally, there is one special character 々 that is really not a character. It simply indicates that the previous character is repeated. For example, 「時時」、「样样」、「色色」、「一一」 can and usually are written as 「時々」、「様々」、「色々」、「一々」.

In addition to these “features” of kanji, you will see a whole slew of delightful perks and surprises kanji has for you as you advance in Japanese. You can decide for yourself if that statement is sarcasm or not. However, don't be scared into thinking that Japanese is incredibly hard. Most of the words in

the language usually only have one kanji associated with it and a majority of kanji do not have more than two types of readings.

## Why Kanji?

Some people feel that the system of using separate, discrete symbols instead of a sensible alphabet is out-dated and overly complicated. In fact, it might have not have been a good idea to adopt Chinese into Japanese since both languages are fundamentally different in structure. But the purpose of this guide is not to debate over the decisions made thousands of years ago but to explain why you must learn kanji in order to learn Japanese. And by this, I mean more than just saying, “That’s how it’s done so get over it!”

Some people feel that Japanese should have just switched from Chinese to rōmaji to do away with all the complicated characters that was bewildering the foreign white devils. In fact, Korean has adopted their own alphabet to greatly simplify their written language to great success. So why didn’t it work for Japanese? And I ask this in the past tense because I believe that the government did attempt to replace kanji with rōmaji shortly after the second world war with little success. I think anyone who has typed at any length in Japanese can easily see why this did not work. At any one time, when you convert typed hiragana into kanji, you are presented with almost always at least two choices (two homophones) and sometimes even up to ten. (Try typing kikan). The 46 or so character alphabet of set sounds in Japanese makes it hard to avoid homophones. Compare this to the Korean alphabet which has 14 consonants and 10 vowels. Any of the consonants can be matched to any of the vowels giving 140 sounds. In addition, a third and sometimes even fourth consonant can be attached to create a single letter. This gives over 1960 sounds that can be created theoretically. (The sounds that are actually used is actually much less than that, though I don’t know the exact number.)

Since you want to read at a much faster rate than you talk, you need some visual cues to instantly tell you what each word is. You can use the shape of words in English to blaze through text because most words have different shapes. Try this little exercise: Hi, enve thgouh all teh wrods aer seplled icorrenctly, can you sltil udsternand me?” Korean does this too because it has enough characters to make words with distinct and different shapes. However, because the visual cues are not distinct as kanji, spaces needed to be added to remove ambiguities. (This presents its own set of problems of when and where to set spaces.)

With kanji, Japanese doesn’t have to worry about spaces and much of the problem with homophones are resolved. Without kanji, even if spaces were to be added, the ambiguities and lack of visual cues would make Japanese text much more difficult to read.

## Part 3: Basic Grammar

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Now that we have learned how to write Japanese, we can begin going over the basic grammatical structure of the language. This section primarily covers all the parts of speech: nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. It will also describe how to integrate the various parts of speech into a coherent sentence by using particles. By the end of this section, you should have a basic understanding of how Japanese works and how thoughts are expressed in Japanese.

### Lessons Covered in This Section

- Expressing State of Being — We will learn how to express the English verb “to be” in Japanese.
- Introduction to Particles — This lesson describes how to create relationships between things by designating a topic or identifier using 「は」、 「も」、 and 「が」 particles.
- Adjectives — Covers the main properties of adjectives. We will learn how to describe nouns by directly modifying the noun or by using particles.
- Verb Basics — Covers the basic properties of verbs. This lesson will describe how verbs are categorized so that we can easily generalize conjugation rules.
- Negative Verbs — Goes over the conjugation rules for negating verbs. We will learn how to transform the sentence, “He will go” into “He will *not* go.”
- Past Tense — Goes over the rules for conjugating verbs to the past tense. We will learn how to transform the sentence, “He will go” into “He *went*.”
- Particles used with Verbs — This lesson covers particles most often associated with verbs. We will learn the direct object particle (を) , target particle (に) , motion target particle (へ) , and the context particle (で) .
- Transitive and Intransitive Verbs — We will learn about transitive and intransitive verbs and how our usage of particles changes as a result.
- Descriptive Subordinate Clauses — We will learn how to modify nouns with verb and conjugated noun clauses to create more complicated sentences.
- Noun-related Particles — We will learn particles associated with nouns (と、や、とか、の) . Generic noun substitution will also be covered allowing us to essentially set just about anything as the topic or identifier. Its use as an implied explanation is also covered.
- Adverbs and Gobi — A short and simple section to finish off this section. It describes how to change adjectives into adverbs. It also introduces two very common and useful sentence endings.

## Expressing State of Being

Because I said so!

### Declaring Something Is So and So Using 「だ」

One of the trickiest part of Japanese is that there is no verb for the state-of-being like the verb “to be” in English. What Japanese has instead, is a way to declare that something is the way it is by attaching the hiragana character 「だ」 to a noun or na-adjective<sup>1</sup> *only*. You’ll see what this means when we learn about nouns and adjectives.

#### Declaring that something is so using 「だ」

- Attach 「だ」 to the noun or na-adjective<sup>2</sup>
  - 魚<sup>さかな</sup>。(Fish.)
  - 魚<sup>さかな</sup>だ。(Is fish.)

Seems easy enough. Here’s the real kicker though.

*A state-of-being can be implied without using 「だ」!*

As it stands, ( 1 ) is simply the word “fish” and doesn’t mean anything beyond that. However, we’ll see in the next section that with the topic particle, we can infer that something is a fish from the context without declaring anything. So the question that should be floating around in your head is, “If you can say something is [X] without using 「だ」, then what’s the point of even having it around?” Well, the main difference is that a declarative statement makes the sentence sound more emphatic and forceful in order to make it more... well declarative. Therefore, it is more common to hear men use 「だ」 at the end of sentences. This is also why you cannot use 「だ」 when asking a question because then it sounds like you’re making a statement and asking a question at the same time. (Unless you’re declaring a question word such as 「どこだ」.)

The declarative 「だ」 is also needed in various grammatical structures where a state-of-being must be explicitly declared. There is also the case where you must not attach it. It’s all quite a pain in the butt really but you don’t have to worry about it yet.

### Conjugating to the Negative State-of-Being

In Japanese, negative and past tense are all expressed by conjugation. We can conjugate a noun or adjective to either its negative or past tense to say that something is not [X] or that something was [X]. This may be a bit hard to grasp at first but none of these state-of-being conjugations make

1 See the *Adjectives* lesson.

2 See the *Adjectives* lesson.

anything declarative like 「だ」 does. We'll learn, in a later lesson<sup>3</sup>, how to make these tenses declarative by attaching 「だ」 to the end of the sentence.

First, for the negative tense, you simply attach 「じゃない」 to the noun or na-adjective.

### Conjugation rules for the negative state-of-being

- Attach 「じゃない」 to the noun or na-adjective<sup>4</sup>
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>友達<sup>ともだち</sup><sup>5</sup> → <sup>ともだち</sup>友達<sup>ともだち</sup>じゃない (is not friend)

### Examples

- (1) 魚<sup>いし</sup>じゃない。  
Is not fish.
- (2) <sup>がくせい</sup>学生<sup>がくせい</sup>じゃない。  
Is not student.
- (3) <sup>しず</sup>静か<sup>しず</sup>じゃない。  
Is not quiet.

### Conjugating for the Past State-of-Being

We will now learn the past tense of the state-of-being. To say something was something, 「だった」 is attached to the noun or na-adjective.

In order to say the negative past (was not), the negative tense is conjugated to the negative past tense by simply dropping the 「い」 from 「じゃない」 and adding 「かった」.

### Conjugation rules for the past state-of-being

- Past state-of-being: Attach 「だった」 to the noun or na-adjective<sup>6</sup>
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>友達<sup>ともだち</sup><sup>7</sup> → <sup>ともだち</sup>友達<sup>ともだち</sup>だった (was friend)
- Negative past state-of-being: Conjugate the noun or na-adjective to the negative tense first and then replace 「い」 of 「じゃない」 with 「かった」
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>友達<sup>ともだち</sup> → <sup>ともだち</sup>友達<sup>ともだち</sup>じゃない → <sup>ともだち</sup>友達<sup>ともだち</sup>じゃなかった (was not friend)

### Examples

- (1) <sup>さかな</sup>魚<sup>さかな</sup>だった。  
Was fish.

3 See the Noun-Related Particles (と, や, と, の) lesson.

4 See the Adjectives lesson.

5 friend

6 See the Adjectives lesson.

7 friend

(2) <sup>がくせい</sup>学生じゃな**かった**。  
Was not student.

(3) <sup>しず</sup>静かじゃな**かった**。  
Was not quiet.

## To Sum Up

We've now learned how to use express a state-of-being in all four tenses. Next we will learn some particles, which will allow us assign roles to words. Here is a summary chart of the conjugations we learned in this section.

### Summary of state-of-being

	Positive		Negative	
Non-Past	<sup>さかな</sup> 魚 (だ)	Is fish	<sup>さかな</sup> 魚 じゃない	Is not fish
Past	<sup>さかな</sup> 魚 だった	Was fish	<sup>さかな</sup> 魚 じゃなかった	Was not fish



# Introduction to Particles

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## Defining Grammatical Functions with Particles

We want to now make good use of what we learned in the last lesson by associating a noun with another noun. This is done with something called particles. Particles are one or two hiragana characters that attach to the end of a word to define what grammatical function that word is serving in the sentence. Using the correct particles is very important because the meaning of a sentence can completely change just by changing the particles. For example, the sentence “Eat fish.” can become “The fish eats.” simply by changing one particle.

## The 「は」 Topic Particle

The first particle we will learn is the topic particle. The topic particle essentially identifies what it is that you’re talking about, basically the topic of your sentence. Let’s say a person says, “Not student.” This is a perfectly valid sentence in Japanese but it doesn’t tell us much without knowing what the sentence is talking about. The topic particle will allow us to express what our sentences are about. The topic particle is the character 「は」. Now, while this character is normally pronounced /ha/, it is pronounced /wa/ only when it is being used as the topic particle.

### Example 1

ボブ：           アリス<sup>がくせい</sup>は学生？  
Are you (Alice) student?

アリス：       うん、<sup>がくせい</sup>学生。  
Yeah, I am.

Here, Bob is indicating that his question is about Alice. Notice how the 「だ」 is left out and yet the English translation has the word “are” and “am.” Since we know the topic is Alice, we don’t need anything else to guess that Alice is a student. In fact, since Bob is asking a question, he can’t attach 「だ」. That would be like trying to make a statement and asking a question at the same time.

### Example 2

ボブ：           ジム<sup>あした</sup>は明日？  
Jim is tomorrow?

アリス：       <sup>あした</sup>明日じゃない。  
Not tomorrow.

Since we have no context, we don’t have enough information to make any sense of this conversation. It obviously makes no sense for Jim to actually *be* tomorrow. Given a context, as long as the sentence

has something to do with Jim and tomorrow, it can mean anything. For instance, they could be talking about when an exam is being held.

### Example 3

アリス： 今日<sup>きょう</sup>は試験<sup>しけん</sup>だ。  
Today is exam.

ボブ： ジムは？  
What about Jim?

アリス： ジムは明日<sup>あした</sup>。  
Jim is tomorrow. (As for Jim, the exam is tomorrow.)

We need to realize how generic the topic can really be. A topic can be referring to any action or object from anywhere even including other sentences. For example, in the last sentence of the conversation above, even though the sentence is about when the exam is for Jim, the word “exam” doesn’t appear anywhere in the sentence!

We’ll see a more specific particle that ties more closely into the sentence at the end of this lesson with the identifier particle.

## The 「も」 Inclusive Topic Particle

Another particle that is very similar to the topic particle is the inclusive topic particle. It is essentially the topic particle with the additional meaning of “also.” Basically, it can introduce another topic in addition to the current topic. The inclusive topic particle is the 「も」 character and its use is best explained by an example.

### Example 1

ボブ： アリスは<sup>がくせい</sup>学生？  
Are you (Alice) student?

アリス： うん、トム<sup>がくせい</sup>も学生。  
Yes, and Tom is also student.

Notice, that Alice must be consistent with the inclusion. It would not make sense to say, “I am a student, and Tom is also not a student.” Instead, Alice would use the 「は」 particle to remove the additional meaning of inclusion as seen in the next example.

### Example 2

ボブ： アリスは<sup>がくせい</sup>学生？  
Are you (Alice) student?

アリス： うん、でもトム<sup>がくせい</sup>は学生じゃない。  
Yes, but Tom is not student.

### Example 3

This is also another possibility.

ボブ： アリスは<sup>がくせい</sup>学生？  
Are you (Alice) student?

アリス： ううん、トム<sup>もがくせい</sup>も学生じゃない。  
No, and Tom is also not student.

So why would Alice, all of a sudden, talk about Tom when Bob is asking about Alice? Maybe Tom is standing right next to her and she wants to include Tom in the conversation.

### The 「が」 Identifier Particle

OK, so we can make a topic using the 「は」 and 「も」 particle. But what if we don't know what the topic is? What if I wanted to ask, "Who is the student?" What I need is some kind of identifier because I don't know who the student is. If I used the topic particle, the question would become, "Is who the student?" and that doesn't make any sense because "who" is not an actual person.

This is where the 「が」 particle comes into play. It is also referred to as the subject particle but I hate that name since it means something completely different in English grammar. Instead, I move to call it the identifier particle because it indicates that the speaker wants to identify something unspecified.

### Example 1

ボブ： <sup>だれ</sup>誰<sup>が</sup>がくせい学生？  
Who is the one that is student?

アリス： ジム<sup>が</sup>がくせい学生。  
Jim is the one who is the student.

Bob wants to identify who among all the possible candidates is a student. Alice responds that Jim is the one. Notice, Alice could also have answered with the topic particle to indicate that, speaking of Jim, she knows that he is a student (maybe not the student). You can see the difference in the next example.

### Example 2

(1) <sup>だれ</sup>誰<sup>が</sup>がくせい学生？  
Who is the one that is student?

(2) <sup>がくせい</sup>学生は<sup>だれ</sup>誰？  
(The) student is who?

Hopefully, you can see that (1) seeks to identify a specific person for "student" while (2) is simply talking about the student. You cannot replace 「が」 with 「は」 in (1) because "who" would become the topic and the question would become, "Is who a student?"

The two particles 「は」 and 「が」 may seem very similar only because it is impossible to translate the difference directly into English. For example, 「<sup>わたし</sup>私<sup>が</sup>は<sup>がくせい</sup>学生」 and 「<sup>わたし</sup>私<sup>が</sup>が<sup>がくせい</sup>学生」 both translate into, “I am student.”<sup>8</sup> However, they only seem similar because English cannot express information about the context as succinctly as Japanese sometimes can. In the first sentence 「<sup>わたし</sup>私<sup>は</sup>は<sup>がくせい</sup>学生」, since 「<sup>わたし</sup>私」 is the topic, the sentence means, “Speaking about me, I am a student.” However, in the second sentence, 「<sup>わたし</sup>私」 is specifying who the 「<sup>がくせい</sup>学生」 is. If we want to know who the student is, the 「<sup>が</sup>が」 particle tells us its 「<sup>わたし</sup>私」.

You can also think about the 「<sup>が</sup>が」 particle as always answering a silent question. For example, if we have 「<sup>さかな</sup>ジム<sup>が</sup>が魚だ」, we are answering a question such as “Who is the fish?” or “Which person is the fish?” or maybe even “What food does Jim like?” Or given the sentence, 「<sup>くるま</sup>これが車」, we can be answering the question, “Which is the car?” or “What is the car?” The 「は」 and 「が」 particles are actually quite different if you think of it the right way. The 「が」 particle identifies a specific property of something while the 「は」 particle is used only to bring up a new topic of conversation. This is why, in longer sentences, it is common to separate the topic with commas to remove ambiguity about which part of the sentence the topic applies to.

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8 Well technically, it's the most likely translation given the lack of context.

# Adjectives

Beautiful, is an Adjective

## Properties of Adjectives

Now that we can connect two nouns together in various ways using particles, we want to describe our nouns with adjectives. An adjective can directly modify a noun that immediately follows it. It can also be connected in the same way we did with nouns using particles. All adjectives fall under two categories: na-adjectives and i-adjectives. We will see how they are different and how to use them in sentences.

## The na-Adjective

The na-adjective is very simple to learn because it acts essentially like a noun. In fact, they are so similar; you can assume that they behave the same way unless I specifically point out differences. One main difference is that a na-adjective can directly modify a noun following it by sticking 「な」 between the adjective and noun. (Hence the name, na-adjective.)

- (1) <sup>しず</sup>静<sup>ひと</sup>かな人。  
Quiet person.

In addition to this direct noun modification which requires a 「な」, you can also say that a noun is an adjective by using the topic or identifier particle in a [Noun] [Particle] [Adj] sentence structure (for instance 「人は静か」). This is essentially the same thing as the state-of-being with nouns that we've already covered in the previous two sections. However, since it doesn't make sense for an adjective to be a noun, you cannot have a [Adj] [Particle] [Noun] sentence structure (for instance 「静かが人」). This is pretty obvious because, for instance, while a person can be quiet, it makes no sense for quiet to be a person.

- (1) <sup>ともだち</sup>友達<sup>しんせつ</sup>は親切。

Friend is kind.

- (2) <sup>ともだち</sup>友達<sup>しんせつ</sup>は親切<sup>ひと</sup>な人。

Friend is kind person.

Remember how na-adjectives act almost exactly the same as nouns? Well, you can see this by the following examples.

- (1) ボブは<sup>さかな</sup>魚<sup>す</sup>が好きだ。  
Bob likes fish.

- (2) ボブは<sup>さかな</sup>魚<sup>す</sup>が好きじゃない。  
Bob does not like fish.

(3) ボブは魚が<sup>さかな</sup>好き<sup>す</sup>だった。  
Bob liked fish.

(4) ボブは魚が<sup>さかな</sup>好き<sup>す</sup>じゃなかった。  
Bob did not like fish.

Do the conjugations look familiar? They should, if you paid attention to the section about state-of-being conjugations for nouns.<sup>9</sup> If it bothers you that “like” is an adjective and not a verb in Japanese, you can think of 「好き」 as meaning “desirable.” Also, you can see a good example of the topic and identifier particle working in harmony. The sentence is about the topic “Bob” and “fish” identifies specifically what Bob likes.

You can also use the last three conjugations to directly modify the noun. (Remember to attach 「な」 for positive non-past tense.)

(1) 魚が<sup>さかな</sup>好き<sup>す</sup>なタイプ。  
Type that likes fish.

(2) 魚が<sup>さかな</sup>好き<sup>す</sup>じゃないタイプ。  
Type that does not like fish.

(3) 魚が<sup>さかな</sup>好き<sup>す</sup>だったタイプ。  
Type that liked fish.

(4) 魚が<sup>さかな</sup>好き<sup>す</sup>じゃなかったタイプ。  
Type that did not like fish.

Here, the entire clause 「魚が好き」、「魚が好きじゃない」、etc. is modifying “type” to talk about types (of people) that like or dislike fish. You can see why this type of sentence is useful

because 「タイプは魚が<sup>さかな</sup>好き<sup>す</sup>だ。」 would mean “The type likes fish,” which doesn’t make much sense.

We can even treat the whole descriptive noun clause as we would a single noun. For instance, we can make the whole clause a topic like the following example.

(1) 魚が<sup>さかな</sup>好き<sup>す</sup>じゃないタイプは、肉が<sup>にく</sup>好き<sup>す</sup>だ。  
Types (of people) who do not like fish like meat.

## The i-Adjective

The i-adjective is called that because it always ends in the hiragana character 「い」. This is the okurigana and it is the part that will change as you conjugate the adjective. But you may know some na-adjectives that also end in 「い」 such as 「きれい (な)」. So how can you tell the difference? The bad news is there really is no way to tell for sure. However, the really good news is that I can only think of two examples of na-adjectives that end with 「い」 that is usually written in hiragana: 「きれいい」 and 「嫌<sup>きら</sup>いい」. All other na-adjectives I can think of that end in 「い」 is usually written in

<sup>9</sup> See the *Expressing State of Being* lesson.

kanji and so you can easily tell that it's not an i-adjective. For instance, in the case of 「きれい」, which is 「綺麗」 or 「奇麗」 in kanji, since the 「い」 part of 「麗」 is encased in kanji, you know that it can't be an i-adjective. That's because the whole point of the 「い」 in i-adjectives is to allow conjugation without having it affect the kanji. In fact, 「嫌い」 is the only na-adjective I can think of that ends in hiragana 「い」 without a kanji. This has to do with the fact that 「嫌い」 is actually derived from the verb 「嫌う」

Remember how the negative state-of-being<sup>10</sup> for nouns also ended in 「い」 (じゃない)? Well, you can treat i-adjectives in the same fashion as the negative state-of-being for nouns. And just like the negative state-of-being for nouns, you cannot attach the declarative 「だ」 to i-adjectives like you can with nouns or na-adjectives.

*Do NOT attach 「だ」 to i-adjectives.*

Now that we got that matter cleared up, we can learn the conjugation rules for i-adjectives. There are two new rules for i-adjective conjugations. To negate or set to past tense, we first drop the 「い」, then add 「くない」 for negation or 「かった」 for past tense. Since 「くない」 ends in an 「い」, you can also treat the negative just like another i-adjective. Therefore, the rule for conjugating to negative past tense is the same as the rule for the positive past tense.

### Conjugation rules for i-adjectives

- **Negative:** First remove the trailing 「い」 from the i-adjective and then attach 「くない」
  - 例) <sup>たか</sup>高~~い~~ → <sup>たか</sup>高<sup>くない</sup>
- **Past-tense:** First remove the trailing 「い」 from the i-adjective or negative i-adjective and then attach 「かった」
  - 例) <sup>たか</sup>高~~い~~ → <sup>たか</sup>高<sup>かった</sup>
  - 例) <sup>たか</sup>高<sup>くない</sup>~~い~~ → <sup>たか</sup>高<sup>くなかった</sup>

### Summary of i-adjectives

	Positive	Negative
Non-Past	<sup>たか</sup> 高 <sup>い</sup>	<sup>たか</sup> 高 <sup>くない</sup>
Past	<sup>たか</sup> 高 <sup>かった</sup>	<sup>たか</sup> 高 <sup>くなかった</sup>

You can directly modify nouns by just attaching the noun to the adjective.

<sup>10</sup> See the *Expressing State of Being* lesson.

- (1) <sup>たか</sup>高いビル。  
Tall building.
- (2) <sup>たか</sup>高くないビル。  
Not tall building.
- (3) <sup>たか</sup>高かったビル。  
Building that was tall.
- (4) <sup>たか</sup>高くなかったビル。  
Building that was not tall.

You can also string multiple adjectives successively in any order in any form.

- (1) <sup>しず</sup>静かな<sup>たか</sup>高いビル。  
A quiet, tall building.
- (2) <sup>たか</sup>高くない<sup>しず</sup>静かなビル。  
A not tall, quiet building.

Note that you can make the same type of descriptive noun clause as we have done with na-adjectives. The only difference, of course, is that we don't need 「な」 to directly modify the noun. In the following example, the descriptive clause 「<sup>ねだん</sup>値段が<sup>たか</sup>高い」 is directly modifying 「レストラン」.

- (1) <sup>ねだん</sup>値段が<sup>たか</sup>高いレストランはあまり<sup>す</sup>好きじゃない。  
Don't like high price restaurants very much.

## An Annoying Exception

There is one i-adjective meaning “good” that acts slightly differently from all other i-adjectives. This is a classic case of how learning Japanese is harder for beginners because the most common and useful words also have the most exceptions. The word for “good” was originally 「よい (良い)」. However, with time, it soon became 「いい」. When it is written in kanji, it is usually read as 「よい」 so 「いい」 is almost always hiragana. That's all fine and good. Unfortunately, all the conjugations are still derived from 「よい」 and not 「いい」. This is shown in the next table.

Another adjective that acts like this is 「<sup>かつ</sup>かっこいい」 because it is an abbreviated version of two words merged together: 「<sup>かつこう</sup>格好」 and 「いい」. Since it uses the same 「いい」, you need to use the same conjugations.

### Conjugation for 「いい」

	Positive	Negative
Non-Past	いい	よくない
Past	よかった	よくなかった



## Conjugation for 「カッコいい」

	Positive	Negative
Non-Past	カッコいい	カッコよくない
Past	カッコよくない	カッコよくなかった

Take care to make all the conjugations from 「よい」 not 「いい」.

### Examples

- (1) <sup>ねだん</sup>値段があんまりよくない。  
Price isn't very good.
- (2) <sup>かれ</sup>彼はカッコよかった！  
He looked really cool!

# Verb Basics

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Let's do stuff with verbs!

## Role of Verbs

We've now learned how to describe nouns in various ways with other nouns and adjectives. This gives us quite a bit of expressive power. However, we still cannot express actions. This is where verbs come in. Verbs, in Japanese, always come at the end of clauses. Since we have not yet learned how to create more than one clause, for now it means that any sentence with a verb must end with the verb. We will now learn the two main categories of verbs, which will allow us to accurately define rules for conjugation. Before learning about verbs, there is one important thing to keep in mind.

*A grammatically complete sentence requires a verb only  
(including state of being).*

Or to rephrase, unlike English, the only thing you need to make a grammatically complete sentence is a verb and nothing else! Understanding this fundamental property is essential to understanding Japanese. That's why even the simplest, most basic Japanese sentence cannot be translated into English! All conjugations will start from the dictionary form (as they appear in the dictionary).

A grammatically complete sentence:

- (1) <sup>た</sup>食べる。  
Eat. (possible translations include: I eat/she eats/they eat)

## Classifying Verbs into ru-Verbs and u-Verbs

Almost all verbs in Japanese can be classified into two categories: ru-verb (一段動詞 <sup>いちだん どうし</sup>) and u-verbs (五段動詞 <sup>ごだん どうし</sup>). The only two verbs that are not considered to be in either category are 「する」 meaning “to do” and 「来る」 <sup>くる</sup> meaning “to come.” Otherwise, the rules for conjugation are almost all the same depending on what class the verb is in. The way to distinguish between these verbs is fairly straightforward.

Remember, every verb has a string of kana called okurigana, which you can modify to conjugate the verb. If you convert the verb to Roman characters (called 「ローマ字」 <sup>じ</sup> in Japanese) and it ends in either “iru” or “eru,” then it is usually a ru-verb. For example, 「食べる」 <sup>た</sup> is romanized as “taberu” and since it ends in “eru,” it is a ru-verb. Another example of a ru-verb is 「起きる」 <sup>お</sup>, which romanizes to “okiru.” All other verbs that do not end in “iru” or “eru” are u-verbs.

However, there is just one snag here. Notice that all ru-verbs end with 「る」 and u-verbs always end in a / u / vowel sound. This unfortunately includes 「る」 in addition to 「つ」、「す」、「く」、「ぐ」、「む」、「ぶ」、「う」、and 「ぬ」 (「死ぬ」 <sup>し</sup> is the only verb that ends

in 「ぬ」 ). Even if a verb ends with 「る」 , if it does not end in “iru” or “eru,” it is always an u-verb. However, there are a number of u-verbs that end in “iru” or “eru” and there is no way to distinguish them from regular ru-verbs apart from memorization. You can refer to the appendix at the end of this lesson for a list of such verbs. You can also refer to [Jim Breen’s WWWJDIC](#),<sup>11</sup> if you have any doubts. Ru-verb are denoted as (v1) while u-verbs are denoted as (v5r).

Because of the audible consistency in the rules, with practice, u-verbs will start to “sound” like u-verbs and likewise for ru-verbs. Eventually, you’ll be able to categorize new verbs just like that without giving it a second thought. Or at least, that should be the intended goal.

### ***How to classify ru-verbs and u-verbs***

- Does not end in iru/eru → u-verb
- Ends in iru/eru → ru-verb with some exceptions

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11 <http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/jwb/wwwjdic?1C>

### Sample ru-verbs

Verb	ローマ字 <sup>じ</sup>
食べる <sup>た</sup>	taberu
着る <sup>き</sup>	kiru
信じる <sup>しん</sup>	shinjiru
寝る <sup>ね</sup>	neru
起きる <sup>お</sup>	okiru
出る <sup>で</sup>	deru
掛ける <sup>か</sup>	kakeru
捨てる <sup>す</sup>	suteru
調べる <sup>しら</sup>	shiraberu

### Sample u-verbs

Verb	ローマ字 <sup>じ</sup>
話す <sup>はな</sup>	hanasu
聞く <sup>き</sup>	kiku
泳ぐ <sup>およ</sup>	oyogu
遊ぶ <sup>あそ</sup>	asobu
待つ <sup>ま</sup>	matsu
飲む <sup>の</sup>	nomu
直す <sup>なお</sup>	naoru
死ぬ <sup>し</sup>	shinu
買う <sup>か</sup>	kau

### Neither ru-verb nor u-verb

Verb	ローマ字 <sup>じ</sup>
する	suru
くる	kuru

## Examples

Here are some example sentences using ru-verbs, u-verbs, and exception verbs.

- (1) アリスは食べる<sup>た</sup>。  
As for Alice, eat.
- (2) ジムが遊ぶ<sup>あそ</sup>。  
Jim is the one that plays.
- (3) ボブもする。  
Bob also do.
- (4) お金がある<sup>かね</sup>。  
There is money. (lit: As for money, it exists.)
- (5) 私は買う<sup>わたし か</sup>。  
As for me, buy.
- (6) 猫はいる<sup>ねこ</sup>。  
There is cat. (lit: As for cat, it exists.)

## Appendix: iru/eru u-Verbs

Here is a list of commonly used u-verbs that end in “iru” or “eru.” This list is categorized roughly into three levels to help you focus on the verbs you need to learn. This list is *not* intended to include every verb under the sun.

iru/eru u-verbs grouped (roughly) by level

Basic	Intermediate	Advanced
<small>い</small> 要る	<small>あせ</small> 焦る	<small>あざけ</small> 嘲る
<small>かえ</small> 帰る	<small>かぎ</small> 限る	<small>くつがえ</small> 覆る
<small>き</small> 切る	<small>け</small> 蹴る	<small>さえぎ</small> 遮る
しゃべる	<small>すべ</small> 滑る	<small>ののし</small> 罵る
<small>し</small> 知る	<small>にぎ</small> 握る	<small>ひね</small> 捻る
<small>はい</small> 入る	<small>ね</small> 練る	<small>ひるがえ</small> 翻る
<small>はし</small> 走る	<small>ふ</small> 伏せる	<small>みなぎ</small> 漲る
<small>へ</small> 減る	<small>まい</small> 参る	<small>めい</small> 滅入る
	<small>ま</small> 交じる	<small>よみがえ</small> 蘇る

# Negative Verbs

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Sometimes you have to be negative

## Negating Verbs

Now that we've seen how to declare things and perform actions with verbs, we want to be able to say the negative. In other words, we want to say that such-and-such action was not performed. Verbs are negated by conjugating to their negative form just like the state-of-being for nouns and adjectives. However, the rules are a tad more complicated.

## Conjugating Verbs into the Negative

We will now make use of the verb classifications we learned in the last section to define the rules for conjugation. But before we get into that, we need to cover one very important exception to the negative conjugation rules, the verb 「ある」. 「ある」 is an u-verb used to express existence of inanimate objects.

For example, if you wanted to say that a chair is in the room, you would use the verb 「ある」. The equivalent verb for animate objects (such as people or animals) is 「いる」, which is a normal ru-verb. For example, if you wanted to say that a person is in the room, you must use the verb 「いる」 not 「ある」. These two verbs 「ある」 and 「いる」 are quite different from all other verbs because they describe existence and are not an actual action. You also have to go through the bother of picking the right one for inanimate and animate objects.

Anyway, the reason I bring it up here is because the negative of 「ある」 is 「ない」 (meaning that something does not exist). Remember, this is an exception so do not apply the normal rules of negation to this verb.

*The negative of 「ある」 is 「ない」.*

Here are the rules for all other verbs. To negate a ru-verb, you simply drop 「る」 and add 「ない」.

For u-verbs, it may be helpful to see the romanized version of the verb. You simply drop the /u/ vowel sound and add "anai." Or, more preferably, you can refer back to the hiragana table.<sup>12</sup> You take the last hiragana character which will always be in the / u / row, move up two columns and replace it with the character in the / a / row. For example 「く」 changes to 「か」.

One important exception to this rule are for verbs that end in 「う」. You must substitute 「わ」 for 「う」 and not 「あ」 as the rule would suggest. You will also have to memorize the conjugations for the two exception verbs and 「ある」. The following tables show the conjugation for sample verbs and the exception verbs.

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<sup>12</sup> See the ひらがな lesson in Part 2.

## How to conjugate verbs to the negative form

- ru-verbs: To conjugate ru-verbs to their negative, drop the last 「る」 and attach 「ない」 to the result.
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>見る → <sup>み</sup>見<sup>ない</sup>
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>出る → <sup>で</sup>出<sup>ない</sup>
- u-verbs: To conjugate u-verbs to their negative, first replace the last / u / character with the / a / sound equivalent and attach 「ない」 to the result.
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>飲<sup>む</sup> → <sup>の</sup>飲<sup>ま</sup> → <sup>の</sup>飲<sup>ま</sup>ない
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>待<sup>つ</sup> → <sup>ま</sup>待<sup>た</sup> → <sup>ま</sup>待<sup>た</sup>ない
- ※ One important exception is verbs that end in 「う」. For these, you must replace 「う」 with 「わ」 (not 「あ」) and attach 「ない」 to the result.
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>拾<sup>う</sup> → <sup>ひろ</sup>拾<sup>わ</sup> → <sup>ひろ</sup>拾<sup>わ</sup>ない

## Sample ru-verbs

Positive	Negative
た 食べる	た 食べない
き 着る	き 着ない
しん 信じる	しん 信じない
ね 寝る	ね 寝ない
お 起きる	お 起きない
で 出る	で 出ない
か 掛ける	か 掛けない
す 捨てる	す 捨てない
しら 調べる	しら 調べない

## Sample u-verbs

Positive	Negative	ローマ字	ローマ字 (neg)
はな 話 <u>す</u>	はな 話 <u>さない</u>	hanasu	hanas <u>anai</u>
き 聞 <u>く</u>	き 聞 <u>かない</u>	kiku	kik <u>anai</u>
およ 泳 <u>ぐ</u>	およ 泳 <u>がない</u>	oyogu	oyog <u>anai</u>
あそ 遊 <u>ぶ</u>	あそ 遊 <u>ばない</u>	asobu	asob <u>anai</u>
ま 待 <u>つ</u>	ま 待 <u>たない</u>	matu <sup>13</sup>	mat <u>anai</u>
の 飲 <u>む</u>	の 飲 <u>まない</u>	nomu	nom <u>anai</u>
なお 直 <u>る</u>	なお 直 <u>らない</u>	naoru	naor <u>anai</u>
し 死 <u>ぬ</u>	し 死 <u>なない</u>	shinu	shin <u>anai</u>
* <u>か</u> 買 <u>う</u>	* <u>か</u> 買 <u>わない</u>	ka <u>u</u>	ka <u>wanai</u>

\* = exceptions particular to this conjugation

## Exception Verbs

Positive	Negative
する	しない
くる	こない
*ある	ない

\* = exceptions particular to this conjugation

## Examples

Here are some example sentences using the negative form. To look these words up, use the link labeled “Translate Words in Japanese Text” from the WWWJDIC or just [click here](#).<sup>14</sup> It will reverse the conjugation and give you the dictionary form. (And even what conjugations were used to boot!) Here are the example sentences from the last section conjugated to the negative.

- (1) アリスは食べない。  
As for Alice, does not eat.

<sup>13</sup> つ is pronounced “tsu,” but it’s treated as “tu” for conjugation purposes because of its position on the hiragana table.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/jwb/wwwjdic?9T>



- (2) ジムが<sup>あそ</sup>遊ばない。  
Jim is the one that does not play.
- (3) ボブもしない。  
Bob also does not do.
- (4) お金<sup>かね</sup>がない。  
There is no money. (lit: As for money, does not exist.)
- (5) わたし<sup>わたし</sup>は<sup>か</sup>買わない。  
As for me, not buy.
- (6) 猫<sup>ねこ</sup>はいない。  
There is no cat. (lit: As for cat, does not exist.)

# Past Tense

*It's all in the past*

## Changing Verbs to the Past Tense

We will finish defining all the basic properties of verbs by learning how to express the past and past-negative tense of actions. I will warn you in advance that the conjugation rules in this section will be the most complex rules you will learn in all of Japanese. On the one hand, once you have this section nailed, all other rules of conjugation will seem simple. On the other hand, you might need to refer back to this section many times before you finally get all the rules. You will probably need a great deal of practice until you can become familiar with all the different conjugations.

## Past Tense for ru-Verbs

We will start off with the easy category of ru-verbs. To change a ru-verb from the dictionary form into the past tense, you simply drop the 「る」 and add 「た」.

### *To change ru-verbs into the past tense*

- Drop the 「る」 part of the ru-verb and add 「た」
  - 例) 出<sup>れい</sup>る → 出<sup>で</sup>た
  - 例) 捨<sup>れい</sup>てる → 捨<sup>す</sup>てた

## Examples

- (1) ご飯<sup>はん</sup>は、食<sup>た</sup>べた。  
About meal, ate.
- (2) 映画<sup>えいが</sup>は、全<sup>ぜん</sup>部<sup>ぶ</sup>見<sup>み</sup>た。  
About movie, saw them all.

## Past Tense for u-Verbs

Changing a u-verb from dictionary form to the past tense is difficult because we must break up u-verbs into four additional categories. These four categories depend on the last character of the verb. The table below illustrates the different sub-categories. In addition, there is one exception to the rules, which is the verb 「行<sup>い</sup>く」. I've bundled it with the regular exception verbs 「する」 and 「来<sup>く</sup>る」 even though 「行<sup>い</sup>く」 is a regular u-verb in all other conjugations.

## Past tense conjugations for u-verbs

Ending	Non-Past	changes to...	Past
す	はな 話す	す→した	はな 話した
く ぐ	や 焼く およ 泳ぐ	く→いた ぐ→いだ	や 焼いた およ 泳いだ
む ぶ ぬ	か 噛む あそ 遊ぶ し 死ぬ	む→んだ ぶ→んだ ぬ→んだ	か 噛んだ あそ 遊んだ し 死んだ
る う つ	き 切る ひろ 拾う も 持つ	る→った う→った つ→った	き 切った ひろ 拾った も 持った

### Exceptions

Non-Past	Past
する	した
くる	きた
* いく	行った

\* = exceptions particular to this conjugation

### Examples

- (1) <sup>きょう</sup>今日は、<sup>はし</sup>走った。  
As for today, ran.
- (2) <sup>ともだち</sup>友達が<sup>き</sup>来た。  
Friend is the one that came.
- (3) <sup>わたし</sup>私も<sup>あそ</sup>遊んだ。  
I also played.
- (4) <sup>べんぎょう</sup>勉強は、した。  
About homework, did it.

## Past Negative Tense for All Verbs

The conjugation rules for the past-negative tense are the same for all verbs. You might have noticed that the negative tense of just about everything always end in 「ない」. The conjugation rule for the past-negative tense of verbs is pretty much the same as all the other negative tenses that end in 「ない」. You simply take the negative tense<sup>15</sup> of any verb, remove the 「い」 from the 「ない」 ending, and replace it with 「かった」.

### To change verbs into the past-negative tense

- Change the first verb to the negative tense<sup>16</sup> and replace the 「い」 with 「かった」

- 例) 捨<sup>れい</sup>て<sup>す</sup>る → 捨<sup>す</sup>て<sup>す</sup>な<sup>い</sup>い → 捨<sup>す</sup>て<sup>す</sup>な<sup>か</sup>った
- 例) 行<sup>れい</sup>く → 行<sup>い</sup>か<sup>い</sup>な<sup>い</sup>い → 行<sup>い</sup>か<sup>な</sup>か<sup>い</sup>った

### Examples

- (1) アリスは食<sup>た</sup>べな<sup>か</sup>った。  
As for Alice, did not eat.
- (2) ジムがしな<sup>か</sup>った。  
Jim is the one that did not do.
- (3) ボブも行<sup>い</sup>か<sup>な</sup>か<sup>い</sup>った。  
Bob also did not go.
- (4) お金<sup>かね</sup>がな<sup>か</sup>った。  
There was no money. (lit: As for money, it did not exist.)
- (5) 私<sup>わたし</sup>は買<sup>か</sup>わな<sup>か</sup>った。  
As for me, did not buy.
- (6) 猫<sup>ねこ</sup>はい<sup>な</sup>か<sup>い</sup>った。  
There was no cat. (lit: As for cat, it did not exist.)

<sup>15</sup> See the *Negative Verbs* lesson.

<sup>16</sup> See the “Conjugating Verbs Into the Negative” heading in the *Negative Verbs* lesson.

# Particles Used with Verbs

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Particles Reloaded

## Particles Used with Verbs

In this section we will learn some new particles essential for using verbs. Basically, we will learn how to specify the direct object of a verb and the location where a verb takes place (either physical or abstract).

### The Direct Object 「を」 Particle

The first particle we will learn is the object particle because it is a very straightforward particle. The 「を」 character is attached to the end of a word to signify that that word is the direct object of the verb. This character is essentially never used anywhere else. That is why the katakana equivalent 「ヲ」 is almost never used since particles are always written in hiragana. The 「を」 character, while technically pronounced as /wo/ essentially sounds like /o/ in real speech. Here are some examples of the direct object particle in action.

(1) <sup>さかな</sup> <sup>た</sup> 魚 **を** 食べる。  
Eat fish.

(2) ジュース <sup>の</sup> **を** 飲んだ。  
Drank juice.

Though it may not seem like the direct object we're familiar with in English, places can be the direct object of motion verbs such as 「<sup>ある</sup>歩く」 and 「<sup>はし</sup>走る」. Since the motion verb is done to the location, the concept of direct object is the same in Japanese. However as you can see by the examples, in English, it often translates to something a bit different due to the slight difference in the concept of direct object.

(3) <sup>まち</sup> 街 **を** <sup>ある</sup>ぶらぶら歩く。  
Aimlessly walk through town. (Lit: Aimlessly walk town)

(4) <sup>こうそくどうろ</sup> 高速道路 <sup>はし</sup> **を** 走る。  
Run through expressway. (Lit: Run expressway)

When you use 「する」 with a noun, the 「を」 particle is optional and you can treat the whole [noun+する] as one verb.

(5) <sup>まいにち</sup> 毎日、<sup>にほんご</sup> 日本語 <sup>べんきょう</sup> **を** 勉強 **する**。  
Study Japanese everyday.

(6) メールアドレス <sup>とうろく</sup> **を** 登録 **した**。  
Registered email address.

## The Target 「に」 Particle

The 「に」 particle can specify a target of a verb. This is different from the 「を」 particle in which the verb does something to the direct object. With the 「に」 particle, the verb does something toward the word associated with the 「に」 particle. For example, the target of any motion verb<sup>17</sup> is specified by the 「に」 particle.

- (1) ボブは日本<sup>にほん</sup>に<sup>い</sup>行った。  
Bob went to Japan.
- (2) 家<sup>いえ</sup>に<sup>かえ</sup>帰らない。  
Not go back home.
- (3) 部屋<sup>へや</sup>に<sup>く</sup>くる。  
Come to room.

Since the motion verb “to come” doesn’t target toward but rather from, using 「に」 would mean “come to.” If you want to say, “come from” instead you would need to use 「から」 (which means “from”) instead of 「に」. It is also often paired with 「まで」, which means “up to.”

- (1) アリスは、アメリカ<sup>から</sup>きた。  
Alice came from America.
- (2) 宿題<sup>しゅくだい</sup>を今日<sup>きょう</sup>から明日<sup>あした</sup>まで<sup>です</sup>る。  
Will do homework from today to tomorrow.

The idea of a target in Japanese is very general and is not restricted to motion verbs. For example, the location of an object is defined as the target of the verb for existence (ある and いる). Time is also a common target. Here are some examples of non-motion verbs and their targets

- (1) 猫<sup>ねこ</sup>は部屋<sup>へや</sup>に<sup>い</sup>る。  
Cat is in room.
- (2) 椅子<sup>いす</sup>が台所<sup>だいどころ</sup>に<sup>あ</sup>った。  
Chair was in the kitchen.
- (3) いい友達<sup>ともだち</sup>に<sup>あ</sup>った。  
Met good friend.
- (4) ジムは医者<sup>いしや</sup>に<sup>な</sup>る。  
Jim will become doctor.

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17 Japanese motion verbs are relative to the speaker. 行く implies motion away from the speaker. 来る implies motion towards the speaker. Thus, if you were to call your friend and say, “I’m coming” in English, in Japanese you would use 「行く」 (away from my location) rather than 「来る」 (towards my location). In this way, it’s not really correct to say that 「来る」 means “to come.”

- (5) <sup>せんしゅう</sup>先週<sup>に</sup><sup>としょかん</sup>図書館<sup>に</sup><sup>い</sup>行った。  
Went to library last week.

Don't forget to use 「ある」 for inanimate objects such as the chair and 「いる」 for animate objects such as the cat.

There is a slight difference in meaning between using the target particle with time and not using anything at all.

- (1) <sup>ともだち</sup>友達は、<sup>らいねん</sup>来年、<sup>にほん</sup>日本<sup>に</sup><sup>い</sup>行く。  
Next year, friend go to Japan.

- (2) <sup>ともだち</sup>友達は、<sup>らいねん</sup>来年<sup>に</sup><sup>にほん</sup>日本<sup>に</sup><sup>い</sup>行く。  
Friend go to Japan next year.

The target particle makes the date a specific target emphasizing that the friend will go to Japan at that time. Without the particle, there is no special emphasis.

## The Directional 「へ」 Particle

While 「へ」 is normally pronounced /he/, when it is being used as a particle, it is always pronounced /e/ (え). The primary difference between the 「に」 and 「へ」 particle is that 「に」 goes to a target as the final, intended destination (both physical or abstract). The 「へ」 particle, on the other hand, is used to express the fact that one is setting out towards the direction of the target. As a result, it is only used with directional motion verbs. It also does not guarantee whether the target is the final intended destination, only that one is heading towards that direction. In other words, the 「に」 particle sticks to the destination while the 「へ」 particle is fuzzy about where one is ultimately headed. For example, if we choose to replace 「に」 with 「へ」 in the first three examples of the previous section, the nuance changes slightly.

- (1) <sup>にほん</sup>ボブは日本<sup>へ</sup><sup>い</sup>行った。  
Bob **headed towards** Japan.
- (2) <sup>いえ</sup>家<sup>へ</sup><sup>かえ</sup>帰らない。  
Not go back **towards** home to house.
- (3) <sup>へや</sup>部屋<sup>へ</sup>くる。  
Come **towards** room.

Note that we cannot use the 「へ」 particle with verbs that have no physical direction. For example, the following is incorrect.

- (誤) <sup>いしや</sup>医者<sup>へ</sup>なる。 - (Grammatically incorrect version of 「<sup>いしや</sup>医者になる」.)

This does not mean to say that 「へ」 cannot set out towards an abstract concept. In fact, because of the fuzzy directional meaning of this particle, the 「へ」 particle can also be used to talk about setting out towards certain future goals or expectations.

18 に is usually omitted, however.

- (1) 勝ちへ向かう。  
Go towards victory.

## The Contextual 「で」 Particle

The 「で」 particle will allow us to specify the context in which the action is performed. For example, if a person ate a fish, where did he eat it? If a person went to school, by what means did she go? With what will you eat the soup? All of these questions can be answered with the 「で」 particle. Here are some examples.

- (1) 映画館で見た。  
Saw at movie theater.
- (2) バスで帰る。  
Go home by bus.
- (3) レストランで昼ご飯を食べた。  
Ate lunch at restaurant.

It may help to think of 「で」 as meaning “by way of.” This way, the same meaning will kind of translate into what the sentence means. The examples will then read: “Saw by way of movie theater,” “Go home by way of bus,” and “Ate lunch by way of restaurant.”

## Using 「で」 with 「何」

The word for “what” (何) is quite annoying because while it’s usually read as 「なに」, sometimes it is read as 「なん」 depending on how it’s used. And since it’s always written in Kanji, you can’t tell which it is. I would suggest sticking with 「なに」 until someone corrects you for when it should be 「なん」. With the 「で」 particle, it is read as 「なに」 as well.<sup>19</sup>

- (1) 何で来た？  
Came by the way of what?
- (2) バスで来た。  
Came by the way of bus.

Here’s the confusing part. There is a colloquial version of the word “why” that is used much more often than the less colloquial version 「どうして」 or the more forceful 「なぜ」. It is also written as 「何で」 but it is read as 「なんで」. This is a completely separate word and has nothing to do with the 「で」 particle.

- (1) 何で来た？  
Why did you come?
- (2) 暇だから。  
Because I am free.

<sup>19</sup> Additional commentary excised as it only applies to the on-line version of the Guide.



The 「から」 here meaning “because” is different from the 「から」 we just learned and will be covered later in the compound sentence section.<sup>20</sup> Basically the point is that the two sentences, while written the same way, is read differently and mean completely different things. Don't worry. This causes less confusion than you think because 95% of the time, the latter is used rather than the former. And even when 「なにで」 is intended, the context will leave no mistake on which one is being used. Even in this short example snippet, you can tell which it is by looking at the answer to the question.

## When Location Is the Topic

There are times when the location of an action is also the topic of a sentence. You can attach the topic particle (「は」 and 「も」) to the three particles that indicate location (「に」、 「へ」、 「で」) when the location is the topic. We'll see how location might become the topic in the following examples.

### Example 1

ボブ：<sup>がっこう</sup> 学校<sup>い</sup>に行った？  
(Did you) go to school?

アリス：<sup>い</sup> 行かなかった。  
Didn't go.

ボブ：<sup>としょかん</sup> 図書館<sup>い</sup>には？  
What about library?

アリス：<sup>としょかん</sup> 図書館<sup>い</sup>にも行かなかった。  
Also didn't go to library.

In this example, Bob brings up a new topic (library) and so the location becomes the topic. The sentence is actually an abbreviated version of 「<sup>としょかん</sup> 図書館<sup>い</sup>には行った？」 which you can ascertain from the context.

### Example 2

ボブ：<sup>た</sup> どこで食べる？  
Eat where?

アリス： イタリアレストランではどう？  
How about Italian restaurant?

Bob asks, “Where shall we eat?” and Alice suggests an Italian restaurant. A sentence like, “How about...” usually brings up a new topic because the person is suggesting something new. In this case, the location (restaurant) is being suggested so it becomes the topic.

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<sup>20</sup> See the *Compound Sentences* (て-form, から、ので、のに、が、けど、し、～たりする) lesson.

## When the Direct Object Is the Topic

The direct object particle is different from particles related to location in that you cannot use any other particles at the same time. For example, going by the previous section, you might have guessed that you can say 「をは」 to express a direct object that is also the topic but this is not the case. A topic can be a direct object without using the 「を」 particle. In fact, putting the 「を」 particle in will make it wrong.

(1) <sup>にほんご</sup>日本語<sup>を</sup> <sup>なら</sup>習う。  
Learn Japanese.

(2) <sup>にほんご</sup>日本語<sup>は</sup>、<sup>なら</sup>習う。  
About Japanese, (will) learn it.

Please take care to not make this mistake.

(<sup>ご</sup>誤) <sup>にほんご</sup>日本語<sup>をは</sup>、<sup>なら</sup>習う。  
*This is incorrect.*

# Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Transitive, not Transvestite!

## Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

In Japanese, sometimes there are two types of the same verb often referred to as transitive and intransitive verbs. The difference between the two is that one verb is an action done by an active agent while the other is something that occurs without a direct agent. In English, this is sometimes expressed with the same verb, such as: “The ball dropped” vs “I dropped the ball” but in Japanese it becomes 「ボールが落ちた」 vs 「ボールを落とした」. Sometimes, the verbs changes when translated into English such as “To put it in the box” (箱に入れる) vs “To enter the box” (箱に入る) but this is only from the differences in the languages. If you think in Japanese, intransitive and transitive verbs have the same meaning except that one indicates that someone had a direct hand in the action (direct object) while the other does not. While knowing the terminology is not important, it is important to know which is which in order to use the correct particle for the correct verb. Since the basic meaning and the kanji is the same, you can learn two verbs for the price of just one kanji! Let’s look at a sample list of intransitive and transitive verbs.

### Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Transitive		Intransitive	
落とす	to drop	落ちる	to fall
出す	to take out	出る	to come out; to leave
入れる	to insert	入る	to enter
開ける	to open	開く	to be opened
閉める	to close	閉まる	to be closed
付ける	to attach	つく	to be attached
消す	to erase	消える	to disappear
抜く	to extract	抜ける	to be extracted

### Pay Attention to Particles!

The important lesson to take away here is to learn how to use the correct particle for the correct type of verb. It might be difficult at first to grasp which is which when learning new verbs or whether there even is a transitive/intransitive distinction. The good news is that the WWWJDIC<sup>21</sup> now indicates whether a verb is transitive (vt) or intransitive (vi) when the distinction applies. However, I have not tested how extensive the coverage is so I recommend looking at example sentences from either the WWWJDIC or Yahoo!辞書.<sup>22</sup> For example, looking at example sentences for 「付ける」

21 <http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~jwb/wwwjdic.html>

22 <http://dic.yahoo.co.jp/>

from the [WWWJDIC](http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~jwb/wwwjdic.html)<sup>23</sup> or [Yahoo!辞書](http://dic.yahoo.co.jp/),<sup>24</sup> you can see that it is a transitive verb from the use of the 「を」 particle.

## Examples

- (1) わたし <sup>でんき</sup>が <sup>つ</sup>電気を付けた。  
I am the one that turned on the lights.
- (2) <sup>でんき</sup>が <sup>つ</sup>電気が付いた。  
The lights turned on.
- (3) <sup>でんき</sup>を <sup>け</sup>電気を消す。  
Turn off the lights.
- (4) <sup>でんき</sup>が <sup>き</sup>電気が消える。  
Lights turn off.
- (5) <sup>だれ</sup> <sup>まど</sup>が <sup>あ</sup>窓を開けた？  
Who opened the window?
- (6) <sup>まど</sup>が <sup>あ</sup>窓がどうして開いた？  
Why has the window opened?

The important thing to remember is that intransitive verbs cannot have a direct object because there is no direct acting agent. The following sentences are grammatically incorrect.

- (誤) <sup>でんき</sup>を <sup>つ</sup>電気を付いた。  
「を」 should be replaced with 「が」 or 「は」
- (誤) <sup>でんき</sup>を <sup>き</sup>電気を消える。  
「を」 should be replaced with 「が」 or 「は」
- (誤) どうして <sup>まど</sup>を <sup>あ</sup>窓を開いた？  
「を」 should be replaced with 「が」 or 「は」

The only time you can use the 「を」 particle for intransitive verbs is when a location is the direct object of a motion verb as briefly described in the previous section.<sup>25</sup>

- (1) <sup>へや</sup>を <sup>で</sup>部屋を出た。  
I left room.

23 <http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~jwb/wwwjdic.html>

24 <http://dic.yahoo.co.jp/>

25 See the *Particles Used With Verbs* lesson.

## Descriptive Subordinate Clauses and Sentence Order

*Subordinate clauses? My kitten has those.*

### Treating Verbs and State-of-Being Like Adjectives

Have you noticed how, many forms of verbs and the state-of-being conjugate in a similar manner to i-adjectives? Well, that is because, in a sense, they are adjectives. For example, consider the sentence: “The person who did not eat went to bank.” The “did not eat” describes the person and in Japanese, you can directly modify the noun “person” with the clause “did not eat” just like a regular adjective. This very simple realization will allow us to modify a noun with any arbitrary verb phrase!

### Using State-of-Being Subclauses as Adjectives

The negative, past, and negative past conjugations of nouns can be used just like adjectives to directly modify nouns. However, we *cannot* do this with the plain non-past state-of-being using 「だ」. (I told you this was a pain in the butt.) The language has particles for this purpose, which will be covered in the next section.<sup>26</sup>

*You cannot use 「だ」 to directly modify a noun with a noun like you can with 「だった」、「じゃない」、and 「じゃなかった」.*

You can, however, have a string of nouns placed together when they're not meant to modify each other. For example, in a phrase such as “International Education Center” you can see that it is just a string of nouns without any grammatical modifications between them. It's not an “Education Center that is International” or a “Center for International Education,” etc., it's just “International Education Center.” In Japanese, you can express this as simply 「国際教育センタ」 (or 「センター」). You will see this chaining of nouns in many combinations. Sometimes a certain combination is so commonly used that it has almost become a separate word and is even listed as a separate entry in some dictionaries. Some examples include: 「登場人物」、 「立入禁止」、 or 「通勤手当」. If you have difficulties in figuring out where to separate the words, you can paste them into the WWWJDIC's [Translate Words in Japanese Text](http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/jwb/wwwjdic?9T)<sup>27</sup> function and it'll parse the words for you (most of the time).

### Examples

Here are some examples of direct noun modifications with a conjugated noun clause. The noun clause has been highlighted.

<sup>26</sup> See the *Noun-Related Particles* (と、や、とか、の) lesson.

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/jwb/wwwjdic?9T>

- (1) <sup>がくせい</sup>学生<sup>じゃない</sup>人は、<sup>ひと</sup>学校<sup>がっこう</sup>に行かない。  
Person who is not student do not go to school.
- (2) <sup>こども</sup>子供<sup>だった</sup>アリスが<sup>りっぱ</sup>立派<sup>おとな</sup>な大人<sup>になった</sup>。  
The Alice that was a child became a fine adult.
- (3) <sup>ともだち</sup>友達<sup>じゃなかった</sup>アリスは、いい<sup>ともだち</sup>友達<sup>になった</sup>。  
Alice who was not a friend, became a good friend.
- (4) <sup>せんしゅう</sup>先週<sup>いしゃ</sup>に医者<sup>だった</sup>ボブは、<sup>しごと</sup>仕事<sup>や</sup>を辞めた。  
Bob who was a doctor last week quit his job.

## Using Subordinate Verb Clauses as Adjectives

Verbs clauses can also be used just like adjectives to modify nouns. The following examples show us how this will allow us to make quite detailed and complicated sentences. The verb clause is highlighted.

### Examples

- (1) <sup>せんしゅう</sup>先週<sup>えいが</sup>に映画<sup>み</sup>を見た<sup>ひと</sup>人は誰<sup>だれ</sup>?  
Who is person who watched movie last week?
- (2) ボブは、<sup>べんきょう</sup>いつも勉強<sup>する</sup>人<sup>だ</sup>だ。  
Bob is a person who always studies.
- (3) <sup>あか</sup>赤い<sup>か</sup>ズボン<sup>を</sup>買う<sup>ともだち</sup>友達<sup>は</sup>ボブ<sup>だ</sup>だ。  
Friend who buy red pants is Bob.
- (4) <sup>ばん</sup>晩<sup>ほん</sup>ご飯<sup>た</sup>を食<sup>は</sup>べな<sup>ひと</sup>かった<sup>い</sup>人は、<sup>えいが</sup>映画<sup>み</sup>で見た<sup>ばんこう</sup>銀行<sup>い</sup>に行<sup>った</sup>った。  
Person who did not eat dinner went to the bank she saw at movie.

## Japanese Sentence Order

Now that we've learned the concept of subordinate clauses and how they are used as building blocks to make sentences, I can go over how Japanese sentence ordering works. There's this myth that keeps floating around about Japanese sentence order that continues to plague many hapless beginners to Japanese. Here's how it goes.

The most basic sentence structure in English can be described as consisting of the following elements in this specific order: [Subject] [Verb] [Object]. A sentence is not grammatically correct if any of those elements are missing or out of order.

Japanese students will tell you that Japanese, on the other hand, while frothing at the mouth, is completely backwards!! Even some Japanese teacher might tell you that the basic Japanese sentence order is [Subject] [Object] [Verb]. This is a classic example of trying to fit Japanese into an English-based type of thinking. Of course, we all know (right?) that the real order of the fundamental

Japanese sentence is: [Verb]. Anything else that comes before the verb doesn't have to come in any particular order and nothing more than the verb is required to make a complete sentence. In addition, the verb must always come at the end. That's the whole point of even having particles so that they can identify what grammatical function a word serves no matter where it is in the sentence. In fact, nothing will stop us from making a sentence with [Object] [Subject] [Verb] or just [Object] [Verb]. The following sentences are all complete and correct because the verb is at the end of the sentence.

Grammatically complete and correctly ordered sentences

- (1) わたし こうえん べんとう た  
私 は公園でお弁当を 食べた。
- (2) こうえん わたし べんとう た  
公園で私 はお弁当を 食べた。
- (3) べんとう わたし こうえん た  
お弁当を私 は公園で 食べた。
- (4) べんとう た  
弁当を 食べた。
- (5) た  
食べた。

So don't sweat over whether your sentence is in the correct order. Just remember the following rules.

### **Japanese sentence order**

- A complete sentence requires a main verb that must come at the end. This also includes the implied state-of-being.
  - 例) 食べた
  - 例) 学生 (だ)
- Complete sentences (subordinate clauses) can be used to modify nouns to make sentences with nested subordinate clauses. (Except for one exception, see above.<sup>28</sup>)
  - 例) お弁当を食べた学生が公園に行った。

28 “You cannot use 「だ」 to directly modify a noun with a noun like you can with 「だった」、「じゃない」、and 「じゃなかった」.”

# ***Noun-Related Particles*** (と、や、とか、の)

Particles Revolution

## **The Last Three Particles (Not!)**

We have already gone over very powerful constructs that can express almost anything we want. We will see the 「の」 particle will give us even more power by allowing us to define a generic, abstract noun. We will also learn how to modify nouns directly with nouns. The three particles we will cover can group nouns together in different ways.

This is the last lesson that will be specifically focused on particles but that does not mean that there are no more particles to learn. We will learn many more particles along the way but they may not be labeled as such. As long as you know what they mean and how to use them, it is not too important to know whether they are particles or not.

## **The Inclusive 「と」 Particle**

The 「と」 particle is similar to the 「も」 particle in that it contains a meaning of inclusion. It can combine two or more nouns together to mean “and.”

- (1) スプーンとフォークで魚を食べた。  
Ate fish by means of fork and spoon.
- (2) 本と雑誌と葉書を買った。  
Bought book, magazine, and post card.

Another similar use of the 「と」 particle is to show an action that was done together with someone or something else.

- (1) 友達と話した。  
Talked with friend.
- (2) 先生と会った。  
Met with teacher.

## **The Vague Listing 「や」 and 「とか」 Particles**

The 「や」 particle, just like the 「と」 particle, is used to list one or more nouns except that it is much more vague than the 「と」 particle. It implies that there may be other things that are unlisted and that not all items in the list may apply. In English, you might think of this as an “and/or, etc.” type of listing.

- (1) 飲み物やカップやナプキンは、いらない？  
You don't need (things like) drink, cup, or napkin, etc.?



- (2) <sup>くつ</sup>靴<sup>や</sup>シャツを<sup>か</sup>買う。  
Buy (things like) shoes and shirt, etc....

「とか」 also has the same meaning as 「や」 but is a slightly more colloquial expression.

- (1) <sup>の</sup>飲み物<sup>も</sup>とか<sup>の</sup>カップとか<sup>の</sup>ナプキンは、いら  
You don't need (things like) drink, cup, or napkin, etc.?

- (2) <sup>くつ</sup>靴<sup>と</sup>かシャツを<sup>か</sup>買う。  
Buy (things like) shoes and shirt, etc....

## The 「の」 Particle

The 「の」 particle has many uses and it is a very powerful particle. It is introduced here because like the 「と」 and 「や」 particle, it can be used to connect one or more nouns. Let's look at a few examples.

- (1) ボブ<sup>の</sup>本。  
Book of Bob.

- (2) 本<sup>の</sup>ボブ。  
Bob of book.

The first sentence essentially means, “Bob’s book.” (not a bible chapter). The second sentence means, “Book’s Bob” which is probably a mistake. I’ve translated (1) as “book of Bob” because the 「の」 particle doesn’t always imply possession as the next example shows.

- (1) ボブは、アメリカ<sup>の</sup>大学<sup>の</sup>学生<sup>だ</sup>。  
Bob is student of college of America.

In normal English, this would translate to, “Bob is a student of an American college.” The order of modification is backwards so Bob is a student of a college that is American. 「学生<sup>の</sup>大学<sup>の</sup>アメリカ」 means “America of college of student” which is probably an error and makes little sense. (America of student’s college?)

The noun that is being modified can be omitted if the context clearly indicates what is being omitted. The following highlighted redundant words can be omitted.

- (1) そのシャツは誰<sup>の</sup>シャツ？  
Whose shirt is that shirt?

- (2) ボブのシャツだ。  
It is shirt of Bob.

to become:

- (1) そのシャツは誰<sup>の</sup>？  
Whose shirt is that?

- (2) ボブ<sup>の</sup>だ。  
It is of Bob.

(「その」 is an abbreviation of 「それ+の」 so it directly modifies the noun because the 「の」 particle is intrinsically attached. Other words include 「この」 from 「これの」 and 「あの」 from 「あれの」.)

The 「の」 particle in this usage essentially replaces the noun and takes over the role as a noun itself. We can essentially treat adjectives and verbs just like nouns by adding the 「の」 particle to it. The particle then becomes a generic noun, which we can treat just like a regular noun.

- (1) <sup>しろ</sup>白い<sup>の</sup>は、かわいい。  
Thing that is white is cute.
- (2) <sup>じゅぎょう</sup>授業<sup>に</sup>行く<sup>の</sup>を<sup>わす</sup>れた。  
Forgot the event of going to class.

Now we can use the direct object, topic, and identifier particle with verbs and adjectives. We don't necessarily have to use the 「の」 particle here. We can use the noun 「物」<sup>もの</sup>, which is a generic object or 「こと」 for a generic event. For example, we can also say:

- (1) <sup>しろ</sup>白い<sup>もの</sup>は、かわいい。  
Thing that is white is cute.
- (2) <sup>じゅぎょう</sup>授業<sup>に</sup>行く<sup>こと</sup>を<sup>わす</sup>れた。  
Forgot the thing of going to class.

However, the 「の」 particle is very useful in that you don't have to specify a particular noun. In the next examples, the 「の」 particle is not replacing any particular noun, it just allows us to modify verb and adjective clauses like noun clauses. The subordinate clauses are highlighted.

- (1) <sup>まいにちべんきょう</sup>毎日勉強<sup>する</sup>の<sup>たいへん</sup>は大変。  
The thing of studying every day is tough.
- (2) <sup>まいにちおな</sup>毎日同じ<sup>もの</sup>物を<sup>た</sup>食べる<sup>のは</sup>、<sup>おもしろ</sup>面白くない。  
It's not interesting to eat same thing every day.

You might have noticed that the word 「同じ」 is directly modifying 「物」<sup>もの</sup> even though it obviously isn't an i-adjective. I have no idea why this is possible. One explanation might be that it is actually an adverb, which we will soon learn doesn't require any particles.

Otherwise, even when substituting 「の」 for a noun, you still need the 「な」 to modify the noun when a na-adjective is being used.

- (1) <sup>しず</sup>静か<sup>な</sup>部屋<sup>が</sup>、アリスの<sup>へや</sup>部屋<sup>だ</sup>。  
Quiet room is room of Alice.

becomes:

- (1) <sup>しず</sup>静か<sup>な</sup>のが、アリスの<sup>へや</sup>部屋だ。  
Quiet one is room of Alice.

### Warning

This may make things seem like you can replace any arbitrary nouns with 「の」 but this is not so. It is important to realize that the sentence must be about the clause and not the noun that was replaced. For example, in the last section we had the sentence, 「<sup>がくせい</sup>学生じゃない<sup>ひと</sup>人は、<sup>がっこう</sup>学校に行かない」。You may think that you can just replace 「<sup>ひと</sup>人」 with 「の」 to produce 「<sup>がくせい</sup>学生じゃない<sup>の</sup>のは、<sup>がっこう</sup>学校に行かない」。But in fact, this makes no sense because the sentence is now about the clause “Is not student.” The sentence becomes, “The thing of not being student does not go to school” which is complete gibberish because not being a student is a state and it doesn’t make sense for a state to go anywhere much less school.

### The 「の」 Particle as Explanation

The 「の」 particle attached at the end of the last clause of a sentence can also convey an explanatory tone to your sentence. For example, if someone asked you if you have time, you might respond, “The thing is I’m kind of busy right now.” The abstract generic noun of “the thing is…” can also be expressed with the 「の」 particle. This type of sentence has an embedded meaning that explains the reason(s) for something else.

The sentence would be expressed like so:

- (1) <sup>いま</sup>今は<sup>いそが</sup>忙しい<sup>の</sup>。  
The thing is that (I’m) busy now.

This sounds very soft and feminine. In fact, adult males will almost always add a declarative 「だ」 unless they want to sound cute for some reason.

- (2) <sup>いま</sup>今は<sup>いそが</sup>忙しい<sup>のだ</sup>。  
The thing is that (I’m) busy now.

However, since the declarative 「だ」 cannot be used in a question, the same 「の」 in questions do not carry a feminine tone at all and is used by both males and females.

- (1) <sup>いま</sup>今は<sup>いそが</sup>忙しい<sup>の</sup>？  
Is it that (you) are busy now? (gender-neutral)

To express state of being, when the 「の」 particle is used to convey this explanatory tone, *we need to add 「な」* to distinguish it from the 「の」 particle that simply means “of.”

- (1) ジムの<sup>だ</sup>。  
It is of Jim. (It is Jim’s.)
- (2) ジム<sup>な</sup>のだ。  
It is Jim (with explanatory tone).

Besides this one case, everything else remains the same as before.

In actuality, while this type of explanatory tone is used all the time, 「のだ」 is usually substituted by 「んだ」. This is probably due to the fact that 「んだ」 is easier to say than 「のだ」. This grammar can have what seems like many different meaning because not only can it be used with all forms of adjectives, nouns, and verbs it itself can also be conjugated just like the state of being. A conjugation chart will show you what this means.

There's really nothing new here. The first chart is just adding 「んだ」 (or 「なんだ」) to a conjugated verb, noun, or adjective. The second chart adds 「んだ」 (or 「なんだ」) to a non-conjugated verb, noun, adjective and then conjugates the 「だ」 part of 「んだ」 just like a regular state of being for nouns and na-adjectives. Just don't forget to attach the 「な」 for nouns as well as na-adjectives.

### 「んだ」 attached to different conjugations

	Noun/Na-Adj	Verb/I-Adj
Plain	<small>がくせい</small> 学生 <b>なんだ</b>	<small>の</small> 飲む <b>んだ</b>
Negative	<small>がくせい</small> 学生 <b>じゃないんだ</b>	<small>の</small> 飲まない <b>んだ</b>
Past	<small>がくせい</small> 学生 <b>だったんだ</b>	<small>の</small> 飲んだ <b>んだ</b>
Past-Neg	<small>がくせい</small> 学生 <b>じゃなかったんだ</b>	<small>の</small> 飲まなかった <b>んだ</b>

(You may substitute 「の」 or 「のだ」 for 「んだ」)

### 「んだ」 itself is conjugated

	Noun/Na-Adj	Verb/I-Adj
Plain	<small>がくせい</small> 学生 <b>なんだ</b>	<small>の</small> 飲む <b>んだ</b>
Negative	<small>がくせい</small> 学生 <b>なんじゃない</b>	<small>の</small> 飲む <b>んじゃない</b>
Past	<small>がくせい</small> 学生 <b>なんだった</b>	<small>の</small> 飲む <b>んだった</b>
Past-Neg	<small>がくせい</small> 学生 <b>なんじゃなかった</b>	<small>の</small> 飲む <b>んじゃないなかった</b>

(You may substitute 「の」 for 「ん」 and 「の」 or 「のだ」 for 「んだ」)

I would say that the past and past-negative forms for noun/na-adjective in the second chart are almost never used (especially with 「の」) but they are presented for completeness.

The crucial difference between using the explanatory 「の」 and not using anything at all is that you are telling the listener, "Look, here's the reason" as opposed to simply imparting new information. For example, if someone asked you, "Are you busy now?" you can simply answer, 「今は いま 忙しい」. However, if someone asked you, "How come you can't talk to me?" since you obviously have some explaining to do, you would answer, 「今は いま 忙しい いそが の」 or 「今は いま 忙しい いそが なんだ」. This grammar is indispensable for seeking explanations in questions. For instance, if you want to ask,

“Hey, isn’t it late?” you can’t just ask, 「遅<sup>おそ</sup>くない？」 because that means, “It’s not late?” You need to indicate that you are seeking explanation in the form of 「遅<sup>おそ</sup>いんじゃない？」.

Let’s see some examples of the types of situations where this grammar is used. The examples will have literal translation to make it easier to see how the meaning stays the same and carries over into what would be very different types of sentences in normal English. A more natural English translation is provided as well because the literal translations can get a bit convoluted.

### Example 1

アリス： どこに行く<sup>い</sup>の？  
Where is it that (you) are going?

ボブ： 授業<sup>じゅぎょう</sup>に行く<sup>い</sup>んだ。  
It is that (I) go to class.

Alice: Where are you going? (Seeking explanation)  
Bob: I’m going to class. (Explanatory)

### Example 2

アリス： 今<sup>いま</sup>、授業<sup>じゅぎょう</sup>がある<sup>い</sup>んじゃない？  
Isn’t it that there is class now?

ボブ： 今<sup>いま</sup>は、ない<sup>い</sup>んだ。  
Now it is that there is no class.

Alice: Don’t you have class now? (Expecting that there is class)  
Bob: No, there is no class now. (Explanatory)

### Example 3

アリス： 今<sup>いま</sup>、授業<sup>じゅぎょう</sup>がない<sup>い</sup>んじゃない？  
Isn’t it that there isn’t class now?

ボブ： ううん、ある。  
No, there is.

Alice: Don’t you not have class now? (Expecting that there is no class)  
Bob: No, I do have class.

### Example 4

アリス： その人が買う<sup>ひと か</sup>んじゃない<sup>い</sup>なかったの？  
Wasn’t it that that person was the one to buy?

ボブ： ううん、<sup>せんせい</sup>先生が<sup>か</sup>買うんだ。  
No, it is that teacher is the one to buy.

Alice: Wasn't that person going to buy? (Expecting that the person would buy)

Bob: No, the teacher is going to. (Explanatory)

### Example 5

アリス： <sup>あさ</sup>朝<sup>はん</sup>飯を<sup>た</sup>食べるんじゃないかった。  
It is that breakfast wasn't to eat.

ボブ： どうして？  
Why?

Alice: Should not have eaten breakfast, you know. (Explaining that breakfast wasn't to be eaten)

Bob: How come?

Don't worry if you are thoroughly confused by now, we will see many more examples along the way. Once you get the sense of how everything works, it's better to forget the English because the double and triple negatives can get quite confusing such as Example 3. However, in Japanese it is a perfectly normal expression, as you will begin to realize once you get accustomed to Japanese.

## Using Adverbs and Gobi

### Why Adverbs and Gobi?

Well, the two are not related to each other but I have decided to group them in one lesson because we will be covering only the two most common gobi for now and it is too short to be a separate lesson in itself.

### Properties of Adverbs

Unlike English, changing adjectives to adverbs is a very simple and straightforward process. In addition, since the system of particles make sentence ordering flexible, adverbs can be placed anywhere in the clause that it applies to long as it comes before the verb that it refers to. As usual, we have two separate rules: one for i-adjectives, and one for na-adjectives.

#### How to change an adjective to an adverb

- i-adjectives: Substitute the 「い」 with 「く」.
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>早い → <sup>はや</sup>早く
- na-adjectives: Attach the target particle 「に」.
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>きれい → <sup>きれい</sup>に

- (1) <sup>あさ</sup>ボブは朝<sup>はん</sup>ご飯を<sup>はや</sup>早く<sup>た</sup>食べた。  
Bob quickly ate breakfast.

The adverb 「早く」 is a little different from the English word “fast” in that it can mean quickly in terms of speed or time. In other words, Bob may have eaten his breakfast early or he may have eaten it quickly depending on the context. In other types of sentences such as 「早く走った」, it is quite obvious that it probably means quickly and not early. (Of course this also depends on the context.)

- (2) <sup>じぶん</sup>アリスは自分の<sup>へや</sup>部屋を<sup>きれい</sup>に<sup>した</sup>した。  
Alice did her own room toward clean.

The literal translation kind of gives you a sense of why the target particle is used. There is some argument against calling this an adverb at all but it is convenient for us to do so because of the grouping of i-adjectives and na-adjectives. Thinking of it as an adverb, we can interpret the sentence to mean: “Alice did her room cleanly.” or less literally: “Alice cleaned her room.” (「きれい」 literally means “pretty” but if it helps, you can think of it as, “Alice prettied up her own room.”)

**Note:** Not all adverbs are derived from adjectives. Some words like 「全然」 and 「たくさん」 are adverbs in themselves without any conjugation. These words can be used without particles just like regular adverbs.

- (1) <sup>えいが</sup>映画を<sup>たくさん</sup>たくさん<sup>み</sup>見た。  
Saw a lot of movies.

- (2) <sup>さいきん</sup>最近、<sup>ぜんぜん</sup>全然食べない。  
Lately, don't eat at all.

Let's look at more examples of adverb usage.

- (1) ボブの<sup>こえ</sup>声は、<sup>けっこう</sup>結構大きい。  
Bob's voice is **fairly** large.
- (2) この<sup>まち</sup>町は、<sup>さいきん</sup>最近<sup>おお</sup>大きく<sup>か</sup>変わった。  
This town had changed **greatly** lately.
- (3) 図書館<sup>としょかん</sup>の中では、<sup>なか</sup><sup>しず</sup>静かにする。  
Within the library, [we] do things **quietly**.

## What's a "Gobi?"

In this section, we will cover the two most commonly used gobi. 「<sup>ごび</sup>語尾」 literally means “language tail” and it simply refers to anything that comes at the end of a sentence or a word. In this guide, I will use it to describe the one or two hiragana characters that always come at the end of sentences due to the lack of better terminology. These endings are often very hard to explain because many do not actually have a specific meaning. But they can change the “sound” or “feel” of a sentence and add some zest and pep to the sentence. The two we will cover here do have meanings and they are used quite often.

## The 「ね」 Gobi

People usually add 「ね」 to the end of their sentence when they are looking for (and expecting) agreement to what they are saying. This is equivalent to saying, “right?” or “isn't it?” in English.

### Example 1

ボブ： <sup>てんき</sup>いい天気だね。  
Good weather, **huh?**

アリス： そうね。  
That is so, **isn't it?**

The literal translation of 「そうね」 sounds a bit odd but it basically means something like, “Sure is.” Males would probably say, 「そうだね」.

### Example 2

アリス： おもしろい<sup>えいが</sup>映画だったね。  
That was interesting movie, **wasn't it?**

ボブ： え？<sup>ぜんぜん</sup>全然おもしろくなかった。  
Huh? No, it wasn't interesting at all.



Since Alice is expecting agreement that the movie was interesting Bob is surprised because he didn't find the movie interesting at all. (「え」 is a sound of surprise and confusion.)

## The 「よ」 Gobi

When 「よ」 is attached to the end of a sentence, it means that the speaker is informing the listener of something new. In English, we might say this with a, “You know...” such as the sentence, “You know, I’m actually a genius.”

### Example 1

アリス：<sup>じかん</sup>時間がないよ。  
You know, there is no time.

ボブ：<sup>だいじょうぶ</sup>大丈夫だよ。  
It's OK, you know.

### Example 2

アリス：<sup>きょう</sup>今日はいい<sup>てんき</sup>天気だね。  
Good weather today, huh?

ボブ：<sup>あした あめ ふ</sup>うん。でも、明日雨が降るよ。  
Yeah. But it will rain tomorrow, you know.

## Combining Both to Get 「よね」

You can also combine the two gobi we just learned to create 「よね」. This is essentially used when you want to inform the listener of some new point you're trying to make and when you're seeking agreement on it at the same time. When combining the two, the order must always be 「よね」. You cannot reverse the order.

### Example

アリス：<sup>さかな す</sup>ボブは、魚が好きなんだよね。  
You know, you like fish, dontcha?

ボブ：<sup>さかな す</sup>そうだね。  
That is so, huh?

## Part 4: Essential Grammar

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We have learned the basic foundation of the Japanese language. Now that we have a general knowledge of how Japanese works, we can now extend that by learning specific grammar for various situations. This section will go over what is considered to be essential grammar for basic practical Japanese. You will begin to see fewer literal translations in order to emphasize the new grammar now that you (should) have a good understanding of the basic fundamental grammar. For example, in sentences where the subject has not been specified, I might simply specify the subject in the translation as “he” even though it may very well be “we” or “them” depending on the context.

This section starts with transforming what we have learned so far into a more unassuming and politer form. In any language, there are ways to word things differently to express a feeling of deference or politeness. Even English has differences such as saying, “may I...” vs “can I...” You may speak one way to your professor and another way to your friends. However, Japanese is different in that not only does the type of vocabulary change, the grammatical structure for every sentence changes as well. There is a distinct and clear line differentiating polite and casual types of speech. On the one hand, the rules clearly tell you how to structure your sentences for different social contexts. On the other hand, every sentence you speak must be conjugated to the proper level of politeness. In section 3, we will cover the polite version of Japanese, which is required for speaking to people of higher social position or to people you are unfamiliar with.

This section will then continue to cover the most useful major types of grammar in Japanese. For this reason, we will learn the most common conjugations such as the te-form, potential, conditional, and volitional. The latter sections are in no particular order and neither does it need to be. The grammar that is presented here is essential which means that you have to learn it all anyway and learn them well.

## Lessons Covered in This Section

- Polite Form — Covers the fundamental difference between polite and casual types of speech. Goes over rules of conjugation for the polite form.
- Addressing People — Covers how to address people by properly according to their title or station. Also covers the various types of pronouns and their appropriate uses.
- Question Marker — Covers how to clearly indicate a question in polite form. Also discusses the use of the question marker in other contexts.
- Compound Sentences — Learn how to chain several sentences into one. Introduces the ever useful te-form.
- Enduring States — Learn how to express a continuing action or state using the te-form.
- Potential Form — Goes over how to express the ability to do something.
- Using する and なる with the に particle — Goes over some useful expressions with 「する」 and 「なる」.
- Conditionals — Explains how to express things and events that occur on a given condition. Comp sci majors, you'll want to read this section!
- Expressing “must” or “have to” — How to say that you must or must not do something. Also covers how you say you don't have to do something.
- Desire and Suggestions — Goes over how to express desire and make suggestions. A must-read for getting dates in Japan!
- Using quoted subordinate clauses and expressing hearsay — Learn how to express your thoughts and quote others using quoted subordinate clauses.
- Trying something out or attempting to do something — Try out things or make an attempt to do something using this grammar.
- Giving and Receiving — Learn how to give and receive using 「あげる」、「やる」、「くれる」、and 「もらう」.
- Making requests — Learn how to make requests using 「～ください」、「～なさい」、「～ちょうだい」、and the command (imperative) form.
- Numbers and Counting — Explains numbers and various counters for counting.
- Wrapping up and more Gobi — Wrap up what we've learned in this section and finish up with gobi.

## Polite Form and Verb Stems (～です、～ます)

May you be so pleased as to learn this section?

### Not Being Rude in Japan

The Japanese we have learned so far is all well and good if you're 5-years old. Unfortunately, adults are expected to use a politer version of the language (called 丁寧語) when addressing certain people.

People you will probably use 丁寧語 with are: 1) people of higher social rank, and 2) people you are not familiar with. Deciding when to use which language is pretty much a matter of "feel." However, it is a good idea to stick with one form for each person.

Later (probably much later), we will learn an even politer version of the language called honorific (尊敬語) and humble (謙讓語) form. It will be more useful than you may think because store clerks, receptionists, and such will speak to you in those forms. But for now, let's concentrate on just 丁寧語, which is the base for 尊敬語 and 謙讓語.

Fortunately, it is not difficult to change casual speech to polite speech. There may be some slight changes to the vocabulary (for example, "yes" and "no" become 「はい」 and 「いいえ」 respectively in polite speech), and very colloquial types of gobi obviously are not used in polite speech. (Don't worry; we haven't even gone over those yet.) Essentially, the only main difference between polite and casual speech comes at the very end of the sentence. You cannot even tell whether a person is speaking in polite or casual speech until the sentence is finished.

### The Stem of Verbs

In order to conjugate all u-verbs and ru-verbs into their respective polite forms, we will first learn about the stem of verbs. This is often called the masu-stem in Japanese textbooks but we will call it just the stem because it is used in many more conjugations than just its masu-form. The stem is really great because it's very easy to produce and is useful in many different types of grammar.

#### Rules for extracting the stem of verbs

- ru-verbs - Remove the 「る」
  - 例) 食べる → 食べ
- u-verbs - The last vowel sound changes from an / u / vowel sound to an / i / vowel sound.
  - 例) 泳ぐ → 泳ぎ
- Exceptions - 「する」 becomes 「し」 and 「くる」 becomes 「き」.

The stem when used by itself can be a very specialized and limited way of creating nouns from verbs. While the 「の」 particle allows you to talk about verbs as if they were nouns, the stem actually turns verbs into nouns. In fact, in very rare cases, the stem is used more often than the verb itself. For example, the stem of 「怒る」 (いかる) is used more often than the verb itself. The movie, "Fists of Fury" is translated as 「怒りの鉄拳」 and not 「怒る鉄拳」. In fact, 「怒る」 will most likely

be read as 「おこる」, a completely different verb with the same meaning and kanji! There are a number of specific nouns (such as 「<sup>よす</sup>休み」) that are really verb stems that are used like regular nouns. However, in general we cannot take any verb and make it into a noun. For example, the following sentence is wrong.

(誤) <sup>の</sup>飲みをする。  
*This sentence makes sense but no one talks like this.*

However, a useful grammar that works in general for stems of all verbs is using the stem as a target with a motion verb (almost always 「<sup>い</sup>行く」 and 「<sup>く</sup>来る」 in this case). This grammar means, “to go or to come to do [some verb].” Here’s an example.

(1) <sup>あした</sup>明日、<sup>えいが</sup>映画を<sup>み</sup>見<sup>い</sup>に行く。  
Tomorrow, go to see movie. 「<sup>み</sup>見に」 is the stem of 「<sup>み</sup>見る」 combined with the target particle 「に」.

The motion target particle 「へ」 sounds like you’re literally going or coming to something while the 「に」 particle implies that you are going or coming for the purpose of doing something.

(1) <sup>きのう</sup>昨日、<sup>ともだち</sup>友達が<sup>あそ</sup>遊び<sup>へ</sup>きた。  
Yesterday, friend came to a playing activity. (Sounds a bit strange)

(2) <sup>きのう</sup>昨日、<sup>ともだち</sup>友達が<sup>あそ</sup>遊び<sup>に</sup>きた。  
Yesterday, friend came to play.

The expression 「<sup>たの</sup>楽しみにする」 meaning “to look forward to” is formed from grammar similar to this but is a special case and should be considered a set expression.

Other verbs are also sometimes attached to the stem to create new verbs. For example, when 「<sup>だ</sup>出す」 is attached to the stem of 「<sup>はし</sup>走る」, which is 「<sup>はし</sup>走り」, you get 「<sup>はし</sup>走り<sup>だ</sup>出す」 meaning “to break out into a run.” Other examples include 「<sup>き</sup>切り<sup>か</sup>替える」, which means “to switch over to something else,” and 「<sup>つ</sup>つけ<sup>く</sup>くわ加える」, which means “to add something by attaching it.” You can see how the separate meanings of the two verbs are combined to create the new combined verb. For example, 「<sup>い</sup>言<sup>だ</sup>い出す」 means “to start talking,” combining the meaning, “to speak” and “to bring out.” There are no general rules here, you need to just memorize these combined verbs as separate verbs in their own right.

Things that are written in a formal context such as newspaper articles also use the stem as a conjunctive verb. We will come back to this later in the *Formal Expressions* lesson.<sup>1</sup>

## Using 「～ます」 to Make Verbs Polite

Of course, the reason I introduced the verb stem is to learn how to conjugated verbs into their polite form... the masu-form! The masu-form must always come at the end of a complete sentence and

<sup>1</sup> See the *Formal Expressions* (である、ではない) lesson.

never inside a modifying subordinate clause. When we learn compound sentences, we will see that each sub-sentence of the compound sentence can end in masu-form as well.

To conjugate verbs into the masu-form, you attach different conjugations of 「ます」 to the stem depending on the tense. Here is a chart.

### A conjugation chart with sample stem 「遊び」<sup>あそ</sup>

	ます conjugations	Stem+ます
Plain	ます	<sup>あそ</sup> 遊びます
Negative	ません	<sup>あそ</sup> 遊びません
Past	ました	<sup>あそ</sup> 遊びました
Past-Neg	ませんでした	<sup>あそ</sup> 遊びませんでした

### Examples

As usual, let's see some examples.

- (1) <sup>あした</sup>明日、<sup>だいがく</sup>大学に<sup>い</sup>行きます。  
Tomorrow, go to college.
- (2) <sup>せんしゅう</sup>先週、<sup>あ</sup>ボブに会いましたよ。  
You know, met Bob last week.
- (3) <sup>ばん</sup>晩ご飯を<sup>た</sup>食べませんでしたね。  
Didn't eat dinner, huh?
- (4) <sup>おもしろ</sup>面白くない映画は<sup>えいが</sup>見<sup>み</sup>ません。  
About not interesting movies, do not see (them).

### Using 「です」 for Everything Else

For any sentence that does not end in a ru-verb or u-verb, the only thing that needs to be done is to add 「です」 or 「でした」. You can also do this for substituted nouns (both 「の」 and 「ん」) by just treating them like regular nouns.<sup>2</sup> Another important thing to remember is that if there is a declarative 「だ」, it must be removed. In being polite, I guess you can't be so bold as to forwardly declare things the way 「だ」 does. Just like the masu-form, this must also go at the end of a complete sentence. Here is a chart illustrating the conjugations.

<sup>2</sup> See "The の Particle" subsection of the *Noun-Related Particles* (と、や、とか、の) lesson.

## i-adjective (だ cannot be used)

	Casual	Polite
Plain	かわいい	かわいいです
Negative	かわいくない	かわいくないです
Past	かわいかった	かわいかったです
Past-Neg	かわいくなかった	かわいくなかったです

## na-adjective/noun (might have to remove だ)

	Casual	Polite
Plain	静 <small>しず</small> か (だ)	静 <small>しず</small> かです
Negative	静 <small>しず</small> かじゃない	静 <small>しず</small> かじゃないです
Past	静 <small>しず</small> かだった	※静 <small>しず</small> かでした
Past-Neg	静 <small>しず</small> かじゃなかった	静 <small>しず</small> かじゃなかったです

※ Notice in the case of noun/na-adjective only, the past tense becomes 「でした」. A very common mistake is to do the same for i-adjectives. Remember 「かわいいでした」 is wrong!

## Examples

As usual, let's see some examples.

- (1) 子こいぬ犬はとても好すきです。  
About puppies, like very much. (The most natural translation is that someone likes puppies very much but there is not enough context to rule out that the puppies like something very much.)
- (2) 昨日、時間きゆうがなじかんかつたんです。  
It was that there was no time yesterday.
- (3) その部へや屋はあまり静しずかじゃないです。  
That room is not very quiet.
- (4) 先週せんしゅうに見みた映画えいがは、とても面おもしろ白しろかつたんです。  
Movie saw last week was very interesting.

## Reality Check

I have heard on a number of occasions that the negative non-past conjugation as given here is not an “officially” correct conjugation. Instead, what’s considered to be a more “correct” conjugation is to actually replace the 「ないです」 part with 「ありません」. The reasoning is that the polite negative form of the verb 「ある」 is not 「ないです」 but 「ありません」. Therefore, 「かわい

くない」 actually becomes 「かわいくありません」 and 「静かじやない」 becomes 「静かじやありません」.

The reality of today's Japanese is that what's supposed to be the "official" conjugation sounds rather stiff and formal. In normal everyday conversations, the conjugation presented here will be used almost every time. While you should use the more formal conjugations for written works using the polite form, you'll rarely hear it in actual speech. In conclusion, I recommend studying and becoming familiar with *both* types of conjugations.

### A more formal negative conjugation

	Casual	Polite
Negative	かわいくない	かわいくありません
Past-Neg	かわいくなかった	かわいくありませんでした
Negative	静かじやない	静かじやありません
Past-Neg	静かじやなかった	静かじやありませんでした

### Examples

- (1) その部屋はあまり静かじやないですよ。  
You know, that room is not very quiet.
- (2) その部屋はあまり静かじやありませんよ。  
You know, that room is not very quiet.

### 「です」 Is Not the Same as 「だ」

Many of you who have taken Japanese classes have probably been taught that 「です」 is the polite version of 「だ」. However, I want to point some several key differences here and the reasons why they are in fact completely different things. It is impossible to fully explain the reasons why they are fundamentally different without discussing grammar that have yet to be covered so I would like to target this toward those who have already started learning Japanese and have been incorrectly misinformed that 「だ」 is the casual version of 「です」. For the rest of you new to this, you can easily skip this part.

I'm sure most of you have learned the expression 「そう」 by now. Now, there are four ways to make a complete sentence using the state-of-being with 「そう」 to produce a sentence that says, "That is so."

### Different Ways to Say, "That Is So."

- (1) そう。
- (2) そうだ。



- (3)        そうです。
- (4)        そうでございます。

The first 「そう」 is the implied state of being and 「そうだ」 is the declarative. As I've stated before, the non-assuming soft spoken 「そう」 is often used by females while the more confident 「そうだ」 is often used by males. 「そうです」 is the polite version of 「そう」, created by attaching 「です」 to the noun. 「そうです」 is not the polite version of 「そうだ」 where the 「だ」 is replaced by 「です」 and I'll explain why.

Perhaps we wanted to make that sentence into a question instead to ask, "Is that so?" There are several ways to do this but some possibilities are given in the following. (This grammar is covered in a later section.<sup>3</sup>)

### **Different Ways to Ask, "Is That So?"**

- (1)        そう？
- (2)        そうか？
- (3)        そうですか？

As I've explained before, the 「だ」 is used to declare what one believes to be a fact. Therefore, 「そうだか？」 is not a valid way to ask a question because it is declaring a fact and asking a question at the same time. But the fact that 「そうですか」 is a valid question shows that 「です」 and 「だ」 are essentially different. 「そうです」, in showing respect and humbleness, is not as assertive and is merely the polite version of 「そう」.

Besides the difference in nuance between 「だ」 and 「です」, another key difference is that 「だ」 is used in many different types of grammar to delineate a subordinate clause. 「です」, on the other hand, is only used at the end of a sentence to designate a polite state-of-being. For instance, consider the two following sentences. (This grammar is covered in a later section.<sup>4</sup>)

(正)        そう<sup>せい</sup>だ<sup>おも</sup>と思います  
I think that is so.

(誤)        そう<sup>ご</sup>です<sup>おも</sup>と思います  
(Incorrect sentence)

「そう<sup>せい</sup>だ<sup>おも</sup>と思います」 is valid while 「そう<sup>ご</sup>です<sup>おも</sup>と思います」 is not because 「です」 can only go at the end of the sentence. 「です」 can only be in a subordinate clause when it is a direct quote of what someone said such as the following.

- (1)        「はい、そうです」と<sup>こた</sup>答えた。

In conclusion, replacing 「です」 with 「だ」, thinking one is the polite equivalent of the other or vice-versa will potentially result in grammatically incorrect sentences. It is best to think of them as totally separate things (because they are).

3 See the *The Question Marker (か)* lesson.

4 See the *Performing an Action on a Subordinate Clause* lesson.

# Addressing People

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*I'm not talking about the postal system silly!*

## Addressing People Properly in Japanese

Not only is it important to use the right type of language with the right people, it is also important to address them by the right name. It is also important to address yourself with the proper level of politeness. Japanese is special in that there are so many ways of saying the simple words, “I” and “you.” We will go over some of ways to refer to yourself and others.

## Referring to Yourself

There are many ways to say “I” in Japanese. Some of these words are not as common and others are hopelessly outdated. We will go over the most common ones that are in use today. The usages of all the different words for “I” is separated into two categories: gender and politeness. In other words, there are words that are usually used by males and words that are usually only used by females and they all depend on the social context.

Before going into this: a note about the word 「私」. The official reading of the kanji is 「わたくし」. This is the reading you is used in a formal context (for example, a speech by the president of a company). This reading will probably be accompanied with honorific and humble forms, which we will cover later. In all other situations, it is usually read as 「わたし」. This is the most generic reference to “I” in terms of politeness and gender; therefore it is usually one of the first words taught to students of Japanese.

Here is a list of the most common words for “I” and how they are used:

私 (わたくし)	Used by both males and females for formal situations.
私 (わたし)	Used by both males and females for normal polite situations.
ぼく 僕	Used primarily by males from fairly polite to fairly casual situations.
おれ 俺	A very rough version of “I” used almost exclusively by males in very casual situations.
あたし	A very feminine and casual way to refer to oneself. Many girls have decided to opt for 「わたし」 instead because of its cutesy and girly sound.
One's own name	Also a very feminine and kind of childish way to refer to oneself.
わし	Usually used by older men well in their middle-ages.

Let's see how different types of sentences use the appropriate version of “I.” 「わたくし」 is left out because we have yet to go over very formal grammatical expressions.

- (1) わたくし なまえ  
私 の名前はキムです。  
My name is Kim. (Neutral, polite)
- (2) ぼく なまえ  
僕 の名前はキムです。  
My name is Kim. (Masculine, polite)

- (3) <sup>ぼく</sup> <sup>なまえ</sup> 僕の名前はボブだ。  
My name is Bob. (Masculine, casual)
- (4) <sup>おれ</sup> <sup>なまえ</sup> 俺の名前はボブだ。  
My name is Bob. (Masculine, casual)
- (5) <sup>あたし</sup> <sup>なまえ</sup> あたしの名前はアリス。  
My name is Alice. (Feminine, casual)

## Referring to Others by Name

Japanese does not require the use of “you” nearly as much as English does. I hope that the examples with Bob, Alice, and Jim have shown that people refer to other people by their names even when they are directly addressing that person. Another common way to address people is by their title such as 「社長」<sup>しゃちょう</sup>、 「課長」<sup>かちょう</sup>、 「先生」<sup>せんせい</sup>, etc. The word 「先生」<sup>せんせい</sup> is used to generally mean any person who has significant knowledge and expertise in something. For example, people usually use 「先生」<sup>せんせい</sup> when directly addressing doctors or teachers (obviously). You can also include the person’s last name such as 「田中先生」<sup>たなか せんせい</sup> (teacher Tanaka). In the case where your relationship with the person doesn’t involve any title, you can use their name (usually their last name) attached with 「さん」 to show politeness. If calling them by their last name seems a little too polite and distant, the practice of attaching 「さん」 to their first name also exists. More endearing and colloquial versions of 「さん」 include 「くん」 and 「ちゃん」. 「くん」 is usually attached to the name of males who are of equal or lower social position. (For example, my boss sometimes calls me 「キムくん」). 「ちゃん」 is a very endearing way to refer to usually females of equal or lower social position.

## Referring to Others with “You”

Please do not use 「あなた」 just like you would use the word “you” in English. In directly addressing people, there are three levels of politeness: 1) Using the person’s name with the appropriate suffix, 2) Not using anything at all, 3) Using 「あなた」. In fact, by the time you get to three, you’re dangerously in the area of being rude. Most of the time, you do not need to use anything at all because you are directly addressing the person. Constantly pounding the listener with “you” every sentence sounds like you are accusing the person of something.

「あなた」 is also an old-fashioned way for women to refer to their husband or lover. Unless you are a middle-aged women with a Japanese husband, I doubt you will be using 「あなた」 in this fashion as well.

Here is a list of some words meaning “you” in English. You will rarely need to use any of these words, especially the ones in the second half of the list.

あなた	Generally only used when there is no way to physically address the person or know the person's name. For example, direct questions to the reader on a form that the reader must fill out would use 「あなた」.
きみ 君	Can be a very close and assuming way to address girls (especially by guys). Can also be kind of rude.
まえ お前	A very rough and coarse way to address someone. Usually used by guys and often changed to 「おめえ」.
あんた	A very assuming and familiar way to address someone. The person using this is maybe miffed off about something.
てまえ 手前	Very rude. Like 「お前」, to add extra punch, people will usually say it like, 「てめ〜」. Sounds like you want to beat someone up. I've only seen this one used in movies and comic books. In fact, if you try this on your friends, they will probably laugh at you and tell you that you've probably been reading too many comic books.
きさま 貴様	Very, very rude. Sounds like you want to take someone out. I've also only seen this one used in comic books. I only go over it so you can understand and enjoy comic books yourself!

## Referring to Others in Third Person

You can use 「<sup>かれ</sup>彼」 and 「<sup>かのじよ</sup>彼女」 for “he” and “she” respectively. Notice that 「<sup>かれ</sup>彼」 and 「<sup>かのじよ</sup>彼女」 can also mean “boyfriend” and “girlfriend.” So how can you tell which meaning is being used?

Context, of course. For example, if someone asks, 「<sup>かのじよ</sup>彼女ですか？」 the person is obviously asking if she is your girlfriend because the question, “Is she she?” doesn't make any sense. Another less commonly used alternative is to say 「ガールフレンド」 and 「ボーイフレンド」 for, well, I'm sure you can guess what they mean.

## Referring to Family Members

Referring to family members is a little more complicated than English. (It could be worse, try learning Korean!) For the purpose of brevity, (since this is a grammar guide and not a vocabulary guide) we will only go over the immediate family. In Japanese, you refer to members of other people's family more politely than your own. This is only when you are talking about members of your own family to others *outside the family*. For example, you would refer to your own mother as 「<sup>はは</sup>母」 to people outside your family but you might very well call her 「<sup>かあ</sup>お母さん」 at home within your own family. There is also a distinction between older and younger siblings. The following chart lists some of the most common terms for family members. There may also be other possibilities not covered in this chart.

## Family member chart

Relationship	One's own family	Someone else's family
Parents	<small>りょうしん</small> 両親	<small>りょうしん</small> ご両親
Mother	<small>はは</small> 母	<small>かあ</small> お母さん
Father	<small>ちち</small> 父	<small>とう</small> お父さん
Wife	<small>つま</small> 妻	<small>おく</small> 奥さん
Husband	<small>おっと</small> 夫	<small>しゅじん</small> ご主人
Older Sister	<small>あね</small> 姉	<small>ねえ</small> お姉さん
Older Brother	<small>あに</small> 兄	<small>にい</small> お兄さん
Younger Sister	<small>いもうと</small> 妹	<small>いもうと</small> 妹さん
Younger Brother	<small>おとうと</small> 弟	<small>おとうと</small> 弟さん
Son	<small>むすこ</small> 息子	<small>むすこ</small> 息子さん
Daughter	<small>むすめ</small> 娘	<small>むすめ</small> 娘さん

Another word for wife, 「家内」<sup>かない</sup> is often considered politically incorrect because the kanji used are “house” and “inside” which implies that wives belong in the home. Amen. (Just kidding)

# The Question Marker (か)

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## Questions in Polite Form

The question marker is covered here because it is primarily used to clearly indicate a question in polite sentences. While it is entirely possible to express a question even in polite form using just intonation, the question marker is often attached to the very end of the sentence to indicate a question. The question marker is simply the hiragana character 「か」 and you don't need to add a question mark. For previously explained reasons,<sup>5</sup> you must not use the declarative 「だ」 with the question marker.

### Example 1

田中さん：<sup>たなか</sup> お母さんはどこですか。<sup>かあ</sup>  
Where is (your) mother?

鈴木さん：<sup>すずき</sup> 母は買い物に行きました。<sup>はは か もの い</sup>  
(My) mother went shopping.

### Example 2

キムさん：<sup>きむ</sup> イタリア料理を食べに行きませんか。<sup>りょうり た い</sup>  
Go to eat Italian food?

鈴木さん：<sup>すずき</sup> すみません。ちょっと、お腹がいっぱいです。<sup>はら</sup>  
Sorry. (My) stomach is a little full.

Here the question is actually being used as an invitation just like how in English we say, “Won't you come in for a drink?” 「すみません」 is a polite way of apologizing. Slightly less formal is 「ごめんなさい」 while the casual version is simply 「ごめん」.

## The Question Marker in Casual Speech

It makes sense to conclude that the question marker would work in exactly the same way in casual speech as it does in polite speech. However, this is *not* the case. The question marker 「か」 is usually not used with casual speech to make actual questions. It is often used to consider whether something is true or not. Depending on the context and intonation, it can also be used to make rhetorical questions or to express sarcasm. It can sound quite rough so you might want to be careful about using 「か」 for questions in the plain casual form.

### Examples

- (1) <sup>ほんとう た</sup> こんなのを本当に食べるか？  
Do you think [he/she] will really eat this type of thing?

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<sup>5</sup> See the *Expressing State of Being* lesson.

- (2) そんなのは、あるかよ！  
Do I look like I would have something like that?!

Instead of 「か」, real questions in casual speech are usually asked with the explanatory の particle<sup>6</sup> or nothing at all except for a rise in intonation, as we have already seen in previous sections.

- (1) こんなのを本当に食べる？  
Are you really going to eat something like this?
- (2) そんなのは、あるの？  
Do you have something like that?

## 「か」 Used in Subordinate Clauses

Another use of the question marker is simply grammatical and has nothing to do with the politeness. A question marker attached to the end of a subordinate clause makes a mini-question inside a larger sentence. This allows the speaker to talk about the question. For example, you can talk about the question, “What did I eat today?” In the following examples, the question that is being considered is in red.

- (1) きのうなに<sup>な</sup>を<sup>た</sup>食べたか<sup>わす</sup>忘れた。  
Forgot what I ate yesterday.
- (2) かれなに<sup>な</sup>を<sup>い</sup>言ったかわからない。  
Don't understand what he said.
- (3) せんせい<sup>せんせい</sup>が<sup>がっこう</sup>学校<sup>い</sup>に行ったか<sup>おし</sup>教え<sup>ない</sup>？  
Won't you inform me whether teacher went to school?

In sentences like (3) where the question being considered has a yes/no answer, it is common (but not necessary) to attach 「どうか」. This is roughly equivalent to saying, “whether or not” in English. You can also include the alternative as well to mean the same thing.

- (1) せんせい<sup>せんせい</sup>が<sup>がっこう</sup>学校<sup>い</sup>に行ったかどうか<sup>し</sup>知らない。  
Don't know whether or not teacher went to school.
- (2) せんせい<sup>せんせい</sup>が<sup>がっこう</sup>学校<sup>い</sup>に行ったか<sup>い</sup>行<sup>い</sup>かなかったか<sup>し</sup>知らない。  
Don't know whether teacher went to school or didn't.

## Using Question Words

While we're on the topic of questions, this is a good time to go over question words (where, who, what, etc.) and what they mean in various contexts. Take a look at what adding the question marker does to the meaning of the words.

<sup>6</sup> See the “The 「の」 Particle as Explanation” heading in the *Noun-Related Particles* (と、や、とか、の) lesson.

## Question Words

Word+Question Marker	Meaning
<sup>だれ</sup> 誰か	Someone
<sup>なに</sup> 何か	Something
いつか	Sometime
どこか	Somewhere
どれか	A certain one from many

As you can see by the following examples, you can treat these words just like any regular nouns.

- (1) <sup>だれ</sup>誰か<sup>が</sup>おいしいクッキーを<sup>ぜんぶ た</sup>全部食べた。  
Someone ate all the delicious cookies.
- (2) <sup>だれ</sup>誰<sup>が</sup>盗んだのか、<sup>だれ</sup>誰か<sup>し</sup>知りませんか。  
Does anybody know who stole it?
- (3) <sup>ほんにん</sup>犯人を<sup>どこか</sup>で見ましたか。  
Did you see the criminal somewhere?
- (4) この<sup>なか</sup>中から<sup>どれか</sup>を選<sup>えら</sup>ぶの。  
(Explaining) You are to select a certain one from inside this [selection].

### Question Words with Inclusive Meaning

The same question words in the chart above can be combined with 「も」 in a negative sentence to mean “nobody” (誰も) , “nothing” (何も) , “nowhere” (どこも) , etc.

「誰も」 and 「何も」 are primarily used only for negative sentences. Curiously, there is no way to say “everybody,” and “everything” with question words. Instead, it is conventional to use other words like 「みんな／みなさん」、<sup>ぜんぶ</sup>「全部」.

The remaining three words 「いつも」 (meaning “always”) and 「どれも」 (meaning “any and all”), and 「どこも」 (meaning everywhere) can be used in both negative and positive sentences.



## Inclusive Words

Word+も	Meaning
<small>だれ</small> 誰も	Nobody (negative only)
<small>なに</small> 何も	Nothing (negative only)
いつも	Always
どこも	Everywhere
どれも	Any and all

- (1) この質問の答えは、誰も知らない。  
Nobody knows the answer of this question.
- (2) 友達はいつも遅れる。  
Friend is always late.
- (3) ここにあるレストランはどれもおいしくない  
Any and all restaurants that are here are not tasty.
- (4) 今週末は、どこにも行かなかった。  
Went nowhere this weekend.

(Grammatically, this 「も」 is the same as the topic particle 「も」 so the target particle 「に」 must go before the topic particle 「も」 in ordering.)

### Question Words to Mean “Any”

The same question words combined with 「でも」 can be used to mean “any.” One thing to be careful about is that 「何でも」 is read as 「なんでも」 and not 「なにでも」

## Words for “Any”

Word+でも	Meaning
<small>だれ</small> 誰でも	Anybody
<small>なん</small> 何でも	Anything
いつでも	Anytime
どこでも	Anywhere
どれでも	Whichever

## Examples

- (1) この<sup>しつもん</sup>質問の<sup>こた</sup>答えは、<sup>だれ</sup>誰でも<sup>わ</sup>分かる。  
Anybody understands the answer of this question.
- (2) <sup>ひる</sup>昼<sup>はん</sup>ご飯は、<sup>どこ</sup>どこでもいいです。  
About lunch, anywhere is good.
- (3) あの<sup>ひと</sup>人は、<sup>ほんとう</sup>本当に<sup>なん</sup>何でも<sup>た</sup>食べる。  
That person really eats anything.

# Compound Sentences (て-form、から、ので、のに、が、けど、し、～たりする)

Intrinsically Intricate

## Compound Sentences

In this section, we will learn various ways to combine multiple simple sentences into one complex sentence. For example, we will learn how to chain separate sentences together to express multiple actions or states. In other words, if we have two simple sentences with the same subject, “I ran” and “I ate,” we will learn how to group them together to mean, “I ran and ate.” We will also learn how to do this with adjectives and nouns. (Ex: He is rich, handsome, and charming.)

## Expressing a Sequence of States

It is very easy to combine a chain of nouns and adjectives to describe a person or object. For example, in English if we wanted to say, “He is X. He is Y. He is Z.” since all three sentences have the same noun, we would usually say, “He is X, Y, and Z.” In Japanese, we can do the same thing by conjugating the noun or adjective. The last noun or adjective remains the same as before.

### How to chain nouns and adjectives together

- **Nouns and na-adjectives:** Attach 「で」 to the noun or na-adjective.
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>一般的 → <sup>いっぼんてき</sup>一般的<sup>いっぼんてき</sup>で
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>静か → <sup>しず</sup>静か<sup>しず</sup>で
- **I-adjectives and negative noun/adjective:** Replace the 「い」 with 「くて」.
- ※For 「いい」 and 「かつこいい」, the 「い→よ」 exception<sup>7</sup> applies here as well.
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>狭~~い~~ → <sup>せま</sup>狭<sup>せま</sup>くて
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>彼女~~い~~じゃな~~い~~ → <sup>かのじょ</sup>彼女<sup>かのじょ</sup>じゃな<sup>かのじょ</sup>くて
  - 例) ~~い~~ → <sup>よ</sup>よ<sup>よ</sup>くて

## Examples

- (1) <sup>わたし</sup>私の<sup>へや</sup>部屋は、<sup>きれい</sup>きれいで、<sup>しず</sup>静かで、<sup>す</sup>とても好き。  
My room is clean, quiet, and I like it a lot.
- (2) <sup>かのじょ</sup>彼女は、<sup>がくせい</sup>学生じゃな<sup>せんせい</sup>くて、先生だ。  
She is not a student, she is a teacher.
- (3) <sup>たなか</sup>田中さんは、<sup>かね</sup>お金持ち<sup>も</sup>で、<sup>かっこ</sup>かっこよ<sup>も</sup>くて、<sup>みりよくてき</sup>魅力的<sup>も</sup>ですね。  
Tanaka-san is rich, handsome, and charming, isn't he?

<sup>7</sup> See the “An Annoying Exception” heading in the *Adjectives* lesson.

As you can see, the 「で」 attached to 「<sup>かねも</sup>お金持ち」 obviously cannot be the context particle<sup>8</sup> 「で」 here because there is no verb. It might be helpful to think of 「で」 as merely a substitution for 「だ」 that can be chained together.

## Expressing a Sequence of Verbs with the te-Form

In a similar fashion, you can express multiple actions. It is usually interpreted as a sequence of event. (I did [X], then I did [Y], then I finally did [Z].) There are two forms: positive and negative. The tense of all the actions is determined by the tense of the last verb.

### How to chain verbs together

- **Positive:** Conjugate the verb to its past tense<sup>9</sup> and replace 「た」 with 「て」 or 「だ」 with 「で」. This is often called the te-form even though it could sometimes be “de”.
- **Negative:** Same as i-adjectives, replace 「い」 with 「くて」.
- This rule also works for the polite 「です」 and 「ます」 endings.
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>学生<sup>がくせい</sup>で~~す~~ → 学生<sup>がくせい</sup>で~~した~~ → 学生<sup>がくせい</sup>で<sup>して</sup>
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>買<sup>か</sup>いま~~す~~ → 買<sup>か</sup>いま~~した~~ → 買<sup>か</sup>いま<sup>して</sup>

### Sample conjugations

Past Tense	Te-form	Negative	Te-form
食べた	食べて	食べない	食べなくて
行った	行って	行かない	行かなくて
した	して	しない	しなくて
遊んだ	遊んで	遊ばない	遊ばなくて
飲んだ	飲んで	飲まない	飲まなくて

### Examples

- (1) <sup>しょくどう</sup>食堂<sup>い</sup>に<sup>ひる</sup>行<sup>ほん</sup>って、<sup>た</sup>昼<sup>ひるね</sup>ご飯<sup>を</sup>食<sup>て</sup>べて、<sup>ひるね</sup>昼寝<sup>を</sup>する。  
I will go to cafeteria, eat lunch, and take a nap.
- (2) <sup>しょくどう</sup>食堂<sup>い</sup>に<sup>ひる</sup>行<sup>ほん</sup>って、<sup>た</sup>昼<sup>ひるね</sup>ご飯<sup>を</sup>食<sup>て</sup>べて、<sup>ひるね</sup>昼寝<sup>を</sup>した。  
I went to cafeteria, ate lunch, and took a nap.

<sup>8</sup> See “The contextual 「で」 particle” heading in the *Particles Used With Verbs* lesson.

<sup>9</sup> See the *Past Tense* lesson.

- (3) 時間が<sup>じかん</sup>ありまして、映画<sup>えいが</sup>を見ました。  
There was time and I watched a movie.

## Expressing Reason or Causation Using 「から」 and 「ので」

You can connect two complete sentences using 「から」 to indicate a reason for something. The two sentences are always ordered [reason] から [result]. When the reason is a non-conjugated noun or na-adjective, you *must* add 「だ」 to explicitly declare the reason in the form of 「(noun/na-adjective)だから」. If you forget to add the declarative 「だ」 to 「から」, it will end up sounding like the 「から」 meaning “from” which was first introduced in the *Particles Used With Verbs* lesson.

### Examples

- (1) 時間が<sup>じかん</sup>なかったからパーティーに行きませんでした。  
There was no time so didn't go to party.
- (2) 友達<sup>ともだち</sup>からプレゼントが<sup>き</sup>来た。  
Present came **from** friend.
- (3) 友達<sup>ともだち</sup>だからプレゼントが<sup>き</sup>来た。  
Present came **because** (the person is) friend. (This sentence sounds a bit odd.)

Either the reason or the cause can be omitted if it is clear from the context. In the case of polite speech, you would treat 「から」 just like a regular noun and add 「です」. When you omit the reason, you must include the declarative 「だ」 or 「です」.

田中<sup>たなか</sup>さん： どうしてパーティーに行きませんでしたか。  
Why didn't you go to the party?

山田<sup>やまだ</sup>さん： 時間が<sup>じかん</sup>なかったからです。  
It's because I didn't have time.

一郎<sup>いちろう</sup>： パーティーに行かなかったの？  
You didn't go to the party?

直子<sup>なおこ</sup>： うん、時間が<sup>じかん</sup>なかったから。  
Yeah, because I didn't have time.

- (1) 時間が<sup>じかん</sup>なかった。  
I didn't have time.
- (2) だからパーティーに行かなかったの？  
Is that why you didn't go to the party.

Notice that 山田<sup>やまだ</sup>さん and 直子<sup>なおこ</sup> could have used the explanatory 「の」<sup>10</sup> to express the same thing. In other words, 山田<sup>やまだ</sup>さん could have also said, 「時間<sup>じかん</sup>がなかったのです」 or 「時間<sup>じかん</sup>がなかったんです」 while 直子<sup>なおこ</sup> could have said 「時間<sup>じかん</sup>がなかったの」 (we'll assume she wants to use the more feminine form). In fact, this is where 「ので」 possibly came from. Let's say you want to combine two sentences: 「時間<sup>じかん</sup>がなかったのだ」 and 「パーティー<sup>い</sup>に行かなかった」. Remember we can treat the 「の」 just like a noun so we can use what we just learned in the first section of this lesson.

(1) 時間<sup>じかん</sup>がなかったのだ + パーティー<sup>い</sup>に行かなかった

becomes:

(2) 時間<sup>じかん</sup>がなかった<sup>ので</sup>パーティー<sup>い</sup>に行かなかった。

In fact, 「ので」 is almost interchangeable with 「から」 with a few subtle differences. 「から」 explicitly states that the sentence preceding is the reason for something while 「ので」 is merely putting two sentences together, the first with an explanatory tone. This is something I call causation where [X] happened, therefore [Y] happened. This is slightly different from 「から」 where [Y] happened explicitly because [X] happened. This difference tends to make 「ので」 sound softer and slighter more polite and it is favored over 「から」 when explaining a reason for doing something that is considered discourteous.

(1) ちょっと忙<sup>いそが</sup>しい<sup>ので</sup>、そろそろ失<sup>しつれい</sup>礼<sup>れい</sup>します。<sup>11</sup>  
Because I'm a little busy, I'll be making my leave soon.

### Reminder:

Don't forget that the explanatory 「の」 requires a 「な」 for both non-conjugated nouns and na-adjectives. Review *Noun-Related Particles* (と、や、とか、の) to see why.

(1) 私<sup>わたし</sup>は学生<sup>がくせい</sup><sup>な</sup>ので、お金<sup>かね</sup>がないんです。  
Because I'm a student, I have no money (lit: there is no money).

(2) ここは静<sup>しず</sup>か<sup>な</sup>ので、とても穏<sup>おだ</sup>やかです。  
It is very calm here because it is quiet.

(3) <sup>な</sup>ので、友達<sup>ともだち</sup>に会<sup>あ</sup>う時間<sup>じかん</sup>がない。  
That's why there's no time to meet friend.

Just like how the explanatory 「の」 can be shortened to 「ん」, in speech, the 「ので」 can be changed to 「んで」 simply because it's easier to slur the sounds together rather than pronouncing the /o/ syllable.

<sup>10</sup> See "The 「の」 Particle as Explanation" heading in the *Noun-Related Particles* (と、や、とか、の) lesson.

<sup>11</sup> 「失<sup>しつれい</sup>礼<sup>れい</sup>します」, which literally means "I'm doing a discourtesy," is commonly used as a polite way to make your leave or disturb someone's time.

- (1) 時間がなかった<sup>じかん</sup>んでパーティーに行<sup>い</sup>かなかった。  
Didn't go to the party because there was no time.
- (2) ここは静<sup>しず</sup>かな<sup>ん</sup>で、とても穏<sup>おだ</sup>やかです。  
It is very calm here because it is quiet.
- (3) <sup>なんで</sup>、<sup>ともだち</sup>友達<sup>あ</sup>に<sup>じかん</sup>会う時間がない。  
That's why there's no time to meet friend.

## Using 「のに」 to Mean “Despite”

Grammatically, 「のに」 is used exactly the same way as 「ので」. When used to combine two simple sentences together, it means “[Sentence 1] despite the fact that [Sentence 2].” However the order is reversed: [Sentence 2]のに[Sentence 1].

### Examples

- (1) 毎日運動した<sup>まいにちうんどう</sup>のに、全然瘦<sup>ぜんぜん や</sup>せなかった。  
Despite exercising every day, I didn't get thinner.
- (2) 学生な<sup>がくせい</sup>のに、彼女<sup>かのじょ</sup>は勉強<sup>べんきょう</sup>しない。  
Despite being a student, she does not study.

## Expressing Contradiction Using 「が」 and 「けど」

Used in the same manner as 「から」 and 「ので」, 「が」 and 「けど」 also connect two sentences together but this time to express a contradiction. Just like 「から」 the declarative 「だ」 is required for nouns and na-adjectives. And just like 「から」 and 「ので」, the reason or cause can be left out.

### Examples

- (1) デパートに行<sup>い</sup>きましたが、何<sup>なに</sup>も欲<sup>ほ</sup>しくなかったです。  
I went to department store but there was nothing I wanted.
- (2) 友達<sup>ともだち</sup>に聞<sup>き</sup>いた<sup>けど</sup>、知<sup>し</sup>らな<sup>かつ</sup>た。  
I asked (or heard from) a friend but he (or I) didn't know.
- (3) 今日<sup>きょう</sup>は暇<sup>ひま</sup>だ<sup>けど</sup>、明日<sup>あした</sup>は忙<sup>いそが</sup>しい。  
I'm free today but I will be busy tomorrow.
- (4) <sup>だけ</sup>だ<sup>けど</sup>、彼<sup>かれ</sup>が<sup>まだ</sup>好<sup>す</sup>きな<sup>の</sup>。  
That may be so, but it is that I still like him. (explanation, feminine tone)

It may seem odd but 「聞く」 can either mean “to listen” or “to ask.” You may think this may become confusing but the meaning is usually clear within context. In (2)、we're assuming that

the friend didn't know, so the speaker was probably asking the friend. Yet again we see the importance of context in Japanese because this sentence can also mean, "I heard from a friend but I didn't know" since there is neither subject nor topic.

Similar to the difference between 「から」 and 「ので」, 「が」 has a softer tone and is slightly more polite than 「けど」. Though this isn't a rule as such, it is generally common to see 「が」 attached to a 「～ます」 or 「～です」 ending and 「けど」 attached to a regular, plain ending. A more formal version of 「けど」 is 「けれど」 and even more formal is 「けれども」, which we may see later when we cover formal expressions.

Unlike the English word for contradiction such as "but" or "however," 「けど」 and 「が」 do not always express a direct contradiction. Often times, especially when introducing a new topic, it is used as a general connector of two separate sentences. For example, in the following sentences, there is no actual contradiction but 「が」 and 「けど」 are used simply to connect the sentences. Sometimes, the English "and" becomes a closer translation than "but."

- (1)       デパートに行きました<sup>い</sup>が、いい物<sup>もの</sup>がたくさんありました。  
I went to the department store and there was a lot of good stuff.
- (2)       マトリックスを見た<sup>み</sup>けど、面白<sup>おもしろ</sup>かった。  
I watched *The Matrix* and it was interesting.

## Expressing Multiple Reasons Using 「し」

When you want to list reasons for multiple states or actions you can do so by adding 「し」 to the end of each subordinate clause. It is very similar to the 「や」 particle except that it lists reasons for verbs and state of being. Again, for states of being, 「だ」 must be used to explicitly declared for any non-conjugated noun or na-adjective. Let's look at some examples.

- (1)       どうして<sup>ともだち</sup>友達じゃないんですか？  
Why isn't him/her friend (seeking explanation)?
- (2)       先生<sup>せんせい</sup>だ<sup>し</sup>、年上<sup>としうえ</sup>だ<sup>し</sup>…。  
Well, he's/she's the teacher, and older....
- (1)       どうして<sup>かれ</sup>彼が<sup>す</sup>好きなの？  
Why (do you) like him?
- (2)       優<sup>やさ</sup>しい<sup>し</sup>、かっ<sup>か</sup>こいい<sup>い</sup>し、面白<sup>おもしろ</sup>いから。  
Because he's kind, attractive, and interesting (among other things).

Notice that 「優<sup>やさ</sup>しくて、かっ<sup>か</sup>こよくて、面白<sup>おもしろ</sup>いから。」 could also have worked but much like the difference between the 「と」 and 「や」 particle, 「し」 implies that there may be other reasons.



## Expressing Multiple Actions or States Using 「～たりする」

This is the verb version of the 「や」 particle. You can make an example list of verbs among a possible larger list by conjugating each verb into the past tense and adding 「り」. At the end, you need to attach the verb 「する」. Just like the 「や」 particle, the tense is determined by the last verb, which in this case will always be 「する」 (since you have to attach it at the end).

You can also use this with the state of being to say that you are a number of things at various random times among a larger list. Similar to regular verbs, you just take the noun or adjective for each state of being and conjugate it to the past state of being and then attach 「り」. Then finally, attach 「する」 at the end.

### Rules for stating a list of verbs among a larger list using 「～たりする」

- Verbs - Conjugate each verb to the past tense<sup>12</sup> and add 「り」. Finally, add 「する」 at the very end.
  - 例) 食べる、飲む → 食べた、飲んだ → 食べたり、飲んだり → 食べたり、飲んだりする
- State of being - Conjugate the noun or adjective for each state of being and add 「り」. Finally, add 「する」 at the very end.
  - 例) 簡単、難しい → 簡単だった、難しかった → 簡単だったり、難しかったり → 簡単だったり、難しかったりする

- (1) 映画を見たり、本を読んだり、昼寝したりする。  
I do things like (among other things) watch movies, read books, and take naps.
- (2) この大学の授業は簡単だったり、難しかったりする。  
Class of this college is sometimes easy, sometimes difficult (and other times something else maybe).

As you can see, the tense and negative/positive state is controlled by the last 「する」.

- (3) 映画を見たり、本を読んだりした。  
I **did** things like (among other things) watch movies, and read books.
- (4) 映画を見たり、本を読んだりしない。  
I **don't** do things like (among other things) watch movies, and read books.
- (5) 映画を見たり、本を読んだりしなかった。  
I **didn't** do things like (among other things) watch movies, and read books.

12 See the Past Tense lesson.

## Other Uses of the te-Form (～ている、～である、～ておく、～ていく、～てくる)

Gosh Darn! I knew I learned this for some reason!

### Other Uses of the te-Form

The te-form is incredibly useful as it is used widely in many different types of grammatical expressions. We will learn about enduring states with the 「～ている」 and 「～である」 form. Even though we have learned various conjugations for verbs, they have all been one-time actions. We will now go over how one would say, for example, “I *am* running.” We will also learn how to perform an action for the future using the 「～ておく」 expression and to express directions of actions using 「～ていく」 and 「～てくる」.

### Using 「～ている」 for Enduring States

We already know how to express a state of being using 「です」, 「だ」, etc. However, it only indicates a one-time thing; you are something or not. This grammar, however, describes a continuing state of an action verb. This usually translates to the gerund in English except for a few exceptions, which we will examine later. We can make good use of the te-form we learned in the last section because the only thing to do left to do is add 「いる」! You can then treat the result as a regular ru-verb.

This 「いる」 is the same ru-verb describing existence, first described in the *Negative Verbs* lesson. However, in this case, you don't have to worry about whether the subject is animate or inanimate.

#### Using 「～ている」 for enduring states

- To describe a continuing action, first conjugate the verb to the te-form and then attach the verb 「いる」. The entire result conjugates as a ru-verb.
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>食べる → <sup>た</sup>食べて → <sup>た</sup>食べている
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>読む → <sup>よ</sup>読んで → <sup>よ</sup>読んでいる
- The result conjugates as a ru-verb regardless of what the original verb is

	Positive		Negative	
Non-Past	<sup>よ</sup> 読んでいる	reading	<sup>よ</sup> 読んでいない	is not reading
Past	<sup>よ</sup> 読んでいた	was reading	<sup>よ</sup> 読んでいなかった	was not reading

### Examples

- (1) <sup>ともだち</sup> 友達は何を<sup>なに</sup>しているの?  
What is friend doing?

- (2) ひる ほん た  
昼ご飯を食べている。  
(Friend) is eating lunch.

Note that once you've changed it into a regular ru-verb, you can do all the normal conjugations. The examples show the masu-form and plain negative conjugations.

- (1) なに よ  
何を読んでいる？  
What are you reading?
- (2) きょうかしよ よ  
教科書を読んでいます。  
I am reading textbook.
- (1) はなし き  
話を聞いていますか。  
Are you listening to me? (lit: Are you listening to story?)
- (2) ううん、き  
聞いていない。  
No, I'm not listening.

Since people are usually too lazy to roll their tongues to properly pronounce the 「い」, in more casual situations, the 「い」 is simply dropped. This is a convenience for speaking. If you were writing an essay or paper, you should always include the 「い」. Here are the abbreviated versions of the previous examples.

- (1) ともだち なに  
友達は何をしてるの？  
What is friend doing?
- (2) ひる ほん た  
昼ご飯を食べてる。  
(Friend) is eating lunch.
- (1) なに よ  
何を読んでる？  
What are you reading?
- (2) きょうかしよ よ  
教科書を読んでいます。  
I am reading textbook.
- (1) はなし き  
話を聞いていますか。  
Are you listening to me? (lit: Are you listening to story?)
- (2) ううん、き  
聞いてない。  
No, I'm not listening.

Notice how I left the 「い」 alone for the polite forms. Though people certainly omit the 「い」 even in polite form, you might want to get used to the proper way of saying things first before getting carried away with casual abbreviations. You will be amazed at the extensive types of abbreviations that exist in casual speech. (You may also be amazed at how long everything gets in super polite speech.) Basically, you will get the abbreviations if you just act lazy and slur everything together. Particles also get punted off left and right.

For example:

- (1) <sup>なに</sup>何をしているの？  
Those particles are such a pain to say all the time.
- (2) <sup>なに</sup>何しているの？  
Ugh, I hate having to spell out all the vowels.
- (3) <sup>なに</sup>何してんの？  
Ah, perfect.

## Enduring State of Being Rather Than Enduring State of Action

There are certain cases where an enduring state doesn't translate into the gerund form. In fact, there is a ambiguity in whether one is in a state of doing an action versus being in a state that resulted from some action. This is usually decided by context and common practices. For example, although 「結婚けっこんしている」 can technically mean someone is in a chapel currently getting married, it is usually used to refer to someone who is already married and is currently in that married state. We'll now discuss some common verbs that often cause this type of confusion for learners of Japanese.

「知るし」 「知るし」 means “to know.” English is weird in that “know” is supposed to be a verb but is actually describing a state of having knowledge. Japanese is more consistent and 「知るし」 is just a regular action verb. In other words, I “knew” (action) something and so now I know it (state).

That's why the English word “to know” is really a continuing state in Japanese, namely: 「知しっている」.

「知るし」 vs 「分わかる」 「分わかる」 meaning “to understand” may seem similar to 「知るし」 in some cases. However, there is a difference between “knowing” and “understanding.” Try not to confuse 「知しっている」 with 「分わかっている」. 「分わかっている」 means that you are already in a state of understanding, in other words, you already get it. If you misuse this, you may sound pompous. (“Yeah, yeah, I got it already.”) On the other hand, 「知しっている」 simply means you know something.

## Examples

- (1) <sup>きょう</sup>今日、**知しりました**。  
I found out about it today. (I did the action of knowing today.)
- (2) この歌うたを**知しっていますか**？  
Do (you) know this song?
- (3) 道みちは**分わかりますか**。  
Do you know the way? (lit: Do (you) understand the road?)
- (4) はい、はい、**分わかった、分わかった**。  
Yes, yes, I got it, I got it.

## Motion Verbs (行く、来る、etc.)

It is reasonable to assume the actions 「行っている」 and 「来ている」 would mean, “going” and “coming” respectively. But unfortunately, this is not the case. The 「～ている」 form of motion verbs is more like a sequence of actions we saw in the last section. You completed the motion, and now you exist in that state. (Remember, 「いる」 is the verb of existence of animate objects.) It might help to think of it as two separate and successive actions: 「行って」、and then 「いる」.

### Examples

- (1) <sup>すずき</sup>鈴木さんはどこですか。  
Where is Suzuki-san?
- (2) もう、家いえにかえ帰っている。  
He is already at home (went home and is there now).
- (3) <sup>さき</sup>先いに行っているよ。  
I'll go on ahead. (I'll go and be there before you.)
- (4) <sup>みえ</sup>美恵ちゃんきは、もう来ているよ。  
Mie-chan is already here, you know. (She came and is here.)

## Using 「～である」 for Resultant States

Appropriately enough, just like there is an 「ある」 to go with 「いる」, there is a 「～である」 form that also has a special meaning. By replacing 「いる」 with 「ある」, instead of a continuing action, it becomes a resultant state after the action has already taken place. Usually, this expression is used to explain that something is in a state of completion. The completed action also carries a nuance of being completed in preparation for something else.

### Examples

Since this grammar describes the state of a completed action, it is common to see the 「は」 and 「も」 particles instead of the 「を」 particle.

- (1) <sup>じゅんび</sup>準備はどうですか。  
How are the preparations?
- (2) <sup>じゅんび</sup>準備は、もうしてあるよ。  
The preparations are already done.
- (1) <sup>りょじょう</sup>旅行のけいかく計画はおわった？  
Are the plans for the trip complete?
- (2) うん、<sup>きっぷ</sup>切符かを買ったし、ホテルのよやく予約もしてある。  
Uh huh, not only did I buy the ticket, I also took care of the hotel reservations.

## Using the 「～ておく」 Form as Preparation for the Future

While 「～である」 carries a nuance of a completed action in preparation for something else, 「～ておく」 explicitly states that the action is done (or will be done) with the future in mind. Imagine this: you have made a delicious pie and you're going to place it on the window sill for it to cool so that you can eat it later. This image might help explain why the verb 「おく」 (置く), meaning “to place,” can be used to describe a preparation for the future. (It's just too bad that pies on window sills always seem to go through some kind of mishap especially in cartoons.) While 「置く」 by itself is written in kanji, it is customary to use hiragana when it comes attached to a conjugated verb (such as the te-form).

### Examples

- (1) ばん はん つく  
晩ご飯を作っておく。  
Make dinner (in advance for the future).
- (2) でんち か  
電池を買っておきます。  
I'll buy batteries (in advance for the future).

Because the close “t” sounds in 「ておく」 makes it difficult to pronounce, it is very often abbreviated to simply 「～とく」.

- (1) ばん はん つく  
晩ご飯を作っとく。  
Make dinner (in advance for the future).
- (2) でんち か  
電池を買っときます。  
I'll buy batteries (in advance for the future).

## Using Motion Verbs (行く、来る) with the te-Form

You can also use the motion verb “to go” (行く) and “to come” with the te-form, to show that an action is oriented toward or from someplace. The most common and useful example of this the verb 「持つ」 (to hold). While 「持っている」 means you are in a state of holding something (in possession of), when the 「いる」 is replaced with 「いく」 or 「くる」, it means you are taking or bringing something. Of course, the conjugation is the same as the regular 「行く」 and 「来る」.

Examples

- (1) えんぴつ も  
鉛筆を持っている？  
Do (you) have a pencil?
- (2) えんぴつ がっこう も  
鉛筆を学校へ持っていく？  
Are (you) taking pencil to school?

- (3) <sup>えんぴつ</sup> <sup>いえ</sup> <sup>も</sup>  
鉛筆を家に持ってくる？  
Are (you) bringing pencil to home?

For these examples, it may make more sense to think of them as a sequence of actions: hold and go, or hold and come. Here are a couple more examples.

- (1) <sup>とう</sup> <sup>はや</sup> <sup>かえ</sup>  
お父さんは、早く帰ってきました。  
Father came back home early.

- (2) <sup>えき</sup> <sup>ほう</sup> <sup>はし</sup>  
駅の方へ走っていった。  
Ran toward the direction of station.

The motion verbs can also be used in time expressions to move forward or come up to the present.

- (1) <sup>ふゆ</sup> <sup>はい</sup> <sup>き</sup> <sup>ひと</sup> <sup>ふ</sup>  
冬に入って、コートを着ている人が増えていきます。  
Entering winter, people wearing coat will increase (toward the future).

- (2) <sup>いっしょうせんめい</sup> <sup>がんば</sup>  
一生懸命、頑張っていく！  
Will try my hardest (toward the future) with all my might!

- (3) <sup>いろいろ</sup> <sup>ひと</sup> <sup>つ</sup> <sup>あ</sup> <sup>ひと</sup> <sup>み</sup>  
色々な人と付き合ってきたけど、いい人はまだ見つからない。  
Went out (up to the present) with various types of people but have yet to find a good person.

- (4) <sup>にほんご</sup> <sup>まえ</sup> <sup>べんきょう</sup> <sup>けっきょく</sup>  
日本語をずっと前から勉強してきて、結局はやめた。  
Studied Japanese from way back before and eventually quit.

# Potential Form

Now you can say you can.

## Expressing the Ability to Do Something

In Japanese, the ability to do a certain action is expressed by conjugating the verb rather than adding a word such as the words “can” or “able to” in the case of English. All verbs conjugated into the potential form become a ru-verb.

## The Potential Form

Once again, the conjugation rules can be split into three major groups: ru-verbs, u-verbs, and exception verbs. However, the potential form of the verb 「する」 (meaning “to do”) is a special exception because it becomes a completely different verb: 「できる」 (出来る)

### Rules for creating potential form

- ru-verbs - Replace the 「る」 with 「られる」.
    - 例) <sup>れい</sup>見<sup>み</sup>る → <sup>み</sup>見<sup>み</sup>られる
  - u-verbs - Change the last character from a / u / vowel sound to the equivalent / e / vowel sound and add 「る」.
    - 例) <sup>れい</sup>遊<sup>あそ</sup>ぶ → <sup>あそ</sup>遊<sup>あそ</sup>べ → <sup>あそ</sup>遊<sup>あそ</sup>べる
  - Exceptions - 「する」 becomes 「できる」 and 「くる」 becomes 「こられる」.
- ※ Remember that all potential verbs become ru-verbs.

### Sample ru-verbs

Plain	Potential
<sup>た</sup> 食 <sup>く</sup> べる	<sup>た</sup> 食 <sup>く</sup> べ <sup>ら</sup> れる
<sup>き</sup> 着 <sup>く</sup> る	<sup>き</sup> 着 <sup>く</sup> ら <sup>れ</sup> る
<sup>しん</sup> 信 <sup>じ</sup> じる	<sup>しん</sup> 信 <sup>じ</sup> じ <sup>ら</sup> れる
<sup>ね</sup> 寝 <sup>る</sup>	<sup>ね</sup> 寝 <sup>ら</sup> れる
<sup>お</sup> 起 <sup>き</sup> きる	<sup>お</sup> 起 <sup>き</sup> き <sup>ら</sup> れる
<sup>で</sup> 出 <sup>で</sup> る	<sup>で</sup> 出 <sup>で</sup> ら <sup>れ</sup> る
<sup>か</sup> 掛 <sup>か</sup> ける	<sup>か</sup> 掛 <sup>か</sup> け <sup>ら</sup> れる
<sup>し</sup> ら <sup>べ</sup> る	<sup>し</sup> ら <sup>べ</sup> ら <sup>れ</sup> る



## Sample u-verbs

Plain	Potential	ローマ字 <sup>じ</sup>	ローマ字 (Pot.) <sup>じ</sup>
はな 話 <sup>す</sup>	はな 話 <sup>せる</sup>	hanasu	hanaseru
か 書 <sup>く</sup>	か 書 <sup>ける</sup>	kaku	kakeru
あそ 遊 <sup>ぶ</sup>	あそ 遊 <sup>べる</sup>	asobu	asoberu
ま 待 <sup>つ</sup>	ま 待 <sup>てる</sup>	matu <sup>13</sup>	materu
の 飲 <sup>む</sup>	の 飲 <sup>める</sup>	nomu	nomeru
と 取 <sup>る</sup>	と 取 <sup>れる</sup>	toru	toreru
し 死 <sup>ぬ</sup>	し 死 <sup>ねる</sup>	shinu	shineru
か 買 <sup>う</sup>	か 買 <sup>える</sup>	kau	kaeru

## Exception Verbs

Plain	Potential
する	できる
くる	こられる

It is also possible to just add 「れる」 instead of the full 「られる」 for ru-verbs. For example, 「食べる」 becomes 「食べれる」 instead of 「食べられる」. I suggest learning the official 「られる」 conjugation first because laziness can be a hard habit to break and the shorter version, though common, is considered to be slang.

## Examples

- (1) <sup>かんじ</sup>漢字は<sup>か</sup>書けますか？  
Can you write kanji?
- (2) <sup>ざんねん</sup>残念だが、<sup>こんしゅうまつ</sup>今週末は<sup>い</sup>行けない。  
It's unfortunate, but can't go this weekend.
- (3) もう<sup>しん</sup>信じられない。  
I can't believe it already.

<sup>13</sup> つ is pronounced “tsu,” but it’s treated as “tu” for conjugation purposes because of its position on the hiragana table.

## Potential Forms Do Not Have Direct Objects

The potential form indicates that something is possible but no actual action is actually taken. While the potential form remains a verb, since it is describing the state of something you must not use the direct object 「を」 as you have done with regular verbs. For example the following sentences are incorrect.

- (誤) <sup>ご</sup> 富士山<sup>ふじさん</sup>を<sup>のぼ</sup>登<sup>のぼ</sup>れた。  
(誤) <sup>ご</sup> 重<sup>おも</sup>い荷物<sup>にもつ</sup>を<sup>も</sup>持<sup>も</sup>てます。

Here are the corrected versions:

- (正) <sup>せい</sup> 富士山<sup>ふじさん</sup>が<sup>のぼ</sup>登<sup>のぼ</sup>れた。  
Was able to climb Fuji-san.  
(正) <sup>せい</sup> 重<sup>おも</sup>い荷物<sup>にもつ</sup>が<sup>も</sup>持<sup>も</sup>てます。  
Am able to hold heavy baggage.

Of course, the 「は」 or 「も」 particle is also possible depending on what you want to say.

## Are 「見える」 and 「聞こえる」 Exceptions?

There are two verbs 「見える」 and 「聞こえる」 that mean that something is visible and audible, respectively. When you want to say that you can see or hear something, you'll want to use these verbs. If however, you wanted to say that you were given the opportunity to see or hear something, you would use the regular potential form. However, in this case, it is more common to use the type of expression as seen in example (3).

### Examples

- (1) <sup>きょう</sup> 今<sup>は</sup>日は晴<sup>は</sup>れて、富士山<sup>ふじさん</sup>が<sup>み</sup>見<sup>み</sup>える。  
It cleared up today and Fuji-san is visible.  
(2) <sup>ともだち</sup> 友<sup>だ</sup>ちのおかげ<sup>が</sup>で、映<sup>えい</sup>画<sup>が</sup>は<sup>み</sup>ただ<sup>み</sup>で見<sup>み</sup>られた。  
Thanks to [my] friend, [I] was able to watch the movie for free.  
(3) <sup>ともだち</sup> 友<sup>だ</sup>ちのおかげ<sup>が</sup>で、映<sup>えい</sup>画<sup>が</sup>を<sup>み</sup>ただ<sup>み</sup>で見<sup>み</sup>ることが<sup>き</sup>できた。  
Thanks to [my] friend, [I] was able to watch the movie for free.

You can see that (3) uses the generic noun for an event to say literally, “The event of seeing movie was able to be done.” which essentially means the same thing as 「見られる」. As already explained in the *Noun-Related Particles* lesson, you can also just use generic noun substitution to substitute for 「こと」.

- (1) <sup>ともだち</sup> 友<sup>だ</sup>ちのおかげ<sup>が</sup>で、映<sup>えい</sup>画<sup>が</sup>を<sup>み</sup>見<sup>み</sup>る<sup>の</sup>が<sup>き</sup>できた。

Here's some more examples using 「聞く」, can you tell the difference? Notice that 「聞こえる」 always means “audible” and never “able to ask.”

- (1) <sup>ひさ</sup>久しぶりに<sup>かれ</sup>彼の<sup>こえ</sup>声が<sup>き</sup>聞けた。  
I was able to hear his voice for the first time in a long time.
- (2) <sup>まわ</sup>周り<sup>かれ</sup>が<sup>い</sup>言っていることがあんまり<sup>き</sup>聞こえなかった  
The surroundings were noisy and I couldn't hear what he was saying very well.

## 「ある」, Yet Another Exception

You can say that something has a possibility of existing by combining 「ある」 and the verb 「得る」 to produce 「あり得る」. This essentially means 「あることができる」 except that nobody actually says that, they just use 「あり得る」. This verb is very curious in that it can be read as either 「ありうる」 or 「ありえる」, however; all the other conjugations such as 「ありえない」、 「ありえた」、 and 「ありえなかった」 only have one possible reading using 「え」.

### Examples

- (1) そんなことはありうる。  
That kind of situation/event is possible (lit: can exist).
- (2) そんなことはありえる。  
That kind of situation/event is possible (lit: can exist).
- (3) そんなことはありえない。  
That kind of situation/event is not possible (lit: cannot exist).
- (4) <sup>かれ</sup>彼が<sup>ねぼう</sup>寝坊したこともありうるね。  
It's also possible that he overslept. (lit: The event that he overslept also possibly exists.)
- (5) それは、ありえない<sup>はなし</sup>話だよ。  
That's an impossible story/scenario. (lit: That story/scenario cannot exist.)

## Using **する** and **なる** with the **に** Particle (～[よう]になる/する)

*This lesson is very becoming for doing*

We can use the verbs 「する」 and 「なる」 in conjunction with the 「に」 particle to make various useful expressions. We are used to using the object particle with 「する」 because something is usually done to something else. We will see how the meaning changes when we change the particle to 「に」. As for 「なる」, it is always used with the 「に」 particle because “becoming” is not an action done to something else but rather a target of change. The only grammatical point of interest here is using 「なる」 with i-adjectives and verbs.

### Using 「なる」 and 「する」 for Nouns and na-Adjectives

As already explained, using 「なる」 with nouns and na-adjectives presents nothing new and acts pretty much the way you'd expect.

- (1) かれ にほんご じょうず  
彼の日本語が上手**になった**。  
His Japanese has become skillful.
- (2) わたし いしや  
私は医者**になった**。  
I became a doctor.
- (3) わたし ゆうめい ひと  
私は有名な人**になる**。  
I will become a famous person.

For adjectives, using the verb 「する」 with the 「に」 particle is just a review back to the lesson on adverbs.<sup>14</sup> However, for nouns, when you use the verb 「する」 with the 「に」 particle, it means that you are going to do things toward something. This changes the meaning of 「する」 to mean, “to decide on X.” This is a common expression to use, for instance, when you are ordering items on a menu.

- (1) わたし  
私は、ハンバーガーとサラダ**にします**。  
I'll have the hamburger and salad. (lit: I'll do toward hamburger and salad.)
- (2) ほか  
他にいいものがたくさんあるけど、やっぱりこれ**にする**。  
There are a lot of other good things, but as I thought, I'll go with this one.

If you think this expression is strange, think about the English expression, “I'll go with the hamburger.” Exactly where are you going with the hamburger?

### Using 「なる」 with i-Adjectives

Because the 「に」 particle is a target particle that is used for nouns and by extension na-adjectives, we need to use something else to show that something is becoming an i-adjective. Since “becoming” expresses a change in state, it makes sense to describe this process using an adverb. In fact, you'll

<sup>14</sup> See the *Using Adverbs and Gobi* lesson.

notice that we were already using adverbs (of a sort) in the previous section by using 「に」 with na-adjectives.

- (1) きょねん 去年から せが たか 背が高くなったね。  
Your height has gotten taller from last year, huh?
- (2) うんどう 運動しているから、つよ 強くなる。  
I will become stronger because I am exercising.
- (3) べんきょう 勉強をたくさんしたから、あたま 頭がよくなった。  
Since I studied a lot, I became smarter. (lit: head became better)

## Using 「なる」 and 「する」 with Verbs

You may wonder how to express becoming a verb since there's no way to directly modify a verb with another verb. The simple solution is to add a noun which will almost always be the generic event こと (事) or the word よう (様), which means an appearance or manner. These nouns act more like particles than actual nouns because they are never used by themselves but rather only in grammatical expressions. However, unlike particles, we can apply the same grammatical rules as regular nouns. Here's how we're going to use these "nouns" with 「する」 and 「なる」.

- (1) かいがい 海外に行く こと になった。  
It's been decided that I will go abroad. (lit: It became the event of going abroad.)
- (2) まいにち 毎日、肉を食べる よう になった。  
It seems like I started eating meat everyday. (lit: It became the appearance of eating meat everyday.)
- (3) かいがい 海外に行く こと にした。  
I decided I will go abroad. (lit: I did toward the event of going abroad.)
- (4) まいにち 毎日、肉を食べる よう にする。  
I will try to eat meat everyday. (lit: I will do toward the manner of eating meat everyday.)

You can directly modify 「なる」 or 「する」 with a verb by first making a noun clause and then treating it just like a regular noun. Pretty clever, huh? I hope the literal translations give you a sense of why the example sentences mean what they do. For example, in (4) 「～ようにする」 translates into "to make an effort toward..." but in Japanese, it's really only a target towards acting in a certain manner.

Since potential verbs describe a state of feasibility rather than an action (remember, that's why the 「を」 particle couldn't be used), it is often used in conjunction with 「～ようになる」 to describe a change in manner to a state of feasibility. Let's take this opportunity to get some potential conjugation practice in.

(1) にほん き すし た  
日本に来て、寿司が食べられるようになった。  
After coming to Japan, I became able to eat sushi.

(2) いちねんかんれんしゅう つよ  
一年間練習したから、ピアノが弾けるようになった。  
Because I practiced for one year, I became able to play the piano.

(3) ちか はい ふじさん み  
地下に入って、富士山が見えなくなった。  
After going underground, Fuji-san became not visible.

As you can see by example (3), since negative verbs end in 「い」, you can treat them just like i-adjectives as we have done countless times before.

# Conditionals (と、なら、ば、たら)

## How to Say “if” in Japanese

This whole section is dedicated to learning how to say “if” in Japanese. Oh, if only it was as simple as English. In Japanese, there’s four (count them, four) ways to say “if!” Thankfully, the conjugations are sparse and easy especially since you don’t have to deal with tenses.

## Expressing Natural Consequence Using 「と」

We’ll first cover the simplest type of “if” which is the natural consequence conditional. This means that if [X] happens, [Y] will happen as a natural consequence. No question about it. If I drop a ball, it will fall to the ground. If I turn off the lights at night, it will get dark. We can express this type of condition in the following format.

### Rules for using the conditional 「と」

- Attach 「と」 to the condition followed by the result that would occur should the condition be satisfied, i.e. [Condition] + と + [Result]
- State of being must be made explicit, i.e. [State of Being] + だと + [Result]

## Examples

- (1) ボールを落すと落ちる。  
If you drop the ball, it will fall.
- (2) 電気を消すと暗くなる。  
If you turn off the lights, it will get dark.

These examples are designed to show how 「と」 is used to express natural consequence. However, even if the statement isn’t a natural consequence in itself, the 「と」 will tell the audience that it is nevertheless expected to be a natural consequence.

- (1) 学校に行かないと友達と会えないよ。  
If you don’t go to school, you can’t meet your friends.
- (2) たくさん食べると太るよ。  
If you eat a lot, you will get fat, for sure.
- (3) 先生だと、きっと年上なんじゃないですか？  
If he’s a teacher, he must be older for sure, right?

The “for sure” part is the implied meaning supplied by the 「と」. The speaker is saying that the following condition will occur in that situation, no matter what. As you can see from the last example, if the condition is a state-of-being, it must be expressed so explicitly using 「だ」. This

applies to all non-conjugated nouns and na-adjectives as I'm sure you're used to by now. This will also help prevent confusion with other types of 「と」.

## Contextual Conditionals Using 「なら (ば)」

Another relatively easy to understand type of “if” is the contextual conditional. You can use this particle to express what will happen given a certain context. For example, if you wanted to say, “Well, if everybody’s going, I’m going too” you would use the 「なら」 conditional because you are saying that you will go in the context of everybody else going. The contextual conditional always requires a context in which the conditional occurs. For instance, you would use it for saying things like, “If *that’s* what you are talking about...” or “If *that’s* the case, then...”

In a sense, you are explaining what would occur if you assume a certain condition is satisfied. In other words, you are saying “if given a certain context, here is what will happen.” You will see this reflected in the English translations as the phrase “if given” in the examples.

The 「なら」 is attached to the context in which the conditional occurs. The format is the same as the 「と」 conditional, however, you must not attach the declarative 「だ」.

### Rules for using the contextual conditional 「なら」

1. Attach 「なら」 to the context in which the conditional would occur, i.e. [Assumed Context] + なら + [Result]
2. You must not attach the declarative 「だ」.

## Examples

- (1) みんなが行くなら私も行く。  
If given that everybody is going, then I'll go too.
- (2) アリスさんが言うなら問題ないよ。  
If given that Alice-san says so, there's no problem.

## Example Dialogue

アリス： 図書館はどこですか。  
Where is the library?

ボブ： 図書館なら、あそこです。  
If given that you're talking about the library, then it's over there.

The following is incorrect.

(誤) 図書館だならあそこです。

You can also decide to use 「ならば」 instead of just 「なら」. This means exactly the same thing except that it has a more formal nuance.



## General Conditionals Using 「ば」

The next type of conditional just expresses a regular “if” condition without any assumptions or embedded meanings. However, it cannot be used with nouns and na-adjectives. Conjugation-wise, the 「ば」 conditional is fairly easy. For verbs, like the potential form, you change the last / u / vowel sound to an / e / vowel sound but instead of attaching 「る」, you attach 「ば」. This rule also applies to ru-verbs. For i-adjectives and negatives ending in 「ない」, you take off the last 「い」 and add 「ければ」.

### Conjugation Rules for 「ば」

- For verbs, just like the potential form,<sup>15</sup> change the last / u / vowel sound to the equivalent / e / vowel sound and attach 「ば」
  - 例) 食<sup>れい</sup>べ<sup>た</sup>る → 食<sup>れい</sup>べ<sup>た</sup>れ → 食<sup>れい</sup>べ<sup>た</sup>れば
  - 例) 待<sup>れい</sup>つ → 待<sup>れい</sup>て → 待<sup>れい</sup>てば
- For i-adjectives or negatives ending in 「ない」, drop the last 「い」 and attach 「ければ」.
  - 例) おかし<sup>れい</sup>い → おかし<sup>れい</sup>ければ
  - 例) な<sup>れい</sup>い → な<sup>れい</sup>ければ

### Examples

- (1) 友達<sup>ともだち</sup>にあ<sup>あ</sup>えれば、買<sup>か</sup>い物<sup>もの</sup>に行<sup>い</sup>きます。  
If I can meet with my friend, we will go shopping.
- (2) お金<sup>かね</sup>があ<sup>あ</sup>ればいいね。  
If I had money, it would be good, huh?
- (3) 楽<sup>たの</sup>しければ、私<sup>わたし</sup>も行<sup>い</sup>く。  
If it's fun, I'll go too.
- (4) 楽<sup>たの</sup>しくな<sup>な</sup>ければ、私<sup>わたし</sup>も行<sup>い</sup>かない。  
If it's not fun, I'll also not go.
- (5) 食<sup>た</sup>べな<sup>な</sup>ければ病<sup>びょうき</sup>気<sup>き</sup>になるよ。  
If you don't eat, you will become sick.

## Past Conditional Using 「たら (ば)」

I call this next conditional the past conditional because it is produced by taking the past tense and just adding 「ら」. It is commonly called the 「たら」 conditional because all past-tense ends with 「た」 and so it always becomes 「たら」. Like the 「ば」 conditional, it is also a general conditional except it can also be used with nouns and na-adjectives.

<sup>15</sup> See the *Potential Form* lesson.

## Conjugation Rule for 「たら (ば)」

- First change the noun, adjective, or verb to its past tense and attach 「ら」
  - 例) 自動 <sup>れい</sup> → 自動<sup>じどう</sup>だった → 自動<sup>じどう</sup>だったら
  - 例) 待つ <sup>れい</sup> → 待<sup>ま</sup>った → 待<sup>ま</sup>ったら
  - 例) 忙しい <sup>れい</sup> → 忙<sup>いそが</sup>しかった → 忙<sup>いそが</sup>しかったら

## Examples

- (1) <sup>ひま</sup>暇<sup>あそ</sup>だったら、<sup>い</sup>遊び<sup>い</sup>に行くよ。  
If I am free, I will go play.
- (2) <sup>がくせい</sup>学生<sup>がくせい</sup>だったら、<sup>わりびき</sup>学生割引<sup>か</sup>で買<sup>か</sup>えます。  
If you're a student, you can buy with a student discount.

For i-adjectives and verbs, it is very difficult to differentiate between the two types of conditionals, and you can make life easier for yourself by considering them to be the same. However, if you must insist, I searched around the web for an explanation of the difference that I can agree with. [Here](#)<sup>16</sup> is the original text. Basically, the 「たら」 conditional focuses on what happens after the condition. This is another reason why I call this the past conditional because the condition is “in the past” (not literally) and we're interested in the result not the condition. The 「ば」 conditional, on the other hand, focuses on the conditional part.

Let's compare the difference in nuance.

- (A) <sup>ともだち</sup>友達<sup>あ</sup>に会<sup>あ</sup>えれば、<sup>か</sup>買<sup>か</sup>い物<sup>もの</sup>に行<sup>い</sup>きます。  
We will go shopping, if I can meet with my friend.
- (B) <sup>ともだち</sup>友達<sup>あ</sup>に会<sup>あ</sup>えたら、<sup>か</sup>買<sup>か</sup>い物<sup>もの</sup>に行<sup>い</sup>きます。  
If I can meet with my friend, we will go shopping.
- (A) <sup>かね</sup>お金<sup>あ</sup>があればいいね。  
It would be good, if I had money, huh?
- (B) <sup>かね</sup>お金<sup>あ</sup>があったらいいね。  
If I had money, it would be good, huh?

Going by the context, the 「～たら」 form sounds more natural for both examples because it doesn't seem like we're really focusing on the condition itself. We're probably more interested in what's going to happen once we meet the friend or how nice it would be if we had money.

The past conditional is the only type of conditional where the result can be in the past. It may seem strange to have an “if” when the result has already taken place. Indeed, in this usage, there really is no “if,” it's just a way of expressing surprise at the result of the condition. This has little to do with conditionals but it is explained here because the grammatical structure is the same.

<sup>16</sup> <http://homepage3.nifty.com/i-yasu/Lesson8.htm>

(1) 家に帰ったら、誰もいなかった。  
When I went home, there was no one there. (unexpected result)

(2) アメリカに行ったら、たくさん太りました。  
As a result of going to America, I got really fat. (unexpected result)

You can also use 「たらば」 instead of 「たら」. Similar to 「ならば」, this means exactly the same thing except that it has a more formal nuance.

## How Does 「もし」 Fit into All of This?

Some of you may be aware of the word 「もし」 which means “if” and may be wondering how it fits into all of this. Well, if you want to say a conditional, you need to use one of the conditionals discussed above. 「もし」 is really a supplement to add a sense of uncertainty on whether the condition is true. For instance, you might use it when you want to make an invitation and you don't want to presume like the following example.

(1) もしよかったら、映画を観に行きますか？  
If **by any chance** it's OK with you, go to watch movie?

(2) もし時間がないなら、明日でもいいよ。  
If given that there's no time, tomorrow is fine as well. (Not certain whether there is no time)

## Expressing “Must” or “Have to” (～だめ、～いけない、～ならない、～ても)

Things that must be done (or not)

### When There’s Something that Must or Must Not Be Done

In life, there are things that we must or must not do whether it’s taking out the trash or doing our homework. We will cover how to say this in Japanese because it is a useful expression and it also ties in well with the previous section. We will also learn how to say the expression, “You don’t have to...” to finish off this section.

### Using 「だめ」、 「いけない」、 and 「ならない」 for Things That Must Not Be Done

If you don’t know what 「だめ」 (駄目) means, I suggest looking it up in [WWWJDIC](http://wwwjdic.com)<sup>17</sup> and clicking on the [Ex] link to see the example sentences. It essentially means “no good” but carefully check out the example sentences because it can be used in many different ways. The other two key words in this section are 「いけない」 and 「ならない」 and they have essentially the same basic meaning as 「だめ」. However, while 「いけない」 can be used by itself, 「ならない」 must only be used in the grammar presented here. In addition, while 「いけない」 and 「ならない」 conjugate like i-adjectives they are not actual adjectives. Let’s learn how to use these words to express things that must not be done.

#### How to say: Must not [verb]

- Take the te-form of the verb,<sup>18</sup> add the 「は」 (wa) particle and finally attach either 「だめ」、 「いけない」、 or 「ならない」.
  - 例) 入る → 入って + は + だめ / いけない / ならない = 入ってはだめ / 入っては  
いけない / 入ってはならない

### Examples

- (1) ここにはい入ってはいけません。  
You must not enter here.
- (2) それをた食べてはだめ!  
You can’t (must not) eat that!
- (3) よる夜、おそ遅くまででんわ電話してはならない。  
You must not use the phone until late at night.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~jwb/wwwjdic.html>

<sup>18</sup> See the “Expressing a Sequence of Verbs With the te-Form” heading in the *Compound Sentences* lesson.

- (4) はや早く寝てはなりませんでした。  
Wasn't allowed to sleep early.

The difference between 「だめ」、「いけない」、and 「ならない」 is that, first of all, 「だめ」 is casual. While 「いけない」 and 「ならない」 are basically identical, 「ならない」 is generally more for things that apply to more than one person like rules and policies.

## Expressing Things That Must Be Done

You may have predicted that the opposite of “You must not do” would use 「いける」 or 「なる」 because they look like the positive version of 「いけない」 and 「ならない」. But I already pointed out that 「いけない」 and 「ならない」 must always be negative, so this is not correct. In actuality, we still use the same 「だめ／いけない／ならない」 but instead we take the opposite of the verb that goes in front of it. This double negative can be kind of confusing at first but you will get used to it with practice. There are three ways to conjugate the verb before adding 「だめ／いけない／ならない」 and two of them involve conditionals so aren't you glad that you just learned conditionals in the previous section?

### How to say: Must [verb]

1. Negative te-form<sup>19</sup> + 「は」 (wa) particle + だめ／いけない／ならない
2. Negative verb<sup>20</sup> + 「と」 conditional + だめ／いけない／ならない
3. Negative verb + 「ば」 conditional + だめ／いけない／ならない

The first method is the same as the “must not do” grammar form except that we simply negated the verb.

- (1) まいにちがっこう毎日学校にい行かなくてはなりません。  
Must go to school everyday.
- (2) しゅくだい宿題をしなくてはいけなかった。  
Had to do homework.

The second method uses the natural conditional that we learned in the last lesson. Literally, it means if you don't do something, then it automatically leads to the fact that it is no good. (In other words, you must do it.) However, people tend to use it for situations beyond the natural consequence characterization that we learned from the last section because it's shorter and easier to use than the other two types of grammar.

- (1) まいにちがっこう毎日学校にい行かないとだめです。  
Must go to school everyday.
- (2) しゅくだい宿題をしなないといけない。  
Have to do homework.

19 See the “Expressing a Sequence of Verbs With the te-Form” heading in the *Compound Sentences* lesson.

20 See the “Conjugating Verbs into the Negative” heading in the *Negative Verbs* lesson.

The third method is similar to the second except that it uses a different type of conditional as explained in the last lesson. With the 「ば」 conditional, it can be used for a wider range of situations. Note that since the verb is always negative, for the 「ば」 conditional, we will always be removing the last 「い」 and adding 「ければ」.

- (1) <sup>まいにちがっこう</sup>毎日学校に<sup>い</sup>行かなければいけません。  
Must go to school everyday.
- (2) <sup>しゅくだい</sup>宿題をしなければだめだった。  
Had to do homework.

It may seem like I just breezed through a whole lot of material because there are three grammar forms and 「だめ／いけない／ならない」 adding up to nine possible combinations (3x3). However, some combinations are more common than others but I did not explicitly point out which were more common because any combination is technically correct and going over style would merely confuse at this point. Also, keep in mind that there is nothing essentially new in terms of conjugation rules. We already covered conditionals in the last lesson and adding the wa particle to the te-form in the beginning of this section.

### **Reality Check**

Although we spent the last section explaining 「～なければ」 and 「～なくては」, the reality is that because they are so long, they are practically never used in actual conversation. Though they are often used in the written medium, in actual speech, people usually use the 「と」 conditional or the various shortcuts described below. In casual speech, the 「と」 conditional is the most prevalent type of conditional. Though I explained in depth the meaning associated with the 「と」 conditional, you have to take it with a grain of salt here because people are inherently lazy.

### **Various Short-Cuts for the Lazy**

You may have been grumbling and complaining about how long most of the expressions are just to say you must do something. You can end up with up to eight additional syllables just to say “I have to...!”

Well, others have thought the same before and people usually use short abbreviated versions of 「なくては」 and 「なければ」 in casual speech. Teachers are often reluctant to teach these overly familiar expressions because they are so much easier to use which is bad for times when they might not be appropriate. But, on the other hand, if you don't learn casual expressions, it makes it difficult to understand your friends (or would-be friends if you only knew how to speak less stiffly!). So here they are but take care to properly practice the longer forms so that you will be able to use them for the appropriate occasions.

#### **Casual abbreviations for things that must be done**

1. Simply replace 「なくて」 with 「なくちゃ」
2. Simply replace 「なければ」 with 「なきゃ」

Right now, you may be saying, “What the?” because the “abbreviations” are about the same length as what we’ve already covered. The secret here is that, unlike the expressions we learned so far, you can just leave the 「だめ／いけない／ならない」 part out altogether!

(1) <sup>べんぎょう</sup>勉強しなくちゃ。  
Gotta study.

(2) <sup>はん た</sup>ご飯を食べななきゃ。  
Gotta eat.

The 「と」 conditional is also used by itself to imply 「だめ／いけない／ならない」.

(1) <sup>がっこう い</sup>学校に行かないと。  
Gotta go to school.

There is another 「ちゃ」 abbreviation for things that you *must not* do. However, in this case, you cannot leave out the 「だめ／いけない／ならない」 part out. Since this is a casual abbreviation, 「だめ」 is used in most cases.

One very important difference for this casual form is that verbs that end in 「む」、「ぶ」、「ぬ」 use 「じゃ」 instead of 「ちゃ」. Essentially, all the verbs that end in 「んだ」 for past tense fall in this category as you can see by this chart.<sup>21</sup>

### **Casual abbreviations for things that must not be done**

1. Replace 「ては」 with 「ちゃ」
2. Replace 「では」 with 「じゃ」

### **Examples**

(1) <sup>はい</sup>ここに**入**っちゃだめだよ。  
You can't enter here.

(2) <sup>し</sup>**死**んじゃだめだよ！  
You can't die!

On a final note, in general, 「ちゃ」 sounds a bit cutesy or girly. You've already seen an example of this with the 「ちゃん」 suffix. Similarly, 「なくちゃ」 also sounds a bit cutesy or childish.

## **Saying Something Is OK to Do or Not Do**

Now let's learn how to say either that it's OK to do or not do something. I decided to shove this section in here because in Japanese, this is essential how to say that you don't have to something (by saying it's OK to not do it). The grammar itself is also relatively easy to pick up and makes for a short section.

<sup>21</sup> See the “Past Tense for u-Verbs” heading in the *Past Tense* lesson.

By simply using the te-form and the 「も」 particle, you are essentially saying, “even if you do X...” Common words that come after this include 「いい」, 「大丈夫」<sup>だいじょうぶ</sup>, or 「構わない」<sup>かま</sup>. Some examples will come in handy.

- (1) <sup>ぜんぶ た</sup>全部食べてもいいよ。  
You can go ahead and eat it all. (lit: Even if you eat it all, it's good, you know.)
- (2) <sup>ぜんぶ た</sup>全部食べなくてもいいよ。  
You don't have to eat it all. (lit: Even if you don't eat it all, it's good, you know.)
- (3) <sup>ぜんぶ の</sup>全部飲んでも<sup>だいじょうぶ</sup>大丈夫だよ。  
It's OK if you drink it all. (lit: Even if you drink it all, it's OK, you know.)
- (4) <sup>ぜんぶ の</sup>全部飲んでも<sup>かま</sup>構わないよ。  
I don't mind if you drink it all. (lit: Even if you drink it all, I don't mind, you know.)

In casual speech, 「～でもいい」 sometimes get shortened to just 「～ていい」.

- (1) もう帰<sup>かえ</sup>ていい？  
Can I go home already?
- (2) これ、ちょっと見<sup>み</sup>ていい？  
Can I take a quick look at this?



# Desire and Suggestions (たい、<sup>ほ</sup>欲しい、Volitional、～たらどう)

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## How to Get Your Way in Japan

We will now learn how to say what you want either by just coming out and saying it or by making discreet suggestions. The major topics we will cover will be the 「たい」 conjugation and the volitional form. We will also learn specialized uses of the 「たら」 and 「ば」 conditionals to offer advice.

## Verbs You Want to Do With 「たい」

You can express verbs that you want to perform with the 「たい」 form. All you need to do is add 「たい」 to the stem of the verb.<sup>22</sup> However, unlike most conjugations we learned where the verb turns into a ru-verb, this form actually transforms the verb into an i-adjective (notice how 「たい」 conveniently ends in 「い」). This makes sense because the conjugated form is a description of something that you want to do. Once you have the 「たい」 form, you can then conjugate it the same as you would any other i-adjective. However, the 「たい」 form is different from regular i-adjectives because it is derived from a verb. This means that all the particles we normally associate with verbs such as 「を」、「に」、「へ」、or 「で」 can all be used with the 「たい」 form, which is not true for regular i-adjectives. Here's a chart just for you.

### 「たい」 conjugations

	Positive	Negative
Non-Past	行きたい	行きたくない
Past	行きたかった	行きたくなかった

## Examples

- (1) <sup>なに</sup>何をしたいですか。  
What do you want to do?
- (2) <sup>おんせん</sup>温泉に行きたい。  
I want to go to hot spring.
- (3) ケーキ、<sup>た</sup>食べたくないの？  
You don't want to eat cake?

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22 See the “The Stem of Verbs” subsection in the *Polite Form and Verb Stems* lesson.

- (4) <sup>た</sup>食べたくなかったけど<sup>た</sup>食べたくなった。  
I didn't want to eat it but I became wanting to eat.

Example (4) was very awkward to translate but is quite simple in Japanese if you refer to “Using 「なる」 With i-Adjectives.”<sup>23</sup> The past tense of the verb 「なる」 was used to create “became want to eat.” Here’s a tongue twister using the negative 「～たくない」 and past-tense of 「なる」：「<sup>た</sup>食べたくなかった」 meaning “became not wanting to eat.”

This may seem obvious but 「ある」 cannot have a 「たい」 form because inanimate objects cannot want anything. However, 「いる」 can be used with the 「たい」 form in examples like the one below.

- (5) <sup>いっしょ</sup>ずっと一緒にいたい。  
I want to be together forever. (lit: Want to exist together for long time.)

Also, you can only use the 「たい」 form for the first-person because you cannot read other people’s mind to see what they want to do. For referring to anyone beside yourself, it is normal to use expressions such as, “I think he wants to...” or “She said that she wants to...” We will learn how to say such expressions in a later lesson.<sup>24</sup> Of course, if you’re asking a question, you can just use the 「たい」 form because you’re not presuming to know anything.

- (6) <sup>いぬ</sup>犬と<sup>あそ</sup>遊びたいですか。  
Do you want to play with dog?

## Indicating Things You Want or Want Done Using 「<sup>ほ</sup>欲しい」

In English, we employ a verb to say that we want something. In Japanese, “to want” is actually an i-adjective and not a verb. We saw something similar with 「<sup>す</sup>好き」 which is an adjective while “to like” in English is a verb. While I didn’t get too much into the workings of 「<sup>す</sup>好き」, I have dedicated a whole section to 「<sup>ほ</sup>欲しい」 because it means, “to want something done” when combined with the te-form of a verb. We will learn a more polite and appropriate way to make requests in the *Making Requests* lesson instead of saying, “I want this done.”

Though not a set rule, whenever words come attached to the te-form of a verb to serve a special grammatical function, it is customary to write it in hiragana. This is because kanji is already used for the verb and the attached word becomes part of that verb.

### Examples

- (1) <sup>おお</sup>大きい<sup>ぬ</sup>縫いぐるみが<sup>ほ</sup>欲しい!  
I want a big stuffed doll!
- (2) <sup>ぜんぶ</sup>全部<sup>た</sup>食べてほしいんだけど…。  
I want it all eaten but....

23 Located in the *Using する and なる with the に Particle* lesson.

24 See the “The Interpreted Quote” heading in the *Performing and Action on a Subordinate Clause* lesson.

- (3) 部屋をきれいに<sup>へや</sup>してほしいのよ。  
It is that I want the room cleaned up, you know.

Like I mentioned, there are more appropriate ways to ask for things which we won't go into until later.<sup>25</sup> This grammar is not used too often but is included for completeness.

## Making a Motion to Do Something Using the Volitional Form (Casual)

The term volitional here means a will to do something. In other words, the volitional form indicates that someone is setting out to do something. In the most common example, this simply translates into the English “let’s” or “shall we?” but we’ll also see how this form can be used to express an effort to do something in a lesson further along.<sup>26</sup>

To conjugate verbs into the volitional form for casual speech, there are two different rules for ru-verbs and u-verbs. For ru-verbs, you simply remove the 「る」 and add 「よう」. For u-verbs, you replace the / u / vowel sound with the / o / vowel sound and add 「う」.

### *Conjugations rules for the casual volitional form*

- For ru-verbs: Remove the 「る」 and add 「よう」
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>食べ<sup>た</sup>る → <sup>た</sup>食べ<sup>よう</sup>
- For u-verbs: Replace the / u / vowel sound with the / o / vowel sound and add 「う」
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>入<sup>はい</sup>る → <sup>はい</sup>入<sup>ろ</sup> → <sup>はい</sup>入<sup>ろう</sup>

Here is a list of verbs you should be used to seeing by now.

<sup>25</sup> See the *Making Requests* lesson.

<sup>26</sup> See the *Trying Something Out or Attempting to do Something* lesson.

## Sample ru-verbs

Plain	Volitional
た 食べる	た 食べよう
き 着る	き 着よう
しん 信じる	しん 信じよう
ね 寝る	ね 寝よう
お 起きる	お 起きよう
で 出る	で 出よう
か 掛ける	か 掛けよう
す 捨てる	す 捨てよう
しら 調べる	しら 調べよう

## Sample u-verbs

Plain	Volitional	ローマ字 <sup>じ</sup>	ローマ字 (Vol.) <sup>じ</sup>
はな 話す	はな 話そう	hanasu	hanasou
き 聞く	き 聞こう	kiku	kikou
およ 泳ぐ	およ 泳ごう	oyogu	oyogou
あそ 遊ぶ	あそ 遊ぼう	asobu	asobou
ま 待つ	ま 待とう	matu <sup>27</sup>	matou
の 飲む	の 飲もう	nomu	nomou
なお 直る	なお 直ろう	naoru	naorou
し 死ぬ	し 死のう	shinu	shinou
か 買う	か 買おう	kau	kaou

<sup>27</sup> つ is pronounced “tsu,” but it’s treated as “tu” for conjugation purposes because of its position on the hiragana table.

## Exception Verbs

Plain	Volitional
する	しよう
くる	こよう

### Examples

I doubt you will ever use 「死しのう」 (let's die) but I left it in for completeness. Here are some more realistic examples.

- (1) 今日きょうは何なにをしようか？  
What shall [we] do today?
- (2) テーマパークに行いこう！  
Let's go to theme park!
- (3) 明日あしたは何なにを食たべようか？  
What shall [we] eat tomorrow?
- (4) カレーを食たべよう！  
Let's eat curry!

Remember, since you're setting out to do something, it doesn't make sense to have this verb in the past tense. Therefore, there is only one tense and if you were to replace 「明日あした」 in (3) with, for example, 「昨日きのう」 then the sentence would make no sense.

### Making a Motion to Do Something Using the Volitional Form (Polite)

The conjugation for the polite form is even simpler. All you have to do is add 「～ましょう」 to the stem of the verb. Similar to the masu-form, verbs in this form must always come at the end of the sentence. In fact, all polite endings must always come at the end and nowhere else as we've already seen.<sup>28</sup>

#### Conjugations rules for the polite volitional form

- For all verbs: Add 「～ましょう」 to the stem of the verb.<sup>29</sup>
  - 例) 食れいべたる → 食たべた ましょう
  - 例) 入れいる → 入はいり → 入はいり ましょう

28 See the “Using 「～ます」 to Make Verbs Polite” heading in the *Polite Form and Verb Stems* lesson.

29 See the *Polite Form and Verb Stems* lesson.

## Sample verbs

Plain	Volitional
する	しまし <span style="color:red">ょう</span>
くる	き <span style="color:red">ま</span> し <span style="color:red">ょう</span>
<small>ね</small> 寝る	<small>ね</small> 寝 <span style="color:red">ま</span> し <span style="color:red">ょう</span>
<small>い</small> 行く	<small>い</small> 行 <span style="color:red">き</span> し <span style="color:red">ま</span> し <span style="color:red">ょう</span>
<small>あそ</small> 遊ぶ	<small>あそ</small> 遊 <span style="color:red">び</span> し <span style="color:red">ま</span> し <span style="color:red">ょう</span>

## Examples

Again, there's nothing new here, just the polite version of the volitional form.

- (1) きょう なに 今日は何をしましょうか？  
What shall [we] do today?
- (2) テーマパークにい行きましょう  
Let's go to theme park!
- (3) あした なに 明日は何をた食べましょうか？  
What shall [we] eat tomorrow?
- (4) カレーをた食べましょう  
Let's eat curry!

## Making Suggestions Using the 「ば」 or 「たら」 Conditional

You can make suggestions by using the 「ば」 or 「たら」 conditional and adding 「どう」. This literally means, “If you do [X], how is it?” In English, this would become, “How about doing [X]?” Grammatically, there's nothing new here but it is a commonly used set phrase.

## Examples

- (1) げんこう 銀行にい行つたらどうですか。  
How about going to bank?
- (2) たまにごりょうしん両親とはな話せばどう？  
How about talking with your parents once in a while?

## Performing an Action on a Subordinate Clause (と、つて)

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“He said, ‘he said,’” he said.

### Performing an Action on a Subordinate Clause

In the section about modifying subordinate clauses,<sup>30</sup> we learned how to treat a subordinate clause like an adjective to directly modify a noun. We will extend the functionality of subordinate clauses by learning how to perform an action on a subordinate clause. Obviously, we cannot simply attach the 「を」 particle to a subordinate clause because the 「を」 particle only applies to noun phrases. We need something to encapsulate the subordinate clause into a unit that we can perform actions on. This is done by making a quoted phrase.

While in English, you can just add quotes and a comma to make a quotation, Japanese requires attaching 「と」 at the end of the quote. This is completely different from the 「と」 particle<sup>31</sup> and the 「と」 conditional.<sup>32</sup> Unlike quotes in English, we can perform many different types of actions on the quote besides the standard “he said,” “she said,” etc. For example, we can perform the action, “to think” or “to hear” to produce phrases such as, “I think [subclause]” or “I heard [subclause]” This is very important in Japanese because Japanese people seldom affirm definite statements. This also why we will have to eventually cover many other types of grammar to express uncertainty or probability.<sup>33</sup>

### The Direct Quote

We’ll learn the simplest type of quoted phrase, which is the direct quote. Basically, you are directly quoting something that was said. This is done by simply enclosing the statement in quotes, adding 「と」 and then inserting the appropriate verb. The most common verbs associated with a direct quote would be 「言<sup>い</sup>う」 and 「聞<sup>き</sup>く」 but you may use any verbs related to direct quotation such as: 「叫<sup>さけ</sup>ぶ」, 「呼<sup>よ</sup>ぶ」, 「呟<sup>つぶ</sup>や」, etc. This type of quotation is often used for dialogue in novels and other narrative works.

### Examples

- (1) アリスが、「寒<sup>さむ</sup>い」と言<sup>い</sup>った。  
Alice said, “Cold.”
- (2) 「今<sup>きょう</sup>日は授<sup>じゅ</sup>業<sup>ぎょう</sup>がない」と先<sup>せん</sup>生<sup>せい</sup>から聞<sup>き</sup>いたんだけど。  
It is that I heard from the teacher, “There is no class today.”

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30 See *Descriptive Subordinate Clauses and Sentence Order* lesson.

31 See the “The Inclusive 「と」 Particle” heading in the *Noun-Related Particles* lesson.

32 See the “Expressing Natural Consequence Using 「と」” heading in the *Conditionals* lesson.

33 See the *Expressing Various Levels of Certainty* lesson.

The verb does not need to be directly connected to the subordinate clause. As long as the verb that applies to the subordinate clause comes before any other verb, you can have any number of adjectives, adverbs or nouns in between.

- (1) 「寒い」とアリスが田中に言った。  
“Cold,” Alice said to Tanaka.

## The Interpreted Quote

The second type of quote is the quote along the lines of what someone actually said. It's not a word-for-word quote. Since this is not a direct quote, no quotations are needed. You can also express thoughts as an interpreted quote as well. By using this and the verb 「思う」 you can say you think that something is so-and-so. You will hear Japanese people use this all the time. You can also use the verb 「考える」 when you are considering something.

## Examples

- (1) 先生から今日は授業がないと聞いたんだけど。  
I heard from the teacher that there is no class today.
- (2) これは、日本語で何と言いますか。  
What do you call this in Japanese? (lit: About this, what do you say in Japanese?)
- (3) 私は、アリスと言います。  
I am called Alice. (lit: As for me, you say Alice.)

In an interpreted quote, the meaning of 「言う」 may change as you see in examples (2) and (3). Actually, as you can see from the literal translation, the meaning remains the same in Japanese but changes only when translated to normal English. (We'll learn more about various ways to use 「いう」 in the next lesson.<sup>34</sup>)

Here are some examples of thoughts being used as quoted subordinate clauses. In example (5), the question marker<sup>35</sup> is used with the volitional<sup>36</sup> to insert an embedded question.

- (4) カレーを食べようと思ったけど、食べる時間がなかった。  
I thought about setting out to eat curry but I didn't have time to eat.
- (5) 今、どこに行こうかと考えている。  
Now, I'm considering where to set out to go.

Unlike the direct quotation, which you can just copy as is, if the quoted subordinate clause is a state-of-being for a noun or na-adjective, you have to explicitly include the declarative 「だ」 to show this.

34 See the *Defining and Describing* lesson.

35 See the “「か」 Used in Subordinate Clauses” heading in *The Question Marker* lesson.

36 See the “Making a Motion to do Something Using the Volitional Form (Casual)” heading in the *Desire and Suggestions* lesson.



- (1) <sup>かれ</sup>彼は、これは何<sup>なに</sup>だ<sup>い</sup>と言いましたか。  
What did he say this **is**?
- (2) <sup>かれ</sup>彼は<sup>こうこうせい</sup>高校生だ<sup>き</sup>と聞いたけど、<sup>しん</sup>信じられない。  
I heard that he **is** a high school student but I can't believe it.

Notice how 「だ」 was added to explicitly declare the state-of-being that is highlighted in the English translation. You can really see how important the 「だ」 is here by comparing the following two sentences.

- (A) <sup>なに</sup>これは何だ<sup>い</sup>と言いましたか。  
What did [he] say **this is**?
- (B) <sup>なに</sup>何<sup>い</sup>と言いましたか。  
What did [he] say?

## Using 「って」 as a Casual Version of 「と」

You may be surprised to hear that there is a shorter and casual version of the quoted subordinate clause since it's already only one hiragana character, 「と」. However, the important point here is that by using this casual shortcut, you can drop the rest of the sentence and hope your audience can understand everything from context.

### Examples

- (1) <sup>ともこ</sup>智子は<sup>らいねん</sup>来年、<sup>かいがい</sup>海外に行くんだ<sup>い</sup>って。  
Tomoko said that she's going overseas next year.
- (2) <sup>かね</sup>もうお金がない<sup>い</sup>って。  
I already told you I have no money.
- (3) <sup>なに</sup>え？何だ<sup>い</sup>って？  
Huh? What did you say?
- (4) <sup>いま</sup>今、<sup>じかん</sup>時間がない<sup>き</sup>って聞いたんだけど、<sup>ほんとう</sup>本当？  
I heard you don't have time now, is that true?
- (5) <sup>いま</sup>今、<sup>じかん</sup>時間がない<sup>い</sup>って、<sup>ほんとう</sup>本当？  
You don't have time now (I heard), is that true?

「って」 can also be used to talk about practically anything, not just to quote something that was said. You can hear 「って」 being used just about everywhere in casual speech. Most of the time it is used in place of the 「は」 particle to simply bring up a topic.

## Examples

- (1) <sup>あした</sup>明日<sup>って</sup>、<sup>あめ</sup>雨<sup>が</sup>降<sup>る</sup>んだ<sup>って</sup>。  
About tomorrow, I hear that it's going to rain.
- (2) アリス<sup>って</sup>、<sup>ひと</sup>すごくいい人<sup>でしょ</sup>？  
About Alice, she's a very good person, right?

## Defining and Describing (という)

What's the meaning of "meaning?"

### The Various Uses of 「いう」

In the previous lesson, we learned how to quote a subordinate clause by encasing it with 「と」. This allowed us to talk about things that people have said, heard, thought, and more. We also took a look at some examples sentences that used 「と」 and 「<sup>い</sup>言う」 to describe how to say something in Japanese and even what to call oneself. In this section, we will learn that with 「と」, we can use 「いう」 in a similar fashion to define, describe, and generally just talk about the thing itself. We'll also see how to do the same thing with the casual 「つて」 version we first learned about in the last lesson.

### Using 「いう」 to Define

In the last lesson, we briefly looked at how to introduce ourselves by using 「と」 and 「いう」. For instance, we had the following example, which Alice used to introduce herself.

- (1) <sup>わたし</sup>私はアリスといいます。  
I am called Alice. (lit: As for me, you say Alice.)

This sentence pattern is probably one of the first things beginner Japanese students learn in the classroom. In this case, the verb 「いう」 doesn't mean that somebody actually said something. Rather, Alice is saying that people in general say "Alice" when referring to her. While using kanji for 「いう」 is perfectly acceptable, in this case, since nothing is actually being said, using hiragana is also common.

This idea of describing what a person is known or referred to as can also be extended to objects and places. We can essentially define and identify anything we want by using 「という」 in this manner. As you can imagine, this is particularly useful for us because it allows us to ask what things are called in Japanese and for the definition of words we don't know yet.

### Examples

- (1) これは、なんというさかな魚魚ですか。  
What is this fish referred to as?.
- (2) この魚は、鯛<sup>さかな</sup>とたいいいます。  
This fish is known as "Tai."
- (3) ルミネというデパートはどこにあるか、<sup>し</sup>知っていますか？  
Do you know where the department store called "Lumine" is?
- (4) 「<sup>ともだち</sup>友達」は、<sup>えいご</sup>英語で「friend」<sup>いみ</sup>という意味です。  
The meaning of "tomodachi" in English is "friend."

## Using 「いう」 to Describe Anything

We learned how to use 「という」 to describe what something is known or referred to as. However, we can take this idea even further by attaching two subordinate clauses. At this point, 「いう」 is so abstract that it doesn't even really have a meaning. When a subordinate clause is encapsulated with 「と」, you must have a verb to go along with it and 「いう」 is simply being used as a generic verb to enable us to talk about any subordinate clause. This allows us to describe and explain just about anything ranging from a single word to complete sentences. As you can imagine, this construction is quite useful and employed quite often in Japanese.

### Examples

- (1) <sup>しゅじんこう</sup> 主人公が <sup>はんりにん</sup> 犯人だった **という** のが <sup>いちばんおもしろ</sup> 一番面白かった。  
The most interesting thing was that the main character was the criminal.
- (2) <sup>にほんじん</sup> 日本人は <sup>さけ</sup> お酒に <sup>よわ</sup> 弱い **という** のは <sup>ほんとう</sup> 本当？  
Is it true that Japanese people are weak to alcohol?
- (3) <sup>どくしん</sup> 独身だ **という** のは、<sup>うそ</sup> 嘘だったの？  
It was a lie that you were single?
- (4) **リブート** **という** のは、パソコンを <sup>さいき どう</sup> 再起動する **という** ことです。  
Reboot means to restart your computer.

We can abstract it even further by replacing the subordinate clause with a generic way of doing something. In this case, we use 「こう」、「そう」、「ああ」、and 「どう」, which when combined with 「いう」 means “this way,” “that way,” “that way (far away in an abstract sense)” and “what way” respectively.

### Examples

- (1) あんたは、いつも **こういう** <sup>とき</sup> 時に来るんだから、<sup>こま</sup> 困るんだよ。  
It's because you always come at times like these that I'm troubled.
- (2) **そういう** <sup>ひと</sup> 人と <sup>いっしょ</sup> 一緒に <sup>しごと</sup> 仕事をするのは、<sup>きら</sup> 嫌だよね。  
[Anybody would] dislike doing work together with that type of person, huh?
- (3) **ああいう** <sup>ひと</sup> 人と <sup>けっこん</sup> 結婚できたら、<sup>さいわ</sup> 幸せになれると <sup>おも</sup> 思います。  
I think you can become happy if you could marry that type of person.
- (4) <sup>だいがく</sup> 大学に行かないって、**どういう** <sup>いみ</sup> 意味なの？  
What do you mean, you're not going to go to college?

## Rephrasing and Making Conclusions with 「という」

We can attach the question marker 「か」 to 「という」 in order to add a questioning element. This construction is used when you want to rephrase or redefine something such as the following dialogue.

### Example Dialogue

- (A) みきちゃんは、あんたの<sup>かのじょ</sup>彼女でしょう？  
Miki-chan is your girlfriend, right?
- (B) う～ん、<sup>かのじょ</sup>彼女<sup>ともだち</sup>というか、友達<sup>なん</sup>というか…  
Um, you might say girlfriend, or friend, or something....

This construction is used all the time, particularly in casual conversations. It can be used to correct something, come to a different conclusion, or even as an interjection.

### Examples

- (1) <sup>さけ</sup>お酒は<sup>す</sup>好き<sup>い</sup>というか、ないと生きていけない。  
I like alcohol or rather, can't live on without it.
- (2) <sup>たぶん</sup>多分行かない<sup>い</sup>と思う。<sup>おも</sup>というか、<sup>かね</sup>お金がないから、<sup>い</sup>行けない。  
Don't think I'll go. Or rather, can't because there's no money.
- (3) <sup>かえ</sup>というか、もう帰らないとだめですけど。  
Rather than that, I have to go home already.

Rather than using 「か」 to rephrase a conclusion, we can also simply use 「こと」 to sum up something without rephrasing anything.

### Example Dialogue

- (A) みきちゃんが<sup>ようすけ</sup>洋介<sup>わか</sup>と別れたんだって。  
I heard that Miki-chan broke up with Yousuke.
- (B) <sup>いま</sup>ということは、みきちゃんは、<sup>かれし</sup>今彼氏がい<sup>ない</sup>ない<sup>こと</sup>ということ？  
Does that mean Miki-chan doesn't have a boyfriend now?
- (A) そう。<sup>そういうこと</sup>。  
That's right. That's what it means.

## Using 「って」 or 「て」 for 「という」

As mentioned in the previous lesson, 「って」 is very often used in causal slang in place of 「と」, because it allows us to leave out the rest of the sentence and assume context (or just plain assumption) will take care of the rest. We already saw that we can use 「って」 to replace 「という」 as well. However, since we just learned how to use 「という」 to do much more than just simply

say something, there is a limit to just how much you can leave out. In any case, 「って」 will allow us to leave out not only 「いう」 but also any accompanying particles as you can see in the following example.

## Examples

- (1) <sup>らいねんりゅうがく</sup>来年留学する**という**のは、<sup>ともこ</sup>智子のこと？  
The studying abroad next year thing, is that Tomoko?
- (2) <sup>らいねんりゅうがく</sup>来年留学する**って**<sup>ともこ</sup>智子のこと？  
The studying abroad next year thing, is that Tomoko?

「だって」 is also another phrase that leaves out just about everything. By convention, it is used to express disagreement or dissatisfaction usually to whine, complain, or to make an excuse but you can't tell what it means just from looking at it. It is an abbreviation of something along the lines of 「とはいっても」 meaning, “even if that was the case.”

## Example Dialogue 1

- (A) しないとだめだよ。  
Have to do it, you know.
- (B) **だって**、<sup>じかん</sup>時間がないからできないよ。  
But (even so), can't do it because there is no time.

## Example Dialogue 2

- (A) <sup>い</sup>行かなくてもいいよ。  
Don't have to go, you know.
- (B) **だって**、みんな<sup>い</sup>行く**って**。<sup>わたし</sup>私**も**<sup>い</sup>行かないと。  
But (even so), everybody said they're going. I have to go too.

In some cases, the small 「つ」 is left out and just 「て」 is used instead of 「って」. This is done (as is usually the case for slang) in order to make things easier to say. In general, this is when there is nothing before the 「て」 or when the sound that comes before it doesn't require the explicit separation the 「つ」 gives us in order to be understood.

## Examples

- (1) **て**ことは、みきちゃんは、<sup>いまかれし</sup>今彼氏がい**ないて**こと？  
Does that mean Miki-chan doesn't have a boyfriend now?
- (2) **て**いうか、もう<sup>かえ</sup>帰らないとだめですけど。  
Rather than that, I have to go home already.

Since slang tends to be used in whichever way the person feels like, there are no definite rules defining whether you should use 「って」 or 「て」. However, 「て」 is generally not used to express what people have actually said or heard, which is why it wasn't covered in the last lesson.

(誤) みきちちゃんが、明日<sup>あした</sup>こない~~て~~。  
Can't use 「て」 for something actually said.

(正) みきちちゃんが、明日<sup>あした</sup>こない~~て~~って。  
Miki-chan says she isn't coming tomorrow.

## Saying 「ゆう」 Instead of 「いう」

Because the 「という」 construction is used so often, there are a lot of different variations and slang based on it. While I do not plan on covering all of them here, you can check out the *Casual Patterns and Slang* lesson in the “Miscellaneous” section for yet even more slang derived from 「という」.

The last thing I'm am going to briefly mention here is the use of 「ゆう」 instead of 「いう」. In conversations, it is quite normal to say 「ゆう」 instead of 「いう」. 「ゆう」 is easier to say because it is simply one letter with a long vowel sound instead of the two different vowel sounds of 「いう」.

### Examples

- (1) て~~いう~~か、もう帰<sup>かえ</sup>らないとだめですけど。  
Rather than that, I have to go home already.
- (2) そう~~いう~~ことじゃないって!  
I said it's not like that (lit: it's not that type of thing)!

# Trying Something Out or Attempting to Do Something (～てみる、Volitional+とする)

Trying things in Japanese

## Let's Try Some Stuff

In English, we use the word, “try” to mean both “to try something out” and “to make an effort to do something.” In Japanese, these are separate grammatical expressions. For instance, “I tried the cherry flavor” and “I tried to do homework” mean quite different things and though English does not make a distinction, Japanese does.

## To Try Something Out

To try something out, you simply need to change the verb to the te-form and add 「みる」. If it helps you to remember, you can think of it as a sequence of an action and then seeing the result. In fact 「みる」 conjugates just like 「見る」. However, just like the 「～てほしい」 grammar<sup>37</sup> we learned, this is a set phrase and 「みる」 is usually written in hiragana.

### Summary

- To say you tried something out, take the action, conjugate it to the te-form<sup>38</sup> and add 「みる」.
  - 例) 切る → 切<sup>き</sup>って → 切<sup>き</sup>ってみる
- You can treat the whole result as a regular verb just as you would with 「見る」.
  - 例) 切<sup>き</sup>ってみる、切<sup>き</sup>ってみた、切<sup>き</sup>てみない、切<sup>き</sup>てみなかった

## Examples

- (1) このや はじめて **食べてみた**けど、とてもおいしかった！  
I tried eating okonomiyaki for the first time and it was very tasty!
- (2) お酒を **飲んでみ**ましたが、すごく **眠**くなりました。  
I tried drinking alcohol and I became extremely sleepy.
- (3) あたら 新 しいデパートに **行**ってみる。  
I'm going to check out the new department store.
- (4) ひろしま このや **食べてみたい**！  
I want to try eating Hiroshima okonomiyaki!

37 See the “Indicating Things You Want or Want Done Using 「欲しい」” heading in the *Desire and Suggestions* lesson.

38 See the “Expressing a Sequence of Verbs with the te-Form” heading in the *Compound Sentences* lesson.



## To Attempt to Do Something

We already learned that the volitional form<sup>39</sup> was used to indicate a will to set out to do something. If you guessed that this next grammar for attempting to do something would involve the volitional form, you were right. To say that you tried (as in attempted) to do something, you need to conjugate the verb into the volitional, enclose it in a quotation (so that we can perform an action on the clause) and finally add the verb 「する」. Or put more simply, you just add 「とする」 to the volitional form of the verb. This is simply an extension of the quoted subordinate clause from the last section.

Instead of saying the quote (言う) or treating it as a thought (思う、考える), we are simply doing it with 「する」.

### Summary

- To say that you are attempting a certain action, convert the action to the volitional form<sup>40</sup> and add 「とする」.

- 例) 見る → 見よう → 見ようとする
- 例) 行く → 行こう → 行こうとする

### Examples

- (1) 毎日、勉強を避けようとする。  
Everyday, she attempts to avoid study.
- (2) 無理矢理に部屋に入ろうとしている。  
He is attempting to force his way into the room.
- (3) 早く寝ようとしたけど、結局は徹夜した。  
I attempted to sleep early but ended up staying up all night.
- (4) お酒を飲もうとしたが、奥さんが止めた。  
He tried to drink alcohol but his wife stopped him.

Though we use the verb 「する」 to say, “to do attempt,” we can use different verbs to do other things with the attempt. For instance, we can use the verb 「決める」 to say, “decide to attempt to do [X].” Here are some examples of other actions carried out on the attempt.

- (1) 勉強をなるべく避けようと思った。  
I thought I would attempt to avoid studying as much as possible.
- (2) 毎日ジムに行こうと決めた。  
Decided to attempt to go to gym everyday.

<sup>39</sup> See the “Making a Motion to do Something Using the Volitional Form (Casual)” heading in the *Desire and Suggestions* lesson.

<sup>40</sup> See the “Making a Motion to do Something Using the Volitional Form (Casual)” heading in the *Desire and Suggestions* lesson.

## Giving and Receiving (あげる、やる、くれる、もらう)

### Japanese People Like Gifts

One thing about Japanese culture is that they're big on giving gifts. There are many different customs involving giving and receiving gifts (お歳暮<sup>せぼ</sup>、お中元<sup>ちゅうげん</sup>、etc.) and when Japanese people go traveling, you can be sure that they're going to be picking up souvenirs to take back as gifts. Even when attending marriages or funerals, people are expected to give a certain amount of money as a gift to help fund the ceremony. You can see why properly learning how to express the giving and receiving of favors and items is a very important and useful skill. For some reason, the proper use of 「あげる」、「くれる」、and 「もらう」 has always haunted people studying Japanese as being horribly complex and intractable. I hope to prove in this section that it is conceptually quite straightforward and simple.

### When to Use 「あげる」

「あげる」 is the Japanese word for “to give” seen from the speaker’s point of view. You must use this verb when you are giving something or doing something for someone else.

### Examples

- (1) わたし　ともだち  
私　が友達にプレゼントをあげた。  
I gave present to friend.
- (2) せんせい  
これは先生にあげる。  
I'll give this to teacher.

In order to express the giving of a favor (verb) you must use the ever useful te-form and then attach 「あげる」. This applies to all the other sections in this lesson as well.

- (1) くるま　か  
車を買ってあげるよ。  
I'll give you the favor of buying a car.
- (2) か  
代わりに行ってあげる。  
I'll give you the favor of going in your place.

For third-person, this verb is used when the speaker is looking at it from the giver’s point of view. We'll see the significance of this when we examine the verb 「くれる」 next.

- (1) がくせい　せんせい  
学生がこれを先生にあげる。  
The student give this to teacher. (looking at it from the student’s point of view)
- (2) ともだち　ちち  
友達が父にいいことを教えてあげた。  
Friend gave the favor of teaching something good to my dad. (looking at it from the friend’s point of view)

## Using 「やる」 to Mean 「あげる」

Usually used for pets, animals, and such, you can substitute 「やる」, which normally means “to do,” for 「あげる」. You would normally never use this type of 「やる」 for people. I only included this so that you won't be confused by sentences like the following.

- (1) <sup>いぬ えさ</sup> 犬に餌をやった？  
Did you give the dog food?

Here, 「やる」 does not mean “to do” but “to give.” You can tell because “doing food to dog” doesn't make any sense.

## When to Use 「くれる」

「くれる」 is also a verb meaning “to give” but unlike 「あげる」, it is from the receiver's point of view. You must use this verb when someone else is giving something or doing something for you (effectively the opposite of 「あげる」).

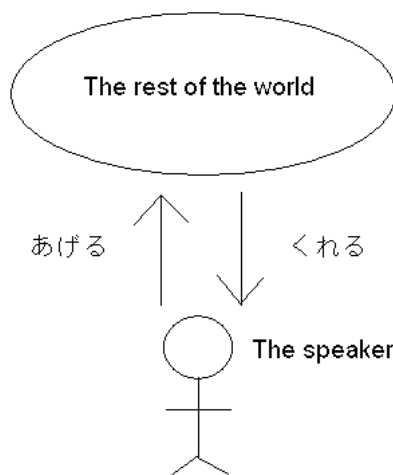
### Examples

- (1) <sup>ともだち わたし</sup> 友達が私にプレゼントをくれた。  
Friend gave present to me.
- (2) <sup>せんせい</sup> これは、先生がくれた。  
Teacher gave this to me.
- (3) <sup>くるま か</sup> 車を買ってくれるの？  
You'll give me the favor of buying a car for me?
- (4) <sup>か</sup> 代わりに行ってくれる？  
Will you give me the favor of going in my place?

Similarly, when used in the third-person, the speaker is speaking from the receiver's point of view and not the giver.

- (1) <sup>せんせい がくせい</sup> 先生がこれを学生にくれる。  
The teacher give this to student. (looking at it from the student's point of view)
- (2) <sup>ともだち ちち おし</sup> 友達が父にいいことを教えてくれた。  
Friend gave favor of teaching something good to my dad. (looking at it from the dad's point of view)

The following diagram illustrates the direction of giving from the point of view of the speaker.



From the speaker's point of view, all the giving done to others "go up" to everybody else while the giving done by everybody else "goes down" to the speaker. This is probably related to the fact that there is an identical verb 「上げる」 meaning "to raise" that contains the character for "above" (上) and that the honorific version of 「くれる」 is 「下さる」 with the character for down (下). This restriction allows us to make certain deductions from vague sentences like the following:

- (1) <sup>せんせい おし</sup>先生が教えてあげますか。  
Teacher, will you be the one to give favor of teaching to... [anybody other than the speaker]?

Because all giving done to the speaker must always use 「くれる」, we know that the teacher must be doing it for someone else and not the speaker. The speaker is also looking at it from the teacher's point of view as doing a favor for someone else.

- (2) <sup>せんせい おし</sup>先生が教えてくれますか。  
Teacher, will you be the one to give favor of teaching to... [anybody including the speaker]?

Because the giver is not the speaker, the teacher is either giving to the speaker or anyone else. The speaker is viewing it from the receiver's point of view as receiving a favor done by the teacher.

Let's see some mistakes to watch out for.

- (誤) <sup>わたし ぜんぶ た</sup>私が全部食べてくれました。  
「くれる」 is being used as giving done by the speaker. (Wrong)

- (正) <sup>わたし ぜんぶ た</sup>私が全部食べてあげました。  
I gave favor of eating it all. (Correct)

- (誤) <sup>ともだち わたし</sup>友達がプレゼントを私にあげた。  
「あげる」 is being used as giving to the speaker. (Wrong)

(正) <sup>せい</sup> 友<sup>とも</sup>達<sup>だち</sup>がプレゼントを私<sup>わたし</sup>にくれた。  
Friend gave present to me. (Correct)

## When to Use 「もらう」

「もらう」 meaning, “to receive” has only one version unlike 「あげる／くれる」 so there’s very little to explain. One thing to point out is that since you receive from someone, 「から」 is also appropriate in addition to the 「に」 target particle.<sup>41</sup>

### Examples

(1) <sup>わたし</sup>私<sup>ともだち</sup>が友<sup>ともだち</sup>達<sup>だち</sup>にプレゼントをもらった。  
I received present from friend.

(2) <sup>ともだち</sup>友<sup>ともだち</sup>達<sup>だち</sup>からプレゼントをもらった。  
I received present from friend.

(3) これは友<sup>ともだち</sup>達<sup>だち</sup>に<sup>か</sup>買<sup>か</sup>ってもらった。  
About this, received the favor of buying it from friend.

(4) <sup>しゅくだい</sup>宿<sup>しゅくだい</sup>題<sup>だい</sup>を<sup>じかん</sup>チエック<sup>じかん</sup>して<sup>むり</sup>もら<sup>むり</sup>いた<sup>むり</sup>かったけど、時<sup>じかん</sup>間<sup>かん</sup>がなくて無<sup>むり</sup>理<sup>り</sup>だ<sup>むり</sup>った。  
I wanted to receive the favor of checking homework but there was no time and it was impossible.

「もらう」 is seen from the perspective of the receiver, so in the case of first-person, others usually don’t receive things from you. However, you might want to use 「私<sup>わたし</sup>からもらう」 when you want to emphasize that fact that the other person received it from you. For instance, if you wanted to say, “Hey, I **gave** you that!” you would use 「あげる」. However, you would use 「もらう」 if you wanted to say, “Hey, you **got** that from me!”

(5) <sup>とけい</sup>その時<sup>とけい</sup>計<sup>けい</sup>は私<sup>わたし</sup>からもらったのよ。  
[He] received that watch from me.

## Asking Favors with 「くれる」 or 「もらえる」

You can make requests by using 「くれる」 and the potential form of 「もらう」 (can I receive the favor of...). We’ve already seen an example of this in example (4) of the 「くれる」 section. Because requests are favors done for the speaker, you cannot use 「あげる」 in this situation.

### Examples

(1) <sup>せんえん</sup>千<sup>せんえん</sup>円<sup>えん</sup>を<sup>か</sup>貸<sup>か</sup>してく<sup>か</sup>れる？  
Will you give me the favor of lending 1,000 yen?

41 See the “The Target 「に」 Particle” heading in the *Particles Used with Verbs* lesson.

- (2) <sup>せんえん</sup>千円を<sup>か</sup>貸してもらえる？  
Can I receive the favor of you lending 1,000 yen?

Notice that the two sentences essentially mean the same thing. This is because the giver and receiver has been omitted because it is obvious from the context. If we were to write out the full sentence, it would look like this:

- (1) <sup>わたし</sup>あなたが、<sup>せんえん</sup>私に千円を<sup>か</sup>貸してくれる？  
Will you give me the favor of lending 1,000 yen?

- (2) <sup>わたし</sup>私が、<sup>せんえん</sup>あなたに千円を<sup>か</sup>貸してもらえる？  
Can I receive the favor of you lending 1,000 yen?

It is not normal to explicitly include the subject and target like this when directly addressing someone but is provided here to illustrate the change of subject and target depending on the verb 「くれる」 and 「もらえる」.

You can use the negative to make the request a little softer. You'll see that this is true in many other types of grammar.

- (1) ちょっと<sup>しず</sup>静かにしてくれない？  
Won't you be a little quieter?

- (2) <sup>かんじ</sup>漢字を書<sup>か</sup>いてもらえませんか。  
Can you write this in kanji for me?

### **Asking Someone to Not Do Something**

In order to request that someone not do something, you simply attach 「で」 to the negative form of the verb and proceed as before.

- (1) <sup>ぜんぶ</sup>全部食<sup>た</sup>べないでくれますか。  
Can you not eat it all?
- (2) <sup>たか</sup>高い物<sup>もの</sup>を買<sup>か</sup>わないでくれる？  
Can you not buy expensive thing(s)?

## Making Requests (～ください、～ちょうだい、～なさい、Command Form)

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### Politely (and Not So Politely) Making Requests

Similar to asking for favors, which we learned in the last lesson, there are also various ways to make requests in Japanese. This is effectively the Japanese way of saying, “please do X.” We’ll first learn the most common way to make requests using a special conjugation of the verb 「くださる」 and the firmer 「なさる」. Finally, we’ll learn the rarely used excessively strong command form for the sake of completeness. You can safely skip the last part unless you’re an avid reader of manga.

#### 「～ください」 — a Special Conjugation of 「くださる」

「ください」 is a special conjugation of 「くださる」, which is the honorific form of 「くれる」. We will learn more about honorific and humble forms<sup>42</sup> in the beginning of the next major section. We are going over 「ください」 here because it has a slight difference in meaning from the normal 「くれる」 and the honorific 「くださる」. 「ください」 is different from 「くれる」 in the following fashion:

(1) それをください。  
Please give me that.

(2) それをくれる？  
Can you give me that?

As you can see 「ください」 is a direct request for something while 「くれる」 is used as a question asking for someone to give something. However, it is similar to 「くれる」 in that you can make a request for an action by simply attaching it to the te-form<sup>43</sup> of the verb.

(1) <sup>かんじ</sup>漢字で<sup>か</sup>書いてください。  
Please write it in kanji.

(2) ゆっくり<sup>はな</sup>話してください。  
Please speak slowly.

The rules for negative requests are same as the rules for 「くれる」 as well.

(1) <sup>らくが</sup>落書きを<sup>か</sup>書かないでください。  
Please don’t write graffiti.

(2) ここに<sup>こ</sup>ないでください。  
Please don’t come here.

In casual speech, it is often common to simply drop the 「ください」 part.

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42 See the *Honorific and Humble Forms* lesson.

43 See the “Expressing a Sequence of Verbs with the te-Form” heading of the *Compound Sentences* lesson.

- (1) <sup>にほんご</sup>日本語で<sup>はな</sup>話して。  
Please speak in Japanese.
- (2) <sup>け</sup>消しゴムを<sup>か</sup>貸して。  
Please lend me the eraser.
- (3) <sup>とお</sup>遠い<sup>ところ</sup>所に<sup>い</sup>行かないで。  
Please don't go to a far place.

For those who want to sound particularly commanding and manly, it is also possible to use 「くれる」 with the 「る」 removed.

- (1) <sup>にほんご</sup>日本語で<sup>はな</sup>話してくれ。  
Speak in Japanese.
- (2) <sup>け</sup>消しゴムを<sup>か</sup>貸してくれ。  
Lend me the eraser.
- (3) <sup>とお</sup>遠い<sup>ところ</sup>所に<sup>い</sup>行かないでくれ。  
Don't go to a far place.

Because 「ください」 like the masu-form must always come at the end sentence or a subordinate clause, you cannot use it to directly modify a noun. For example, the following is not possible with 「ください」.

- (1) <sup>とう</sup>お父さんが<sup>くれた</sup>時計が<sup>とけい</sup>壊れた。  
The clock that father gave broke.

Of course, since direct quotes is merely repeating something someone said in verbatim, you can put practically anything in a direct quote.

- (1) 「それをください」と<sup>とう</sup>お父さんが<sup>い</sup>言った。  
Father said, "Please give me that."

## Using 「～ちょうだい」 as a Casual Request

A casual alternative of 「ください」 used usually by females is 「ちょうだい」. It is always written in hiragana. Written in kanji, it is usually used in a very formal expression such as 「<sup>ちょうだいいだ</sup>頂戴致します」. There's not much more to say here because grammatically; it works the same way as 「ください」.

### Examples

- (1) スプーンを<sup>ちょうだい</sup>ちょうだい。  
Please give me the spoon.
- (2) ここに<sup>なまえ</sup>名前を<sup>か</sup>書いて<sup>ちょうだい</sup>ちょうだい。  
Please write your name here.



## Using 「～なさい」 to Make Firm but Polite Requests

「なさい」 is a special honorific conjugation like 「する」. It is a soft yet firm way of issuing a command. It is used, for example, when a mother is scolding her child or when a teacher wants a delinquent student to pay attention. Unlike 「ください」, 「なさい」 only applies to positive verbs and uses the stem of the verb<sup>44</sup> instead of the te-form. It also cannot be used by itself but must be attached to another verb.

### Using 「なさい」 to make firm but polite requests

- Conjugate the verb to its stem<sup>45</sup> and attach 「なさい」
  - 例) <sup>た</sup>食べる → <sup>た</sup>食べ<sup>の</sup>なさい
  - 例) <sup>の</sup>飲む → <sup>の</sup>飲み → <sup>の</sup>飲み<sup>の</sup>なさい
  - 例) <sup>し</sup>する → <sup>し</sup>し → <sup>し</sup>し<sup>の</sup>なさい

### Examples

(1) よく<sup>き</sup>聞きなさい!  
Listen well!

(2) ここに<sup>すわ</sup>座りなさい。  
Sit here.

You can also drop 「さい」 portion of the 「なさい」 to make a casual version of this grammar.

(1) まだいっぱいあるから、たくさん<sup>た</sup>食べな。  
There's still a lot, so eat a lot.

(2) それでいいと<sup>おも</sup>思うなら、そうしなよ。  
If you think that's fine, then go ahead and do it.

## The Command Form

We will go over the command form in the interest of covering all the possible verb conjugations. In reality, the command form is rarely used as Japanese people tend to be too polite to use imperatives. Also, this course type of speech is rarely, if indeed at all, used by females who tend to use 「なさい」 or an exasperated 「くれる」 when angry or irritated. This form is only really useful for reading comic books or watching movies. You may often see or hear 「死<sup>し</sup>ね！」 (“Die!”) in movies or manga which, of course, you'll never hear in real life. (I hope!)

Be sure to note that, in addition to the familiar 「する」, 「くる」 exception verbs, 「くれる」 is also an exception for the command form.

44 See “The Stem of Verbs” heading in the *Polite Form and Verb Stems* lesson.

45 See “The Stem of Verbs” heading in the *Polite Form and Verb Stems* lesson.

### Rules for creating command form

- ru-verbs - Replace the 「る」 with 「ろ」
- u-verbs - Change the last character from an / u / vowel to an / e / vowel
- Exceptions - 「する」 becomes 「しろ」, 「くる」 becomes 「こい」, 「くれる」 becomes 「くれ」

### Sample ru-verbs

Plain	Command
食べる	食べろ
着る	着ろ
信じる	信じろ
寝る	寝ろ
起きる	起きろ
出る	出ろ
掛ける	掛けろ
捨てる	捨てろ

### Sample u-verbs

Plain	Command	ローマ字 <sup>じ</sup>	ローマ字 (Com) <sup>じ</sup>
話す	話せ	hanasu	hanase
聞く	聞け	kiku	kike
遊ぶ	遊べ	asobu	asobe
待つ	待て	matu <sup>46</sup>	mate
飲む	飲め	nomu	nome
直す	直れ	naoru	naore
死ぬ	死ね	shinu	shine
買う	買え	kau	kae

46 つ is pronounced “tsu,” but it’s treated as “tu” for conjugation purposes because of its position on the hiragana table.

## Exception Verbs

Plain	Command
する	しろ
くる	こい
くれる	くれ

### Examples

- (1) 好きに<sup>す</sup>しろ。  
Do as you please.
- (2) あっち<sup>い</sup>行け!  
Go away!
- (3) 早く<sup>はや</sup>酒<sup>さけ</sup>を持<sup>も</sup>ってきてくれ。  
Hurry up and bring me some alcohol.

The negative command form is very simple: simply attach 「な」 to either ru-verbs or u-verbs. Don't confuse this with the 「な」 gomi we will be learning at the end of this section. The intonation is totally different.

### Using the negative command form

- Attach 「な」 to the verb.
  - 例) 行<sup>れい</sup>く → 行<sup>い</sup>くな
  - 例) する<sup>れい</sup> → する<sup>い</sup>な

### Examples

- (1) それを<sup>た</sup>食べるな!  
Don't eat that!
- (2) 変<sup>へん</sup>なことを<sup>い</sup>言うな!  
Don't say such weird things!

This is not to be confused with the shortened version of 「～なさい」 we just learned in the last section.<sup>47</sup> The most obvious difference (besides the clear difference in tone) is that in 「～なさい」, the verb is first converted to the stem while the negative command has no conjugation. For example, for 「する」, 「しな」 would be the short version of 「しなさい」 while 「するな」 would be a negative command.

<sup>47</sup> See the “Using 「～なさい」 to Make Firm but Polite Requests” heading in this lesson.

# Numbers and Counting

3 licks to get to the center of a tootsie roll lollipop

What! ...is the air-speed velocity of an unladen swallow?  
-Holy Grail Bridgekeeper

## Numbers and Amounts

Numbers and counting in Japanese are difficult enough to require its own section. First of all, the number system is in units of four instead of three, which can make converting into English quite difficult. Also, there are things called counters, which are required to count different types of objects, animals, or people. We will learn the most generic and widely used counters to get you started so that you can learn more on your own. To be honest, counters might be the only thing that'll make you want to quit learning Japanese, it's that bad. I recommend you digest only a little bit of this section at a time because it's awfully a lot of things to memorize.

## The Number System

The Japanese number system is spread into units of four. So a number such as 10,000,000 is actually split up as 1000,0000. However, thanks to the strong influence of the Western world and the standardization of numbers, when numbers are actually written, the split-off is three digits. Here are the first ten numbers.

Numerals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
かんじ 漢字	いち	に	さん	よん	ご	ろく	なな	はち	きゅう	じゅう
ひらがな	いち	に	さん	し/よん	ご	ろく	しち/なな	はち	きゅう	じゅう

As the chart indicates, 4 can either be 「し」 or 「よん」 and 7 can either be 「しち」 or 「なな」. Basically, both are acceptable up to 10. However, past ten, the reading is almost always 「よん」 and 「なな」. In general, 「よん」 and 「なな」 are preferred over 「し」 and 「しち」 in most circumstances.

You can simply count from 1 to 99 with just these ten numbers. Japanese is easier than English in this respect because you do not have to memorize separate words such as “twenty” or “fifty.” In Japanese, it's simply just “two ten” and “five ten.”

(1) <sup>さんじゅういち</sup>三十一 (さんじゅういち) = 31 (2) <sup>ごじゅうよん</sup>五十四 (ごじゅうよん) = 54 (3)  
<sup>ななじゅうなな</sup>七十七 (ななじゅうなな) = 77 (4) <sup>にじゅう</sup>二十 (にじゅう) = 20

Notice that numbers are either always written in kanji or numerals because hiragana can get rather long and hard to decipher.

## Numbers Past 99

Here are the higher numbers:

Numerals	100	1,000	10,000	10 <sup>8</sup>	10 <sup>12</sup>
漢字	百	千	万	億	兆
ひらがな	ひゃく	せん	まん	おく	ちよう

Notice how the numbers jumped four digits from 10<sup>4</sup> to 10<sup>8</sup> between 万 and 億? That's because Japanese is divided into units of four. Once you get past 1 万 (10,000), you start all over until you reach 9,999 万, then it rotates to 1 億 (100,000,000). By the way, 百 is 100 and 千 is 1,000, but anything past that, and you need to attach a 1 so the rest of the units become 一万 (10<sup>4</sup>)、一億 (10<sup>8</sup>)、一兆 (10<sup>12</sup>).

Now you can count up to 9,999,999,999,999,999 or 9,999 兆 just by chaining the numbers same as before. Only, this is where the trouble starts. Try saying 「いちちよう」、「ろくひゃく」、「さんせん」 really quickly, you'll notice it's difficult because of the repetition of similar consonant sounds. Therefore, Japanese people have decided to make it easier on themselves by pronouncing them as 「いっちよう」、「ろっぴゃく」、and 「さんぜん」. We already discussed this near the end of the Kanji section.<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately, it makes it all the harder for you to remember when to pronounce what. Here are all the slight sound changes.

Numerals	漢字	ひらがな
300	三百	さんびゃく
600	六百	ろっぴゃく
800	八百	はっぴゃく
3,000	三千	さんぜん
8,000	八千	はっせん
10 <sup>12</sup>	一兆	いっちよう

(1) よんまんさんぜんななじゅうろく  
四万三千七十六  
43,076

(2) ななおくろっぴゃくにじゅうよんまんきゅうせんにひゃくにじゅうに  
七億六百二十四万九千二百二十二  
706,249,222

(3) ごひゃくちようにまんいち  
五百兆二万  
500,000,000,020,001

Notice that it is customary to write large numbers only in numerals as even kanji can become difficult to decipher.

Some of you may be clamoring for larger numbers but you'll hardly ever use 「億」 much less 「兆」. I will guarantee that you will not need to know this but I looked up a list<sup>49</sup> for curiosity's sake.

48 See the Kanji lesson.

49 <http://macky0625.hp.infoseek.co.jp/ookazukokazu.htm>

## Numbers Smaller or Less Than 1

Zero in Japanese is 「零」<sup>れい</sup> but we usually just use 「ゼロ」 or 「マル」. There is no special method of reading decimals, you simply say 「点」<sup>てん</sup> for the dot and read each individual number. Here's an example:

(1) ゼロ、点、ゼロ、ゼロ、二、一  
0.0021

For negative numbers, everything is the same as positive numbers except that you say 「マイナス」 first.

(1) マイナス二十九<sup>にじゅうきゅう</sup>  
-29

## Counting and Counters

Ah, and now we come to the fun part. In Japanese, when you are simply counting numbers, everything is just as you would expect, 一、二、三、<sup>いち に さん</sup> and so on. However, if you want to count any type of object, you have to use something called a counter which depends on what type of object you are counting and on top of this, there are various sound changes similar to the ones we saw with 六百<sup>ろっぴやく</sup>, etc.. The counter themselves are usually single kanji characters that often have a special reading just for the counter. First, let's learn the counters for dates

### Dates

The year is very easy. All you have to do is say the number and add 「年」<sup>ねん</sup> which is pronounced here as 「ねん」. For example, Year 2003 becomes 2003年<sup>ねん</sup> (にせんさんねん). Only, the catch is that there is another calendar which starts over every time a new emperor ascends the throne. The year is preceded by the era, for example this year is: 平成15年<sup>へいせい ねん</sup>. My birthday, 1981 is 昭和56年<sup>しょうわ ねん</sup> (The Showa era lasted from 1926 to 1989). Don't think you don't need to know this if you're going to be filling out forms in Japan because they often ask you your birthday or the current date in the Japanese calendar (和暦<sup>われき</sup>). So [here](#)'s<sup>50</sup> a neat converter into the Japanese calendar you can use.

Saying the months is actually easier than English because all you have to do is write the number (either in numerals or kanji) of the month and add 「月」 which is read as 「がつ」. However, you need to pay attention to April (4月), July (7月), and September (9月) which are pronounced 「しがつ」、 「しちがつ」、 and 「くがつ」 respectively.

Finally, we get to the days of the month, which is where the headache starts. The first day of the month is 「ついたち」<sup>ついたち</sup> (一日); different from 「いちにち」<sup>いちにち</sup> (一日), which means "one day." Besides this and some other exceptions we'll soon cover, you can simply say the number and add 「日」 which is pronounced here as 「にち」. For example, the 26th becomes 26日 (にじゅうろくにち). Pretty simple, however, the first 10 days, the 14th, 19th, 20th, 29th have special

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2272.html>

readings that you must separately memorize. If you like memorizing things, you'll have a ball here. Notice that the kanji doesn't change but the reading does.

英語	the 1st	the 2nd	the 3rd	the 4th	the 5th	the 6th	the 7th	the 8th	the 9th	the 10th	the 14th	the 19th	the 20th	the 24th	the 29th
漢字	一日	二日	三日	四日	五日	六日	七日	八日	九日	十日	十四日	十九日	二十日	二十四日	二十九日
ひらがな	ついたち	ふつか	みっか	よっか	いつか	むいか	なのか	ようか	このか	とおか	じゅうよっか	じゅうくにち	はつか	にじゅうよっか	にじゅうくにち

In Japan, the full format for dates follows the international date format and looks like: XXXX 年 YY 月 ZZ 日. For example, today's date would be: 2003 年 12 月 2 日

### Time

Now, we'll learn how to tell time. The hour is given by saying the number and adding 「時」 which is pronounced here as 「じ」. Here is a chart of exceptions to look out for.

英語	4 o'clock	7 o'clock	9 o'clock
漢字	四時	七時	九時
ひらがな	よじ	しちじ	くじ

Notice how the numbers 4, 7, and 9 keep coming up to be a pain in the butt? Well, those and sometimes 1, 6 and 8 are the numbers to watch out for.

The minutes are given by adding 「分」 which usually read as 「ふん」 with the following exceptions:

英語	1 min	3 min	4 min	6 min	8 min	10 min
漢字	一分	三分	四分	六分	八分	十分
ひらがな	いっぶん	さんぶん	よんぶん	ろっぶん	はっぶん	じゅっぶん

For higher number, you use the normal pronunciation for the higher digits and rotate around the same readings for 1 to 10. For instance, 24 minutes is 「にじゅうよんぶん」 (二十四分) while 30 minutes is 「さんじゅっぶん」 (三十分). There are also other less common but still correct pronunciations such as 「はちぶん」 for 「八分」 and 「じっぶん」 for 「十分」 (this one is almost never used).

All readings for seconds consists of the number plus 「秒」, which is read as 「びょう」. There are no exceptions for seconds and all the readings are the same.

## Some Examples of Time

- (1) いちじにじゅうよんぷん  
1時24分  
いちじ・にじゅうよんぷん  
1:24
- (2) ごごよじじゅっぷん  
午後4時10分  
ごご・よじ・じゅっぷん  
4:10 PM
- (3) ごぜんくじじゅうろっぷん  
午前9時16分  
ごぜん・くじ・じゅうろっぷん  
9:16 AM
- (4) ゆうさんじじゅうろっぷん  
13時16分  
じゅうさんじ・じゅうろっぷん  
13:16
- (5) にじじゅうはっぷんじゅうさんびょう  
2時18分13秒  
にじ・じゅうはっぷん・じゅうさんびょう  
2:18:13

## A Span of Time

Ha! I bet you thought you were done with dates and time, well guess again. This time we will learn counters for counting spans of time, days, months, and years. The basic counter for a span of time is

「間」, which is read as 「かん」. You can attach it to the end of hours, days, weeks, and years. Minutes (in general) and seconds do not need this counter and months have a separate counter, which we will cover next.

- (1) にじかんよんじゅっぷん  
二時間四十分  
にじかん・よんじゅっぷん  
2 hours and 40 minutes
- (2) に はつかかん  
二十日間  
はつかかん  
20 days
- (3) じゅうごかん  
十五日間  
じゅうごにちかん  
15 days



(4) <sup>に ねんかん</sup>  
二年間  
にねんかん  
two years

(5) <sup>さん かん</sup>  
三週間  
さんしゅうかん  
three weeks

(6) <sup>いちにち</sup>  
一日  
いちにち  
one day

As mentioned before, a period of one day is 「一日」 (<sup>いちにち</sup>いちにち) which is different from the 1st of the month: 「ついたち」.

Pronunciations to watch out for when counting weeks is one week: 「一週間」 (<sup>いっしゅうかん</sup>いっしゅうかん) and 8 weeks: 「八週間」 (<sup>はっしゅうかん</sup>はっしゅうかん).

To count the number of months, you simply take a regular number and add 「か」 and 「月」 which is pronounced here as 「げつ」 and not 「がつ」. The 「か」 used in this counter is usually written as a small katakana 「ヶ」 which is confusing because it's still pronounced as 「か」 and not 「け」. The small 「ヶ」 is actually totally different from the katakana 「ヶ」 and is really an abbreviation for the kanji 「箇」, the original kanji for the counter. This small 「ヶ」 is also used in some place names such as 「千駄ヶ谷」 and other counters, such as the counter for location described in the “Other Counters” section below.

In counting months, you should watch out for the following sound changes:

<sup>えいご</sup> 英語	1 month	6 months	10 months
<sup>かんじ</sup> 漢字	<sup>いっかげつ</sup> 一ヶ月	<sup>ろっかげつ</sup> 六ヶ月	<sup>じゅっかげつ</sup> 十ヶ月
<sup>ひらがな</sup> ひらがな	いっかげつ	ろっかげつ	じゅっかげつ

Just like minutes, the high numbers rotate back using the same sounds for 1 to 10.

(1) <sup>じゅう いっかげつ</sup>  
十一ヶ月  
じゅういっかげつ  
eleven months

(2) <sup>に じゅっかげつ</sup>  
二十ヶ月  
にじゅっかげつ  
twenty months

(3) <sup>さんじゅうさん かげつ</sup>  
三十三ヶ月  
さんじゅうさんかげつ  
thirty three months

## Other Counters

We'll cover some of the most common counters so that you'll be familiar with how counters work. This will hopefully allow you to learn other counters on your own because there are too many to even consider covering them all. The important thing to remember is that using the wrong counter is grammatically incorrect. If you are counting people, you must use the people counter, etc. Sometimes, it is acceptable to use a more generic counter when a less commonly used counter applies. Here are some counters.

日本語	When to Use
人	To count the number of people
本	To count long, cylindrical objects such as bottles or chopsticks
枚	To count thin objects such as paper or shirts
冊	To count bound objects usually books
匹	To count small animals like cats or dogs
歳	To count the age of a living creatures such as people
個	To count small (often round) objects
回	To count number of times
ヶ所 (箇所)	To count number of locations
つ	To count any generic object that has a rare or no counter

## Counting 1 to 10 (some variations might exist)

	に人	ほん本	まい枚	さつ冊	ひき匹	さい歳	こ個	かい回	かしよ所 (箇所)	つ
1	ひとり	いっほん	いちまい	いっさつ	いっぴき	いっさい	いっこ	いっかい	いっかしよ	ひとつ
2	ふたり	にほん	にまい	にさつ	にひき	にさい	にこ	にかい	にかしよ	ふたつ
3	さんにん	さんほん	さんまい	さんさつ	さんびき	さんさい	さんこ	さんかい	さんかしよ	みっつ
4	よにん	よんほん	よんまい	よんさつ	よんひき	よんさい	よんこ	よんかい	よんかしよ	よっつ
5	ごにん	ごほん	ごまい	ごさつ	ごひき	ごさい	ごこ	ごかい	ごかしよ	いつつ
6	ろくにん	ろっほん	ろくまい	ろくさつ	ろっぴき	ろくさい	ろっこ	ろっかい	ろっかしよ	むっつ
7	しちにん	ななほん	ななまい	ななさつ	ななひき	ななさい	ななこ	ななかい	ななかしよ	ななつ
8	はちにん	はちほん	はちまい	はっさつ	はっぴき	はっさい	はっこ	はちかい	はっかしよ	やっつ
9	きゅうにん	きゅうほん	きゅうまい	きゅうさつ	きゅうひき	きゅうさい	きゅうこ	きゅうかい	きゅうかしよ	ここのつ
10	じゅうにん	じゅうほん	じゅうまい	じゅうさつ	じゅうひき	じゅうさい	じゅうこ	じゅうかい	じゅうかしよ	とお

The changed sounds have been highlighted. You don't count 0 because there is nothing to count. You can simply use 「ない」 or 「いない」. The chart has hiragana for pronunciation but, as before, it is usually written with either numbers or kanji plus the counter with the single exception of 「とお」 which is simply written as 「<sup>とお</sup>十」. For higher numbers, it's the same as before, you use the normal

pronunciation for the higher digits and rotate around the same readings for 1 to 10 except for 「一人」<sup>ひとり</sup> and 「二人」<sup>ふたり</sup> which transforms to the normal 「いち」 and 「に」 once you get past the first two. So 「一人」<sup>ひとり</sup> is 「ひとり」 while 「11人」<sup>じゅういちにん</sup> is 「じゅういちにん」. Also, the generic counter 「〜つ」 only applies up to exactly ten items. Past that, you can just use regular plain numbers.

Note: The counter for age is often sometimes written as 「才」<sup>さい</sup> for those who don't have the time to write out the more complex kanji. Plus, age 20 is usually read as 「はたち」 and not 「にじゅっさい」.

## Using 「目」<sup>め</sup> to Show Order

You can attach 「目」<sup>め</sup> (read as 「め」) to various counters to indicate the order. The most common example is the 「番」<sup>ばん</sup> counter. For example, 「一番」<sup>いちばん</sup> which means “number one” becomes “the first” when you add 「目」<sup>め</sup> (一番目<sup>いちばんめ</sup>). Similarly, 「一回目」<sup>いっかいめ</sup> is the first time, 「二回目」<sup>にかいめ</sup> is the second time, 「四人目」<sup>よんにんめ</sup> is the fourth person, and so on.

## Wrapping Up Section 4 and More Gobi

*This is only the end of the beginning*

### Some More Gobi and Some Review

We are coming to the end of the fourth major section of the guide. Do you feel like your Japanese has improved? We've come to the point where we've learned enough conjugations to be able to start mixing them together in various useful combinations. Of course this can be a little difficult to do without some practice, which is the reason for this lesson. But first, since we've come to the end of yet another section, let's learn some more sentence endings.

### The Next Most Often Used Gobi: 「な」 and 「さ」

Next to 「よ」 and 「ね」, 「さ」 and 「な」 are the next most commonly used gobi.

「さ」, which is basically a very casual form of 「よ」, is similar to the English “like” in that some people throw it in at the end of almost every single phrase. Of course, that doesn't mean it's necessarily a very sophisticated manner of speech but just like using “like” all the time, I cannot deny that it is an easy habit to fall into. In that sense, due to its over-use, it has almost lost any specific meaning. You may overhear a conversation like the following:

だいがくせい  
大学生 1 : あのさ…

だいがくせい  
大学生 2 : うん

だいがくせい  
大学生 1 : この間さ…

だいがくせい  
大学生 2 : うん

だいがくせい  
大学生 1 : デイズニーランドに行ったんだけどさ、なんかさ、すごい込んで…

だいがくせい  
大学生 2 : うん

だいがくせい  
大学生 1 : 何もできなくてさ…

And it goes on like this, sometimes the other person might break in to say something related to the topic.

You can use 「な」 in place of 「ね」 when it sounds too soft and reserved for what you want to say or for the audience you are speaking to. Its rough sound generally applies to the male gender but is not necessarily restricted to only males.

ようすけ  
洋介 : 今、図書館に行くんだよな。

You are going to the library now huh? (seeking explanation)

ともこ  
智子 : うん、なんで?

Yeah, why?

ボブ : 日本語は、たくさん勉強したけどな。まだ全然わからない。

I studied Japanese a lot, right? But, I still don't get it at all.

アリス：<sup>だいじょうぶ</sup>大丈夫よ。きっとわかるようになるからさ。  
No problem. You'll become able to understand for sure, you know?

ボブ：<sup>ならいいけどな</sup>。  
If so, it would be good.

The 「な」 gobi is often used with the question marker 「か」 to indicate that the speaker is considering something.

- (1) <sup>きょう あめ ふ</sup>今日は雨が降るかな？  
I wonder if it'll rain today.
- (2) <sup>だいがく い</sup>いい大学に行けるかな？  
I wonder if I can go to a good college.

## Gender-Specific Emphasis Gobi: 「わ」、「ぞ」、「ぜ」、「かしら」

These gobi are primarily used just to emphasize something and doesn't really have a meaning per se. However, they can make your statements sound much stronger and very gender-specific. Using 「わ」 is just like 「よ」 except it will make you sound almost sickeningly female (putting different dialects aside). Use sparingly. 「かしら」 is also a very feminine version of 「かな」, which we just went over. 「ぞ」 and 「ぜ」 are identical to 「よ」 except that it makes you sound “cool” and manly, or at least, that is the intent. These examples might not be very helpful without actually hearing what they sound like.

- (1) <sup>じかん</sup>もう時間がないわ。  
There is no more time.
- (2) おい、行くぞ！  
Hey, we're going!
- (3) これで、もう終わりだぜ。  
With this, it's over already.
- (4) <sup>だいがく い</sup>いい大学に入れるかしら？  
I wonder if I can enter a good college.

## That's a Wrap!

We learned quite a lot of things in this section. Let's try to put it all together by seeing how different kinds of conjugations are used in different combinations. This is of course by no means an exhaustive list but merely an illustration of how we can use what we learned in various combinations to create a lot of useful expressions.

### Example 1

アリス：<sup>かが せんせい</sup>加賀先生、<sup>しつもん き</sup>ちょっと質問を聞いてもいいですか？

加賀先生：<sup>かが せんせい</sup> うん、いいですよ。

アリス：<sup>にほんご</sup> 「Hello」を日本語で何<sup>なに</sup>と<sup>ゆ</sup>言<sup>い</sup>え<sup>ば</sup>51いいですか。

加賀先生：<sup>かが せんせい</sup> そうね。大体、<sup>だいたい</sup>「こんにちは」と<sup>い</sup>言<sup>い</sup>う<sup>おも</sup>と思<sup>おも</sup>います52よ。ただし、書<sup>か</sup>く時<sup>とき</sup>は「こ  
んにちわ」<sup>じゃなくて</sup>53、「こんにちは」と書<sup>か</sup>かなくてはなりません。

アリス：<sup>ほか</sup> そうですか。他<sup>ほか</sup>に何<sup>なに</sup>かいい表<sup>ひょうげん</sup>現<sup>げん</sup>はありますか。

加賀先生：<sup>かが せんせい</sup> これも<sup>おぼ</sup>覚<sup>おぼ</sup>え<sup>といて</sup>54ね。朝<sup>あさ</sup>は、「おはよう」と<sup>い</sup>言<sup>い</sup>う<sup>お</sup>の。でも、上<sup>うへ</sup>の人<sup>ひと</sup>には  
「おはようございます」と<sup>い</sup>言<sup>い</sup>っ<sup>て</sup>く<sup>だ</sup>さ<sup>い</sup>。

アリス：<sup>わ</sup> はい、分<sup>わ</sup>かりました。間<sup>まちが</sup>違<sup>ちが</sup>えないようにします。いい勉<sup>べんきょう</sup>強<sup>きょう</sup>になりました！

### Literal Translation of Example 1

Alice: Kaga-sensei, is it OK to ask you a question?  
 Kaga-sensei: Yes, it's OK.  
 Alice: If you say what for "hello" in Japanese, is it OK?  
 Kaga-sensei: Well, mostly, I think people say "konnichiwa." Only, when you write it, you must write "konnichiha" and not "konnichiwa."  
 Alice: Is that so? Are there any other good expressions?  
 Kaga-sensei: Please memorize this too (in preparation for the future). In the morning, everybody says, "ohayou." But, please say, "ohayou-gozaïmasu" to a higher person.  
 Alice: Yes, I understood. I'll do in the manner of not making mistake. It became good study!

### Interpretative Translation of Example 1

Alice: Kaga-sensei, is it OK to ask you a question?  
 Kaga-sensei: Sure.  
 Alice: How do you say "Hello" in Japanese?  
 Kaga-sensei: Well, most of the time, I think people say "konnichiwa." Only, when you write it, you must write "konnichiha" and not "konnichiwa."  
 Alice: Is that so? Are there any other good expressions?  
 Kaga-sensei: You should know this too. In the morning, everybody says, "ohayou." But, please say, "ohayou-gozaïmasu" to a higher person.  
 Alice: OK, I got it. I'll try not to make that mistake. That was very informative!

### Example 2

洋介：<sup>ようすけ</sup> お！アリスだ。あのね、<sup>しつもん</sup>質<sup>しつもん</sup>問<sup>もん</sup>を聞<sup>き</sup>いてもいい？  
 アリス：<sup>なに</sup> 何<sup>なに</sup>？

51 何<sup>なに</sup>と<sup>ゆ</sup>言<sup>い</sup>え<sup>ば</sup> = quoted sub-clause + if conditional of 言<sup>い</sup>う

52 「と<sup>い</sup>言<sup>い</sup>う<sup>おも</sup>と思<sup>おも</sup>います」 = quoted sub-clause + quoted sub-clause

53 「<sup>じゃなくて</sup>」 = negative sequence of states

54 「<sup>おぼ</sup>覚<sup>おぼ</sup>え<sup>といて</sup>」 - 覚<sup>おぼ</sup>える + abbreviated form of ~ておく + casual ~てく<sup>だ</sup>さ<sup>い</sup> with く<sup>だ</sup>さ<sup>い</sup> dropped.

ようすけ 洋介： ちょっと英語を<sup>えいご</sup>教<sup>おし</sup>えてもらいたい<sup>55</sup>んだけどさ、もし時間<sup>じかん</sup>があれば、教<sup>おし</sup>えてくれない？  
 アリス： え？英語<sup>えいご</sup>を勉強<sup>べんきょう</sup>するの？  
 ようすけ 洋介： うん、アメリカで留学<sup>りゅうがく</sup>してみたい<sup>56</sup>なと思<sup>おも</sup>って<sup>56</sup>ね。去年<sup>きょねん</sup>も行<sup>い</sup>こうとした<sup>57</sup>けど、  
 お金<sup>かね</sup>がなくて…  
 アリス： そうなの？いいよ。いつ教<sup>おし</sup>えてほしいの？  
 ようすけ 洋介： いつでもいいよ。  
 アリス： じゃ、来週<sup>らいしゅう</sup>の木曜日<sup>もくようび</sup>からはどう？  
 ようすけ 洋介： うん、いいよ。ありがとう！  
 アリス： 勉強<sup>べんきょう</sup>を怠<sup>なま</sup>けたり、来<sup>こ</sup>なかつたり、しな<sup>い</sup>いで<sup>58</sup>ね。  
 ようすけ 洋介： そんなことしないよ！

### Literal Translation of Example 2

Yousuke: Oh! It's Alice. Hey, is it OK to ask a question?  
 Alice: What?  
 Yousuke: I want to receive the favor of you teaching English and if, by any chance, you have time, will you give the favor of teaching?  
 Alice: Huh? You are going to study English?  
 Yousuke: Yeah, I was thinking that I want to try studying abroad in America. I tried to make motion toward going last year too but, without money....  
 Alice: Is that so? It's good. When do you want me to teach you?  
 Yousuke: Anytime is good.  
 Alice: Then what about from next week Thursday?  
 Yousuke: Yeah, OK. Thanks!  
 Alice: Don't do things like shirk on your studies or not come, OK?  
 Yousuke: I won't do anything like that!

### Interpretative Translation of Example 2

Yousuke: Oh! It's Alice. Hey, can I ask you a question?  
 Alice: What up?  
 Yousuke: I want to learn English so if you have time, can you teach me?  
 Alice: Huh? You're going to study English?  
 Yousuke: Yeah, I was thinking about studying abroad in America. I tried going last year too but I didn't have the money.

55 「教<sup>おし</sup>えてもらいたい」 = receiving favor + to want (たい)

56 「してみたい<sup>おも</sup>なと思<sup>おも</sup>って」 = to try something out (～てみる) + want to (たい) + な gobi + quoted subquote + te-form of 思<sup>おも</sup>う

57 「行<sup>い</sup>こうとした」 = volitional of 行<sup>い</sup>く + to attempt (とする)

58 「怠<sup>なま</sup>けたり来<sup>こ</sup>なかつたりしな<sup>い</sup>いで」 = List of actions (～たりする) + negative request of する.



Alice: Really? No problem. When do you want me to teach you?  
Yousuke: Anytime is fine.  
Alice: What about from next week Thursday then?  
Yousuke: OK, thanks!  
Alice: You're not going to shirk on your studies or not come or anything right?  
Yousuke: I won't do anything like that!

## Part 5: Special Expressions

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I have decided to call this next section “Special Expressions” only because with the exception of the first few lessons, most of the grammar here applies to more specific areas than the grammar we have covered so far. These special expressions, while individually not vital, are, as a collection, necessary for regular everyday conversations. We are slowly entering the stage where we’ve built the toolbox and we now need to acquire the little tools that will make the toolbox complete. Now that we covered most of the base, it is time to look at all the little itty gritty bits. You are welcome to skip around the lessons, however; the examples will assume that you have gone over all previous sections.

### Lessons covered in this section

- Causative and Passive Verbs — The last major type of verb conjugation, we’ll learn how to create passive, causative, and the common causative-passive combination.
- Honorific and Humble Forms — Learn even politer expressions with honorific and humble forms.
- Things that happen unintentionally — Learn how to express things that happen by accident.
- Special expressions with generic nouns — Some special expressions using 「こと」 and 「ところ」.
- Expressing various levels of certainty — Various ways to express different levels of certainty.
- Expressing amounts — Different ways to express amounts.
- Various ways to express similarity and hearsay — Various ways to express things that you heard.
- Various uses of 方 and よる — Various ways to use 「方」 and 「よる」 especially for comparisons.
- Saying something is easy or difficult to do — Useful ways to conjugate verbs to mean that it’s easy or hard to do.
- More negative verbs — Some less common but nonetheless useful negative forms of verbs.
- Hypothesizing and Concluding — Express hypothetical situations and reach conclusions based on certain data.
- Expressing time-specific actions — Various grammar that describes the time-frame or rate of frequency of verbs.
- Leaving something the way it is — How to express not making changes to a state.

# Causative and Passive Verbs

Cause to be Passive

## Causative and Passive Verbs

We will now learn the last two major types of verb conjugations: causative and passive forms. While there are many reasons to put this in the Essential Grammar section, I have decided to put it as the first lesson of this section because: 1) The essential grammar section was getting really big, 2) Causative and passive forms are not as commonly used as other verb forms. These two verb conjugations are traditionally covered together because of the notorious causative-passive combination. We will now go over what all these things are and how they are used.

## Causative Verbs

Verbs conjugated into the causative form are used to indicate an action that someone makes happen. Like Captain Picard so succinctly puts it, the causative verb means to “make it so.” This verb is usually used in the context of making somebody do something. The really confusing thing about the causative verb is that it can also mean to let someone do something. Or maybe this is a different type of verb with the exact same conjugation rules. Whichever the case may be, a verb in the causative form can mean either making or letting someone do something. The only good news is that when the causative form is used with 「あげる」 and 「くれる」, it almost always means to “let someone do.” Once you get used to it, surprisingly, it becomes quite clear which meaning is being used when.

- (1) <sup>ぜんぶ た</sup>全部食べさせた。  
Made/Let (someone) eat it all.
- (2) <sup>ぜんぶ た</sup>全部食べさせてくれた。  
Let (someone) eat it all.

### Causative Conjugation Rules

Here are the conjugation rules for the causative form. All causative verbs become ru-verbs.

- ru-verbs - Remove the 「る」 and add 「させる」.
- u-verbs - Change the last character as you would for negative verbs<sup>1</sup> but attach 「せる」 instead of 「ない」.
- Exception Verbs - 「する」 becomes 「させる」 and 「くる」 becomes 「こさせる」.

<sup>1</sup> See the “Conjugating Verbs into the Negative” heading in the *Negative Verbs* lesson.

## Sample ru-verbs

Plain	Causative
た 食べる	た 食べさせる
き 着る	き 着させる
しん 信じる	しん 信じさせる
ね 寝る	ね 寝させる
お 起きる	お 起きさせる
で 出る	で 出させる
か 掛ける	か 掛けさせる
す 捨てる	す 捨てさせる
しら 調べる	しら 調べさせる

## Sample u-verbs

Plain	Causative	ローマ字 <sup>じ</sup>	ローマ字 <sup>じ</sup> (Caus.)
はな 話す	はな 話させる	hanasu	hanasaseru
き 聞く	き 聞かせる	kiku	kikaseru
およ 泳ぐ	およ 泳がせる	oyogu	oyogaseru
あそ 遊ぶ	あそ 遊ばせる	asobu	asobaseru
ま 待つ	ま 待たせる	matu <sup>2</sup>	mataseru
の 飲む	の 飲ませる	nomu	nomaseru
なお 直る	なお 直らせる	naoru	naoraseru
し 死ぬ	し 死なせる	shinu	shinaseru
か 買う	か 買わせる	kau	kawaseru

<sup>2</sup> つ is pronounced “tsu,” but it’s treated as “tu” for conjugation purposes because of its position on the hiragana table.

## Exception Verbs

Positive	Causative
する	させる
くる	こさせる

### Examples

Here are some examples using the causative verb. Context will usually tell you which is being meant, but for our purposes we will assume that when the verb is used with 「あげる」 and 「くれる」 (ください) it means “to let someone do” while it means, “to *make* someone do” when used without it.

- (1) せんせい がくせい しゅくだい  
先生が学生に宿題をたくさんさせた。  
Teacher made students do lots of homework.
- (2) せんせい しつもん  
先生が質問をたくさん聞かせてくれた。  
Teacher let [someone] ask lots of questions.
- (3) きょう しごと やす  
今日は仕事を休ませてください。  
Please let me rest from work today. (Please let me take the day off today.)
- (4) ぶちょう ちょうじかんはたら  
その部長は、よく長時間働かせる。  
That manager often make [people] work long hours.

When asking for permission to let someone do something, it is more common to use the 「～てもいい」 grammar.<sup>3</sup>

- (1) トイレに行かせてくれますか。  
Can you let me go to the bathroom? (Sounds like a prisoner, even in English)
- (2) トイレに行ってもいいですか。  
Is it OK to go to the bathroom? (No problem here)

### A Shorter Alternative

There is a shorter version of the causative conjugation, which I will go over for completeness. However, since this version is mostly used in very rough slang, you are free to skip this section until you've had time to get used to the regular form. Also, textbooks usually don't cover this version of the causative verb.

The key difference in this version is that all verbs become an u-verbs with a 「す」 ending. Therefore, the resulting verb would conjugate just like any other u-verb ending in 「す」 such as 「話す」 or 「指す」. The first part of the conjugation is the same as the original causative form.

<sup>3</sup> See the “Saying Something is OK to Do or not Do” heading in the *Expressing “Must” or “Have To”* lesson.

However, for ru-verbs, instead of attaching 「させる」, you attach 「さす」 and for u-verbs, you attach 「す」 instead of 「せる」. As a result, all the verbs become an u-verb ending in 「す」.

### Shortened Causative Form

This form is rarely used so you may just want to stick with the more traditional version of the causative form.

- ru-verbs - Remove the 「る」 and add 「さす」.
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>食<sup>た</sup>べ<sup>る</sup> → <sup>た</sup>食<sup>べ</sup>さ<sup>す</sup>
- u-verbs - Change the last character as you would for negative verbs<sup>4</sup> but attach 「す」 instead of 「ない」.
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>行<sup>い</sup>く → <sup>い</sup>行<sup>か</sup> → <sup>い</sup>行<sup>か</sup>す
- Exception Verbs - 「する」 becomes 「さす」 and 「くる」 becomes 「こさす」.

### Examples

- (1) <sup>おな</sup>同じ<sup>なんかい</sup>ことを何回も<sup>い</sup>言<sup>わ</sup>す<sup>な</sup>!  
Don't make me say the same thing again and again!
- (2) <sup>はらあ</sup>お腹空いているんだから、なんか<sup>た</sup>食<sup>べ</sup>さ<sup>し</sup>てくれよ。  
I'm hungry so let me eat something.

### Passive Verbs

Passive verbs are verbs that are done to the (passive) subject. Unlike English style of writing which discourages the use of the passive form, passive verbs in Japanese are often used in essays and articles.

### Passive Conjugation Rules

For once, the conjugations rules are same for both ru-verbs and u-verbs. All passive verbs become ru-verbs.

- ru-verbs and u-verbs - Change the last character from an / u / vowel sound to an / a / vowel sound and add 「れる」.
- Exception Verbs - 「する」 becomes 「される」 and 「くる」 becomes 「こられる」.

<sup>4</sup> See the “Conjugating Verbs into the Negative” heading in the *Negative Verbs* lesson.

## Sample ru-verbs

Plain	Passive
た 食べる	た 食べられる
き 着る	き 着られる
しん 信じる	しん 信じられる
ね 寝る	ね 寝られる
おき 起きる	おき 起きられる
で 出る	で 出られる
か 掛ける	か 掛けられる
す 捨てる	す 捨てられる
しら 調べる	しら 調べられる

## Sample u-verbs

Plain	Passive	ローマ字 <sup>じ</sup>	ローマ字 (Pass.) <sup>じ</sup>
はな 話す	はな 話される	hanasu	hanasareru
き 聞く	き 聞かれる	kiku	kikareru
およ 泳ぐ	およ 泳がれる	oyogu	oyogareru
あそ 遊ぶ	あそ 遊ばれる	asobu	asobareru
ま 待つ	ま 待たれる	matu <sup>5</sup>	matareru
の 飲む	の 飲まれる	nomu	nomareru
なお 直る	なお 直られる	naoru	naorareru
し 死ぬ	し 死なれる	shinu	shinareru
か 買う	か 買われる	kau	kawareru

5 つ is pronounced “tsu,” but it’s treated as “tu” for conjugation purposes because of its position on the hiragana table.

## Exception Verbs

Positive	Passive
する	される
くる	こられる

### Examples

- (1) ポリッジが誰かに食べられた！  
The porridge was eaten by somebody!
- (2) みんなに僕だと言われます。  
I am told by everybody that [I'm] strange.
- (3) 光の速さを超えるのは、不可能だと思われる。  
Exceeding the speed of light is thought to be impossible.
- (4) この教科書は多くの人に読まれている。  
This textbook is being read by a large number of people.
- (5) 外国人に質問を聞かれたが、答えられなかった。  
I was asked a question by a foreigner but I couldn't answer.
- (6) このパッケージには、あらゆるものが含まれている。  
Everything is included in this package.

### Using Passive Form to Show Politeness

While we will go over various types of grammar that express a politeness level above the normal -masu/-desu forms in the next lesson, it is useful to know that using passive form is another more polite way to express an action. In Japanese, a sentence is usually more polite when it is less direct. For example, it is more polite to refer to someone by his or her name and not by the direct pronoun “you.” It is also more polite to ask a negative question than a positive one. (For example, 「しますか？」 vs. 「しませんか？」) In a similar sense, using the passive form makes the sentence less direct because the subject does not directly perform the action. This makes it sound more polite. Here is the same sentence in increasing degrees of politeness.

- (1) どうする？  
What will you do? (lit: How do?)
- (2) どうしますか？  
Regular polite.
- (3) どうされますか？  
Passive polite.



- (4) どうなさいますか？  
Honorific (to be covered next lesson)
- (5) どうなさいますでしょうか？  
Honorific + a lesser degree of certainty.

Notice how the same sentence grows longer and longer as you get more and more indirect.

## Examples

- (1) レシートはどうなされますか？  
What about your receipt? (lit: How will you do receipt?)
- (2) あしたのかいぎにい行かれるんですか？  
Are you going to tomorrow's meeting?

## Causative-Passive Forms

The causative-passive form is simply the combination of causative and passive conjugations to mean that the action of making someone do something was done to that person. This would effectively translate into, “[someone] is made to do [something].” The important thing to remember is the order of conjugation. The verb is first conjugated to the causative and then passive, never the other way around.

### Causative-Passive Conjugation Form

- The causative-passive verb is formed by first conjugating to the causative form and then by conjugating the result to the passive form.
  - 例) た食べる → た食べさせる → た食べさせられる
  - 例) い行く → い行かせる → い行かせられる

## Examples

- (1) あさ はん た朝ご飯は食べたくなかったのに、た食べさせられた。  
Despite not wanting to eat breakfast, I **was made to eat** it.
- (2) にほん さけ の おお日本では、お酒を飲ませられることが多い。  
In Japan, the event of **being made to drink** is numerous.
- (3) に じかん まあいつに二時間も待たせられた。  
I **was made to wait** 2 hours by that guy.
- (4) おや まいにち しゅくだい親に毎日宿題をさせられる。  
I **am made to do homework** everyday by my parent(s).

## A Shorter Alternative

Going along with the shorter causative alternative, you can also use the same conjugation for the causative-passive form. I won't cover it in too much detail because the usefulness of this form is rather limited just like the shorter causative form itself. The idea is to simply use the shortened causative form instead of using the regular causative conjugation. The rest is the same as before. This form is normally used with only a limited set of verbs so here are a few examples to show you what this form looks like.

### Shortened causative-passive form examples

- First conjugate to the shortened causative form. Then conjugate to the passive form.

- 例) <sup>れい</sup>行く → <sup>い</sup>行か → <sup>い</sup>行かす → <sup>い</sup>行かされた
- 例) <sup>れい</sup>立つ → <sup>た</sup>立た → <sup>た</sup>立たす → <sup>た</sup>立たされた

### Examples

- (1) <sup>がくせい</sup>学生が<sup>ろうか</sup>廊下に<sup>た</sup>立たされた。  
The student **was made to stand** in the hall.
- (2) <sup>にほん</sup>日本では、<sup>さけ</sup>お酒を<sup>の</sup>飲まされる<sup>こと</sup>が多い。  
In Japan, the event of **being made to drink** is numerous.
- (3) <sup>に</sup>あいつに<sup>じかん</sup>二時間も<sup>ま</sup>待たされた。  
**I was made to wait** 2 hours by that guy.

# Honorific and Humble Forms

*I am humbled, your honor*

## Honorific and Humble Forms

Japanese can be roughly separated into three levels of politeness: casual, polite, and honorific/humble. So far, we have already gone over the polite forms using 「～です」 and 「～ます」. We will now cover the next level of politeness using honorific and humble forms. You will often hear this type of language in any customer/consumer type situations such as fast food counters, restaurants, etc. For now, the first thing to remember is that the speaker always considers himself/herself to be at the lowest level. So any actions performed by oneself are in humble form while actions performed by anyone else seen from the view of the speaker uses the honorific form.

## Set Expressions

The difficult part of learning honorific and humble language is that there are a number of words that have separate verbs for honorific and humble forms. Anything that does not have its own special expression fall under the general rules of humble and honorific conjugations that we will cover next.

### Honorific and Humble Verbs

Plain	Honorific	Humble
する	なさる	いた 致す
行く	いらっしゃる／おいでになる	まい 参る
来る	いらっしゃる／おいでになる	まい 参る
いる	いらっしゃる／おいでになる	おる
見る	らん ご覧になる	はいけん 拝見する
聞く	—	うかが 伺う
言う	おっしゃる	もう　もう　あ 申す／申し上げる
あげる	さ　あ 差し上げる	—
くれる	くだ 下さる	—
もらう	—	いただく
食べる	め　あ 召し上がる	—
知っている	ぞんじ ご存知 (です)	ぞん 存じる

### Honorific Verbs with Special Conjugations

A number of these verbs do not follow the normal masu-conjugation rules and they include: 「なさる」、「いらっしゃる」、「おっしゃる」、「<sup>くだ</sup>下さる」、and 「ござる」 (which we will soon cover). For all masu-form tenses of these verbs, instead of the 「る」 becoming a 「り」 as it does

with normal u-verbs, it instead becomes an 「い」. All other conjugations besides the masu-form do not change from regular u-verbs.

### ます-conjugations

Plain	ます-form	Past ます-form	Negative ます-form	Past-negative ます-form
なさる	なさいます	なさいました	なさいません	なさいませんでした
いらっしゃる	いらっしゃいます	いらっしゃいました	いらっしゃいません	いらっしゃいませんでした
おっしゃる	おっしゃいます	おっしゃいました	おっしゃいません	おっしゃいませんでした
<sup>くだ</sup> 下さる	<sup>くだ</sup> 下さいます	<sup>くだ</sup> 下さいました	<sup>くだ</sup> 下さいません	<sup>くだ</sup> 下さいませんでした
ござる	ございます	ございました	ございません	ございませんでした

### Examples of Honorific Form

We can now begin to see that 「ください」 is just a special conjugation of 「<sup>くだ</sup>下さる」 which is the honorific version of 「くれる」. Let's look at some actual examples. Since these examples are all questions directed directly to someone (second person), they all use the honorific form.

- (1) アリスさん、もう<sup>め</sup>召し<sup>あ</sup>上がりましたか。  
Alice-san, did [you] eat already?
- (2) <sup>しごと</sup>仕事で何<sup>なに</sup>をなさっているんですか。  
What are you doing at work?
- (3) <sup>すいせんじょう</sup>推薦状を書いて<sup>か</sup>くださるんですか。  
You're going to give me the favor of writing a recommendation letter?
- (4) どちらからいらっしゃいましたか。  
Where did you come from?
- (5) <sup>きょう</sup>今日は、どちらへいらっしゃいますか。  
Where are you going today?

### Examples of Humble Form

The following examples are all actions done by the speaker so they all use the humble form.

- (1) <sup>わたし</sup>私はキムと<sup>もう</sup>申します。  
As for me, [people] say Kim. (I am called Kim.)
- (2) <sup>わたし</sup>私<sup>か</sup>が書いたレポートを<sup>み</sup>見ていただけますか。  
Will I be able to receive the favor of getting my report looked at?
- (3) <sup>しつれいた</sup>失礼<sup>いた</sup>致します。  
Excuse me. (lit: I am doing a discourtesy.)

## Other Substitutions

In addition to these set expressions, there are some words that also have more polite counterparts. Probably the most important is the politer version of 「ある」, which is 「ござる」. This verb can be used for both inanimate and animate objects. It is neither honorific nor humble but it is a step above 「ある」 in politeness. However, unless you want to sound like a samurai, 「ござる」 is always used in the polite form: 「ございます」.

By extension, the politer version of 「です」 is 「でございます」. This is essentially the masu-form conjugation of 「でござる」, which comes from 「である」 literally meaning, “to exist as” (to be covered much later<sup>6</sup>).

### Examples

(1 A) こちらは、<sup>わたし</sup>私<sup>へや</sup>の部屋です。  
Over here is my room.

(1 B) こちらは、<sup>わたし</sup>私<sup>へや</sup>の部屋でございます。  
This way is my room.

(2 A) <sup>てあら</sup>お手洗いはこのビルの<sup>にかい</sup>二階にあります。  
The bathroom is in the second floor of this building.

(2 B) <sup>てあら</sup>お手洗いはこのビルの<sup>にかい</sup>二階にございます。  
The bathroom is in the second floor of this building.

Other examples include 「いい」, which is more formally expressed as 「よろしい」. There are also six different ways to say, “I’m sorry” (not counting 「悪いね」 or slight inflection changes like 「すいません」).

Successively politer expressions for apologizing:

- (1) ごめん。
- (2) ごめんなさい。
- (3) すみません。
- (4) <sup>もう</sup>申し<sup>わけ</sup>訳ありません。<sup>7</sup>
- (5) <sup>おそ</sup>恐れ<sup>い</sup>入ります。
- (6) <sup>きょうしゆく</sup>恐縮 です。

In addition, the politest suffix for names is 「様」<sup>さま</sup>, one level above 「さん」. You won't be using this suffix too often in actual speech even if you speak to that person in honorific/humble speech. However, expect to use it when writing letters even to people you are somewhat familiar with. Also,

<sup>6</sup> See the “Using 「である」 to State That Something is So in an Authoritative Tone” heading of the *Formal Expressions* lesson.

<sup>7</sup> (申し訳<sup>もう</sup> is the humble form of 言<sup>い</sup>い<sup>わけ</sup>訳)

service people such as cashiers or waitresses/waiters will normally refer to the customer as 「お客さま様」. Of course, royalty and deities are always accompanied by 「様」 such as 「神様」.

## Honorific and Humble Conjugations

For all other verbs without set expressions, there are conjugation rules to change them into honorific and humble forms. They both involve a common practice of attaching a polite prefix 「御」. In Japanese, there is a practice of attaching an honorific prefix 「御」 to certain (not all) nouns to show politeness. In fact, some words like 「お酒」、 「お茶」、 or 「お金」 come with this prefix so often that it's become practically the word itself. In general, 「御」 is written in hiragana as either 「ご」 for words read as 音読み (例： ご意見、 ご飯) or 「お」 for words read as 訓読み (例： お金、 お仕事). In fact, you may have been using this prefix already without realizing it like 「お好み焼き」 or 「お土産」. There are some exceptions to this rule such as 「お返事」. Luckily since 「御」 is rarely written in kanji, identifying the exceptions should not really be a problem.

### Honorific Form

The honorific form of verbs that are not among the set honorific expressions given above can be formed in two different ways.

#### Honorific Conjugation 1:

お + stem + に + なる

This kind of makes sense if you think of it as a person becoming the honorific state of a verb. All subsequent conjugations follow the normal rules of conjugating the u-verb 「なる」. To be honest, this type of sentence formulation is rarely used.

- (1) 先生はお見えになりますか。  
Have you seen the teacher?

#### Honorific Conjugation 2:

お + stem + です

### Examples

- (2) もうお帰りですか。  
You're going home already?

- (3) <sup>てんない</sup> 店内で<sup>めあ</sup>お召し上がりですか。  
Will you be dining in?

Service people want to be extra polite so they will often use this type of “double honorific” conjugation or <sup>にじゅう けいご</sup>二重敬語 (in this case, the honorific 「<sup>めあ</sup>召し上がる」 combined with the honorific conjugation). Whether it’s necessary or grammatically proper is another story.

### Using 「ください」 with Honorifics

You can also use 「<sup>くだ</sup>下さい」 with a honorific verb by replacing 「になる」 with 「ください」. This is useful for when you want to ask somebody to do something but still use a honorific verb. Yet another often-used expression.

- (1) <sup>しょうしょう</sup>少々 <sup>ま</sup>お待ちください。  
Please wait a moment.

Similarly, with 「<sup>らん</sup>ご覧になる」, you simply replace 「になる」 with 「ください」.

- (2) こちらに<sup>らんくだ</sup>ご覧下さい。  
Please look this way.

This works for other nouns as well. For example, riding the trains...

- (3) <sup>し</sup>閉まるドアに<sup>くだ</sup>ご注意下さい。  
Please be careful of the closing doors.

### Humble Form

Humble verbs are formed in the following fashion.

#### Humble Conjugation:

お + stem + する

You’ve probably already heard the first example many times before but now you know exactly where it comes from.

- (1) よろしく<sup>ねが</sup>お願いします。  
I properly make request.
- (2) <sup>せんせい</sup>先生、<sup>き</sup>お聞きしたいことがあります。  
Teacher, there’s something I want to ask you.
- (3) すみません、<sup>ま</sup>お待たせしました。  
Sorry, I made you wait (causative form).

- (4) <sup>せんえん</sup>千円から<sup>あず</sup>お預かりいたします。  
We'll be holding on [from?] your 1,000 yen.

You'll hear something like example (4) when, for example, you need to get change after paying 1,000 yen. Again, the <sup>にじゅう けいご</sup>二重敬語 where 「する」 has been converted to the humble 「<sup>いた</sup>致す」 form when it's already in the お+stem+する humble form. Some Japanese people complain that this makes no sense and that 「から」 should really be 「を」.

## Making Honorific Requests

We learned how to make polite requests using 「～ください」 in this previous section<sup>8</sup> and we just looked at how to use honorific verbs with requests as well. However, there is yet another way to make requests using honorific verbs. This grammar only applies to the honorific verbs with special 「～ます」 conjugations that we just covered. This includes 「<sup>くだ</sup>下さる」、「いらっしゃる」、「なさる」、and 「おっしゃる」。I've never actually seen this used with 「おっしゃる」, but it is grammatically possible.

### Making requests for honorific actions

- Conjugate the honorific verb to the special masu-conjugation and replace the last 「す」 with 「せ」
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>下さ<sup>る</sup> → <sup>くだ</sup>下さ<sup>います</sup> → <sup>くだ</sup>下さ<sup>いませ</sup>
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>いらっしや<sup>る</sup> → <sup>くだ</sup>いらっしや<sup>います</sup> → <sup>くだ</sup>いらっしや<sup>いませ</sup>
- An abbreviated and less formal version of this is to simply remove the 「ます」 after conjugating to special the masu-form
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>下さ<sup>る</sup> → <sup>くだ</sup>下さ<sup>います</sup> → <sup>くだ</sup>下さ<sup>い</sup>
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>いらっしや<sup>る</sup> → <sup>くだ</sup>いらっしや<sup>います</sup> → <sup>くだ</sup>いらっしや<sup>い</sup>

Now you finally know where grammar such as 「しなさい」 and 「してください」 actually came from. Let's look at a few quick examples.

### Examples

You'll probably hear this one a million times every time you enter some kind of store in Japan.

- (1) <sup>れい</sup>いらっしや<sup>いませ</sup>。  
Please come in!

However, a middle-aged sushi chef will probably use the abbreviated version.

- (2) <sup>れい</sup>いらっしや<sup>い</sup>!  
Please come in!

Some more examples...

<sup>8</sup> See the “「～ください」 — a Special Conjugation of 「くださる」” heading of the *Making Requests* lesson.



(3) ありがとうございます。またお越こしくださいませ。  
Thank you very much. Please come again.

(4) どうぞ、ごゆっくりなさいませ。  
Please take your time and relax.

# Things That Happen Unintentionally (～てしまう、～ちゃう／～じゃう)

Oops! I screwed up.

## Unintended Actions

This is the first of many useful tools that will become essential in your day-to-day conversations. We will now learn how to express an action that has taken place unintentionally often with unsatisfactory results. This is primarily done by the verb 「しまう」. Let's look at an example.

こうすけ 康介：  
しゅくだい 宿題をやった？  
Did you do homework?

アリス：  
しまった！  
Oh no! (I screwed up!)

## Using 「しまう」 with Other Verbs

When 「しまう」 is used in this sense, it is normal to attach it to the te-form<sup>9</sup> of another verb to express an action that is done or happened unintentionally. As is common with this type of grammar, the tense is decided by the tense of 「しまう」.

- (1) そのケーキを全部<sup>ぜんぶ</sup>食べてしまった。  
Oops, I ate that whole cake.
- (2) 毎日<sup>まいにち</sup>ケーキを<sup>た</sup>食べて、2キロ<sup>ふと</sup>太ってしまった。  
I ate cake everyday and I (unintentionally) gained two kilograms.
- (3) ちゃんと<sup>た</sup>食べないと、<sup>や</sup>痩せてしまいますよ。  
If you don't eat properly, you'll (unintentionally) lost weight you know.
- (4) <sup>けっきょく</sup>結局、<sup>きら</sup>嫌なことを<sup>ま</sup>させてしまった。  
In the end, I (unintentionally) made [someone] do something distasteful.
- (5) ごめん、<sup>ま</sup>待たせてしまって！  
Sorry about (unintentionally) making you wait!
- (6) <sup>きんぎょ</sup>金魚がもう<sup>し</sup>死んでしまった。  
The goldfish died already (oops).

If you want to see many more examples, look up 「しまう」 on WWJDIC and click the [EX] link. There are over 100 examples with translations for you to enjoy.

<sup>9</sup> See the “Expressing a Sequence of Verbs With the te-Form” heading in the *Compound Sentences* lesson.

## Using the Casual Version of 「～てしまう」

In casual speech, the 「～てしまう」 is often substituted by 「～ちゃう」 while 「～でしまう」 is substituted by 「じゃう」. Both 「～ちゃう」 and 「～じゃう」 conjugate just like regular u-verbs.

- (1) <sup>きんぎょ</sup>金魚がもう死<sup>し</sup>んじ<sup>じ</sup>ゃった。  
The goldfish died already.
- (2) もう帰<sup>かえ</sup>っ<sup>ち</sup>ゃっていい？  
Is it OK if I went home already?
- (3) みんな、どっか行<sup>い</sup>っ<sup>ち</sup>ゃったよ。  
Everybody went off somewhere.
- (4) そろそろ遅<sup>おそ</sup>くなっ<sup>ち</sup>ゃうよ。  
It'll gradually become late, you know.

There is yet another very colloquial version of 「～てしまう」 and 「～でしまう」 where it is replaced by 「～ちまう」 and 「～じまう」 respectively. Unlike, the cuter 「～ちゃう」 and 「～じゃう」 slang, this version conjures a image of rough and course middle-aged man.

- (1) また遅<sup>ちこく</sup>刻<sup>く</sup>し<sup>し</sup>ち<sup>ち</sup>まったよ。  
Darn, I'm late again.
- (2) ごめん、ついお前<sup>まえ</sup>を呼<sup>よ</sup>んじ<sup>じ</sup>まった。  
Sorry, I just ended up calling you unconsciously.

## Another Meaning of 「しまう」

If you look up 「しまう」, the edict dictionary will say:

仕舞 <sup>しま</sup> う 【しまう】 (v5u) (uk) to finish; to close; to do something completely; to put away; to put an end to;
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You may want to consider this a totally separate verb from the 「しまう」 we have covered so far. Occasionally but not usually, 「しまう」 will have this meaning rather than the unintended action.

- (1) <sup>しゅくだい</sup>宿題<sup>だい</sup>をやっ<sup>し</sup>てしま<sup>ま</sup>いなさい。  
Finish your homework completely.

# Special Expressions with Generic Nouns (こと、ところ、もの)

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Generic Nouns

## Special Expressions with Generic Nouns

We've already learned how to use generic nouns in order to modify nouns here.<sup>10</sup> Now we will go over some special expression used with generic nouns.

### Using 「こと」 to Say Whether Something Has Happened

When you combine 「こと」, the generic word for an event with 「ある」, you can talk about whether an event exists or not.

#### Examples

- (1) <sup>てつや</sup>徹夜して、<sup>しゅくだい</sup>宿題 **することはある**。  
There are times when I do homework while staying up all night.
- (2) <sup>ひとり</sup>一人で **行くことはありません**。  
I never go by myself.

Using the past tense of the verb with 「こと」, you can talk about whether an event has ever taken place. This is essentially the only way you can say “have done” in Japanese so this is a very useful expression. You need to use this grammar any time you want to talk about whether someone has ever done something.

#### Examples

- (1) パリに **行ったことはありませんか**。  
Have you ever gone to Paris?
- (2) お寿司を **食べたことがある**。  
I've had sushi before.
- (3) <sup>にほん</sup>日本の <sup>えいが</sup>映画を **観たことはないの**？  
You've never seen a Japanese movie?
- (4) ヨーロッパに **行ったことがあったらいいな**。  
It would be nice if I ever go to Europe.
- (5) そういうのを **見たことがなかった**。  
I had never seen anything like that.

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<sup>10</sup> See the “The 「の」 Particle” heading in the *Noun-Related Particles* lesson.

- (6) <sup>いちど</sup>一度行ったこともないんです。  
I've never gone, not even once.

## Using 「ところ」 as an Abstract Place

「ところ」 (<sup>ところ</sup>所) is usually used to indicate a generic physical location. However, it can also hold a much broader meaning ranging from a characteristic to a place in time.

### Examples

- (1) <sup>はや</sup>早くきて。<sup>えいが</sup>映画は、<sup>いま</sup>今ちょうどいいところだよ。  
Come quickly. We're at the good part of the movie.
- (2) <sup>かれ</sup>彼は、<sup>やさ</sup>優しいところもあるよ。  
His personality has some gentle parts too.
- (3) <sup>いま</sup>今は <sup>じゅぎょう</sup>授業が <sup>おわ</sup>終わったところですよ。  
Class has ended just now.
- (4) <sup>い</sup>これから行くところでした。  
I was just about to go from now.

## Using 「もの」 as a Casual Feminine Way to Emphasize

The generic object noun 「もの」 can be used as a casual and feminine way of emphasizing something.<sup>11</sup> This is identical to the explanatory feminine emphasis expressed by the 「の」 particle. Just like the explanatory 「の」 particle, the 「の」 is often changed into 「ん」 resulting in 「もん」. Using 「もん」 sounds very feminine and a little cheeky (in a cute way).

### Examples

- (質問) <sup>しつもん</sup> どうしてこなかったの？  
Why didn't (you) come?
- (1) <sup>じゅぎょう</sup> 授業があつたの。  
I had class. (feminine explanatory)
- (2) <sup>じゅぎょう</sup> 授業があつたもの。  
I had class. (feminine explanatory)
- (3) <sup>じゅぎょう</sup> 授業があつたもん。  
I had class, so there. (feminine explanatory)

<sup>11</sup> See the “The 「の」 Particle as Explanation” heading in the *Noun-Related Particles* lesson.

## Expressing Various Levels of Certainty (かもしれない、でしょう、だろう)

It's definitely kind of true for sure maybe...

### Expressing Different Degrees of Certainty

In general, Japanese people don't assert themselves of something unless they are absolutely sure that it is correct. This accounts for the incredibly frequent use of 「～<sup>おも</sup>と思う」 and the various grammatical expressions used to express specific levels of certainty. We will go over these expressions starting from the less certain to the most certain.

### Using 「かもしれない」 to Express Uncertainty

「かもしれない」 is used to mean “maybe” or “possibly” and is less certain than the word 「<sup>たぶん</sup>多分」. It attaches to the end of a complete clause. For noun and na-adjective clauses, the declarative 「だ」 must be removed. It can also be written in kanji as 「かも<sup>し</sup>知れない」 and you can treat it the same as a negative ru-verb (there is no positive equivalent) so the masu-form would become 「かもしれません」. In casual speech, it can be abbreviated to just 「かも」. There is also a very masculine version 「かもしれん」, which is simply a different type of negative verb covered here.<sup>12</sup>

#### Expressing uncertainty with 「かもしれない」

- Simply attach 「かもしれない」 or 「かも<sup>し</sup>知れない」 to the clause
  - 例) 映画を見た<sup>れい</sup>かもしれない
  - 例) 彼は<sup>れい</sup>学生<sup>かれ</sup>かも<sup>がくせい</sup>もしれない
  - 例) それは<sup>れい</sup>面白い<sup>おもしろ</sup>かもしれない
- Noun and na-adjective clauses must *not* use the declarative 「だ」
  - 例) 先生<sup>れい</sup>~~だ~~かもしれない → 先生<sup>せんせい</sup>かもしれない
  - 例) 退屈<sup>れい</sup>~~だ~~かもしれない → 退屈<sup>たいくつ</sup>かもしれない
- It can be abbreviated to just 「かも」 in casual speech
  - 例) 面白い<sup>れい</sup>かもしれない → 面白い<sup>おもしろ</sup>かも

### Examples

- (1) スミスさんは<sup>しょくどう</sup>食堂<sup>い</sup>に行った<sup>れい</sup>かも<sup>し</sup>れません。  
Smith-san may have gone to the cafeteria.

<sup>12</sup> See the *More Negative Verbs* lesson.

- (2) <sup>あめ</sup>雨で<sup>しあい</sup>試合は<sup>ちゅうし</sup>中止になる<sup>かもしれない</sup>ね。  
The game may become canceled by rain, huh?
- (3) この<sup>えいが</sup>映画は<sup>いつかい</sup>一回見たことある<sup>かも</sup>！  
I might have already seen this movie once.
- (4) あそこが<sup>よよぎ</sup>代々木<sup>こうえん</sup>公園<sup>かもしれない</sup>。  
That might be Yoyogi park over there.
- (5) もう<sup>に</sup>逃げられない<sup>かもしれんぞ</sup>。  
Might not be able to escape anymore, you know.

## Using 「でしょう」 to Express a Fair Amount of Certainty (Polite)

「でしょう」 is used to express a level of some certainty and is close in meaning to 「<sup>たぶん</sup>多分」. Just like 「～です／～ます」, it must come at the end of a complete sentence. It does not have any other conjugations. You can also replace 「～ですか」 with 「～でしょうか」 to make the question sound slightly more polite and less assuming by adding a slight level of uncertainty.

### Examples

- (1) <sup>あした</sup>明日も<sup>あめ</sup>雨<sup>でしょう</sup>。  
Probably rain tomorrow too.
- (2) あなたは、<sup>がくせい</sup>学生さん<sup>でしょうか</sup>。  
Are (you) student?
- (3) これからどこへ<sup>い</sup>行くん<sup>でしょうか</sup>？  
Where (are you) going from here?

If you want to sound really, really polite, you can even add 「～でしょうか」 to the end of a 「～ます」 ending.

- (4) <sup>やす</sup>休ませてもらえます<sup>でしょうか</sup>。  
May I receive the favor of resting, possibly?

## Using 「でしょう」 and 「だろう」 to Express Strong Amount of Certainty (Casual)

The casual equivalent of 「でしょう」 is surprisingly enough 「<sup>だ</sup>だろう」. However, when you are speaking in a polite manner, the 「でしょう」 is enunciated flatly while in casual speech, it has a rising intonation and can be shortened to 「<sup>でしよ</sup>でしよ」. In addition, since people tend to be more assertive in casual situations, the casual version has a much stronger flavor often sounding more like, “See, I told you so!”

## Examples

- (1) あっ！<sup>ちこく</sup>遅刻しちゃう！  
Ah! We're going to be late!
- (2) だから、<sup>じかん</sup>時間がないって言った<sup>い</sup>でしょう！  
That's why I told you there was no time!
- (3) これから<sup>た</sup>食べに行く<sup>い</sup>くんでしょ。  
You're going to eat from now aren't you?
- (4) だったら？  
So what if I am?
- (5) <sup>そうじ</sup>掃除、<sup>てつだ</sup>手伝ってくれる<sup>い</sup>でしょう。  
You're going to help me clean, right?
- (6) え？そうなの？  
Huh? Is that so?

「だろう」 means essentially the same thing as 「でしょう」 except that it sounds more masculine and is used mostly by males.

- (A) アリスはどこだ？  
Where is Alice?
- (B) もう寝ている<sup>ね</sup>だろう。  
Probably sleeping already.
- (A) もう家<sup>いえ</sup>に帰る<sup>かえ</sup>んだらう。  
You're going home already, right?
- (B) そうよ。  
That's right.



## Expressing Amounts (だけ、のみ、しか、ばかり、すぎる、Amount+も、ほど、さ)

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Doesn't amount too much

### Expressing Various Degrees of Amounts

This lesson will cover various expressions used to express various degrees of amounts. For example, sentences like, "I *only* ate one," "That was *all* that was left," "There's *just* old people here," or "I ate *too much*" all indicate whether there's a lot or little of something. Most of these expressions are made with particles and not as separate words as you see in English.

### Indicating That's All There Is Using 「だけ」

The particle 「だけ」 is used to express that that's all there is. Just like the other particles we have already learned, it is directly attached to the end of whichever word that it applies to.

#### Examples

- (1) りんご**だけ**。  
Just apple(s) (and nothing else).
- (2) これとそれ**だけ**。  
Just that and this (and nothing else).

When one of the major particles we covered in the *Introduction to Particles, Particles Used with Verbs, and Noun-Related Particles* lessons are also applied to a word, these particles must come after 「だけ」. In fact, the ordering of multiple particles usually start from the most specific to the most general.

- (1) それ**だけは**、<sup>た</sup>食べないでください。  
Just don't eat that. (Anything else is assumed to be OK).
- (2) この<sup>うた</sup>歌**だけを**<sup>うた</sup>歌わなかった。  
Didn't sing just this song.
- (3) その人**だけが**<sup>す</sup>好きだったんだ。  
That person was the only person I liked.

The same goes for double particles. Again 「だけ」 must come first.

- (1) この<sup>はんばいき</sup>販売機**だけでは**、<sup>えんだま</sup>500円玉<sup>つか</sup>が**使えない**。  
Cannot use 500 yen coin in just this vending machine.

With minor particles such as 「から」 or 「まで」, it is difficult to tell which should come first. When in doubt, try googling to see the level of popularity of each combination. It turns out that 「からだけ」 is almost twice as popular as 「だけから」 with a hit number of 90,000 vs. 50,000.

- (1) <sup>こばやし</sup>小林さん<sup>へんじ</sup>から<sup>こ</sup>だけには、返事が来なかった。  
A reply has not come **from only** Kobayashi-san (topic + target).

Unlike some particles, you can directly attach 「だけ」 to verbs as well.

- (1) <sup>じゆんび</sup>準備が<sup>お</sup>終わったから、これからは<sup>た</sup>食べる<sup>だけ</sup>だ。  
Since the preparations are done, from here we just have to eat.
- (2) <sup>なまえ</sup>ここに名前を<sup>か</sup>書く<sup>だけ</sup>でいいですか？  
Is it OK to just write [my] name here?

## Using 「のみ」 as a Formal Version of 「だけ」

A particle that is essentially identical both grammatically and in meaning to 「だけ」 is 「のみ」. However, unlike 「だけ」, which is used in regular conversations, 「のみ」 is usually only used in a written context. It is often used for explaining policies, in manuals, and other things of that nature. This grammar really belongs in the advanced section since formal language has a different flavor and tone from what we have seen so far. However, it is covered here because it is essentially identical to 「だけ」. Just googling for 「のみ」 will quickly show the difference in the type of language that is used with 「のみ」 as opposed to 「だけ」.

- (1) <sup>じょうしゃけん</sup>この乗車券は<sup>はつばいとうじつ</sup>発売当日<sup>ゆうこう</sup>のみ有効です。  
This boarding ticket is **only** valid on the date on which it was purchased.
- (2) アンケート<sup>たいしょう</sup>対象は<sup>だいがくせい</sup>大学生のみです。  
The targets of this survey are **only** college students.

## Indication That There's Nothing Else Using 「しか」

I carefully phrased the title of this section to show that 「しか」 must be used to indicate the *lack* of everything else. In other words, the rest of the sentence must always be negative.

- (1) これ<sup>しか</sup>ない。  
There's nothing but this.

The following is wrong.

- (誤) これ<sup>しか</sup>ある。  
Wrong, wrong, wrong.

As you can see, 「しか」 has an embedded negative meaning while 「だけ」 doesn't have any particular nuance.

- (1) これ<sup>だけ</sup>見る。  
See just this.
- (2) これ<sup>だけ</sup>見ない。  
Don't see just this.

- (3) これ<sup>み</sup>しか見ない。  
Don't see anything else but this.

## Examples

Let's see some example sentences.

- (1) 今日<sup>きょう</sup>は忙<sup>いそが</sup>しくて、朝<sup>あさ</sup>ご飯<sup>はん</sup>しか<sup>た</sup>食べられなかった。  
Today was busy and couldn't eat anything but breakfast.

Notice that unlike 「だけ」, it is necessary to finish off the sentence.

- (質問) <sup>しつもん</sup> 全部<sup>ぜんぶ</sup>買<sup>か</sup>うの？

You're buying everything?

- (1) ううん、これだけ。  
Nah, just this.
- (2) ううん、これしか<sup>か</sup>買<sup>か</sup>わない。  
Nah, won't buy anything else but this.
- (誤) <sup>ご</sup> ううん、これしか。  
*Wrong, the sentence must explicitly indicate the negative.*

While the major particles always come last, it turns out that 「しか」 must come after 「から」 and 「まで」. A google search of 「からしか」 beats 「しかから」 by an overwhelming 60,000 to 600.

- (1) アリス<sup>な</sup>からしか<sup>なに</sup>何ももらってない。  
I didn't receive anything except from Alice.

You can also use this grammar with verbs.

- (1) これから<sup>がんば</sup>頑張<sup>か</sup>るしかない！  
There's nothing to do but try our best!
- (2) こうなったら、<sup>に</sup>逃<sup>に</sup>げるしかない。  
There no choice but to run away once it turns out like this.
- (3) もう腐<sup>くさ</sup>っているから、<sup>す</sup>捨<sup>す</sup>てるしかないよ。  
It's rotten already so there's nothing to do but throw it out.

### 「つきや」, **an Alternative to** 「しか」

「つきや」 is another version of 「しか」 that means essentially the same thing and works exactly the same way. Just substitute 「しか」 with 「つきや」 and you're good to go. This version is a bit stronger than 「しか」 in emphasis but it's not used nearly as often so I wouldn't worry about it too much. I briefly cover it here just in case you do run into this expression.

## Examples

- (1) これは買うっきやない！  
There's nothing but to buy this!
- (2) こうなったら、もうやるっきやない！  
If things turn out like this, there nothing to do but to just do it!

## Expressing the Opposite of 「だけ」 with 「ばかり」

「ばかり」 is used to express the condition where there's so much of something to the point where there's nothing else. Notice this is fundamentally different from 「しか」 which expresses a *lack* of everything else but the item in question. In more casual situations, 「ばかり」 is usually pronounced 「ばかり」 or just 「ばかり」. For example, let's say you went to a party to find, much to your dismay, the whole room filled with middle-aged women. You might say the following.

- (1) <sup>なに</sup>何だよ！おばさんばかりじゃないか？  
What the? Isn't it nothing but obasan?

Or perhaps a little more girly:

- (2) いやだ。おばさんばかり。  
Eww. It's nothing but obasan.

## Examples

Let's look at some more examples.

- (1) <sup>たかしくん</sup>崇君は<sup>まんが</sup>漫画ばかり<sup>よ</sup>読んでてさ。<sup>わる</sup>かっこ悪い。  
Takashi-kun is reading nothing but comic books... He's so uncool.

It is quite common in casual speech to end mid-sentence like this. Notice 「読んでて」 is the te-form of 「<sup>よ</sup>読んでいる」 with the 「い」 dropped. We assume that the conclusion will come somewhere later in the story.

- (2) <sup>かれ</sup>彼は<sup>まあじゃん</sup>麻雀ばかりです。  
He's nothing but mahjong. (He does nothing but play mahjong.)
- (3) <sup>なおみ</sup>直美ちゃんと<sup>あそ</sup>遊ぶばかりでしょう！  
You're hanging out with Naomi-chan all the time, aren't you!
- (4) <sup>さいきん</sup>最近<sup>しごと</sup>は仕事ばかりだよ。  
Lately, it's nothing but work.

## Saying There's Too Much of Something Using 「すぎる」

「すぎる」 is a regular ru-verb written 「<sup>す</sup>過ぎる」 meaning, "to exceed." However, much like 「～てほしい」 you can modify the meaning of other verbs and adjectives. When 「すぎる」 is

attached to the end of other verbs and adjectives, it means that it is too much or that it has exceeded the normal levels. For verbs, you must directly attach 「すぎる」 to the stem of the verb. For example, to eat too much would become 「食べすぎる」 and to drink too much would become 「飲みすぎる」. For adjectives, you just attach it to the end after you remove the last 「い」 from the i-adjectives (as usual). One more rule is that for both negative verbs and adjectives, one must remove the 「い」 from 「ない」 and replace with 「さ」 before attaching 「すぎる」. There is no tense (past or non-past) associated with this grammar. Since 「すぎる」 is a regular ru-verb, use of this grammar results in a regular ru-verb.

### Using 「すぎる」 to indicate there's too much of something

- 1. For verbs, first change the verb to the stem<sup>13</sup> and attach 「すぎる」.
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>食べ<sup>た</sup>る → <sup>た</sup>食べ<sup>すぎる</sup>
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>太<sup>ふと</sup>る → <sup>ふと</sup>太<sup>り</sup> → <sup>ふと</sup>太<sup>り</sup>すぎる
- 2. For na-adjectives, simply attach 「すぎる」. For i-adjectives, remove the last 「い」 first before attaching 「すぎる」.
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>静<sup>しず</sup>か → <sup>しず</sup>静<sup>か</sup>すぎる
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>大<sup>おお</sup>き<sup>い</sup> → <sup>おお</sup>大<sup>き</sup>すぎる
- 3. For negative verbs and adjectives, replace the last 「い」 from 「ない」 with 「さ」 and then attach 「すぎる」
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>食べ<sup>た</sup>な<sup>な</sup>い → <sup>た</sup>食べ<sup>な</sup>さ → <sup>た</sup>食べ<sup>な</sup>さ<sup>すぎる</sup>
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>面白<sup>おもしろ</sup>くな<sup>な</sup>い → <sup>おもしろ</sup>面白<sup>く</sup>な<sup>な</sup>さ → <sup>おもしろ</sup>面白<sup>く</sup>な<sup>な</sup>さ<sup>すぎる</sup>
- **Note:** I-adjectives that end in 「ない」 which incorporate the negative 「無い」 such as 「もったいない」 (勿体<sup>もった</sup>無<sup>な</sup>い) or 「なさけない」 (情<sup>なさ</sup>け無<sup>な</sup>い) follow the third rule.
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>も<sup>も</sup>った<sup>な</sup>いな<sup>な</sup>い → <sup>も</sup>も<sup>た</sup>いな<sup>な</sup>さ → <sup>も</sup>も<sup>た</sup>いな<sup>な</sup>さ<sup>すぎる</sup>
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>情<sup>なさ</sup>け<sup>な</sup>いな<sup>な</sup>い → <sup>なさ</sup>情<sup>け</sup>な<sup>な</sup>さ → <sup>なさ</sup>情<sup>け</sup>な<sup>な</sup>さ<sup>すぎる</sup>
- Most regular i-adjectives such as 「危ない」 or 「少ない」 follow the regular rule (rule 2).
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>危<sup>あぶ</sup>な<sup>な</sup>い → <sup>あぶ</sup>危<sup>な</sup>さ<sup>すぎる</sup>
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>少<sup>すく</sup>な<sup>な</sup>い → <sup>すく</sup>少<sup>な</sup>さ<sup>すぎる</sup>

### Examples

- (1) <sup>さとう</sup>佐藤さんは<sup>りょうり</sup>料理が<sup>じょうず</sup>上手で、また<sup>た</sup>食べ<sup>す</sup>過ぎました。  
Satou-san is good at cooking and I ate too much again.
- (2) <sup>さけ</sup>お酒を<sup>の</sup>飲み<sup>すぎ</sup>ない<sup>き</sup>ように<sup>き</sup>気をつけてね。  
Be careful to not drink too much, OK?

<sup>13</sup> See the “The Stem of Verbs” heading in the *Speaking Politely and Verb Stems* lesson.

- (3) <sup>おお</sup>大きすぎるからトランクに<sup>はい</sup>入らないぞ。  
It won't fit in the trunk cause it's too big, man.
- (4) <sup>しず</sup>静かすぎる。罠<sup>わな</sup>かもしれないよ。  
It's too quiet. It might be a trap, you know.
- (5) <sup>じかん</sup>時間が<sup>た</sup>足りなさすぎて、<sup>なに</sup>何もできなかった。  
Due to too much of a lack of time, I couldn't do anything.
- (6) <sup>かれ</sup>彼には、<sup>かのじょ</sup>彼女が<sup>もったいなさ</sup>すぎるよ。  
She is totally wasted on him (too good for him).

It is also common to change 「すぎる」 into its stem<sup>14</sup> and use it as a noun.

- (A さん) <sup>さくばん</sup> 昨晚のこと、<sup>ぜんぜんおぼ</sup>全然覚えてないな。  
Man, I don't remember anything about last night.
- (B さん) それは<sup>の</sup>飲みすぎだよ。  
That's drinking too much.

## Adding the 「も」 Particle to Express Excessive Amounts

When the 「も」 particle comes after some type of amount, it means that the amount indicated is way too much. For instance, let's look at the next example.

- (1) <sup>きのう</sup> 昨日、<sup>でんわ</sup> 電話<sup>さんかい</sup> 三回もしたよ！  
I called you like three times yesterday!

Notice that the 「も」 particle is attached to the amount “three times.” This sentence implies that the speaker called even three times and still the person didn't pick up the phone. We understand this to mean that three times are a lot of times to call someone.

- (2) <sup>しけん</sup> 試験のために<sup>さんじかん</sup> 三時間も<sup>べんきょう</sup> 勉強した。  
I studied three whole hours for the exam.
- (3) <sup>ことし</sup> 今年、<sup>じゅう</sup> 十<sup>ふと</sup>キロも太っちゃった！  
I gained 10 whole kilograms this year!

## Using 「ほど」 to Express the Extent of Something

The noun 「ほど」 (程) is attached to a word in a sentence to express the extent of something. It can modify nouns as well as verbs as seen in the next example.

- (1) <sup>きょう</sup> 今日<sup>てんき</sup> の天気はそれ<sup>さむ</sup> ほど寒くない。  
Today's weather is not cold to that extent.

<sup>14</sup> See the “The Stem of Verbs” heading in the *Speaking Politely and Verb Stems* lesson.

- (2) <sup>ね</sup>寝る時間がない<sup>じかん</sup>ほど<sup>いそが</sup>忙しい。  
 Busy to the extent that there's no time to sleep.

When you use this with conditionals, you can express something that translates into English as, “The more you [verb], the more....” The grammar is always formed in the following sequence: [conditional of verb] followed immediately by [same verb+ ほど]

- (1) <sup>かんこくりょうり</sup>韓国料理は<sup>た</sup>食べれば<sup>た</sup>食べるほど、おいしくなる。  
 About Korean food, the more you eat the tastier it becomes.

The literal translation is, “About Korean food, if you eat, to the extent that you eat, it becomes tasty.” which essentially means the same thing. The example uses the 「ば」 conditional form,<sup>15</sup> but the 「たら」 conditional<sup>16</sup> will work as well. Since this is a general statement, the contextual 「なら」 conditional<sup>17</sup> will never work. The decided 「と」 conditional<sup>18</sup> won't work very well here either since it may not always be true depending on the extent of the action.

- (1) <sup>ある</sup>歩いたら<sup>ある</sup>歩くほど、<sup>まよ</sup>迷ってしまった。  
 The more I walked, the more I got lost.
- (2) <sup>べんきょう</sup>勉強を<sup>あたま</sup>すればするほど、頭がよくなるよ。  
 The more you study, the more you will become smarter.

You can also use this grammar with i-adjectives by using the 「ば」 conditional.

- (1) iPod は、ハードディスクの<sup>ようりょう</sup>容量が<sup>おお</sup>大きければ<sup>おお</sup>大きいほど<sup>きよく</sup>もっとたくさんの曲  
<sup>ほぞん</sup>が保存できます。  
 About iPod, the larger the hard disk capacity, the more songs you can save.
- (2) <sup>こうくうけん</sup>航空券は<sup>やす</sup>安ければ<sup>やす</sup>安いほど<sup>かぎ</sup>いいとは限らない。  
 It's not necessarily the case that the cheaper the ticket, the better it is.

For na-adjectives, since you can't use the 「ば」 conditional you have to resort to the 「なら」 conditional.<sup>19</sup> Because it sounds strange to use the 「なら」 conditional in this fashion, you will hardly ever see this grammar used with na-adjectives. Since 「ほど」 is treated as a noun, make sure you don't forget to use 「な」 to attach the noun to the na-adjective.

- (1) <sup>ぶんしょう</sup>文章は、<sup>みじか</sup>短ければ<sup>みじか</sup>短いほど、<sup>かんたん</sup>簡単なら<sup>かんたん</sup>簡単なほどよいです。  
 The shorter and simpler the sentences, the better it is.

## Using 「～さ」 with Adjectives to Indicate an Amount

We will now learn how to add 「さ」 to adjectives to indicate an amount of that adjective. For example, we can attach 「さ」 to the adjective for “high” in order to get “height.” Instead of looking at the height, we can even attach 「さ」 to the adjective for “low” to focus on the amount of

15 See the “General Conditionals Using 「ば」” heading in the *Conditionals* lesson.

16 See the “Past Conditional Using 「たら (ば)」” heading in the *Conditionals* lesson.

17 See the “Contextual Conditionals Using 「なら (ば)」” heading in the *Conditionals* lesson.

18 See the “Expressing Natural Consequence Using 「と」” heading in the *Conditionals* lesson.

19 See the “Contextual Conditionals Using 「なら (ば)」” heading in the *Conditionals* lesson.

lowness as opposed to the amount of highness. In fact, there is nothing to stop us from using this with any adjective to indicate an amount of that adjective. The result becomes a regular noun indicating the amount of that adjective.

### Adding 「～さ」 to adjectives to indicate an amount

- For *i*-adjectives: First remove the trailing 「い」 from the *i*-adjective and then attach 「さ」
  - 例) <sup>たか</sup>高い → <sup>たか</sup>高さ
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>低い → <sup>れい</sup>低さ
- For *na*-adjectives: Just attach 「さ」 to the end of the *na*-adjective
  - 例) <sup>おだ</sup>穏やか → <sup>おだ</sup>穏やかさ
- The result becomes a regular noun.

### Examples

(1) このビルの<sup>たか</sup>高さは何ですか？  
What is the height of this building?

(2) <sup>いぬ</sup>犬の<sup>ちょうかく</sup>聴覚の<sup>びんかん</sup>敏感さを<sup>にんげん</sup>人間と<sup>くら</sup>比べると、はるかに<sup>かみ</sup>上だ。  
If you compare the level of sensitivity of hearing of dogs to humans, it is far above.



## Various Ways to Express Similarity and Hearsay (よう、～みたい、～そう、～そうだ、～らしい、～っぽい)

*Like, I like anyone that looks like the likes of you*

In Japanese there are many different ways to express likeness or similarity depending on appearance, behavior, or outcome. When learning these expressions for the first time, it is difficult to understand what the differences are between them because they all translate to the same thing in English. This lesson is designed to study the differences between these expressions so that you can start to get a sense of which is appropriate for what you want to say.

### Expressing Similarity with よう (様)

We've already briefly gone over 「よう」 here.<sup>20</sup> We learned that 「よう」 means an appearance or manner. We can use this definition to say that something has an appearance or manner of a certain state. This word can be used in many ways to express similarity. The simplest example is by directly modifying the subordinate clause. When the sentence ends in 「よう」, you must explicitly express the state of being by adding 「だ」, 「です」, or 「でございます」.

(1) ここには、誰もいないようだ。  
Looks like no one is here.

(2) 映画を観たようです。  
Looks like [he] watched the movie.

When directly modifying nouns or na-adjectives, you must use the 「の」 particle for nouns or attach 「な」 to na-adjectives.

(3) 学生のようだ。  
Looks like it's a student.

(4) ここは静かなようだ。  
Looks like it's quiet.

Notice that (3) does not say that the person looks like a student. Rather, the explicit state of being states that the person appears to be a student. On a side note, you can't say 「おいしいようだ」 to say that something looks tasty. This is like saying, "This dish apparently is tasty," which can actually be kind of rude.

You can also use it as a na-adjective to describe something that appears to be something else.

(5) あの人を見たような気がした。  
Had a feeling like I saw that person before.

(6) 彼は学生のようないきずです。  
He has a student-like atmosphere.

<sup>20</sup> See the "Using 「なる」 and 「する」 With Verbs" heading in the Using する and なる With the に Particle lesson.

Finally, we can attach the target particle to say things like, “I heard it like that” or “I said it like...”

- (7) ちよつと怒つたように聞こえた。  
Was able to hear it like (she) was a little mad.
- (8) 何も起こらなかったように言った。  
Said (it) like nothing happened.

## Using 「みたい」 to Say Something Looks Like Something Else

Another way to express similarity which is considered more casual is by using 「みたい」. Do not confuse this with the 「たい」 conjugation<sup>21</sup> of 「見る」. The main difference is that this 「みたい」 can be attached directly to nouns, adjectives, and verbs just like particles which i-adjectives like 「～たい」 obviously can't do. In addition, 「みたい」 conjugates like a noun or na-adjective.

### Using 「みたい」 to say something looks like something else

Attach 「みたい」 to the noun that bears the resemblance. 「みたい」 conjugates like a noun or na-adjective and not an i-adjective.

#### Conjugation Example with 「犬」

	Positive		Negative	
Non-Past	犬みたい	Looks like a dog	犬みたいじゃない	Doesn't look like a dog
Past	犬みたいだった	Looked like a dog	犬みたいじゃなかった	Didn't look like a dog

## Examples

- (1) もう売り切れみたい。  
Looks like it's sold out already.
- (2) 制服を着ている姿を見ると、学生みたいです。  
Looking at the uniform-wearing figure, (person) looks like a student.

The implied meaning here is the person wearing the uniform is not really a student because he/she only looks like a student. This is different from (3) of the previous 「よう」 section which implied that the person appears to be (but might not be) a student. Again, we also can't say 「おいしいみたい」 to say that something looks tasty because it implies that, in actuality, the food might not be so good. Similarly, you would never say 「かわいいみたい」 to say that something looks cute.

Don't forget that 「みたい」 does not conjugate like the 「～たい」 form or i-adjectives.

<sup>21</sup> See the “Verbs You Want to Do With 「たい」” heading in the *Desire and Suggestions* lesson.

(誤) このピザはお好み焼きみたいくない？  
みたい conjugates like a na-adjective.

(3) このピザはお好み焼きみたいじゃない？  
Doesn't this pizza looks like okonomiyaki?

Though you probably won't use it very often, here are examples of the past and past-negative.

(4) 喫茶店に行くみたいだった。  
It looked like (we) were going to a coffee shop.

(5) 秘密を教えてくださいみたいじゃなかった？  
It didn't look like (she) was going to tell the secret?

「みたい」 is really a grammar only used in conversation. Do not use it in essays, articles, anything that needs to sound authoritative. You can use 「よう」 instead in the following fashion.

(6) もう売り切れのようだ。  
It appears that it is sold-out already.

(7) このピザはお好み焼きのように見える。  
This pizza looks like okonomiyaki.

## Guessing at an Outcome Using 「～そう」

The problem with English is that the expression, “seems like” has too many meanings. It can mean similarity in appearance, similarity in behavior or even that current evidence points to a likely outcome. We will now learn how to say the third meaning; how to indicate a likely outcome given the situation.

Just like the grammar we have learned so far in this lesson, we can use this grammar by simply attaching 「そう」 to the end of verbs, and adjectives. However, there are four important different cases. Actually, I just noticed this but the conjugation rules are exactly the same as the 「～すぎる」 grammar<sup>22</sup> we learned in the last section. The only difference is that for the adjective 「いい」, you need to change it to 「よさ」 before attaching 「そう」 to create 「よさそう」.

### Rules for conjugation

1. Verbs must be changed to the stem.<sup>23</sup>
2. The 「い」 in i-adjectives must be dropped except for 「いい」.
  1. 「いい」 must first be conjugated to 「よさ」
3. For all negative tenses, the 「い」 must be replaced with 「き」.
4. This grammar does not work with plain nouns.

<sup>22</sup> See the “Saying There's Too Much of Something Using 「すぎる」” heading in the *Expressing Amounts* lesson.

<sup>23</sup> See the “The Stem of Verbs” heading in the *Polite Form and Verb Stems* lesson.

## 1. Verb Must be Changed to the Stem.

For ru-verbs, remove the 「る」

- (1) バランスが崩れて、一瞬倒れそうだった。  
Losing my balance, I seemed likely to fall for a moment.

For u-verbs, change the / u / vowel sound to an / i / vowel sound

- (2) この辺りにありそうだけどな。  
It seems likely that it would be around here but....

## 2. The 「い」 in i-Adjectives Must be Dropped.

In the next example, the 「い」 has been dropped from 「おいしい」.

- (1) この漬物はおいしそう！  
I bet this pickled vegetable is tasty! (This pickled vegetable looks good!)

### 2.1 Exception

The only exception to this rule is the adjective 「いい」. When using this grammar with 「いい」, you must first change it to 「よさ」.

- (2) これも結構よさそうだけど、やっぱり高いよね。  
This one also seems to be good but, as expected, it's expensive, huh?

Nothing needs to be done for na-adjectives.

- (3) お前なら、金髪の女が好きそうだな。  
Knowing you, I bet you like blond-haired girls.

## 3. For All Negative Tenses, the 「い」 Must Be Replaced with 「さ」.

The negative of 「来る」 is 「こない」 so when used with 「～そう」, it becomes 「こなさそう」.

- (1) もう10時になったから、来なさそうだね。  
Since it already became 10:00, it's likely that (person) won't come.
- (2) これはただの試合じゃなさそうだ。  
This isn't likely to be an ordinary match.

Identical to the 「～すぎる」 grammar,<sup>24</sup> i-adjectives that are derived from the negative 「～ない」 like 「もったいない」 or 「情けない」 also follow this rule as well (which would be 「もったいなさそう」 and 「情けなさそう」 in this case).

<sup>24</sup> See the “Saying There's Too Much of Something Using 「すぎる」” heading in the *Expressing Amounts* lesson.

#### 4. This Grammar Does Not Work with Plain Nouns.

(誤) その人は学生~~そう~~。

There are other grammars<sup>25</sup> we have already covered that can be used to indicate that something is likely to be something else.

(1) その人は学生~~で~~しょう。  
That person is probably student.

(2) その人は学生~~だ~~ろう。  
That person is probably student.

Be careful never to use 「かわいい」 with this grammar. 「かわいそう」 is a completely different word used when you feel sorry for something or someone. 「かわいい」 means, “to look cute” already so you never need to use any of the grammar in this lesson to say something looks cute.

(1) この犬はかわい~~そう~~。  
Oh, this poor dog.

(2) この犬はかわい~~い~~。  
This dog is cute.

#### Expressing Hearsay Using 「～そうだ」

The reason that there are so many annoying rules to using 「～そう」 is to distinguish it from this next grammar we will learn. This is a useful grammar for talking about things you heard that doesn't necessary have anything to do with how you yourself, think or feel. Unlike the last grammar we learned, you can simply attach 「そうだ」 to verbs and i-adjectives. For na-adjectives and nouns, you must indicated the state of being by adding 「だ」 to the noun/na-adjective. Also, notice that 「そう」 itself must always end in 「だ」、「です」、or 「でございます」。These differences are what distinguishes this grammar from the one we learned in the last section. There are no tenses for this grammar.

(1) 明日、雨が降る~~そう~~だ。  
I hear that it's going to rain tomorrow.

(2) 毎日会いに行った~~そう~~です。  
I heard he went to meet everyday.

Don't forget to add 「だ」 for nouns or na-adjectives.

(3) 彼は、高校生~~だ~~そうです。  
I hear that he is a high school student.

When starting the sentence with this grammar, you also need to add 「だ」 just like you do with 「だから」.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> See the *Expressing Various Levels of Certainty* lesson.

<sup>26</sup> See the “Expressing Reason or Causation Using 「から」 and 「ので」” heading in the *Compound Sentences* lesson.

- (1) 今日、田中さんはこないの？  
Is Tanaka-san not coming today?
- (2) **だそうです。**  
So I hear.

## Expressing Hearsay or Behavior Using 「～らしい」

「らしい」 can be directly attached to nouns, adjectives, or verbs to show that things appear to be a certain way due to what you've heard. This is different from 「～そうだ」 because 「～そうだ」 indicates something you heard about specifically while 「らしい」 means things seem to be a certain way based on some things you heard about the subject. 「らしい」 conjugates like a normal i-adjective.

- (A) 今日、田中さんはこないの？  
Is Tanaka-san not coming today?
- (B) **こないらしい。**  
Seems like it (based on what I heard).
- (A) あの人は何なの？  
What is that person over there?
- (B) 美由紀さんの友達**らしい**ですよ。  
Seems to be Miyuki-san's friend (based on what I heard).

Another way to use 「らしい」 is to indicate that a person seems to be a certain thing due to his behavior.

- (1) あの子は子供**らしくない**。  
That child does not act like a child.
- (2) 大人**らしく**するつもりだったのに、大騒ぎしてしまった。  
Despite the fact that I planned to act like an adult, I ended up making a big ruckus.

## 「っぽい」 : Slang Expression of Similarity

A really casual way to express similarity is to attach 「っぽい」 to the word that reflects the resemblance. Because this is a very casual expression, you can use it as a casual version for all the different types of expression for similarity covered above.

「っぽい」 conjugates just like an i-adjective, as seen by example (3) below.

- (1) あの人はちょっと**韓国人っぽい**よね。  
That person looks like a Korean person, huh?
- (2) みんなで、もう**全部**食べてしまった**っぽい**よ。  
It appears that everybody ate everything already.

(3) きょうこ ぜんぜんおんな  
恭子は全然女っぽくないね。  
Kyouko is not womanly at all, huh?

# Using <sup>ほう</sup>方 and よる for Comparisons and Other Functions (より、<sup>ほう</sup>の方、<sup>ほう</sup>Stem+方、<sup>ほう</sup>によって、<sup>ほう</sup>によると)

Compare and Contrast

## Various Uses of 「<sup>ほう</sup>方」 and 「よる」

If you were wondering how to make comparison in Japanese, well wonder no more. We will learn how to use 「<sup>ほう</sup>方」 and 「より」 to make comparisons between two things. We will also learn other uses of 「<sup>ほう</sup>方」 and 「よる」 along the way.

## Using 「<sup>ほう</sup>方」 for Comparisons

The noun 「<sup>ほう</sup>方」 is read as 「ほう」 when it is used to mean a direction or orientation. It can also be read as 「かた」 when it is used as a politer version of 「<sup>ひと</sup>人」. But that's neither here nor there. When we use 「<sup>ほう</sup>方」 to mean direction, we can use it for comparison by saying one way of things is better, worse, etc., than the other way. Grammatically, it works just like any other regular nouns.

## Examples

Use it with nouns by utilizing the 「の」 particle.

- (1) <sup>はん</sup>ご飯<sup>ほう</sup>の方がおいしい。  
Rice is tastier. (lit: The way of rice is tasty.)
- (2) <sup>すずき</sup>鈴木さん<sup>ほう</sup>の方が<sup>わか</sup>若い。  
Suzuki-san is younger. (lit: The way of Suzuki is young.)

Grammatically, it's no different from a regular noun.

- (3) <sup>がくせい</sup>学生<sup>ほう</sup>じゃない方が<sup>いい</sup>いいよ。  
It's better to not be a student. (lit: The way of not being student is good.)
- (4) <sup>あか</sup>赤ちゃんは、<sup>しず</sup>静かな<sup>ほう</sup>方が<sup>す</sup>好き。  
Like quiet babies more. (lit: About babies, the quiet way is desirable.)

The tricky part of making comparisons with verb is the use of tenses. For absolutely no reason, non-negative verbs must always be past tense.

- (5) ゆっくり<sup>た</sup>食べた<sup>ほう</sup>方が<sup>けんこう</sup>健康にいいよ。  
It's better for your health to eat slowly.



- (6) こちらから行った方が早かった。  
It was faster to go from this way.

The same thing does not apply for negative verbs.

- (7) マトリックス・レボリューションを観ない方がいいよ。  
It's better not to watch *Matrix Revolution*.

The negative verb is only in the past tense when the comparison is of something that happened in the past.

- (8) そんなに飲まなかった方がよかった。  
It was better not to have drunk that much.

## Using 「より」 for Comparisons

You can think of 「より」 as being the opposite of 「方」. It means, “rather than” or “as opposed to.” It attaches directly to the back of any word. It is usually used in conjunction with 「方」 to say something like, “This way is better as opposed to that way.”

### Examples

- (1) 花より団子。  
Dango rather than flowers. (This is a very famous proverb.)
- (2) ご飯の方が、パンよりおいしい。  
Rice tastes better than bread. (lit: The rice way is tasty as opposed to bread.)
- (3) キムさんより鈴木さんの方が若い。  
Suzuki-san is younger than Kim-san. (lit: The way of Suzuki is young as opposed to Kim-san.)

For those curious about the meaning of the proverb, dango is a sweet doughy treat usually sold at festivals. The proverb is saying that people prefer this treat to watching the flowers, referring to the 「花見」 event where people go out to see the cherry blossoms (and get smashed). The deeper meaning of the proverb, like all good proverbs, depends on how you apply it.

Of course, there is no rule that 「より」 must be used with 「方」. The other way of things can be gleaned from context.

- (鈴木) 毎日仕事に行くのが嫌だ。  
I don't like going to work everyday.
- (スミス) 仕事がないよりむしろよ。  
It's not as bad as opposed to not having a job.

Words associated with 「より」 do not need any tense. Notice in the following sentence that 「<sup>た</sup>食べる」 in front of 「より」 is present tense even though 「<sup>た</sup>食べる」 in front of 「<sup>ほう</sup>方」 is past tense.

- (1) ゆっくり<sup>た</sup>食べた<sup>ほう</sup>方が早く<sup>はや</sup>食べる<sup>た</sup>よりいい。  
It is better to eat slowly as opposed to eating quickly.

### Using 「より」 as a Superlative

You can also use 「より」 with question words such as 「<sup>だれ</sup>誰」、 「<sup>なに</sup>何」、 or 「どこ」 to make a superlative by comparing with everything or everybody else. In this case, though not required, it is common to include the 「も」 particle.

### Examples

- (1) <sup>しょうひん</sup>商品の<sup>ひんしつ</sup>品質を<sup>なに</sup>何より<sup>たいせつ</sup>大切にしています。  
We place value in product's quality over anything else.
- (2) この<sup>しごと</sup>仕事は<sup>だれ</sup>誰よりも<sup>はや</sup>早くできます。  
Can do this job more quickly than anyone else.

### Using 「<sup>かた</sup>方」 to Express a Way to Do Something

You can also attach 「<sup>かた</sup>方」 to the stem of verbs to express a way to do that verb. In this usage, 「<sup>かた</sup>方」 is read as 「<sup>かた</sup>かた」 and the result becomes a noun. For example, 「<sup>い</sup>行き<sup>かた</sup>方」 (いきかた) means, “the way to go” or 「<sup>た</sup>食べ<sup>かた</sup>方」 (たべかた) means, “the way to eat.” This expression is probably what you want to use when you want to ask how to do something.

### Examples

- (1) <sup>しんじゅく</sup>新宿の<sup>い</sup>行き<sup>かた</sup>方は<sup>わ</sup>わかりますか。  
Do you know the way to go to Shinjuku?
- (2) そうい<sup>た</sup>う<sup>かた</sup>食べ<sup>かた</sup>方は<sup>からだ</sup>体によくないよ。  
Eating in that way is not good for your body.
- (3) <sup>かんじ</sup>漢字の<sup>か</sup>書き<sup>かた</sup>方を<sup>おし</sup>教えてくださいか？  
Can you teach me the way of writing kanji?
- (4) パソコンの<sup>つか</sup>使<sup>かた</sup>いは、<sup>し</sup>みんな知<sup>し</sup>っているでしょう。  
Probably everybody knows the way to use PC's.

When verbs are transformed to this form, the result becomes a noun clause. Sometimes, this requires a change of particles. For instance, while 「行く」 usually involves a target (the 「に」 or 「へ」 particle), since 「行き方」 is a noun clause, (1) becomes 「新宿の行き方」 instead of the familiar 「新宿に行く」.

## Using 「によって」 to Express Dependency

When you want to say, “depending on [X],” you can do this in Japanese by simply attaching 「によって」 to [X].

### Examples

- (1) <sup>ひと</sup>人<sup>はなし</sup>によって<sup>ちが</sup>話が<sup>ちが</sup>違う。  
The story is different depending on the person.
- (2) <sup>きせつ</sup>季節<sup>くだもの</sup>によって<sup>い</sup>果物は<sup>い</sup>おいしく<sup>な</sup>なったり、<sup>あ</sup>まずく<sup>な</sup>なったりする。  
Fruit becomes tasty or nasty depending on the season.

This is simply the te-form<sup>27</sup> of 「よる」 as seen by the following simple exchange.

- (かずこ) <sup>きょう</sup>今日は<sup>の</sup>飲みに<sup>い</sup>行こうか？  
Shall we go drinking today?
- (だいき) <sup>ゆうこ</sup>それは、<sup>ゆうこ</sup>裕子<sup>に</sup>よる<sup>ね</sup>ね。  
That depends on Yuuko.

## Indicating a Source of Information Using 「によると」

Another expression using 「よる」 is by using it with the target and the decided conditional<sup>28</sup> 「と」 to indicate a source of information. In English, this would translate to “according to [X]” where 「によると」 is attached to [X].

### Examples

- (1) <sup>てんきよほう</sup>天気予報<sup>によ</sup>ると、<sup>きょう</sup>今日は<sup>あめ</sup>雨<sup>だ</sup>そう<sup>だ</sup>だ。  
According to the weather forecast, I hear today is rain.
- (2) <sup>ともだち</sup>友達の<sup>はなし</sup>話<sup>によ</sup>ると、<sup>ともこ</sup>朋子は<sup>み</sup>やっと<sup>み</sup>ボーイフレンド<sup>を</sup>見<sup>つ</sup>けたらしい。  
According to a friend's story, it appears that Tomoko finally found a boyfriend.

27 See the “Expressing a Sequence of Verbs With the te-Form” heading in the *Compound Sentences* lesson.

28 See the “Expressing Natural Consequence Using 「と」” heading in the *Conditionals* lesson.

# Saying Something is Easy or Difficult to Do (～やすい、～にくい)

Easy or Hard?

This is a short easy lesson on how to transform verbs into adjectives describing whether that action is easy or difficult to do. Basically, it consists of changing the verb into the stem and adding 「やすい」 for easy and 「にくい」 for hard. The result then becomes a regular i-adjective. Pretty easy, huh?

## Using 「～やすい、～にくい」 to describe easy and difficult actions

- To describe an action as being easy, change the verb to the stem<sup>29</sup> and add 「やすい」. To describe an action as being difficult, attach 「にくい」 to the stem.
  - 例) ru-verb: 食べる<sup>れい</sup> → 食べ<sup>た</sup>やすい
  - 例) u-verb: しゃべる<sup>れい</sup> → しゃべ<sup>た</sup>り → しゃべりにくい
- The result becomes a regular i-adjective.

	Positive	Negative
Non-Past	食べ <sup>た</sup> にくい	食べ <sup>た</sup> にくくない
Past	食べ <sup>た</sup> にくかった	食べ <sup>た</sup> にくくなかった

## Examples

- (1) この字は読み<sup>よ</sup>にくい。  
This hand-writing is hard to read.
- (2) カクテルはビールより飲み<sup>の</sup>やすい。  
Cocktails are easier to drink than beer.
- (3) 部屋<sup>へや</sup>が暗<sup>くら</sup>かったので、見<sup>み</sup>にくかった。  
Since the room was dark, it was hard to see.

As an aside: Be careful with 「見にくい」 because 「醜<sup>みにく</sup>い」 is a rarely used adjective meaning, “ugly.” I wonder if it’s just coincidence that “difficult to see” and “ugly” sound exactly the same?

Of course, you can always use some other grammatical structure that we have already learned to express the same thing using appropriate adjectives such as 「難<sup>むずか</sup>しい」、「易<sup>やさ</sup>しい」、「簡<sup>かんたん</sup>単」、「容<sup>よう</sup>易<sup>い</sup>」、etc. The following two sentences are essentially identical in meaning.

<sup>29</sup> See the “The Stem of Verbs” heading in the *Polite Form and Verb Stems* lesson.

- (1) あの肉は<sup>にく</sup>食べ<sup>た</sup>にくい。  
That meat is hard to eat.
- (2) あの肉を<sup>にく</sup>食べ<sup>た</sup>るのは<sup>むずか</sup>難しい。  
The thing of eating that meat is difficult.

## Variations of 「～にくい」 with 「～がたい」 and 「～づらい」

The kanji for 「にくい」 actually comes from 「難しい」 which can also be read as 「かたい」. As a result, you can also add a voiced version 「～がたい」 as a verb suffix to express the same thing as 「にくい」. 「にくい」 is more common for speaking while 「がたい」 is more suited for the written medium. 「にくい」 tends to be used for physical actions while 「がたい」 is usually reserved for less physical actions that don't actually require movement. However, there seems to be no hard rule on which is more appropriate for a given verb so I suggest searching for both versions in Google to ascertain the popularity of a given combination. You should also always write the suffix in hiragana to prevent ambiguities in the reading.

### Examples

- (1) 彼との<sup>かれ</sup>忘れ<sup>わす</sup>が<sup>おも</sup>たい<sup>で</sup>思い出を大切にしている。  
I am treating importantly the hard to forget memories of and with him.
- (2) とても<sup>しん</sup>信じ<sup>はなし</sup>が<sup>ほんとう</sup>たい<sup>お</sup>話だが、本当に起こったらしい。  
It's a very difficult to believe story but it seems (from hearsay) that it really happened.

Yet another, more coarse variation of stem + 「にくい」 is to use 「づらい」 instead which is a slightly transformed version of 「辛い」 (つらい). This is not to be confused with the the same 「辛<sup>から</sup>い」 (からい), which means spicy!

### Examples

- (1) 日本語は<sup>にほんご</sup>読<sup>よ</sup>みづ<sup>ら</sup>いな。  
Man, Japanese is hard to read.
- (2) 待ち合わせは、<sup>ま</sup>分<sup>あ</sup>かりづ<sup>ら</sup>い<sup>ばしょ</sup>場所にしないでね。  
Please don't pick a difficult to understand location for the meeting arrangement.

## More Negative Verbs (ないで、ず、～ん、ぬ)

*Just in case you didn't get enough the first time*

We already learned the most common type of negative verbs; the ones that end in 「ない」. However, there are couple more different types of negatives verbs. The ones you will find most useful are the first two, which expresses an action that was done without having done another action. The others are fairly obscure or useful only for very casual expressions. However, you will run into them if you learn Japanese for a fair amount of time.

### Doing Something without Doing Something Else

Way back when, we learned how to express a sequence of actions<sup>30</sup> and this worked fine for both positive and negative verbs. For instance, the sentence “I didn't eat, and then I went to sleep” would become 「<sup>た</sup>食べなくて<sup>ね</sup>寝た。」 However, this sentence sounds a bit strange because eating doesn't have much to do with sleeping. What we probably really want to say is that we went to sleep without eating. To express this, we need to use a more generalized form of the negative request we covered at the very end of the giving and receiving lesson.<sup>31</sup> In other words, instead of substituting the last 「い」 with 「くて」, we need only append 「で」 instead.

#### Doing something without doing something else

- To indicate an action that was done without doing another action, add 「で」 to the negative of the action that was *not* done.

○ 例) <sup>れい</sup>食べる → <sup>た</sup>食べない → <sup>た</sup>食べないで

#### Examples

- (1) <sup>なに</sup>何も<sup>た</sup>食べない<sup>ね</sup>で寝ました。  
Went to sleep without eating anything.
- (2) <sup>は</sup>歯を<sup>みが</sup>磨かない<sup>で</sup>、<sup>がっこう</sup>学校に<sup>い</sup>行っちゃいました。  
Went to school without brushing teeth (by accident).
- (3) <sup>しゅくだい</sup>宿題を<sup>し</sup>しない<sup>で</sup>、<sup>じゅぎょう</sup>授業に<sup>い</sup>行くのは、<sup>ほう</sup>やめた方がいいよ。  
It's better to stop going to class without doing homework.
- (4) <sup>せんせい</sup>先生と<sup>そうだん</sup>相談しない<sup>で</sup>、この<sup>じゅぎょう</sup>授業を<sup>と</sup>取るとは<sup>でき</sup>出来ない。  
You cannot take this class without consulting with teacher.

Hopefully not too difficult. Another way to express the exact same thing is to replace the last 「ない」 part with 「ず」. However, the two exception verbs 「する」 and 「くる」 become 「せず」 and 「こず」 respectively. It is also common to see this grammar combined with the target 「に」

30 See the “Expressing a Sequence of Verbs With the te-Form” heading in the *Compound Sentences* lesson.

31 See the “Asking Favors With 「くれる」 or 「もらえる」” heading in the *Giving and Receiving* lesson.

particle. This version is more formal than 「ないで」 and is not used as much in regular conversations.

### Doing something without doing something else (Alternate Form)

- Another way to indicate an action that was done without doing another action is to replace the 「ない」 part of the negative action that was not done with 「ず」.
  - 例) 食べる → 食べない → 食べず
  - 例) 行く → 行かない → 行かず
- The two exception verbs 「する」 and 「くる」 become 「せず」 and 「こず」 respectively.
  - 例外1) する → せず
  - 例外2) くる → こず

### Examples

- (1) 彼は何も言わず、帰ってしまった。  
He went home without saying anything.
- (2) 何も食べずにそんなにお酒を飲むと当然酔っ払いますよ。  
Obviously, you're going to get drunk if you drink that much without eating anything.
- (3) 勉強せずに東大に入れると思わないな。  
I don't think you can get in Tokyo University without studying.

### A Casual Masculine Type of Negative That Ends in 「ん」

Finally, we cover another type of negative that is used mostly by older men. Since 「ない」 is so long and difficult to say (sarcasm), you can shorten it to just 「ん」. However, you can't directly modify other words in this form; in other words, you can't make it a modifying subordinate clause.<sup>32</sup> In the same manner as before, 「する」 becomes 「せん」 and 「くる」 becomes 「こん」 though I've never heard or seen 「こん」 actually being used. If you have ever heard 「すまん」 and wondered what that meant, it's actually an example of this grammar. Notice that 「すみません」 is actually in polite negative form. Well, the plain form would be 「すまない」, right? That further transforms to just 「すまん」. The word brings up an image of おじさん but that may be just me. Anyway, it's a male expression.

<sup>32</sup> See the "Using Subordinate Verb Clauses as Adjectives" heading in the *Descriptive Subordinate Clauses and Sentence Order* lesson.

### A shorter way to say negative verbs

- A shorter way to say a negative verb is to use 「ん」 instead of 「ない」.
  - 例) 知<sup>し</sup>る → 知ら<sup>し</sup>ない → 知ら<sup>し</sup>ん
- The two exception verbs 「する」 and 「くる」 become 「せん」 and 「こん」 respectively.
  - 例外1) <sup>れいがい</sup>する → <sup>れいがい</sup>せん
  - 例外2) <sup>れいがい</sup>くる → <sup>れいがい</sup>こん

### Examples

(1) すまん。  
Sorry.

(2) <sup>かんこくじん</sup> 韓国人と<sup>けっこん</sup> 結婚しなくては<sup>ならん</sup>!  
You must marry a Korean!

(3) そんなことは<sup>させん</sup>!  
I won't let you do such a thing!

You can even use this slang for past tense verbs by adding 「かった」.

(4) <sup>みな</sup> 皆、<sup>きょう</sup> 今日<sup>い</sup> 行くって、<sup>し</sup> 知ら<sup>ん</sup> <sup>かった</sup> だよ。  
I didn't know everybody was going today.

### A Classical Negative Verb That Ends in 「ぬ」

There is yet another version of the negative verb conjugation and it uses 「ぬ」 instead of the 「ない」 that attaches to the end of the verb. While this version of the negative conjugation is old-fashioned and part of classical Japanese, you will still encounter it occasionally. In fact, I just saw this conjugation on a sign at the train station today, so it's not too uncommon.

For any verb, you can replace 「ない」 with 「ぬ」 to get to an old-fashion sounding version of the negative. Similar to the last section, 「する」 becomes 「せぬ」 and 「くる」 becomes 「こぬ」. You may hear this grammar being used from older people or your friends if they want to bring back ye olde days.



### An old-fashioned way to say negative verbs

- An old-fashioned way to say a negative verb is to use 「ぬ」 instead of 「ない」.
  - 例) 知る<sup>し</sup> → 知ら~~ない~~ → 知ら<sup>ぬ</sup>
- The two exception verbs 「する」 and 「くる」 become 「せぬ」 and 「こぬ」 respectively.
  - 例外1) <sup>れいがい</sup>する → <sup>れいがい</sup>せぬ
  - 例外2) <sup>れいがい</sup>くる → <sup>れいがい</sup>こぬ

### Examples

(1) <sup>かんこくじん</sup> 韓国人と <sup>けっこん</sup> 結婚しては <sup>ならぬ</sup> ならぬ!  
You must not marry a Korean!

(2) <sup>もぎ</sup> 模擬試験に <sup>なんかい</sup> 何回も <sup>しっぱい</sup> 失敗して、<sup>じっさい</sup> 実際 <sup>う</sup> に受けてみたら <sup>おも</sup> 思わぬ <sup>けっか</sup> 結果が <sup>で</sup> 出た。  
After having failed mock examination any number of times, a result I wouldn't have thought came out when I actually tried taking the test.

## Hypothesizing and Concluding (わけ、～とする)

### Some Things That Are Not Covered

As we near the end of section 5, we are essentially picking up different useful types of grammar here and there. In writing this section, I considered a large number of things that are on the border between vocabulary and grammar. In the end, I decided to leave everything out that can be looked up and easily learned with examples. Some examples of grammar that fall under this category are 「に たい かん について」. When you come across such grammar in the course of learning Japanese, you can look them up at the [WWWJDIC](http://wwwjdic.com)<sup>33</sup> and take a look at the example sentences. That's all you should need to get you started. In the meantime, I've decided to go over two types of grammar that deserve some explanation, 「わけ」 (わけ 訳) and 「とする」.

### Coming to a Conclusion with 「わけ」

The first type of grammar is, in actuality, just a regular noun. However, it is used to express a concept that deserves some explanation. The noun 「わけ」 (わけ 訳) is defined as: “meaning; reason; can be deduced.” You can see how this word is used in the following mini-dialogue.

#### Mini-Dialogue 1

- なおこ：  
直子： えいご べんきょう を 勉強 しても、うまくならないの。  
No matter how much I study, I don't become better at English.
- ジム：  
ジム： ごがく のうりよく が ない という わけ か。  
So basically, it **means** that you don't have ability at language.
- なおこ：  
直子： しつれい ね。  
How rude.

As you can see, Jim is concluding from what Naoko said that she must not have any skills at learning languages. This is completely different from the explanatory 「の」,<sup>34</sup> which is used to explain something that may or may not be obvious. 「わけ」 is instead used to draw conclusions that anyone might be able to arrive at given certain information.

A very useful application of this grammar is to combine it with 「ない」 to indicate that there is no reasonable conclusion. This allows some very useful expression like, “How in the world am I supposed to know that?”

- (1) ちゅうごくご よ が 読 め る わけ が ない。  
There is no reasoning for (me) to be able to read Chinese.

While grammar dictates that a particle is required for the noun 「わけ」, since this type of expression is used so often, the particle is often dropped to create just 「～わけない」.

33 <http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~jwb/wwwjdic.html>

34 See the “The 「の」 Particle as Explanation” heading in the *Noun-Related Particles* lesson.

## Mini-Dialogue 2

なおこ  
直子： ひろこ いえ い  
広子の家に行ったことがある？  
Have you ever gone to Hiroko's house?

いちろう  
一郎： あるわけないでしょう。  
There's no way I would have ever gone to her house, right?

## Mini-Dialogue 3

なおこ  
直子： びせきぶん わ  
微積分は分かる？  
Do you understand (differential and integral) calculus?

いちろう  
一郎： わ  
分かるわけないよ！  
There's no way I would understand!

Although not as common, 「わけ」 can also be used as a formal expression for saying that something must or must not be done at all costs. This is simply a stronger and more formal version of 「～てはいけない」. This grammar is created by simply attaching 「わけにはいかない」. The 「は」 is the topic particle and is pronounced 「わ」. The reason 「いけない」 changes to 「いかない」 is probably related to intransitive and transitive verbs but I don't want to get too caught up in the logistics of it. Just take note that it's 「い**か**ない」 in this case and not 「い**け**ない」.

- (1) こんど ま  
今度は負ける**わけにはいかない**。  
This time, I must not lose at all costs.
- (2) ここまできて、あきらめる**わけにはいかない**。  
After coming this far, I must not give up.

## Making Hypotheses with 「とする」

While this next grammar doesn't necessary have anything to do with the previous grammar, I thought it would fit nicely together. In a previous lesson, we learn how to combine the volitional form with 「とする」 to indicate an attempt to perform an action.<sup>35</sup> We will now learn several other ways 「とする」 can be used. It may help to keep in mind that 「とする」 is really just a combination of the quotation particle 「と」 and the verb 「する」 meaning “to do.” Let's say you have a sentence: [verb]とする. This means literally that you are doing like “[verb]” (in quotes). As you can see, when used with the volitional, it becomes: “Doing like making motion to do [verb].” In other words, you are acting as if to make a motion to do [verb]. As we have already seen, this translates to “attempt to do [verb].” Let's see what happens when we use it on plain verbs.

### Examples

- (1) あした い  
明日に行**く**とする。  
Assume we go tomorrow.

<sup>35</sup> See the “To Attempt to Do Something” heading in the *Trying Something Out or Attempting to Do Something* lesson.

In (1), the example is considering what would happen supposing that they should decide to go tomorrow. You can see that the literal translation still makes sense, “Do like we go tomorrow.” but in this situation, we are making a hypothesis unlike the grammar we have gone over before with the volitional form of the verb. Since we are considering a hypothesis, it is reasonable that the conditional will be very handy here and indeed, you will often see sentences like the following:

- (2) <sup>いま</sup>今から行くとしたら、<sup>じ</sup>9時に<sup>き</sup>着くと<sup>おも</sup>思います。  
If we suppose that we go from now, I think we will arrive at 9:00.

As you can see, the verb 「する」 has been conjugated to the 「たら」 conditional form to consider what would happen if you assume a certain case. You can also change 「する」 to the te-form (して) and use it as a sequence of actions like so:

- (3) <sup>かんきやく</sup>観客として<sup>さんか</sup>参加させてもらった。  
Received favor of allowing to participate as spectator.
- (4) <sup>ひがいしゃ</sup>被害者としては、<sup>ひじょう</sup>非常に<sup>さいわ</sup>幸いだった。  
As a victim, was extremely fortunate.
- (5) <sup>あさ</sup>朝ご飯を<sup>はん</sup>食べた<sup>た</sup>としても、もう<sup>ひる</sup>昼だから<sup>はら</sup>お腹が<sup>あ</sup>空いたでしょう。  
Even assuming that you ate breakfast, because it’s already noon, you’re probably hungry, right?

The same idea applies here as well. In (3), you are doing like a “spectator” and doing like a “victim” in (4) and finally, doing like you ate breakfast in (5). So you can see why the same grammar applies for all these types of sentences because they all mean the same thing in Japanese (minus the use of additional particles and various conjugations of 「する」).

## Expressing Time-Specific Actions (ばかり、とたんに、ながら、まくる)

When did it all happen?

In this lesson, we will go over various ways to express actions that take place in a certain time-frame. In particular, we will learn how to say: 1) an action has just been completed, 2) an action is taken immediately after another action took place, 3) an action occurs while another action is ongoing, and 4) one continuously repeats an action.

### Expressing an Action That Was Just Completed Using 「～ばかり」

This is a very useful grammar that is used to indicate that one has just finished doing something. For instance, the first time I really wished I knew how to say something like this was when I wanted to politely decline an invitation to eat because I had just eaten. To do this, take the past tense of verb that you want to indicate as just being completed and add 「ばかり」. This is used with only the past tense of verbs and is not to be confused with the 「ばかり」 used with nouns to express amounts.<sup>36</sup>

Just like the other type of 「ばかり」 we have covered before, in slang, you can hear people use 「ばっか」 instead of 「ばかり」.

#### Using 「ばかり」 for actions just completed

- To indicate that an action has ended just recently, take the past tense of the verb and add 「ばかり」.
  - 例) 食べる<sup>れい</sup> → 食べた<sup>た</sup> → 食べたばかり
- For casual speech, you can abbreviate 「ばかり」 to just 「ばっか」
  - 例) 食べたばかり<sup>れい</sup> → 食べたばっか<sup>た</sup>
- You can treat the result as you would with any noun.

Positive		Negative	
食べたばかり (だ) <sup>た</sup>	Just ate	食べたばかりじゃない <sup>た</sup>	Didn't just eat

### Examples

- (1) すみません、今<sup>いま</sup>食べたばかり<sup>た</sup>なので、お腹<sup>はら</sup>がいっぱいです。  
Sorry, but I'm full having just eaten.
- (2) 10キロを<sup>はし</sup>走<sup>はし</sup>ったばかり<sup>た</sup>で、<sup>すご</sup>凄<sup>つか</sup>く疲れた。  
I just ran 10 kilometers and am really tired.

<sup>36</sup> See the “Expressing the opposite of 「だけ」 with 「ばかり」” heading in the *Expressing Amounts* lesson.

- (3) いま いえ かせ  
今、家に帰ったばかりです。  
I got back home just now.

Here are some examples of the abbreviated version.

- (1) ひる はん た 昼ご飯を食べた**ばっ**かなのに、ほら あもうお腹が空いた。  
Despite the fact that I just ate lunch, I'm hungry already.
- (2) いま おまさか、今起きた**ばっ**かなの？  
No way, did you wake up just now?

## Using 「とたん」 to Express Something That Occurred Immediately After an Action

Kind of as a supplement to 「ばかり」, we will cover one way to say something happened as soon as something else occurs. To use this grammar, add 「とたん」 to the past tense of the first action that happened. It is also common to add the 「に」 target particle to indicate that specific point in time.

### Using 「とたん」 to indicate one thing happened right after another

- Change the verb that happened first to the past tense<sup>37</sup> and attach 「とたん」 or 「とたんに」.
  - れい 例) あ開ける → あ開けた → あ開けた**とたん** (に)
  - れい 例) と取る → と取った → と取った**とたん** (に)

※ Note: You can only use this grammar for things that happen outside your control.

## Examples

- (1) まど あ窓を**開けたとたんに**、ねこ と猫が跳んでいった。  
As soon as I opened window, cat jumped out.

For many more examples, check these [examples sentences](#)<sup>38</sup> from our old trusty WWWJDIC.

An important thing to realize is that you can only use this grammar for things that occur immediately after something else and not for an action that you, yourself carry out. For instance, compare the following two sentences.

- (誤) えいが み映画を観たとたんに、**せトイレに行きました**。  
You carried out the action of going to the bathroom so this is not correct.

- (正) えいが み映画を観たとたんに、**ねむ眠くなりました**。  
Since becoming sleepy is something that happened outside your control, this sentence is OK.

37 See the “Changing Verbs to the Past Tense” heading in the *Past Tense* lesson.

38 [http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/jwb/wwwjdic?1Q%C5%D3%C3%BC\\_1\\_](http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/jwb/wwwjdic?1Q%C5%D3%C3%BC_1_)

## Using 「ながら」 for Two Concurrent Actions

You can use 「ながら」 to express that one action is taking place in conjunction with another action. To use 「ながら」, you must change the first verb to the stem and append 「ながら」. Though probably rare, you can also attach 「ながら」 to the negative of the verb for express the negative. This grammar has no tense since it is determined by the second verb.

### Using 「ながら」 for concurrent actions

- Change the first verb to the stem<sup>39</sup> and append 「ながら」
  - 例) 走<sup>れい</sup>る → 走<sup>はし</sup>り → 走<sup>はし</sup>りながら
- For the negative, simply attach 「ながら」 to the negative tense
  - 例) 走<sup>れい</sup>る → 走<sup>はし</sup>らない → 走<sup>はし</sup>らないながら

### Examples

- (1) テレビを<sup>み</sup>観ながら、<sup>しゅくだい</sup>宿題をする。  
Do homework while watching TV.
- (2) <sup>おんがく</sup>音楽を<sup>き</sup>聴きながら、<sup>がっこう</sup>学校へ<sup>ある</sup>歩くのが<sup>す</sup>好き。  
Like to walk to school while listening to music.
- (3) <sup>あいて</sup>相手に<sup>なに</sup>何も<sup>い</sup>言わないながら、<sup>じぶん</sup>自分の<sup>きもち</sup>気持ちをわかって<sup>たん</sup>ほしいのは<sup>たん</sup>単なるわがままだと思わない？  
Don't you think that wanting the other person to understand one's feelings while not saying anything is just simply selfishness?

Notice that the sentence ends with the main verb just like it always does. This means that the main action of the sentence is the verb that ends the clause. The 「ながら」 simply describes another action that is also taking place. For example, if we switched the verbs in (1) to say, 「<sup>しゅくだい</sup>宿題をしながら、<sup>み</sup>テレビを<sup>みる</sup>。」, this changes the sentence to say, “Watch TV while doing homework.” In other words, the main action, in this case, becomes watching TV and the action of doing homework is describing an action that is taking place at the same time.

The tense is controlled by the main verb so the verb used with 「ながら」 cannot have a tense.

- (1) <sup>た</sup>ポップコーンを<sup>た</sup>食べながら、<sup>えいが</sup>映画を<sup>み</sup>観る。  
**Watch** movie while eating popcorn.
- (2) <sup>た</sup>ポップコーンを<sup>た</sup>食べながら、<sup>えいが</sup>映画を<sup>み</sup>観た。  
**Watched** movie while eating popcorn.
- (3) <sup>くちぶえ</sup>口笛をしながら、<sup>てがみ</sup>手紙を<sup>か</sup>書いていた。  
**Was writing** letter while whistling.

39 See the “The Stem of Verbs” heading in the *Polite Form and Verb Stems* lesson.

## Using 「ながら」 with State of Being to Mean “While”

A more advanced use of 「ながら」 is to use it with the implied state of being. In other words, you can use it with nouns or adjectives to talk about what something is while something else. The implied state of being means that you must not use the declarative 「だ」, you just attach 「ながら」 to the noun or adjective. For example, a common way this grammar is used is to say, “While it’s

unfortunate, something something....” In Japanese, this would become 「<sup>ざんねん</sup>残念ながら…」

You can also attach the inclusive 「も」 particle to 「ながら」 to get 「ながらも」. This changes the meaning from “while” to “even while.”

### Using 「ながら」 with state of being to mean “while” or 「ながらも」 to mean “even while”

- To say [X] is something while something else, attach 「ながら」 to [X]
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>残念 → <sup>ざんねん</sup>残念ながら
- To say [X] is something even while something else, attach 「ながらも」 to [X]
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>貧乏 → <sup>びんぼう</sup>貧乏ながらも

## Examples

- (1) <sup>しごと</sup>仕事がいっぱい入って、<sup>はい</sup>残念ながら、<sup>きょう</sup>今日は行けなくなりました。  
While it’s unfortunate, a lot of work came in and it became so that I can’t go today.
- (2) <sup>びんぼう</sup>貧乏ながらも、<sup>こうきゆう</sup>高級な<sup>か</sup>バッグを買っちゃったよ。  
Even while I’m poor, I ended up buying a high quality bag.
- (3) <sup>かれ</sup>彼は、<sup>しょしんしゃ</sup>初心者ながらも、<sup>じつりよく</sup>実力は<sup>おな</sup>プロと同じだ。  
Even while he is a beginner, his actual skills are the same as a pro.

## To Repeat Something with Reckless Abandon Using 「まくる」

The WWWJDIC very succinctly defines the definition of this verb as a “verb suffix to indicate reckless abandon to the activity.” Unfortunately, it doesn’t go on to tell you exactly how it’s actually used. Actually, there’s not much to explain. You take the stem of the verb and simply attach 「まくる」. However, since this is a continuing activity, it is an enduring state<sup>40</sup> unless you’re going to do it in the future. This is a very casual expression.

<sup>40</sup> See the “Using 「～ている」 for Enduring States” heading in the *Other Uses of the te-Form* lesson.



### Using 「まくる」 for frequent actions

- Change the first verb to the stem<sup>41</sup> and append 「まくっている」.
  - 例) やる → やり → やりまくっている
- You can use all the normal conjugations you would expect with any other verb.

	Positive		Negative	
Non-Past	やりまくっている	Doing all the time	やりまくっていない	Don't do all the time
Past	やりまくっていた	Did all the time	やりまくっていなかった	Didn't do all the time

### Examples

- (1) ゲームにはまっちゃって、最近<sup>さいきん</sup>パソコンを<sup>つか</sup>使いまくっているよ。  
Having gotten hooked by games, I do nothing but use the computer lately.
- (2) アメリカにいた<sup>とき</sup>時はコーラを<sup>の</sup>飲みまくっていた。  
When I was in the US, I drank coke like all the time.

41 See the “The Stem of Verbs” heading in the *Polite Form and Verb Stems* lesson.

# Leaving Something the Way It Is (まま、っぱなし)

Nothing Ever Changes

## Expressing a Lack of Change

Up until now, we've mostly been talking about things that have happened or changed in the course of events. We will now learn some simple grammar to express a lack of change.

## Using 「まま」 to Express a Lack of Change

「まま」, not to be confused with the childish expression for “mother” (ママ), is a grammatical phrase to express a lack of change in something. Grammatically, it is used just like a regular noun. You'll most likely hear this grammar at a convenience store when you buy a very small item. Since store clerks use super polite expressions and at lightening fast speeds, learning this one expression will help you out a bit in advance. (Of course, upon showing a lack of comprehension, the person usually repeats the exact same phrase... at the exact same speed.)

## Examples

- (1) この<sup>よろ</sup>ままですかいですか？  
Is it OK **just like** this?

In other words, the clerk wants to know if you'll take it just like that or whether you want it in a small bag. 「<sup>よろ</sup>ましい」, in case I haven't gone over it yet, is simply a very polite version of 「いい」. Notice that 「まま」 grammatically works just like a regular noun which means, as usual, that you can modify it with verb phrases or adjectives.

- (2) <sup>はんぶん</sup>半分しか<sup>た</sup>食べてない<sup>まま</sup>で<sup>す</sup>捨てちゃダメ！  
You can't throw it out leaving it in that half-eaten condition!

OK, the translation is very loose, but the idea is that it's in an unchanged state of being half-eaten and you can't just throw that out.

Here's a good example I found googling around. It is chock full of grammar which are explained here,<sup>42</sup> here,<sup>43</sup> and here.<sup>44</sup> Hint: The 「いさせる」 is the causative form of 「いる」 meaning “let/make me exist.”

- (3) <sup>きょう</sup>今日だけは<sup>かな</sup>悲しい<sup>まま</sup>でいさせてほしい。  
For only today, I want you to let me stay in this sad condition.

Finally, just in case, here's an example of direct noun modification.

- (4) その<sup>かつこう</sup>格好の<sup>い</sup>ままですクラブに入れないよ。  
You can't get in the club in that getup (without changing it).

42 See the “Indicating That's All There is Using 「だけ」” heading in the *Expressing Amounts* lesson.

43 See the “Causative Verbs” heading in the *Causative and Passive Verbs* lesson.

44 See the “Indicating Things You Want or Want Done Using 「欲しい」” heading in the *Desire and Suggestions* lesson.

## Using 「っぱなし」 to Leave Something the Way It Is

The verb 「<sup>はな</sup>放す」 meaning “to set loose,” can be used in various ways in regards to leaving something the way it is. For instance, a variation 「<sup>ほ</sup>放つとく」 is used when you want to say “Leave me alone.” For instance, you might use the command form of a request (くれる) and say, 「ほっといてくれ！」 (Leave me alone!). Yet another variant 「ほったらかす」 means “to neglect.”

The grammar I would like to discuss here is the 「っぱなし」 suffix variant. You can attach this suffix to the stem of any verb to describe the act of doing something and leaving it that way without changing it. You can treat the combination like a regular noun.

As usual, you can click the [EX] link after looking up the word at the [WWWJDIC](http://wwwjdic.org)<sup>45</sup> to see examples. In fact, [here's a direct link](#)<sup>46</sup> to examples of this grammar. As you can see by the examples, this suffix carries a nuance that the thing left alone is due to oversight or neglect. Here are the (simple) conjugation rules for this grammar.

### Using 「っぱなし」 to complete an action and leave it that way

- Take the stem<sup>47</sup> of the verb and attach 「っぱなし」.

- 例) <sup>れい</sup>開ける → <sup>あ</sup>開け<sup>あ</sup>っぱなし
- 例) <sup>れい</sup>書く → <sup>か</sup>書<sup>か</sup>き → <sup>か</sup>書き<sup>か</sup>っぱなし

### Examples

- (1) テレビを<sup>つ</sup>付け<sup>あ</sup>っぱなしにしなければ<sup>ねむ</sup>眠れない人は、<sup>ひと</sup>結構<sup>けっこう</sup>いる。  
There exists a fair number of people who cannot sleep unless they turn on the TV and leave it that way.
- (2) <sup>まど</sup>窓が<sup>あ</sup>開<sup>あ</sup>け<sup>ばな</sup>っ放<sup>か</sup>しだったので、<sup>か</sup>蚊が<sup>はい</sup>いっぱい入った。  
The window was left wide open so a lot of mosquitos got in.

45 <http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~jwb/wwwjdic.html>

46 [http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/jwb/wwwjdic?1Q%A4%C3%A4%D1%A4%CA%A4%B7\\_1\\_](http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/jwb/wwwjdic?1Q%A4%C3%A4%D1%A4%CA%A4%B7_1_)

47 See the “The Stem of Verbs” heading in the *Polite Form and Verb Stems* lesson.

## Part 6: Advanced Topics

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*Look at me, I'm advanced!*

Whew! We've come a long way from learning the basic phonetic alphabet to covering almost all the grammar you're going to need for daily conversations. But wait, we're not finished yet! In fact, things are going to get even more challenging and interesting because, especially toward the latter part of this section, we are going to learn grammar that only might come in handy. In my experience, the most useful things are easiest to learn as they come up again and again. However, in order to completely master a language, we also must work hard to conquer the bigger area of things that don't come up very often and yet every native Japanese speaker instinctively understands. Believe it or not, even the more obscure grammar will come up eventually leaving you wondering what it's supposed to mean. That's why I bothered to learn them at least.

### Lessons covered in this section

- Formal Expressions — If you're only going to learn one lesson from this section, learn this one! This lesson will cover the formal version of state of being (である、ではない) as well as some fundamental differences in the type of language used in formal writing and speech such as reports or documentaries.
- Things that should be a certain way — We will go over some different ways to express the way things should be or are supposed to be using 「はず」、「べき」、「べく」、and 「べからず」.
- Expressing the minimum expectation — We will learn how to express the minimum expectations such as the sentence, "He can't even speak English" using 「できえ」、「ですら」、and 「おろか」.
- Showing signs of something — We will learn various useful ways to express someone showing signs of something using 「～がる」、「ばかり」、and 「～めく」.
- Formal expressions of non-feasibility — We will learn a number of formal expressions relating to the feasibility and necessity of having to do certain things.
- Tendencies — Different ways to express a tendency to do or be a certain way.
- Advanced Volitional — Continuing with formal language, we will look at some more advanced uses of the volitional form such as 「であろう」 or 「～まい」.
- Covered by something — Some more grammar to describe something that is covered by something.
- Advanced proximity of actions — Some advanced expressions to describe events that happen right after another.
- Others — Other grammar that I noticed that doesn't really fit anywhere else.

## Formal Expressions (である、ではない)

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### What do You Mean by Formal Expressions?

So far we have learned casual, polite, and honorific/humble types of languages. So what do I mean by formal expressions? I think we are all aware of the type of language I am talking about. We hear it in speeches, read it in reports, and see it on documentaries. While discussing good writing style is beyond the scope of this guide, we will go over some of the grammar that you will commonly find in this type of language. Which is not to say that it won't appear in regular everyday speech. (Because it does.)

### Using 「である」 to State That Something Is So in an Authoritative Tone

We have already learned how to speak with your friends in casual speech, your superiors in polite speech, and your customers in honorific / humble speech. We've learned 「だ」、「です」、and 「でございます」 to express a state of being for these different levels of politeness. There is one more type of state of being that is primarily used to state facts in a neutral, official sounding manner - 「である」. Just like the others, you tack 「である」 on to the adjective or noun that represents the state.

### Examples

- (1) わがはい ねこ  
吾輩は猫である  
I am a Cat.<sup>1</sup>

Since I'm too lazy to look up facts, let's trot on over to the Japanese version of [Wikipedia](#)<sup>2</sup> and look at some random articles by clicking on 「おまかせ表示」<sup>ひょうじ</sup>.

- (2) こんごうぶつ しゆるいいじょう じゆんぶつしつ ま  
混合物(こんごうぶつ, mixture)とは、2種類以上の純物質が混じりあっている  
ぶつしつ  
物質である。(Wikipedia - 混合物,<sup>3</sup> July 2004)  
An amalgam is a mixture of two or more pure substances.

To give you an idea of how changing the 「である」 changes the tone, I've included some fake content around that sentence.

こんごうぶつ なに  
混合物は何？  
こんごうぶつ しゆるいいじょう じゆんぶつしつ ま ぶつしつ  
混合物は、2種類以上の純物質が混じりあっている物質だ。  
こんごうぶつ なに  
混合物は何ですか？  
こんごうぶつ しゆるいいじょう じゆんぶつしつ ま ぶつしつ  
混合物は、2種類以上の純物質が混じりあっている物質です。

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1 This is the title of a famous novel by 夏目漱石.  
2 <http://ja.wikipedia.org/>  
3 <http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/混合物>

こんごうぶつ なに  
混合物は何でしようか。

こんごうぶつ しゆるいいじょう じゆんぶつしつ ま ぶつしつ  
混合物は、2種類以上の純物質が混じりあっている物質でございます。

こんごうぶつ  
混合物とは？

こんごうぶつ しゆるいいじょう じゆんぶつしつ ま ぶつしつ  
混合物は、2種類以上の純物質が混じりあっている物質である。

Newspaper articles are different in that the main objective is to convey current events as succinctly and quickly as possible. For this reason, 「である」 is not normally used in newspaper articles favoring 「だ」 or nothing at all. Though, in general, since newspaper articles detail events that took place or quotations, almost all sentences end in plain dictionary-form verbs anyway.

- (1) こくど こうつうしょう ねんご りようりつ ひ あ かんが か か とき  
国土交通省は2年後に利用率を70%まで引き上げる考えで、買い替え時に  
りよう き こくど あさひ しんぶん  
利用する気にな国土かどうかカギになりそうだ。(朝日新聞,<sup>4</sup> 2004/8/16)  
With the idea of raising percentage of usage to 70% in two years, it seems likely that  
the key will become whether the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport will  
employ [it] when it buys replacements.

## Negative of 「である」

Because the negative<sup>5</sup> of 「ある」 is 「ない」, you might expect the opposite of 「である」 to be 「でない」. However, for some reason I'm not aware of, you need to insert the topic particle<sup>6</sup> before 「ない」 to get 「ではない」.

## Example

- (1) これは不公平ではないでしようか。  
Wouldn't you consider this to be unfair?
- (2) げんご かんたん  
言語は簡単にマスターできることではない。  
Language is not something that can be mastered easily.

4 <http://www.asahi.com/business/update/0816/028.html>

5 See the “Conjugating Verbs Into the Negative” heading in the *Negative Verbs* lesson.

6 See the “The 「は」 Topic Particle” in the *Introduction to Particles* lesson.

### Using 「である」 to sound official

- Attach 「である」 to the verb or adjective that the state of being applies to.
  - 例) れい 学生 → がくせい 学生である
- For the negative, attach 「ではない」 to the verb or adjective that the state of being applies to.
  - 例) れい 学生 → がくせい 学生ではない
- For the past tense state of being, apply the regular past tenses<sup>7</sup> of 「ある」

### Complete conjugation chart for 「である」

Positive		Negative	
<small>がくせい</small> 学生である	is student	<small>がくせい</small> 学生ではない	is not student
<small>がくせい</small> 学生であった	was student	<small>がくせい</small> 学生ではなかった	was not student

## Sequential Subordinate Clauses in Formal Language

In the *Compound Sentence* lesson, we learned how to use the te-form<sup>8</sup> of verbs to express multiples sequential actions in one sentence. This practice, however, is used only in regular everyday speech. Formal speeches, narration, and written publications employ plain verb stems<sup>9</sup> instead of the te-form to describe sequential actions. Particularly, newspaper articles, in the interest of brevity, always prefer verb stems to the te-form.

### Examples

- (1) はなび 花火 (はなび) は、かやく 火薬と きんぞく 金属の ふんまつ 粉末を ま 混ぜたものに ひ 火を つけ 付け、ねんしょうとき 燃焼時の ひばな 火花を たの 楽しむためのもの。 ([Wikipedia - 花火](http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/花火),<sup>10</sup> August 2004)  
Fireworks are for the enjoyment of sparks created from combustion created by lighting up a mixture of gunpowder and metal powder.
- (2) きぎょうない 企業内の こきゃく 顧客データを りよう 利用し、かれ 彼の ゆくえ 行方を しら 調べることが でき 出来た。  
Was able to investigate his whereabouts using the company's internal customer data.

For the ～ている forms,<sup>11</sup> the stem becomes 「～てい」 but because that doesn't fit very well into the middle of a sentence, it is common to use the humble form<sup>12</sup> of 「いる」 which you will remember is 「おる」. This is simply so you can employ 「おり」 to connect subordinate clauses instead of just 「い」. It has nothing to do with the humble aspect of 「おる」.

7 See the *Past Tense* lesson.

8 See the “Expressing a Sequence of Verbs With the te-Form” heading in the *Compound Sentences* lesson.

9 See the “The Stem of Verbs” heading in the *Polite Form and Verb Stems* lesson.

10 <http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/花火>

11 See the “Using 「～ている」 for Enduring States” heading in the *Other Uses of the te-Form* lesson.

12 See the “Set Expressions” heading in the *Honorific and Humble Forms* lesson.

- (3) この<sup>りょかん</sup>旅館は、<sup>さまざま</sup>様々な<sup>あたら</sup>新しい<sup>せつび</sup>設備が<sup>そな</sup>備えており、とても<sup>かいてき</sup>快適だった。  
This Japanese inn having been equipped with various new facilities, was very comfortable.



# Things That Should Be a Certain Way (はず、べき、べく、べからず)

The way things should be

## Talking About the Way Things Are Supposed to Be

In this lesson, we'll learn how to express the way things are supposed depending on what we mean by "supposed." While the first two grammar points 「はず」 and 「べき」 come up often and are quite useful, you'll rarely ever encounter 「べく」 or 「べからず」. You can safely skip those lessons unless you are studying for the 1級日本語検定.

## Using 「はず」 to Describe an Expectation

The first grammar we will learn is 「はず」, which is used to express something that hasn't happened yet but is expected to. You can treat 「はず」 just like a regular noun as it is usually attached to the adjective or verb that is expected. In Japanese, you might define this as meaning 「～と予想している」.

The only thing to be careful about here is expressing an expectation of something not happening. To do this, you must use the negative existence verb 「ない」 to say that such an expectation does not exist. This might be in the form of 「～はずがない」 or 「～はずはない」 depending on which particle you want to use. The negative conjugation 「はずじゃない」 is really only used when you want to confirm in a positive sense such as 「～はずじゃないか?」.

### Using 「はず」 to describe an expectation

- Use 「はず」 just like a regular noun to modify the expected thing
  - 例) 受験日のはず (noun)
  - 例) 可能なはず (na-adjective)
  - 例) おいしいはず (i-adjective)
  - 例) 帰るはず (verb)
- For the case where you expect the negative, use the 「ない」 verb for nonexistence
  - 例) 帰るはず → 帰るはずがない

## Examples

- (1) 彼は漫画マニアだから、これらをもう全部読んだはずだよ。  
He's a comic book mania so I expect he read all these already.
- (2) この料理はおいしいはずだったが、焦げちゃって、まずくなった。  
This dish was expected to be tasty but it burned and became distasteful.

- (3) 色々<sup>いろいろ</sup> 予定<sup>よてい</sup>してあるから、今年<sup>ことし</sup>は楽しい<sup>たの</sup>クリスマス<sup>の</sup>の<sup>はず</sup>。  
Because various things have been planned out, I expect a fun Christmas this year.
- (4) そう簡単<sup>かんたん</sup>に直<sup>なお</sup>せるはず<sup>が</sup>ないよ。  
It's not supposed to be that easy to fix.
- (5) 打合せ<sup>うちあわ</sup>は毎週<sup>まいしゅう</sup> 2時から<sup>じ</sup>始<sup>はじ</sup>まるはず<sup>じ</sup>じゃないですか？  
This meeting is supposed to start every week at 2 o'clock, isn't it?

Here are [more examples](#)<sup>13</sup> from the WWWJDIC. You may also want to check out the [jeKai entry](#).<sup>14</sup>

## Using 「べき」 to Describe Actions One Should Do

「べき」 is a verb suffix used to describe something that is supposed to be done. This suffix is commonly defined as “should,” however, one must realize that it cannot be used to make suggestions like the sentence, “You should go to the doctor.” If you use 「べき」, it sounds more like, “You are supposed to go to the doctor.” 「べき」 has a much stronger tone and makes you sound like a know-it-all telling people what to do. For making suggestions, it is customary to use the comparison 「方がいい」 grammar<sup>15</sup> instead. For this reason, this grammar is almost never used to directly tell someone what to do. It is usually used in reference to oneself where you can be as bossy as you want or in a neutral context where circumstances dictate what is proper and what is not. One such example would be a sentence like, “We are supposed to raise our kids properly with a good education.”

Unlike the 「はず」 grammar, there is no expectation that something is going to happen. Rather, this grammar describes what one should do in a given circumstance. In Japanese, you might define it as meaning 「絶対<sup>ぜったい</sup>ではないが、強く<sup>つよ</sup> 推奨<sup>すいしょう</sup>されている」.

There is very little of grammatical interest. 「べき」 works just like a regular noun and so you can conjugated it as 「べきじゃない」、「べきだった」, and so on. The only thing to note here is that when you're using it with 「する」, the verb meaning “to do,” you can optionally drop the 「る」 from 「するべき」 to produce 「すべき」. You can do this with this verb *only* and it does not apply for any other verbs even if the verb is written as 「する」 such as 「擦<sup>こす</sup>る」, the verb meaning “to rub.”

### Using 「べき」 for actions that should be done

- Attach 「べき」 to the action that should be done
  - 例) 行<sup>れい</sup>う → 行<sup>おこな</sup>うべき
  - 例) する → するべき
- For the generic “to do” verb 「する」 only, you can remove the 「る」
  - 例) する<sup>れい</sup>べき → すべき

13 [http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/jwb/wwwjdic?1QA\\_1\\_](http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/jwb/wwwjdic?1QA_1_)

14 <http://www.jekai.org/entries/aa/00/nn/aa00nn81.htm>

15 See the “Using 「方」 for comparisons” heading in the *Using 方 and よる for Comparisons and Other Functions* lesson.

## Examples

- (1) なに か まえほんとう ひつよう 何かを買う前に本当に必要かどうかをよく かんが 考えるべきだ。  
Before buying something, one **should** think well on whether it's really necessary or not.
- (2) たと こに 例え国のためであっても、こくみん だま 国民を騙すべきではないと思う。おも  
Even if it is, for example, for the country, I don't think the country's citizens **should** be deceived.
- (3) おきんしゃ おおてげんこう あいてと そしょう お 預金者が大手銀行を相手取って訴訟を起こすケースも出ており、きんゆうちよう ひがい 金融庁は被害者しや きゆうざい ゆうせんの救済を優先させて、きんゆうきかん ほんざい ぼうし たいさく きょうか うなが 金融機関に犯罪防止対策の強化を促すべきだと判断。あさひ しんぶん  
(朝日新聞<sup>16</sup>)  
With cases coming out of depositors suing large banks, the Financial Services Agency decided it **should** prioritize relief for victims and urge banks to strengthen measures for crime prevention.

Here are [more examples](#)<sup>17</sup> from the WWWJDIC.

## Using 「べく」 to Describe What One Tries to Do

Grammatically, 「べく」 is really a conjunctive form (連用形) of 「べき」, similar to what the te-form<sup>18</sup> does to connect another phrase. However, what needs mentioning here is that by changing it into a conjunctive and adding a predicate, the meaning of 「べく」 changes from the ordinary meaning of 「べき」. While 「べき」 describes a strong suggestion, changing it to 「べく」 allows you to describe what one did in order to carry out that suggestion. Take a look at the following examples to see how the meaning changes.

- (1) はや かえ 早く帰るべき。  
Should go home early.
- (2) はや かえ 早く帰るべく、じゆんび 準備をし始めた。はじ  
**In trying to** go home early, started the preparations.

As we can see in this example, adding the 「準備をし始めた」 tells us what the subject did in order to carry out the action he/she was supposed to do. In this way we can define 「べく」 as meaning, “in order to” or “in an effort to.” Similarly, 「べく」 might mean the Japanese equivalent of 「しようと思つて」 or 「できるように」. This is a very seldom-used old-fashioned expression and is merely presented here to completely cover all aspects of 「べき」.

16 <http://www.asahi.com/business/update/0110/022.html>

17 [http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/jwb/wwwjdic?1Q%A4%D9%A4%AD\\_1\\_](http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/jwb/wwwjdic?1Q%A4%D9%A4%AD_1_)

18 See the “Expressing a Sequence of Verbs With the te-Form” heading in the *Compound Sentences* lesson.

### Using 「べく」 for actions that are attempted to be done

- Attach 「べく」 to the action that is attempted to be done
  - 例) れい おこな おこな 行<sup>れい</sup>う → 行<sup>れい</sup>う<sup>べく</sup>
  - 例) する → する<sup>べく</sup>
- Same as 「べき」, you can remove the 「る」 for the generic “to do” verb 「する」 only
  - 例) れい する<sup>れい</sup>べく → する<sup>べく</sup>

### Examples

- (1) しけん ごうかく みないつしやうせんめい べんきやう 試験に合格<sup>すべく</sup>、皆一生懸命に勉強している。  
Everybody is studying very hard **in an effort** to pass the exam.
- (2) こんご きやくさま たいわ まどぐち じゆうじつ どりよく 今後もお客様との対話の窓口として、より充実<sup>していくべく</sup>努力してまいります。  
We are working from here **in an effort** to provide a enriched window for customer interaction.

### Using 「べからず」 to Describe Things One Must Not Do

Moving on to yet another form of 「べき」 is 「べからず」. This is undoubtedly related to the 「ず」 negative ending we learned in this previous section.<sup>19</sup> However, it seems to be a conjugation of an old 未然形 of 「べから」. I have no idea what that means and you don't have to either. The only thing we need to take away from this is that 「べからず」 expresses the opposite meaning of 「べき」 as an action that one must *not* do. I suppose the short abrupt ending of the 「ず」 form makes this more useful for laying out rules. In fact, searching around on google comes up with a bunch of 「べし・べからず」 or “do's and don'ts.” (べし is an even older form of べき, which I doubt you'll ever need.)

### Using 「べからず」 for actions that must not be done

- Attach 「べからず」 to the action that must not be done
  - 例) れい おこな おこな 行<sup>れい</sup>う → 行<sup>れい</sup>う<sup>べからず</sup>
  - 例) する → する<sup>べからず</sup>
- Same as 「べき」, you can remove the 「る」 for the generic “to do” verb 「する」 only
  - 例) れい する<sup>れい</sup>べからず → する<sup>べからず</sup>

### Examples

- (1) す ゴミ捨<sup>す</sup>てるべからず。  
You **must not** throw away trash.

<sup>19</sup> See the “Doing Something Without Doing Something Else” heading in the *More Negative Verbs* lesson.

- (2) あんぜん そち 安全措置を わす 忘れるべからず。  
You **must not** forget the safety equipment.

## Expressing the Minimum Expectation (できえ、ですら、おろか)

*Naw, not even!*

In this section, we'll learn various ways to express the minimum expectation. This grammar is not used as often as you might think as there are many situations where a simpler expression would sound more natural, but you should still become familiar with it.

### Using 「(で) さえ」 to Describe the Minimum Requirement

In English, we might say, “not even close” to show that not even the minimum expectation has been met. In Japanese, we can express this by attaching 「さえ」 to the object or verb that miserably failed to reach what one would consider as a given. Let's see some examples of this with nouns first. You can also use the same grammar in a positive sentence to show that that is all you need to produce a desired effect.

#### Examples

- (1) <sup>しゅくだい</sup> <sup>おお</sup>宿題が多すぎて、<sup>い</sup> <sup>じかん</sup>トイレに行く時間<sup>さえ</sup>なかった。  
There was so much homework, I didn't even have time to go to the bathroom.
- (2) <sup>かね</sup>お金<sup>さえ</sup>あれば、<sup>なに</sup> <sup>でき</sup>何でも出来るよ。  
The least you need is money and you can do anything.
- (3) <sup>べんとう</sup> <sup>か</sup>お弁当を<sup>か</sup> <sup>かね</sup>買うお金<sup>さえ</sup>なかった。  
I didn't even have money to buy lunch.

For nouns *only*, you can add 「で」 and use 「できえ」 instead of just 「さえ」. There are no grammatical differences but it does sound a bit more emphatic.

- (4) <sup>わたし</sup>私<sup>でき</sup>できえ出来れば、<sup>らく</sup>あんたには楽ちんでしょう。  
If even I can do it, it should be a breeze for you.

You can also attach 「さえ」 to the stem of verbs to express a minimum action for a result. This is usually followed up immediately by 「する」 to show that the minimum action was done (or not done in the case of negative).

- (5) ビタミンを<sup>た</sup>食べ<sup>さえ</sup>すれば、<sup>けんこう</sup> <sup>ほしょう</sup>健康が保証されますよ。  
If you just eat vitamins, your health will be guaranteed.
- (6) <sup>じぶん</sup> <sup>あやま</sup>自分の<sup>みと</sup>過ちを認め<sup>さえ</sup>しなければ、<sup>もんだい</sup> <sup>かいけつ</sup>問題は解決しないよ。  
The problem won't be solved if you don't even recognize your own mistake, you know.

### Using 「(で) さえ」 to describe the minimum requirement

- For nouns, attach 「さえ」 or 「でさえ」 to the minimum requirement
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>私 <sup>わたし</sup> **さえ** - even me
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>子供 <sup>こども</sup> **でさえ** - even children
- For verbs, change the verb to the stem<sup>20</sup> and attach 「さえ」
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>食 <sup>た</sup>べ **る** → <sup>た</sup>食 <sup>べ</sup> **さえ**
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>行 <sup>い</sup>く → <sup>い</sup>行 <sup>き</sup> → <sup>い</sup>行 <sup>き</sup> **さえ**

### 「(で) すら」 - Same as 「(で) さえ」 but Different?

「(で) すら」 is a variation of 「(で) さえ」 that means essentially the same thing and is used in the exact same way. However, it is more obscure and is usually ignored in favor of 「(で) さえ」. The main reason we are covering it here is because since it's the same as 「(で) さえ」, it's a cinch to go over. Plus, it's covered in the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) level 1 (if you're thinking of taking that).

### Examples

- (1) この天才<sup>てんさい</sup>の私<sup>わたし</sup> **ですら** わからなかった。  
Even a genius such as myself couldn't solve it.
- (2) 私<sup>わたし</sup>は緊張<sup>きんちょう</sup>しすぎて、ちらつと見る<sup>み</sup>こと **すら** 出来<sup>でき</sup>ませんでした。  
I was so nervous that I couldn't even take a quick peek.
- (3) 「人<sup>かんじ</sup>」の漢字<sup>し</sup> **すら** 知らない<sup>せいと</sup>生徒<sup>せいと</sup>は、いないでしょ！  
There are no students that don't even know the 「人」 kanji!

<sup>20</sup> See the “The Stem of Verbs” heading in the *Polite Form and Verb Stems* lesson.

「(で) すら」 *is used in exactly the same way as* 「(で) さえ」 *and means the same thing to boot*

- For nouns, attach 「すら」 or 「ですら」 to the minimum requirement
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>私 <sup>わたし</sup>すら - Even me
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>子供 <sup>こども</sup>ですら - Even children
- For verbs, change the verb to the stem<sup>21</sup> and attach 「さえ」
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>食べる → <sup>た</sup>食べ <sup>すら</sup>すら
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>行く → <sup>い</sup>行き → <sup>い</sup>行き <sup>すら</sup>すら
- However, it is more common to attach the generic noun 「こと」 to the verb and just treat the whole thing as a regular noun. (ie <sup>た</sup>食べる <sup>こと</sup>ことすら and <sup>い</sup>行く <sup>こと</sup>ことすら)

## 「おろか」 - It's Not Even Worth Considering

I suspect this grammar comes from the adjective 「<sup>おろ</sup>愚か」 which means to be foolish or stupid. However, in this case, you're not making fun of something, rather by using 「おろか」, you can indicate that something is so ridiculous that it's not even worth considering. In English, we might say something like, "Are you kidding? I can't touch my knees much less do a full split!" In this example, the full split is so beyond the person's abilities that it would be foolish to even consider it.

### Examples

- (1) <sup>かんじ</sup>漢字は<sup>おろ</sup>か、ひらがなさえ<sup>よ</sup>読めないよ！  
Forget about kanji, I can't even read hiragana!
- (2) <sup>けっこん</sup>結婚は<sup>おろ</sup>か、<sup>かげつ</sup>2ヶ月<sup>つ</sup>付き合<sup>あ</sup>って、<sup>けっきょく</sup>結局<sup>わか</sup>別れてしまった。  
We eventually broke up after going out two months much less get married.
- (3) <sup>だいがく</sup>大学は<sup>おろ</sup>か、<sup>こうこう</sup>高校<sup>そつぎょう</sup>すら卒業しなかった。  
I didn't even graduate from high school much less college.

21 See the "The Stem of Verbs" heading in the *Polite Form and Verb Stems* lesson.



## Showing Signs of Something (～がる、ばかり、～めく)

I saw the sign

In this lesson, we'll learn various expressions involving how to describe people who are expressing themselves without words. For example, we'll learn how to say expressions in Japanese such as "They acted as if they were saying goodbye," "He acted disgusted," and "She acts like she wants to go."

### Showing Outward Signs of an Emotion Using 「～がる」

The 「～がる」 grammar is used when you want to make an observation about how someone is feeling. This is simply an observation based on some type of sign(s). Therefore, you would not use it for your own emotions since guessing about your own emotions is not necessary. This grammar can only be used with adjectives so you can use this grammar to say, "He is acting scared," but you cannot say "He acted surprised," because "to be surprised" is a verb in Japanese and not an adjective. This grammar is also commonly used with a certain set of adjectives related to emotions such as: 「嫌きら」、「怖こわい」、「嬉うれしい」、or 「恥はずかしい」.

#### Using 「～がる」 for observing the emotions or feelings of others

- For i-adjectives: First remove the trailing 「い」 from the i-adjective and then attach 「がる」
  - 例) 怖こわい → 怖こわがる
- For na-adjectives: Just attach 「がる」 to the end of the na-adjective
  - 例) 重宝ちゆうぼう → 重宝ちゆうぼうがる
- All adjectives that are conjugated with 「～がる」 become an u-verb

	Positive		Negative	
Non-Past	怖 <small>こわ</small> がる	act scared	怖 <small>こわ</small> がらない	not act scared
Past	怖 <small>こわ</small> がった	acted scared	怖 <small>こわ</small> がらなかった	didn't act scared

### Examples

- (1) 早くはやきてよ！何をなに恥はずかしがっているの？  
Hurry up and come here. What are you acting all embarrassed for?
- (2) 彼女かのじょは朝あさ早く起おこされるのを嫌きらがるタイプです。  
My girlfriend is the type to show dislike towards getting woken up early in the morning.
- (3) うちのこども子供はプールにはい入いるのを理由りゆうもなく怖こわがる。  
Our child acts afraid about entering a pool without any reason.

This grammar is also used to observe very frankly on what you think someone other than yourself wants. This involves the adjective 「欲しい」 for things one wants or the 「～たい」 conjugation<sup>22</sup> for actions one wants to do, which is essentially a verb conjugated to an i-adjective. This type of grammar is more suited for things like narration in a story and is rarely used in this fashion for normal conversations because of its impersonal style of observation. For casual conversations, it is more common to use 「でしょう」<sup>23</sup> such as in, 「カレーを食べたいでしょう。」. For polite conversations, it is normal to not make any assumptions at all or to use the 「よね」 sentence ending<sup>24</sup> such as in 「カレーを食べたいですか。」 or 「カレーを食べたいですよね。」

## Examples

- (1) 家に帰ったら、すぐパソコンを**使いたがる**。  
[He] soon acts like wanting to use computer as soon as [he] gets home.
- (2) みんなイタリアに**行きたがってる**んだけど、私の予算で行けるかどうかはとも怪しい。  
Everybody is acting like they want to go to Italy but it's suspicious whether I can go or not going by my budget.
- (3) 妻はルイヴィトンのバッグを**欲しがっている**んだけど、そんなもん、買えるわけないでしょう！  
My wife was showing signs of wanting a Louis Vuitton bag but there's no way I can buy something like that!

「～がる」 is also used with 「屋」 to indicate a type of person that often feels a certain way such as 「**恥ずかしがり屋**」 (one who easily feels or acts embarrassed)、 「**寒がり屋**」 (one who easily feels cold)、 or 「**暑がり屋**」 (one who easily feels hot).

- (3) 私は**寒がり屋**だから、ミネソタで暮らすのは辛かった。  
I'm the type who easily gets cold and so living in Minnesota was painful.

## Using 「ばかり」 to Act as if One Might Do Something

We just learned how to observe the emotions and feelings of other by using 「～がる」 with adjectives. But what about verbs? Indeed, there is a separate grammar used to express the fact that someone else looks like they are about to do something but actually does not. Similar to the 「～がる」 grammar, this is usually not used in normal everyday conversations. I have seen it several times in books and novels but have yet to hear this grammar in a conversation.

22 See the “Verbs You Want to Do With 「たい」 ” heading in the *Desire and Suggestions* lesson.

23 See the “Using 「でしょう」 and 「だろう」 to Express a Strong Amount of Certainty (Casual)” heading in the *Expressing Various Levels of Certainty* lesson.

24 See the “Combining Both to Get 「よね」 ” heading in the *Using Adverbs and Gobi* lesson.

For the regular non-past, non-negative verb, you must first conjugate the verb to the negative ending with 「ん」, which was covered here.<sup>25</sup> Then, you just attach 「ばかり」 to the end of the verb. For all other conjugations, nothing else is necessary except to just add 「ばかり」 to the verb. The most common verb used with this grammar is 「言う」. It is also usually used with the 「に」 target particle attached to the end of 「ばかり」.

This grammar is completely different from the 「ばかり」 used to express amounts<sup>26</sup> and the 「ばかり」 used to express the proximity of an action.<sup>27</sup>

### Using 「ばかり」 to indicate that one seems to want to do something

- For present, non-negative tense: Conjugate the verb to the 「ん」 negative form<sup>28</sup> and attach 「ばかり」
  - 例) 言<sup>い</sup>う → 言<sup>い</sup>わ<sup>ない</sup> → 言<sup>い</sup>わ<sup>ん</sup> → 言<sup>い</sup>わ<sup>ん</sup>ばかり
- For all other tenses: Simply attach 「ばかり」 to the end of the verb
  - 例) 言<sup>い</sup>わ<sup>な</sup>かつた → 言<sup>い</sup>わ<sup>な</sup>かつたばかり

### Summary of basic conjugations

	Positive		Negative	
Non-Past	言 <sup>い</sup> わ <sup>ん</sup> ばかり	as if to say	言 <sup>い</sup> わ <sup>ない</sup> ばかり	as if [she] doesn't say
Past	言 <sup>い</sup> つたばかり	as if [she] said	言 <sup>い</sup> わ <sup>な</sup> かつたばかり	as if [she] didn't say

### Examples

- (1) ボールは爆発<sup>ばくはつ</sup>せんばかりに、膨<sup>ふく</sup>らんでいた。  
The ball was expanding as if it was going to explode.
- (2) 「あんたと関係<sup>かんけい</sup>ない」と言<sup>い</sup>わ<sup>ん</sup>ばかりに彼女<sup>かのじょ</sup>は彼<sup>かれ</sup>を無視<sup>むし</sup>していた。  
She ignored him as if to say, “You have nothing to do with this.”
- (3) 昨日<sup>きのう</sup>のケンカで何も<sup>なに</sup>言<sup>い</sup>わ<sup>な</sup>かつたばかりに、平気<sup>へいき</sup>な顔<sup>かお</sup>をしている。  
Has a calm face as if [he] didn't say anything during the fight yesterday.

### Using 「めく」 to Indicate an Atmosphere of a State

By now, you're probably thinking, “OK, we've done adjectives and verbs. What about nouns?” As a matter of fact, there is a similar grammar that is used usually for nouns and na-adjectives. It is used

25 See the “A Casual Masculine Type of Negative that Ends in 「ん」” heading in the *More Negative Verbs* lesson.

26 See the “Expressing the opposite of 「だけ」 with 「ばかり」” heading in the *Expressing Amounts* lesson.

27 See the “Saying an Action Was Just Completed Using 「～ばかり」” heading in the *Expressing Time-Specific Actions* lesson.

28 See the “A Casual Masculine Type of Negative that Ends in 「ん」” heading in the *More Negative Verbs* lesson.

to indicate that something is showing the signs of a certain state. Unlike the 「～がる」 grammar, there is no action that indicates anything; merely the atmosphere gives off the impression of the state. Just like the previous grammar we learned in this section, this grammar has a list of commonly used nouns such as 「<sup>なぞ</sup>謎」、 「<sup>ひみつ</sup>秘密」、 or 「<sup>ひにく</sup>皮肉」。 This grammar is used by simply attaching 「めく」 to the noun or na-adjective. The result then becomes a regular u-verb.

**Using 「めく」 to indicate that one seems to want to do something**

- Simply attach 「めく」 to the noun or na-adjective. The result then becomes a regular u-verb.
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>謎 → <sup>なぞ</sup>謎<sup>なぞ</sup>めく

**Summary of basic conjugations**

	Positive		Negative	
Non-Past	<sup>なぞ</sup> 謎めく	puzzling atmosphere	* <sup>なぞ</sup> 謎めかない	not puzzling atmosphere
Past	<sup>なぞ</sup> 謎めいた	puzzled atmosphere	* <sup>なぞ</sup> 謎めかなかった	not puzzled atmosphere

\* I suppose the negative tenses are theoretically possible but probably not practically. The most common tense is by the far the past tense.

**Examples**

- (1) <sup>こうよう</sup>紅葉が<sup>はじ</sup>始まり、すっかり<sup>あき</sup>秋<sup>めいた</sup>めいた<sup>くうき</sup>空気になつてきた。  
With the leaves starting to change color, the air came to become quite autumn like.
- (2) そんな<sup>なぞ</sup>謎<sup>めいた</sup>めいた<sup>かお</sup>顔をされても、うまく<sup>せつめい</sup>説明できないよ。  
Even having that kind of puzzled look done to me, I can't explain it very well, you know.
- (3) いつも<sup>ひにく</sup>皮肉<sup>めいた</sup>めいた<sup>い</sup>言<sup>かた</sup>い方をしたら、みんなを<sup>きら</sup>嫌がらせるよ。  
You'll make everyone dislike you if you keep speaking with that ironic tone, you know.

For a whole slew of additional real world examples, check out the [jeKai entry](http://www.jekai.org/entries/aa/00/np/aa00np21.htm).<sup>29</sup> It states that the grammar can be used for adverbs and other parts of speech but none of the numerous examples show this and even assuming it's possible, it's probably not practiced in reality.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.jekai.org/entries/aa/00/np/aa00np21.htm>

## Formal Expressions of Non-Feasibility (～ざるを得ない、やむを得ない、～かねる)

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### Advanced Expressions of Non-Feasibility

We learned how to express feasibility in the section on the potential form<sup>30</sup> quite a while ways back. In this section, we'll learn some advanced and specialized ways to express certain types of feasibility or the lack thereof. Like much of the grammar in the Advanced Section, the grammar covered here is mostly used for written works and rarely used in regular speech.

### Expressing the Inability to Not Do Using 「～ざるを得ない」

This grammar is used when there's something that just can't be helped and must be done. It is the negative version of the grammar we previously covered<sup>31</sup> for something that has to be done. It uses the negative of the verb 「得る」, meaning “obtain,” to mean roughly, “one cannot obtain not doing of an action.” This means that you can't not do something even if you wanted to. As a result of the use of double negatives, this grammar carries a slight suggestion that you really don't want to do it, but you have to because it can't be helped. Really, the negative connotation is the only difference between this grammar and the grammar we covered in this “have to” section.<sup>32</sup> That, and the fact that this grammar is fancier and more advanced.

This grammar uses an archaic negative form of verbs that ends in 「～ざる」. It is really not used in modern Japanese with the exception of this grammar and some expressions such as 「意図せざる」.<sup>33</sup> The rules for conjugation is the same as the negative verbs we covered in this section,<sup>33</sup> except this grammar attaches 「ざる」 instead. To reiterate, all you have to do is conjugate the verb to the negative form and then replace the 「ない」 with 「ざる」. The two exception verbs are 「する」 which becomes 「せざる」 and 「くる」 which becomes 「こざる」. Finally, all that's left to be done is to attach 「を得ない」 to the verb. It is also not uncommon to use hiragana instead of the kanji.

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30 See the *Potential Form* lesson.

31 See the *Expressing “Must” or “Have To”* lesson.

32 See the *Expressing “Must” or “Have To”* lesson.

33 See the “Doing Something Without Doing Something Else” heading in the *More Negative Verbs* lesson.

## Using 「～ざるを得ない」 for actions that must be done

- To say that you can't not do something replace the 「ない」 part of the negative verb with 「ざる」, then attach 「を得ない」 to the end of the verb.
  - 例) 食<sup>れい</sup>る → 食<sup>た</sup>べない → 食<sup>た</sup>べざる → 食<sup>た</sup>べざる<sup>う</sup>を得ない
  - 例) 行<sup>れい</sup>く → 行<sup>い</sup>かない → 行<sup>い</sup>かざる → 行<sup>い</sup>かざる<sup>う</sup>を得ない
- The two exception verbs 「する」 and 「くる」 become 「せざる」 and 「こざる」 respectively.
  - 例外1) する → せざる → せざる<sup>う</sup>をえない
  - 例外2) くる → こざる → こざる<sup>う</sup>をえない

## Examples

- (1) このテレビがこれ以上壊れたら、新しいのを<sup>か</sup>買<sup>う</sup>わざる<sup>う</sup>を得ないな。  
If this TV breaks even more, there's no choice but to buy a new one.
- (2) ずっと我慢してきたが、この<sup>じょうたい</sup>状態だと歯<sup>はい</sup>医<sup>い</sup>者<sup>しゃ</sup>さんに<sup>い</sup>行<sup>う</sup>かざる<sup>う</sup>を得ない。  
I tolerated it all this time but in this situation, I can't not go to the dentist.
- (3) <sup>じょうし</sup>上司<sup>はなし</sup>の<sup>き</sup>話を聞くと、どうしても<sup>かいがい</sup>海外<sup>しゅつちよう</sup>に出張<sup>しゅつちよう</sup>を<sup>う</sup>せざる<sup>う</sup>を得ないようです。  
Hearing the story from the boss, it seems like I can't not go on a business trip overseas no matter what.

## Expressing the Inability to Stop Doing Something Using 「やむを得ない」

This grammar is very similar to the one we just learned above except that it uses the verb 「止む」 to say that one cannot obtain the stopping of something. Remember that we normally can't just attach the 「を」 direct object particle to verbs, so this is really a set expression. Just like the previous grammar we learned, it is used to describe something that one is forced to do due to some circumstances. The difference here is that this is a complete phrase, which can be used for a general situation that doesn't involve any specific action. In other words, you're not actually forced to do something; rather it describes a situation that cannot be helped. If you have already learned 「仕方がない」 or 「しょうがない」, this grammar means pretty much the same thing. The difference lies in whether you want to say, "Looks like we're stuck" vs. "Due to circumstances beyond our control..."

Since this is a set expression, there are really no grammar points to discuss. You only need to take the phrase and use it as you would any regular subordinate clause.

## Examples

- (1) やむを得ない事由により手続が遅れた場合、必ずご連絡下さい。  
If the paperwork should be late due to uncontrollable circumstance, please make sure to contact us.
- (2) この仕事は厳しいかもしれませんが、最近の不景気では新しい仕事が見つからないのでやむを得ない状態です。  
This job may be bad but with the recent economic downturn, it's a situation where nothing can be done.

## Expressing What Cannot Be Done with 「～かねる」

The meaning and usage of 「かねる」 is covered pretty well in this [jeKai entry](#)<sup>34</sup> with plenty of examples. While much of this is a repetition of what's written there, 「かねる」 is a ru-verb that is used as a suffix to other verbs to express the fact that something is impossible. By impossible, we are not talking so much about physical impossibility, such as creating matter out of nothing, but more about what cannot be accomplished given certain conditions.

「かねる」 is more often used in the negative tense as 「かねない」 to indicate that there is a possibility that the verb in question might happen. As the jeKai entry mentions, this is usually in reference to something bad, which you might express in English as, “there is a risk that...” or “there is a fear that...”

One important thing that the jeKai doesn't mention is how you would go about using this grammar. It's not difficult and you may have already guessed from the example sentences that all you need to do is just attach 「かねる」 or 「かねない」 to the stem of the verb.

### Using 「～かねる」 for things that cannot be done

- To say that something cannot be done using 「かねる」, change the verb to the stem<sup>35</sup> and attach 「かねる」
  - 例) 決める → 決めかねる
  - 例) する → しかねる
- 「かねる」 is the same as a regular ru-verb so you negate it to 「かねない」 to say that something (bad) might happen.
  - 例) なる → なりかねる → なりかねない
  - 例) する → しかねる → しかねない

## Examples

- (1) この場ではちょっと決めかねますので、また別途会議を設けましょう。  
Since making a decision here is impossible, let's set up a separate meeting again.

34 <http://www.jekai.org/entries/aa/00/np/aa00np03.htm>

35 See the “The Stem of Verbs” heading in the *Polite Form and Verb Stems* lesson.

- (2) このままでは、個人情報こじん じょうほうが漏洩ろうえいしかねないので、速やかすみに対応たいおうをお願いねが致しますいた。  
At this rate, there is a possibility that personal information might leak so I request that this be dealt with promptly.



## Tendencies (～がち、～つつ、きらいがある)

Tendencies tend to be that way

In this lesson, we will go over various types of grammar that deal with tendencies. Like much of the Advanced Section, all the grammar in this lesson are used mostly in written works and are generally not used in conversational Japanese.

### Saying Something Is Apt to Occur Using 「～がち」

This is arguably the most useful grammar in this lesson in terms of practically. By that, I mean that it's the only grammar here that you might actually hear in a regular conversation though again, it is far more common in a written context.

With this grammar, you can say that something is likely to occur by simply attaching 「がち」 to the stem of the verb. While, 「がち」 is a suffix, it works in much same way as a noun or na-adjective.<sup>36</sup> In other words, the result becomes a description of something as being likely. This means that we can do things like modifying nouns by attaching 「な」 and other things we're used to doing with na-adjectives.

You can also say that something is prone to be something by simply attaching 「がち」 to the noun.

#### Using 「～がち」 as a description of an action apt to occur

- To describe an action that's prone to occur using 「がち」, attach 「がち」 to the stem of the verb.<sup>37</sup>
  - 例) 見<sup>れい</sup>る → 見<sup>み</sup>がち
  - 例) な<sup>れい</sup>る → な<sup>なり</sup> → な<sup>なり</sup>がち
- To say that something is prone to be something, attach 「がち」 to the appropriate noun
  - 例) 病<sup>れい</sup>気 → 病<sup>びょうき</sup>気<sup>びょうき</sup>がち
- All adjectives that are conjugated with 「～がち」 become a noun/na-adjective

	Positive		Negative	
Non-Past	なりがち	apt to become	なりがちじゃない	is not apt to become
Past	なりがちだった	was apt to become	なりがちじゃなかった	was not apt to become

### Examples

- (1) 確定申告は<sup>かくていしんこく</sup>忘れ<sup>わす</sup>がち<sup>てつぎ</sup>な手続のひとつだ。  
Filing income taxes is one of those process that one is apt to forget.

<sup>36</sup> See the "Saying something is apt to occur using 「～がち」" heading in the *Tendencies* lesson.

<sup>37</sup> See the "The Stem of Verbs" heading in the *Polite Form and Verb Stems* lesson.

- (2) 留守<sup>るす</sup>がち<sup>かてい</sup>なご家庭には、犬よりも、猫<sup>いぬ</sup>の方が<sup>ねこ</sup>おすすめ<sup>ほう</sup>です。  
For families that tend to be away from home, cats are recommended over dogs.
- (3) 父親<sup>ちちおや</sup>は病<sup>びょうき</sup>気が<sup>ち</sup>ちで、みんなが<sup>しんぱい</sup>心配<sup>しんぱい</sup>している。  
Father is prone to illness and everybody is worried.

For more examples, check out the [WWJDIC examples](#).<sup>38</sup>

## Describing an Ongoing Occurrence Using 「～つつ」

「つつ」 is a verb modifier that can be attached to the stem of verbs to express an ongoing occurrence. Though the meaning stays essentially the same, there are essentially two ways to use this grammar. The first is almost identical to the 「～ながら」 grammar.<sup>39</sup> You can use 「つつ」 to describe an action that is taking place while another action is ongoing. However, there are several major differences between 「つつ」 and 「～ながら」. First, the tone of 「つつ」 is very different from that of 「～ながら」 and you would rarely, if ever, use it for regular everyday occurrences. To go along with this, 「つつ」 is more appropriate for more literary or abstract actions such as those involving emotions or thoughts. Second, 「～ながら」 is used to describe an auxiliary action that takes place while the main action is going on. However, with 「つつ」, both actions have equal weight.

For example, it would sound very strange to say the following.

- (誤) テレビを<sup>み</sup>見<sup>つ</sup>つつ、寝<sup>ね</sup>ちゃダメよ！  
*This sounds unnatural.*
- (1) テレビを<sup>み</sup>見<sup>な</sup>ながら、寝<sup>ね</sup>ちゃダメよ！  
Don't watch TV while sleeping!

The second way to use this grammar is to express the existence of a continuing process by using 「ある」, the verb for existence. Everything is the same as before except that you attach 「ある」 to 「つつ」 to produce 「～つつある」. This is often used in magazine or newspaper articles to describe a certain trend or tide.

### Using 「～つつ」 to describe a repetitive occurrence

- To describe an ongoing action using 「つつ」, attach 「つつ」 to the stem of the verb.<sup>40</sup>
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>見<sup>み</sup>る → <sup>み</sup>見<sup>つ</sup>つつ
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>思<sup>おも</sup>う → <sup>おも</sup>思<sup>い</sup> → <sup>おも</sup>思<sup>い</sup>つつ
- To show the existence of a trend or tide, add 「ある」 to 「つつ」
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>な<sup>な</sup>る → <sup>な</sup>なり → <sup>な</sup>なり<sup>つ</sup>つつ → <sup>な</sup>なり<sup>つ</sup>つつ<sup>あ</sup>る

38 [http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/jwb/wwwjdic?1Q%A4%AC%A4%C1\\_0\\_\\_](http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/jwb/wwwjdic?1Q%A4%AC%A4%C1_0__)

39 See the “Using 「ながら」 for Two Concurrent Actions” heading in the *Expressing Time-Specific Actions* lesson.

40 See the “The Stem of Verbs” heading in the *Polite Form and Verb Stems* lesson.

## Examples

- (1) ふつかよ 二日酔いで いた 痛む あたま 頭を お 押し えつつ えつつ、はい トイレに入った。  
Went into the bathroom while holding an aching head from a hangover.
- (2) からだ 体によくないと おも 思いつつ、さいきん 最近 ぜんぜんうんどう は全然運動してない。  
While thinking it's bad for body, haven't exercised at all recently.
- (3) でんき 電気製品 せいひん の はってん 発展につれて、やうりよう ハードディスクの容量 おお はますます大きくなり つつあ っている。  
With the development of electronic goods, hard disk drive capacities are becoming ever larger.
- (4) いま 今の日本では、しゅうしん 終身雇用 こよう や ねんこうじょれつ 年功序列 という こよう 雇用慣行 かんこう が くず 崩れつつある。  
In today's Japan, hiring practices like life-time employment and age-based ranking are tending to break down.

For more examples, check out the [WWWJDIC examples](#).<sup>41</sup>

## Describing a Negative Tendency Using 「きらいがある」

「きらいがある」 is a fixed expression used to describe a bad tendency or habit. I suspect that 「きらい」 here might have something to do with the word for hateful: 「きら嫌い」. However, unlike 「きら嫌い」, which is a na-adjective, the 「きらい」 in this grammar functions as a noun. This is made plain by the fact that the 「が」 particle comes right after 「きらい」, which is not allowed for adjectives. The rest of the phrase is simply expressing the fact that the negative tendency exists.

### Using 「きらいがある」 to describe a negative tendency

- The 「きらい」 in this grammar functions as a noun. 「ある」 is simply the existence verb for inanimate objects.
  - 例) れい 依存症 いぞん の しょう きらいがある。

## Examples

- (1) おお 多くの だいがくせい 大学生は、しめきりび 締切日ぎりぎりまで、しゅくだい 宿題を きらい やらない きらい がある。  
A lot of college students have a bad tendency of not doing their homework until just barely it's due date.
- (2) コーディングが す 好きな かいほつしゃ 開発者は、さくせい ちゃんとしたドキュメント作成と じゅつぶん 十分な おこた テストを おこた 怠る きらい がある。  
Developers that like coding have a bad tendency to neglect proper documents and adequate testing.

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/jwb/wwwjdic?1Q%A4%C4%A4%C4\\_0\\_](http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/jwb/wwwjdic?1Q%A4%C4%A4%C4_0_)

## Advanced Volitional (まい、であろう、かろう)

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Very Volatile Volitional

### More Advanced Volitional Forms

We learned in a previous lesson that the volitional form<sup>42</sup> is used when one is set out to do something. In this section, we're going to cover some other ways in which the volitional form is used, most notably, the negative volitional form.

### Negative Volitional

You may have seen the negative volitional form in a verb conjugation table and wondered, “What the heck is that used for?” Well the answer is not much, or to put it more accurately, there are various ways it can be used but almost all of them are extremely stiff, old-fashioned and seldom used. In fact, it's so seldomly used, this is the [only explanation](#)<sup>43</sup> I found in English on the web or anywhere else. (I also found this [one](#)<sup>44</sup> in Japanese.)

The negative volitional is simply the negative version of the regular volitional. What that means is that there is a will for something to *not* happen or that someone is set out to *not* do something. In other words, because one is trying not to do something, it's probably not going to happen. Essentially, it can also become a very stiff and old-fashioned version of 「でしょう」<sup>45</sup> and 「だろう」.<sup>46</sup> Nobody actually uses this form nowadays but you might still hear it in movies or comics for characters that fit that type of role.

Verbs are conjugated to the negative volitional by simply attaching 「まい」 to the verb. Another alternative is to attach 「まい」 to the stem. The conjugation for the negative volitional is quite different from those we are used to because it is always the last conjugation to apply even for the masu-form. In other words, there is no way to conjugate 「まい」 to the masu-form, you simply attach 「まい」 to the masu-form conjugation.

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42 See the “Making a Motion to Do Something Using the Volitional Form (Casual)” heading in the *Desire and Suggestions* lesson.

43 <http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~jwb/wwwverbinf.html>

44 <http://www.geocities.jp/niwasaburoo/32kanyuuisi.html#32.10>

45 See the “Using 「でしょう」 to Express a Fair Amount of Certainty (Polite)” heading in the *Expressing Various Levels of Certainty* lesson.

46 See the “Using 「でしょう」 and 「だろう」 to Express a Strong Amount of Certainty (Casual)” heading in the *Expressing Various Levels of Certainty* lesson.

## Using 「まい」 to express a will to not do something

- Attach 「まい」 to the end of the verb
- 例) <sup>れい</sup>見る → <sup>み</sup>見る<sup>まい</sup>
- 例) <sup>れい</sup>行く → <sup>い</sup>行く<sup>まい</sup>
- You can also add 「まい」 to the stem
- 例) <sup>れい</sup>する → <sup>し</sup>まい
- 例) <sup>れい</sup>認め<sup>る</sup> → <sup>みと</sup>認め<sup>まい</sup>
- This conjugation must always come last. For masu-form, attach 「まい」 to the masu-form verb.
- 例) <sup>れい</sup>なる → <sup>なり</sup> → <sup>なり</sup>ます → <sup>なり</sup>ます<sup>まい</sup>

## Examples

- (1) <sup>あいて</sup>相手は<sup>けん</sup>剣の<sup>たつじん</sup>達人だ。そう<sup>かんたん</sup>簡単には<sup>まさ</sup>勝て<sup>まい</sup>。  
Your opponent is a master of the sword. I doubt you can win so easily.
- (2) そんな<sup>むちゃ</sup>無茶な<sup>しゅだん</sup>手段は<sup>みと</sup>認め<sup>ます</sup>まい!  
I won't approve of such an unreasonable method!

We already learned that you can use the volitional form to say, “let’s”<sup>47</sup> and to express an attempt do something.<sup>48</sup> But that doesn’t mean you can use the negative volitional to say “let’s not.” Also, while you *can* use it as an attempt to not do something, people just use 「ようにする」<sup>49</sup> unless they wanted to sound old-fashioned. The tone of this grammar carries a very strong determination to not do something, as you’ll see in the examples.

- (1) その<sup>とき</sup>時までは<sup>け</sup>決し<sup>かれ</sup>彼に<sup>あ</sup>会<sup>う</sup>まいと<sup>き</sup>心に決<sup>めて</sup>いた。  
Until that time, I had decided in my heart to not meet him by any means.
- (2) あの<sup>ひと</sup>人は、<sup>にど</sup>二度と<sup>うそ</sup>嘘を<sup>つく</sup>まいと<sup>ちか</sup>誓<sup>った</sup>のです。  
That person had sworn to never lie again.

## Using the Volitional to Express a Lack of Relation

We will now learn a grammar that’s actually practical for everyday use using the negative volitional grammar. Basically, we can use both volitional and negative volitional forms to say it doesn’t matter whether something is going to happen or not. This is done by attaching 「が」 to both the volitional and the negative volitional form of the verb that doesn’t matter.

47 See the “Making a Motion to Do Something Using the Volitional Form (Casual)” heading in the *Desire and Suggestions* lesson.

48 See the “To Attempt to Do Something” heading in the *Trying Something Out or Attempting to Do Something* lesson.

49 See the “Using 「なる」 and 「する」 with verbs” heading in the *Using する and なる with the に Particle* lesson.

### Using the volitional to express a lack of relation

- Attach 「<sup>れい</sup>が」 to the volitional and negative volitional form of the verb.
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>見る → <sup>み</sup>見よう、<sup>み</sup>見まい → <sup>み</sup>見ようが<sup>み</sup>見まいが
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>食べる → <sup>た</sup>食べよう、<sup>た</sup>食べるまい → <sup>た</sup>食べようが<sup>た</sup>食べるまいが

### Examples

- (1) <sup>だいがく</sup> <sup>はい</sup> <sup>はい</sup> あいつが大学に入ろうが入るまいが、<sup>おれ</sup> <sup>かんけい</sup> 俺とは関係ないよ。  
Whether that guy is going to college or not, it has nothing to do with me.
- (2) <sup>じかん</sup> 時間が<sup>あ</sup>ろうが<sup>あ</sup>るまいが、<sup>ま</sup> <sup>あ</sup>間に合わせるしかない。  
Whether there is time or not, there's nothing to do but make it on time.
- (3) <sup>さいきん</sup> 最近のウィルスは <sup>きょうりょく</sup> 強力 で、<sup>じっこう</sup> プログラムを<sup>し</sup>ようが<sup>し</sup>まいが、<sup>み</sup> ページを見  
<sup>かんせん</sup> るだけで感染するらしい。  
The viruses lately have been strong and whether you run a program or not, I hear it  
will spread just by looking at the page.

### Using 「であろう」 to Express Likelihood

We already found out that the negative volitional can be used as kind of a formal version of 「でしょう」<sup>50</sup> and 「だろう」.<sup>51</sup> You may wonder, how would you do the same thing for the volitional? The answer is to conjugate the verb 「ある」 from the formal state of being<sup>52</sup> 「である」 to the volitional to produce 「であろう」. Remember 「でしょう」 can already be used as a polite form, so this form is even a step above that in formality. We'll see what kind of language uses this form in the examples. <sup>むずか</sup> 難

### Using 「であろう」 to express likelihood

- Attach 「であろう」 to the noun, adjective, or verb.
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup> <sup>こんなん</sup> 困難 → <sup>こんなん</sup> 困難であろう
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup> する → するであろう

50 See the “Using 「でしょう」 to Express a Fair Amount of Certainty (Polite)” heading in the *Expressing Various Levels of Certainty* lesson.

51 See the “Using 「でしょう」 and 「だろう」 to Express a Strong Amount of Certainty (Casual)” heading in the *Expressing Various Levels of Certainty* lesson.

52 See the “Using 「である」 to State that Something is So in an Authoritative Tone” heading in the *Formal Expressions* lesson.

## Examples

- (1) 今後<sup>こんご</sup>50年、人間<sup>ねん</sup>が直面<sup>にんげん</sup>する<sup>ちよくめん</sup>であろう問題<sup>もんだい</sup>に正面<sup>しゅうめん</sup>から向き合<sup>む</sup>って、自ら<sup>あ</sup>解決<sup>みずか</sup>をはかりつつ、そのノウハウが次の産業<sup>つぎ</sup>となるシナリオを<sup>さんぎょう</sup>考えたい。<sup>かんが</sup> (from [www.jkokuryo.com](http://www.jkokuryo.com)<sup>53</sup>)

I would like to directly approach problems that humans have **likely encounter** the next 50 years and while measuring solutions, take that knowledge and think about scenarios that will become the next industry.

- (2) もちろん、生徒数<sup>せいとすう</sup>減少<sup>げんしょう</sup>の現在<sup>げんざい</sup>、学科<sup>がっか</sup>の新設<sup>しんせつ</sup>は困難<sup>こんなん</sup>であろうが、職業<sup>しよくぎょう</sup>科<sup>か</sup>の統廃合<sup>とう</sup>や科内<sup>はいごう</sup>コースの改編<sup>かいへん</sup>などで時代<sup>じだい</sup>に合わせた変革<sup>あ</sup>が求められているはずである。<sup>はんかく</sup> (from [www1.normanet.ne.jp](http://www1.normanet.ne.jp)<sup>54</sup>)

Of course, new educational facilities will **likely be difficult** with this period of decreasing student population but with reorganizations of subjects and courses within subjects, there is supposed to be demand for reform fit for this period.

## Using 「かろう」 as Volitional for 「い」 Endings

We learned in the lesson about formal grammar<sup>55</sup> that 「ではない」 was the negative of 「である」. So how would we say something like 「であろう」 but for the negative tense? The answer is to use yet another type of volitional for negative tenses and i-adjectives used only in formal and literary contexts. You can think of this grammar as a very old-fashioned version for i-adjectives and negative 「い」 endings.

The conjugation rule is simple: remove the last 「い」 and attach 「かろう」. You can use it for negative tenses and i-adjectives just like the 「かった」 past conjugation form.

### Using 「かろう」 to express volition for 「い」 endings

- Drop the last 「い」 and attach 「かろう」

- 例) ではな<sup>れい</sup>い → ではな<sup>れい</sup>かろう
- 例) 早<sup>れい</sup>い → 早<sup>れい</sup>かろう

## Examples

- (1) どんな商品<sup>しょうひん</sup>でもネット<sup>はんばん</sup>で販売<sup>うりあげ</sup>するだけで売上が伸びるとい<sup>の</sup>うものではな<sup>れい</sup>かろう。<sup>れい</sup> (from [www.kojii.net](http://www.kojii.net)<sup>56</sup>)

It's not necessarily the case that sales go up just by selling any type of product on the net.

53 <http://www.jkokuryo.com/papers/online/20020107.htm>

54 <http://www1.normanet.ne.jp/~ww100114/library/li-01.htm>

55 See the “Negative of 「である」” heading in the *Formal Expressions* lesson.

56 <http://http://www.kojii.net/opinion/col010205.html>

- (2) <sup>うんどう</sup> <sup>はじめ</sup> <sup>はや</sup> <sup>おそ</sup> <sup>けんこう</sup> <sup>か</sup>  
運動を始めるのが早かろうが遅かろうが、健康にいいというのは変わりません。  
Whether you start exercising early or late, the fact that it's good for you health doesn't change.
- (3) <sup>きゅうじつ</sup> <sup>しごと</sup> <sup>かんけい</sup>  
休日であろ<sup>う</sup>が、なか<sup>ろ</sup>うが、この仕事では関係ないみたい。  
Whether it's a holiday or not, it looks like it doesn't matter for this job.



# Covered by Something (だらけ、まみれ、ずくめ)

It's all covered here

## Special Expressions for Coverings

This is a short lesson to cover several specialized expressions that describe the state of being covered by something. Mostly, we will focus on the differences between 「だらけ」、「まみれ」 and 「ずくめ」.

## Using 「だらけ」 When an Object Is Riddled Everywhere with Something

「だらけ」 is usually used when something is riddled everywhere. It generally carries a negative connotation. As a result, you'll often see 「だらけ」 used with expressions like 「<sup>まちが</sup>間違えだらけ」, 「ゴミだらけ」, or 「<sup>ほこり</sup>埃だらけ」. There is no conjugation rule to cover here, all you need to do is attach 「だらけ」 to the noun that is just all over the place. You should treat the result just like you would a regular noun.

### Using 「だらけ」 to describe the state of being riddled everywhere by something

- Attach 「だらけ」 to the noun that is covering the object or place
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>間違え → <sup>まちが</sup>間違えだらけ (riddled with mistakes)
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>埃 → <sup>ほこり</sup>埃だらけ (riddled with dust)

## Examples

- (1) このドキュメントは<sup>まちが</sup>間違えだらけで、<sup>ぜんぜんやく た</sup>全然役に立たない。  
This document is just riddled with mistakes and is not useful at all.
  - (2) <sup>けいたい</sup>携帯を<sup>ねんかんつか</sup>2年間使ってたら、<sup>きず</sup>傷だらけになった。  
After using cell phone for 2 years, it became covered with scratches.
- ※ Notice the use of the 「の」 particle to modify since 「だらけ」 functions like a noun.
- (3) この<sup>ほこり</sup>埃だらけのテレビをちゃんと<sup>ふ</sup>拭いてくれない？  
Can you properly dust this TV completely covered in dust?

## Using 「まみれ」 to Describe a Covering

「まみれ」 may seem very similar to 「だらけ」 but there are some very important subtle differences. First, it's only used for actually physical objects so you can't say things like 「<sup>まちが</sup>間違えま

みれ」 like you can with 「だらけ」. Plus, you can only use it for things that literally covers the object. In other words, you can't use it to mean "littered" or "riddled" like we have done with 「だらけ」 So you can use it for things like liquids and dust, but you can't use it for things like scratches and garbage.

The grammatical rules are the same as 「だらけ」.

### Using 「まみれ」 to describe a covering by sticking

- Like 「だらけ」, you attach 「まみれ」 to the noun that is doing covering.
  - 例) 血<sup>れい</sup> → 血<sup>ち</sup>まみれ (covered in blood)
  - 例) 油<sup>れい</sup> → 油<sup>あぶら</sup>まみれ (covered in oil)
- You can only use 「まみれ」 for physical objects that literally covers the object.
  - 例) 間違え<sup>まちが</sup>まみれ (not a physical object)
  - 例) ゴミ<sup>れい</sup>まみれ (doesn't actually cover anything)

### Examples

(1) 彼は<sup>かれ</sup>油<sup>あぶら</sup>まみれになりながら、車<sup>くるま</sup>の修理<sup>しゅうり</sup>に頑張<sup>がんば</sup>りました。  
While becoming covered in oil, he worked hard at fixing the car.

(2) たった1キロを走<sup>はし</sup>ただけで、汗<sup>あせ</sup>まみれになるのは情<sup>なさ</sup>けない。  
It's pitiful that one gets covered in sweat from running just 1 kilometer.

### 「ずくめ」 to Express Entirety

The 「大辞林」<sup>だいじりん</sup> dictionary describes exactly what 「ずくめ」 means very well.

名詞<sup>めいし</sup>およびそれに準<sup>じゆん</sup>ずる語句<sup>ごく</sup>に付<sup>つ</sup>いて、何<sup>なに</sup>から何<sup>なに</sup>まで、そればかりであることを表す。すべて…である。「うそ<sup>い</sup>の言いわけ」「いいこと<sup>い</sup>—」「黒<sup>くろ</sup>—の服装<sup>ふくそう</sup>」「結構<sup>けつこう</sup>—」

In other words, 「ずくめ」 describes something that applies to the whole thing. For instance, if we were talking about the human body, the expression "is [X] from head to toe" might be close to what 「ずくめ」 means.

In actuality, 「ずくめ」 is an expression that is rarely used and usually with a color to describe people completely dressed in that color. For example, you can see what is meant by 「白<sup>しろ</sup>ずくめの従業員<sup>じゅうぎょういん</sup>」 in [this 朝日<sup>あさひ</sup> article](http://mytown.asahi.com/wakayama/news01.asp?c=13&kiji=283).<sup>57</sup>

Grammatically, 「ずくめ」 works in exactly the same ways as 「だらけ」 and 「まみれ」.

<sup>57</sup> <http://mytown.asahi.com/wakayama/news01.asp?c=13&kiji=283>

## Using 「ずくめ」 to describe something that applies to the whole thing

- Attach 「ずくめ」 to the noun that applies to the whole thing.
  - 例) <sup>白い</sup>白 → <sup>しろ</sup>白<sup>しろ</sup>ずくめ
  - 例) <sup>いい</sup>いいこと → <sup>いい</sup>いいこと<sup>ずくめ</sup>

### Examples

- (1) <sup>しろ</sup>白<sup>ずくめ</sup>団体<sup>だんたい</sup>は去年<sup>きょねん</sup>ニュースになっ<sup>っ</sup>ていた。  
The organization dressed all in white was on the news last year.
- (2) <sup>おんな</sup>女<sup>こ</sup>の子と <sup>きょうつう</sup>共通<sup>わだい</sup>の話題<sup>じぶん</sup>ができて、<sup>からだ</sup>自分の体<sup>けんこう</sup>も健康<sup>ずくめ</sup>になる。いいこと<sup>ずくめ</sup>ですよ。(from [www.de-sire.net](http://www.de-sire.net)<sup>58</sup>)  
A common topic to talk about with girls is able to be made and one's own body also becomes healthy. It's all good things.

58 <http://www.de-sire.net/food.html>

## Advanced Proximity of Actions (が<sup>はや</sup>早いか、や<sup>いな</sup>否や、そばから)

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And right after this...

### Events That Occur Right After

In this section, we will be covering some advanced grammar that describe an action that takes place right after something else has occurred. I suggest you look over this section if you are really serious about completely mastering Japanese, or if you plan to take the level 1 JLPT exam, or if you enjoy reading a lot of Japanese literature.

### Using 「が<sup>はや</sup>早いか」 to Describe the Instant Something Occurred

The phrase 「が<sup>はや</sup>早いか」 is used to describe something that happened the instant something else occurred.

It is more common to use the word 「すぐ」 with the te-form of the verb to describe the same type of thing but 「が<sup>はや</sup>早いか」 has a more instantaneous nuance. In addition, unlike 「すぐ」, which simply means “soon,” 「が<sup>はや</sup>早いか」 has several distinct characteristics.

First of all, this grammar is used to describe an action that immediately occurs as a direct result of the first verb so it is unnatural to use this grammar for unrelated or naturally occurring events. For instance, you would not use it to say, “It started raining the moment we went out” because it was going to rain whether or not you went out. In addition, this grammar is only used for things that have actually occurred and therefore always employs the past tense. [This site](#)<sup>59</sup> gives a very detailed description of the particulars of this grammar.

To use this grammar, you attach 「が<sup>はや</sup>早いか」 to the first verb, then you describe the event that happened the next instant. While it's conventional to use the non-past tense (dictionary form) for the first verb, you can also use the past tense. For example, you can say either 「<sup>い</sup>言うが<sup>はや</sup>早いか」 or 「<sup>い</sup>言ったが<sup>はや</sup>早いか」. The curious thing about this grammar is that the 「が」 particle comes right after the verb. Remember, you can do this only with this specific grammatical phrase.

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59 <http://www.nihongo2.com/dictionary/046.html>

## Using 「<sup>はや</sup>が早い<sup>か</sup>」 to describe what happened the instant something occurred

- Attach 「<sup>はや</sup>が早い<sup>か</sup>」 to the non-past or past tense of the verb that just occurred
  - 例) 言う<sup>れい</sup> → 言う<sup>い</sup>が早い<sup>はや</sup>か
  - 例) 言う<sup>れい</sup> → 言った<sup>い</sup> → 言った<sup>い</sup>が早い<sup>はや</sup>か
- You can only use this grammar only for events that are directly related.
- You can only use this grammar only for events that actually happened (past tense).
- Refer to [this site](#)<sup>60</sup> for more details.

## Examples

- (1) <sup>かのじょ</sup>彼女は、<sup>きょうじゆ</sup>教授の<sup>すがた</sup>姿を<sup>み</sup>見る<sup>はや</sup>が早い<sup>か</sup>、<sup>きょうしつ</sup>教室から<sup>に</sup>逃げ<sup>で</sup>出した。  
The instant [she] saw the teacher's figure, [she] ran away from the classroom.
- (2) 「<sup>た</sup>食べてみよう」と<sup>い</sup>言う<sup>はや</sup>が早い<sup>か</sup>、<sup>くち</sup>口の中に<sup>なか</sup>放り<sup>ほう</sup>込<sup>こ</sup>んだ。  
The instant [he] said “let's try eating it,” he threw [it] into his mouth.
- (3) 「<sup>た</sup>食べてみよう」と<sup>い</sup>言った<sup>はや</sup>が早い<sup>か</sup>、<sup>くち</sup>口の中に<sup>なか</sup>放り<sup>ほう</sup>込<sup>こ</sup>んだ。  
The instant [he] said “let's try eating it,” he threw [it] into his mouth.

## Using 「<sup>いな</sup>や／や否<sup>いな</sup>や」 to Describe What Happened Right After

The 「<sup>いな</sup>や」 or 「<sup>いな</sup>や否<sup>いな</sup>や」 (やいなや) phrase, when appended to a verb, is used to describe something that happened right after that verb. Its meaning is essential the same as 「<sup>はや</sup>が早い<sup>か</sup>」. It is also another type of grammar that is not really used in regular conversational Japanese.

「<sup>いな</sup>否<sup>いな</sup>」 (read here as 「<sup>いな</sup>いな」) is a fancy Kanji for “no” used in words like 「<sup>ひてい</sup>否定<sup>いな</sup>」 and similar to 「<sup>ふ</sup>不<sup>いな</sup>」. The literal meaning of this grammar is “whether the action was taken or not.” In order words, the second action is taken before you even take the time to determine whether the first event really happened or not.

You can use this grammar by attaching 「<sup>いな</sup>や」 or 「<sup>いな</sup>や否<sup>いな</sup>や」 to the dictionary form of the first verb that occurred. Since this grammar is used for events that already have occurred, the second verb is usually in the past tense. However, you can use the dictionary tense to indicate that the events happen regularly. Refer to [this site](#)<sup>61</sup> to see more examples and details about this grammar.

60 <http://www.nihongo2.com/dictionary/046.html>

61 <http://www.nihongo2.com/dictionary/428.html>

### Using 「や／や否や」<sup>いな</sup> to describe what happened right after

- Attach 「や」 or 「や否や」<sup>いな</sup> (やいなや) to the dictionary form of the first verb that occurred
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>見る → <sup>み</sup>見るや
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>見る → <sup>み</sup>見るや否や<sup>いな</sup>
- This grammar is almost always used for events that actually happened (past tense).
- This grammar can be used with the present tense for regularly occurring events.
- Refer to [this site](#)<sup>62</sup> for more details.

### Examples

- (1) わたし <sup>かお</sup>私 <sup>み</sup>の顔を <sup>みる</sup>見るや、<sup>なに</sup>何か <sup>い</sup>言おうとした。  
[He] tried to say something as soon as he saw my face.
- (2) <sup>とうじょう</sup>搭乗 <sup>き</sup>のアナウンスが <sup>きこえる</sup>聞こえるや否や<sup>いな</sup>、<sup>みんな</sup>みんなが <sup>ほう</sup>ゲートの <sup>はし</sup>方へ <sup>だ</sup>走り出した。  
As soon as the announcement to board was audible, everybody started running toward the gate.

### Using 「そばから」 to Describe an Event That Repeatedly Occurs Soon After

「そばから」 is yet another grammar that describes an event that happens right after another. However, unlike the expressions we have covered so far, 「そばから」 implies that the events are a recurring pattern. For example, you would use this grammar to express the fact that you just clean and clean your room only for it to get dirty again soon after.

Besides this difference, the rules for using this expression is exactly the same as 「<sup>はや</sup>が早い<sup>か</sup>」 and 「<sup>いな</sup>や否や」. Just attach 「そばから」 to the dictionary form of the first verb that occurred. The past tense, though rare, also appears to be acceptable. However, the event that immediately follows is usually expressed with the non-past dictionary form because this grammar is used for repeated events and not a specific event in the past. You can take a look at [this site](#)<sup>63</sup> for more details and examples.

62 <http://www.nihongo2.com/dictionary/428.html>

63 <http://www.nihongo2.com/dictionary/127.html>

### Using 「そばから」 to describe an event that repeatedly occurs soon after

- Attach 「そばから」 to the dictionary form of the first verb that occurred
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>読む → <sup>よ</sup>読むそばから
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>する → <sup>す</sup>するそばから
- This grammar implies that the events occur repeatedly.
- Refer to [this site](#)<sup>64</sup> for more details.

### Examples

- (1) <sup>こども</sup>子供が<sup>そうじ</sup>掃除<sup>す</sup>するそばから<sup>ち</sup>散らかすから、もうあきらめたくなった。  
The child messes up [the room] (repeatedly) as soon as I clean so I already became wanting to give up.
- (2) <sup>きょうかしょ</sup>教科書を<sup>よ</sup>読んだそばから<sup>わす</sup>忘れてしまうので<sup>べんきょう</sup>勉強ができない。  
Forget (repeatedly) right after I read the textbook so I can't study.

64 <http://www.nihongo2.com/dictionary/127.html>

## Others (思いきや、がてら、あげく)

Some other stuff

### Other Grammar

Oh my goodness, we've come at last to the end of the guide! Hopefully, you've managed to get a good grasp of how grammar works in Japanese and how to use them to communicate your thoughts in the Japanese way. In this final section, we'll be covering some left-over grammar that I couldn't fit into a larger category. Don't worry, this won't be the absolute end as there will be an additional miscellaneous section that will contain all sorts of useful information about other various aspects of the language.

### Using 「思いきや」 to Describe Something Unexpected

This is a grammar I learned out of a book and was surprised to actually hear it used in real life on a number of occasions. You use this grammar when you think one thing, but much to your astonishment, things actually turn out to be very different. You use it in the same way as you would express any thoughts, by using the quotation 「と」<sup>65</sup> and 「思う」<sup>おも</sup>. The only difference is that you use 「思いきや」<sup>おも</sup> instead of 「思う」<sup>おも</sup>. There is no tense in 「思いきや」<sup>おも</sup>, or rather, since the results have already went against your expectations, the original thought is implicitly understood to be past tense.

#### Using 「思いきや」 to describe something unforeseen or unexpected

- Attach 「思いきや」<sup>おも</sup> to the thought using the quotation 「と」<sup>66</sup>.
  - 例) ある → あると → あると<sup>おも</sup>思いきや

### Examples

- (1) ひるま ぜったいこ おも ひとり  
昼間だから絶対<sup>こ</sup>込んでいる<sup>おも</sup>と思いきや、一人もいなかった。  
Despite having thought that it must be crowded since it was afternoon, (surprisingly) not a single person was there.
- (2) やす おも かいけい ぜんえんいじょう  
このレストランは安い<sup>やす</sup>と思いきや、会計は5千円以上<sup>かいけい ぜんえんいじょう</sup>だった！  
Thought this restaurant would be cheap but (surprisingly) the bill was over 5,000 yen!

65 See the "The Interpreted Quote" heading in the *Performing and Action on a Subordinate Clause* lesson.

66 See the "The Interpreted Quote" heading in the *Performing and Action on a Subordinate Clause* lesson.



## Using 「～がてら」 to Do Two Things at One Time

This rather formal and seldom-used grammar is used to indicate that two actions were done at the same time. The nuance is a bit different from 「ながら」<sup>67</sup> in that some or all of the time spent on doing one action was also used to do another action as an aside. Remember, 「ながら」 is used to describe two exactly concurrent actions.

The interesting thing about this grammar is that no verb is required. You can just attach it to a noun, and the verb “to do” is inferred. For instance, “while taking a stroll” can simply be expressed as 「<sup>さんぽ</sup>散歩がてら」. In the case where you want to employ a different verb, you also have the option of attaching 「がてら」 to the stem similar to the 「ながら」 usage.<sup>68</sup> In addition, the verb or noun that is accompanied by 「がてら」 is the main action while the following action is the one done on the side. Refer to [this site](#)<sup>69</sup> to see more examples and details about this grammar.

### Using 「～がてら」 to do two things at one time

- Attach 「がてら」 to the noun or verb stem of the main action. In case of a noun, the verb 「する」 is inferred.
  - 例) <sup>さんぽ</sup>散歩 → <sup>さんぽ</sup>散歩がてら
  - 例) <sup>つく</sup>作る → <sup>つく</sup>作り → <sup>つく</sup>作りがてら
- Refer to [this site](#)<sup>70</sup> for more details.

## Examples

- (1) <sup>さんぽ</sup>散歩がてら、<sup>か</sup>タバコを<sup>い</sup>買いに行きました。  
While taking a stroll, I also used that time to buy cigarettes.
- (2) <sup>はくぶつかん</sup>博物館を<sup>み</sup>見がてらに、<sup>みやげ</sup>お土産を<sup>か</sup>買うつもりです。  
While seeing the museum, I plan to also use that time to buy souvenirs.

## Using 「～あげく (挙句)」 to Describe a Bad Result

「あげく」 is a grammar used to describe a result, usually negative, that came about after a great deal of effort. The rule for this grammar is very simple. You modify the verb or noun that was carried out with 「あげく」 and then describe the final result that came about from that verb or noun. Because this grammar is used to describe a result from an action already completed, it is used with the past tense of the verb. 「あげく」 is essentially treated the same as any noun. In other words, you would need the 「の」 particle to modify another noun.

「あげくの果て」 is another stronger version of this grammar. Refer to [this site](#)<sup>71</sup> to see more examples and details about this grammar.

67 See the “Using 「ながら」 for Two Concurrent Actions” heading in the *Expressing Time-Specific Actions* lesson.

68 See the “Using 「ながら」 for Two Concurrent Actions” heading in the *Expressing Time-Specific Actions* lesson.

69 <http://www.nihongo2.com/dictionary/038.html>

70 <http://www.nihongo2.com/dictionary/038.html>

71 <http://www.nihongo2.com/dictionary/002.html>

### Using 「～あげく」 to describe a final result

- Attach 「あげく」 to the verb or noun created the end result (「の」 particle is required for nouns)
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>けんか → <sup>れい</sup>けんかの<sup>かんが</sup>あげく
  - 例) <sup>れい</sup>考えた → <sup>かんが</sup>考えた<sup>かんが</sup>あげく
- Refer to [this site](#)<sup>72</sup> for more details.

### Examples

The brackets show what is being implied by the grammar.

- (1) <sup>じじょう</sup>事情を2時間<sup>じかん</sup>かけて説明<sup>せつめい</sup>をした<sup>あげく</sup>、<sup>なっとく</sup>納得してもらえなかった。  
[After a great deal of] explaining the circumstances for 2 hours, [in the end], couldn't receive understanding.
- (2) <sup>せんせい</sup>先生と相談<sup>そうだん</sup>の<sup>あげく</sup>、<sup>たいがく</sup>退学することにした。  
[After much] consulting with teacher, [in the end], decided on dropping out of school.

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.nihongo2.com/dictionary/002.html>

# Part 7: Miscellaneous

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*And now for something... completely different*

Now that we've covered just about every type of grammar we'll ever need, it's time to cover some other related topics. In this section, we will cover various related topics that don't exactly fit into the conventional grammar education. Take a look, you'll likely find things that are very useful for mastering Japanese.

## Lessons covered in this section

- Casual Patterns and Slang – While it's nearly impossible to cover all the different types of slang in Japanese, this lesson will cover some of the larger common patterns or themes.
- Kansai Dialect – We will go over some of the fundamental differences in grammar and word endings that are used in Kansai dialect, the second-most widely used dialect in Japan.
- Various Conjugation Charts – A handy reference of charts for various conjugations covered throughout this guide.

# ***Casual Patterns and Slang***

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*Yo, what up with the slang?*

## **Casual Patterns and Slang**

So far, for every grammar we have covered, we also went over all the casual variations as well. However, even though we have already covered all the casual forms, truly mastering casual speech in Japanese requires far more than just learning the various casual forms. There are countless numbers of ways in which wordings and pronunciations change as well as differences between male and female speech. Understanding slang also requires knowing various vocabulary that is also growing with every new generation. Many adults would be hard-pressed to understand the kind of slang being used by kids today.

While comprehensively covering slang and relevant vocabulary would require a book in and of itself (a book that would soon become out of date), I'll instead cover some broad patterns and common phenomenon which will at least help you get started in understanding the most common aspects of Japanese slang. There is no particular order in the material presented here and I expect this page to grow continuously as I find different things to cover.

Please note that slang is also heavily influenced by local dialects. Although all the material presented here is valid for the greater Tokyo area, your mileage may vary depending on where you are located.

## **Basic Principles of Slang**

In the world of slang, anything goes and rules that apply to written Japanese are often broken. The most difficult part is that, of course, you can't just say whatever you want. When you break the rules, you have to break it the correct way. Taking what you learned from textbooks or Japanese classes and applying it to the real world is not so easy because it is impossible to teach all the possible ways things can get jumbled up in the spoken language. Learning how to speak naturally with all the correct idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies in a language is something that requires practice with real people in real-world situations. In this section, we'll look at some common patterns and themes that will at least help you get an idea of where the majority of slang originates from.

One thing you'll soon realize when you first start talking to Japanese people in real life is that many sounds are slurred together. This is especially true for males. The fact is voices in instructional material such as language tapes often exaggerate the pronunciation of each letter in order to make aural comprehension easier. In reality, not all the sounds are pronounced as clearly as it should be and things end up sounding different from how it's written on paper.

There is one major driving factor behind the majority of slang in Japanese. The primary goal of most slang is to make things easier to say. In other words, the goal is to reduce or simplify the movement of your mouth. There are two primary ways in which this is accomplished, 1) By making things shorter or, 2) By slurring the sounds together. We have already seen many examples of the first method such as shortening 「かもしれない」 to 「かも」 or preferring 「と」 to the longer conditional forms. The second method makes things easier to say usually by substituting parts of words with sounds that fit better with the sounds surrounding it or by merging two or more sounds together. For example, the same 「かもしれない」 might be pronounced 「かもしんない」 since 「しん」 requires less movement than 「しれ」.

## The fundamental goal of slang is to reduce mouth movement

Let's see some more examples of words that get shortened or slurred. Try saying both versions to get a feel for how the slang saves space and some calories for your mouth.

### Examples

- (A) ここはつまらないから <sup>わたし いえ い</sup>私の家に行こう。  
(B) ここつまないから、<sup>わたし い</sup>私んち行こう。  
(A) まったく、いつまでこんなところで、ぐずぐずするんだよ。  
(B) <sup>わたし い</sup>ったく、いつまでこんなとこで、ぐずぐずすんだよ。

You'll see that a great deal of slang in Japanese stems from this single principle of making things easier to say. It's very natural because it's guided by how your mouth moves. With a fair amount of practice, you should be able to naturally pick up shorter, alternative pronunciations and incorporate them into your own speech.

### Sentence Ordering and Particles (or the Lack Thereof)

While written Japanese already has fairly loose rules regarding sentence order, casual spoken Japanese takes it one step further. A complete sentence requires a verb at the end of the sentence to complete the thought. However, we'll see how this rule is bent in casual conversations.

Conversations are sporadic and chaotic in any language and it's common for people to say the first thing that pops into their head without thinking out the whole proper sentence.

For example, if you wanted to ask what something was, the normal, proper way would be to ask, 「<sup>なに</sup>それは何？」 However, if the first thing that popped into your head, “What the?” then it would be more natural to say 「<sup>なに</sup>何」 first. However, since 「<sup>なに</sup>何はそれ？」 doesn't make any sense (Is what that?), Japanese people simply break it up into what are essentially two sentence fragments asking “what” first (<sup>なに</sup>何?), and then following it up with the explanation of what you were talking about (「それ」 in this case). For the sake of convenience, this is lumped into what looks like one sentence.

### Examples

- (A) <sup>なに</sup>それは何?  
What is that?  
(B) <sup>なに</sup>何それ?  
What? That. (Two sentences lumped into one)

Sometimes, the first thing that pops into your head might be main verb. But if the main verb has already slipped out of your mouth, you're now left with the rest of the sentence without a verb to complete the thought. In conversational Japanese, it's perfectly acceptable to have the verb come

first using the same technique we just saw by breaking them into two sentences. The second sentence is incomplete of course, but that kind of thing is common in the speech of any language.

- (1) 見た？ あの<sup>み</sup>人<sup>ひと</sup>？  
Did you see? That guy?
- (2) もう<sup>た</sup>食べた？ 昨日<sup>きのう</sup>買った<sup>か</sup>アイス。  
You ate it already? The ice cream I bought yesterday.

## Using 「じゃん」 Instead of 「じゃない」 to Confirm

「じゃん」 is an abbreviation of 「じゃない」, the negative conjugation for nouns and na-adjectives. However, this only applies to 「じゃない」 used in the following fashion.

- (1) サラリーマンだから、<sup>ざんぎょう</sup>残業はたくさんするん<sup>じゃん</sup>じゃない？  
Because he's a salary man, doesn't he do a lot of overtime?

The important thing to note about the example above is that 「じゃない」 here is actually confirming the positive. In fact, a closer translation is, "Because he's a salary man, he probably does a lot of overtime." But it's still a question so there's a slight nuance that you are seeking confirmation even though you are relatively sure.

「じゃん」 is a shorter slang for expressing the same type of thing except it doesn't even bother to ask a question to confirm. It's completely affirmative in tone.

In fact, the closest equivalent to 「じゃん」 is 「じゃない」 used in the following fashion.

- (2) まあ、いい<sup>じゃん</sup>じゃない。  
Well, it's probably fine (don't you think?).

This type of expression is the *only* case where you can attach 「じゃない」 directly to i-adjectives and verbs. Once you actually hear this expression in real life, you'll see that it has a distinct pronunciation that is different from simply using the negative. Plus, you have to realize that this type of 「じゃない」 sounds rather mature and feminine, unlike 「じゃん」, which is gender-neutral.

Like the above, specialized use of 「じゃない」, you can also attach 「じゃん」 directly to verbs and i-adjectives as well as the usual nouns and na-adjectives. Because slang is usually created to make things easier, it's not surprising that the rules for using 「じゃん」 are so lax and easy.

### Summary

- Though derived from 「じゃない」, 「じゃん」 is always used to confirm the positive.
- It can be attached to the end of any sentence regardless of whether it ends in a noun, adjective, verb, or adverb.

Finally, let's get to the examples. Hopefully, you can see that 「じゃん」 is basically saying something along the lines of, "See, I'm right, aren't I?"

## Examples

- (1) ほら、やっぱりレポートを書かないとだめじゃん。  
See, as I thought, you have to write the report.
- (2) 誰もいないからここで着替えてもいいじゃん。  
Since there's nobody, it's probably fine to change here.
- (A) たかし君は、ここにいる？  
Is Takashi here?
- (B) 知らない。  
Dunno.
- (A) あっ！やっぱ、いるじゃん！  
Ah! See, he is here!

There's also another variation, which attaches the question marker as well. The meaning is mostly the same but it adds more to the questioning, confirming tone.

- (A) 駅の近くにカラオケがあるじゃんか。  
There's a karaoke place near the station, right?
- (B) うん。  
Yeah.
- (A) あそこのすぐ隣だ。  
It's right next to there.

## Using 「つ」 for 「という」

As we learned in the defining and describing section,<sup>1</sup> 「いう」 serves many more functions than the equivalent English verb, “to say.” It is used all the time and therefore, it's not too surprising that a number of variations and slang have developed. Here's one more that I felt was too “slangy” to cover so early at that point of the guide.

This may sound hard to believe but if you really slur 「という」 together, it becomes something resembling 「つ」. Or least, that's what somebody thought when he or she began replacing 「という」 with 「つ」 or in some case 「つう」.

Now, in my opinion, 「つ」 is a lot harder to say than 「という」 so using it like a native might take a bit of practice. Rather than making things easier to say, as is usually the case, the real purpose of this substitution is to sound rougher because 「つ」 has a harder, hissing sound. This is ideal for when you're pissed or for that young and rough image you've always wanted. As you might expect, this type of speech is usually used by males or very tough females.

<sup>1</sup> See the *Defining and Describing* lesson.

## Examples

- (1) つうか、なんでお前<sup>まえ</sup>がここにいんのよ！  
Or rather, why are you here?!
- (2) 宿題<sup>しゅくだい</sup>で時間<sup>じかん</sup>がないつってんのに、みきちちゃんとデートしにいったらしい。  
Although he's saying he doesn't have time due to homework, I hear he went on a date with Miki-chan.
- (3) 明日<sup>あした</sup>は試験<sup>しけん</sup>だぞ。つっても、勉強<sup>べんきょう</sup>はしてないだろうな。  
Yo, tomorrow's the test. Even if I say that, you probably didn't study anyway, huh?
- (4) だから、違う<sup>ちが</sup>んだつうの！  
Like I said, you're wrong!

If you want even more emphasis, you can even add a small 「つ」. This usually means you are really at the brink of your patience.

- (4) だから、違う<sup>ちが</sup>んだつつうの！  
Like I said, you're wrong!

## Using 「つてば」 and 「つたら」 to Show Exasperation

「つてば」 and 「つたら」 is yet another type of abbreviation for 「という」 similar to 「つて」 as discussed in the defining and describing section.<sup>2</sup> In this case, it's an abbreviation of the conditional form of 「という」, which is 「といえど」 and 「といつたら」. By using this abbreviation, you are essentially saying something along the lines of, “If I told you once, I told you a million times!” You can use this expression when you are tired of repeating yourself or when you are exasperated with somebody for not listening to you.

## Examples

- (1) もう行く<sup>い</sup>つてば！  
I told you I'm going already!
- (2) あなたつたら、いつも忘<sup>わす</sup>れるんだから。  
You're always forgetting.

## Using 「なんか」 Just About Everywhere

By now, you're probably aware that 「何」<sup>なに</sup> can be either read as 「なに」 or 「なん」 depending on what comes after it such as 「何色」<sup>なにいろ</sup> (なにいろ) versus 「何人」<sup>なんにん</sup> (なんにん). In the case of 「何か」<sup>なに</sup>, while 「なにか」 is the correct reading, it is often contracted to just 「なんか」 in casual speech.

<sup>2</sup> See the “Using 「つて」 or 「て」 for 「という」” heading in the *Defining and Describing* lesson.



(A) **なにか**<sup>た</sup>食べる？  
Eat something?

(B) **なんか**<sup>た</sup>食べる？  
Eat something?

However, 「なんか」 also has a function similar to the word “like” in English. By “like,” I’m not talking about the actual word but the kind that has no meaning and some people use just about anywhere in the sentence. Similarly, 「なんか」 can also be used as a filler without any actual meaning. For instance, take a look at the example below.

(1) 今日は、**なんか**<sup>いそが</sup>忙しいみたいよ。  
I guess he’s like busy today.

While 「なんか」 is a shorter version of 「なにか」, only 「なんか」 can be used in this way as a filler.

(誤) 今日は、**なにか**<sup>いそが</sup>忙しいみたいよ。  
「なにか」 cannot be used as a filler word.

Let’s take a look at a few more examples.

## Examples

(1) **なんか**ね。お風呂<sup>ふろ</sup>って超<sup>ちょう</sup>気持ち<sup>きもち</sup>いいよね！  
Like, baths feel really good, huh?

(2) お母<sup>かあ</sup>さんが、**なんか**明日<sup>あした</sup>まで戻<sup>もど</sup>らないんだってよ。  
Mom said she’s not coming back until like tomorrow.

(3) **なんか**さ。ボブは、私<sup>わたし</sup>のこと**なんか**本当<sup>ほんとう</sup>に好き<sup>す</sup>かな？  
Hey like, do you really think that Bob likes somebody like me?

## Showing Contempt for an Action with 「～やがる」

「やがる」 is a verb suffix used to indicate hatred or contempt for the person doing the action. Unlike the rest of the slang covered here, this extremely strong language is not used in normal, everyday conversations. You will probably never hear this expression outside of movies, comic books, games, and the like. However, it is covered here so that you can understand when it is used in those mediums.

In order to use 「やがる」, you simply attach it to the stem of the verb. After that, 「やがる」 conjugated just like a regular u-verb.

## Examples

(1) あんなやつに**負け**<sup>ま</sup>**やが**って。じゃ、どうすんだよ？  
Losing to a guy like that. Well, what are you going to do?

- (2) やる<sup>き</sup>か？ だったらさっさと<sup>き</sup>来<sup>き</sup>やがれ！  
You want to fight? If so, then hurry up and come on!

## ***Kansai Dialect***

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*This section will be completed at a future date.*

## ***Various Conjugation Charts***

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*This section will be completed at a future date.*

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*This section will be completed at a future date.*

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