JP

LANGUAGE COURSE

Japanese Grammar 1

12 Chapters

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Generated with Claude

JAPANESE GRAMMAR 1

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🧱 How Japanese Sentences Work — にほんごの ぶんの しくみ

*You already know Japanese as ready-made phrases from Japanese Basic Conversation 1. This course turns those phrases into rules you can apply to sentences you have never heard. Before any particle or verb ending, you need the **shape** of a Japanese sentence, because it is built almost back to front compared with English. This chapter gives you that shape and nothing else: the rest of the course fills it in, one piece per chapter.*

The rule in one box A Japanese sentence ends with its **verb** (or です). Everything else comes before it, and each noun is **tagged by a small word called a particle** that says what job the noun does. The order of the tagged parts can move; the verb cannot. Formula: **[topic は] [other parts + particles] verb.**

1. The verb goes last

English puts the verb in the middle (*I eat sushi*): Subject, Verb, Object. Japanese puts it at the end: Subject, Object, Verb (SOV).

ENGLISH (S V O)	JAPANESE (S O V)	SAY IT
I eat sushi.	わたしは すしを たべます。	*watashi wa sushi o tabemasu*
Anna drinks tea.	アンナさんは おちゃを のみます。	*Anna-san wa ocha o nomimasu*
My father reads the newspaper.	ちちは しんぶんを よみます。	*chichi wa shinbun o yomimasu*

Listen to the end

> Because the verb comes last, you only learn whether a sentence is positive, negative, past or a question when it finishes: *たべます* (eats) or *たべません* (doesn't eat). That is why Japanese listeners wait patiently for the end, and why *ます* / *ません* and *か* carry so much weight in this course.

2. Particles tag the jobs

Where English uses word order to show who did what, Japanese uses **particles**, short words placed straight after a noun. The same three words can then appear in any order and the meaning stays clear:

JAPANESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
いぬが ねこを みます。	*inu ga neko o mimasu*	The dog looks at the cat.
ねこを いぬが みます。	*neko o inu ga mimasu*	The dog looks at the cat. (same meaning, the cat is stressed)

が tags the one doing, *を* tags the one done to. Swap the nouns and the particles, and the meaning changes: *ねこが いぬを みます* is "the cat looks at the dog". The particles are the subject of Japanese Grammar 1, chapters 4 to 6.

3. Topic and comment

The most important particle for a beginner is **は** (written *は*, pronounced *wa*). It marks the **topic**: what the sentence is about. The rest of the sentence is a **comment** on that topic. English speakers hear it as "as for ...".

TOPIC (は)	COMMENT	ENGLISH
わたしは *watashi wa*	がくせいです。 *gakusei desu*	As for me, (I) am a student.
この ラーメンは *kono rāmen wa*	おいしいです。 *oishii desu*	As for this ramen, (it) is delicious.

TOPIC (は)	COMMENT	ENGLISH
きょうは *kyō wa*	あめです。 *ame desu*	As for today, (it) is rain. = It's raining today.

Watch out: は is not "the subject"

Textbooks often translate *は* as a subject marker, but the real job is "this is what I am talking about". The last example, *きょうは あめです*, shows it: "today" is not what is raining, it is the topic. Japanese Grammar 1, chapter 4, separates the topic marker *は* from the subject marker *が* carefully.

4. What Japanese leaves out

Compared with English, Japanese is wonderfully economical. Four things you may be used to simply do not exist:

ENGLISH HAS IT	JAPANESE	EXAMPLE
Articles (a, the)	none	ほんを よみます。 *hon o yomimasu* = I read a book / the book / books.
Plural endings (-s)	none (the noun stays as it is)	ねこが います。 *neko ga imasu* = There is a cat / There are cats.
Grammatical gender (he/she, la/le)	none	せんせいは しんせつです。 *sensei wa shinsetsu desu* = The teacher (he or she) is kind.
Verb agreement (I am, he is)	the verb is the same for every person	わたしも あなたも いきます。 *watashi mo anata mo ikimasu* = I go, and you go.

When a number or the situation makes the count important, Japanese adds it with **counters** (*ひとり, ふたり, さんにん* for people; Japanese Grammar 1, chapter 3). The noun itself never changes.

5. Dropped subjects

Japanese drops any part the listener can work out: especially "I" and "you". The result is a short sentence that would be incomplete in English but is perfectly natural in Japanese.

SHORT JAPANESE	SAY IT	WHAT IT CAN MEAN
いきます。	*ikimasu*	(I) will go. / (We) are going. / (He) goes. (context decides)
たべましたか。	*tabemashita ka*	Did (you) eat?
いいえ、たべていません。	*iie, tabete imasen*	No, (I) haven't eaten.

> **Avoid saying あなた**
>
> Because the subject is dropped so readily, repeatedly saying *あなた* ("you") sounds pushy or even rude. Use the person's name plus *さん* (*Tanaka-san*), or leave the subject out. The word for "I", *わたし*, is safe in polite speech, but you will drop it often once the context is clear.

6. Three levels of politeness, in outline

The same sentence can be said at different levels of formality. This course uses the middle level, the **polite style** (*ます / です*), because it is safe with everyone. The other two levels are previewed here, and treated later.

LEVEL	EXAMPLE: "I EAT / GO"	SAY IT	WHERE YOU WILL MEET IT
Plain (casual)	たべる / いく	*taberu / iku*	friends, family, anime; Japanese Grammar 2
Polite (the style of this course)	たべます / いきます	*tabemasu / ikimasu*	strangers, shops, work; Japanese Grammar 1
Honorific / humble (keigo)	めしあがります / まいります	*meshiagarimasu / mairimasu*	formal service and business; Japanese Grammar 4

The level changes the **verb ending and a few words**, but the sentence shape stays the same: topic, other parts with particles, verb last.

🗣️ In Use — つかいかた

The shape in real exchanges. Read each aloud and spot the verb at the end.

① At the café

A:

なにを のみますか。

Nani o nomimasu ka.

What will (you) drink?

B:

コーヒーを のみます。

Kōhī o nomimasu.

(I) will drink coffee.

② Introducing yourself

A:

わたしは ジョンです。

Watashi wa Jon desu.

As for me, (I) am John.

B:

スミスさんは ごがくせいですか。

Sumisu-san wa gogakusei desu ka.

As for Mr/Ms Smith, (are you) a student?

③ Dropped subject

A:

あした いきますか。

Ashita ikimasu ka.

(Will you) go tomorrow?

B:

はい、いきます。

Hai, ikimasu.

Yes, (I) will go.

📋 Quick Reference

IDEA	PATTERN	EXAMPLE
Verb last	… + verb。	ごはんを たべます。 *gohan o tabemasu*
Topic	〜は …	わたしは がくせいです。 *watashi wa gakusei desu*
Particle after a noun	noun + が / を / に …	ねこが さかなを たべます。 *neko ga sakana o tabemasu*
Question	sentence + か	たべますか。 *tabemasu ka*
Drop what is obvious	leave out I / you	いきます。 *ikimasu*
Polite style	〜ます / 〜です	たべます / がくせいです

✍️ Practice — れんしゅう

Try each one, then click to check.

1. Where does the verb go in a Japanese sentence?

▼ Show answer

At the end of the sentence.

2. Put in order: たべます / すしを / わたしは

▼ Show answer

わたしは すしを たべます。 (watashi wa sushi o tabemasu): topic first, object next, verb last.

3. What does いぬが ねこを みます mean? And ねこが いぬを みます?

▼ Show answer

The dog looks at the cat; the cat looks at the dog. The particle が marks the one doing, を the one done to.

4. Does ほんを よみます mean "I read a book", "I read the book" or "I read books"?

▼ Show answer

Any of them. Japanese has no articles or plural endings; context decides.

5. Translate: きょうは あめです。

▼ Show answer

"It's raining today." Literally "As for today, (it) is rain." *きょう* is the topic.

6. Which subject is dropped in たべましたか。?

▼ Show answer

"You": *Did (you) eat?* In a question, the dropped subject is usually the listener.

7. Why is it better to say たなかさん than あなた?

▼ Show answer

あなた ("you") can sound pushy or rude; a name plus *さん* is polite, and the subject can often be dropped altogether.

8. Name the three politeness levels in order, from casual to most formal.

▼ Show answer

Plain (*たべる*), polite (*たべます*), honorific/humble (*めしあがります*). This course uses the polite level.

9. Make a question: あした いきます。 → ?

▼ Show answer

あした いきますか。 (ashita ikimasu ka): add *か* at the end; no word order change is needed.

10. Say in Japanese: "As for me, (I) am a student."

▼ Show answer

わたしは がくせいです。 (watashi wa gakusei desu)

Coming up in Chapter 2: Sounds and Writing. The beat (mora) that sets Japanese rhythm, long vowels, the small っ, voiced marks, combined sounds like きゃ, how the three scripts mix, and pitch accent in outline.

📢 Sounds and Writing — おとと もじ

*This is the only sound chapter in the course, so it is a compact map rather than a second kana course. It re-sorts what Hiragana 1-3 and Katakana 1-2 taught you, one symbol at a time, into the few ideas grammar depends on: the **mora** (the beat of Japanese), long vowels, the small っ, voiced marks, combined sounds, and how the three scripts share a sentence. Every later chapter assumes you have these.*

The rule in one box Japanese is counted in **beats called morae** (はく), each lasting about the same time. One kana = one beat, except the small や ゆ よ (which join the kana before them) and the small っ (which takes a beat of its own). **Length is meaning:** a long vowel or a doubled consonant makes a different word.

1. The mora: counting the beat

English counts syllables and stresses some of them. Japanese gives every beat equal time. ん (the nasal) and the small っ each get a full beat, and a long vowel gets two.

WORD	SAY IT	BEATS	COUNT
さくら	*sakura*	3	sa · ku · ra
にほん	*nihon*	3	ni · ho · n
きって	*kitte*	3	ki · t · te
とうきょう	*Tōkyō*	4	to · u · kyo · u
がっこう	*gakkō*	4	ga · k · ko · u

Tap it out

The quickest way to hear Japanese rhythm is to tap once per beat while you say a word. *Tōkyō* gets four taps, not two: *to-u-kyo-u*. If your tapping and the speaker's agree, your length is right.

2. Long vowels

A long vowel is a vowel held for two beats. In hiragana it is written by adding a vowel kana. The addition depends on the vowel:

LONG VOWEL	WRITTEN WITH	EXAMPLE	SAY IT
aa	あ	おかあさん (mother)	*okāsan*
ii	い	おにいさん (older brother)	*onīsan*
uu	う	くうき (air)	*kūki*
ee	え (or い)	おねえさん (older sister), せんせい (teacher)	*onēsan, sensei*
oo	う (or お)	ありがとう (thank you), おおきい (big)	*arigatō, ōkii*

Katakana shows every long vowel with the bar ー: コーヒー kōhī (coffee), ケーキ kēki (cake).

Long and short vowels make different words, so length matters:

SHORT	LONG
おばさん *obasan* aunt	おばあさん *obāsan* grandmother
おじさん *ojisan* uncle	おじいさん *ojīsan* grandfather
ビル *biru* building	ビール *bīru* beer
ゆき *yuki* snow	ゆうき *yūki* courage

Watch out: romaji spellings

Romaji shows a long vowel in different ways: a bar over the vowel (*ō*, used in this course), a doubled vowel (*oo*), or *ou* / *oh* in some signs and passports (*Tokyo* may be written with no marks at all). The

> kana tell you the truth; romaji is only a guide.

3. The small っ: a held consonant

A small っ is a one-beat pause that doubles the consonant after it. In romaji it appears as the consonant written twice. It occurs only before the sounds **k, s, t, p** (and their variants *sh, ch, ts*).

WITHOUT っ	WITH っ
きて *kite* (come!)	きって *kitte* (stamp)
さか *saka* (slope)	さっか *sakka* (writer)
おと *oto* (sound)	おっと *otto* (husband)
はか *haka* (grave)	はっか *hakka* (mint)

Other everyday examples: ざっし zasshi (magazine), ちょっと chotto (a little), にっぽん Nippon (Japan, the formal reading). To say the double consonant, hold the mouth in position for a full beat, then release: *kit-te*.

4. Voiced and half-voiced marks

Two small marks change a kana's consonant. The **dakuten** ゛ (two dots) voices it; the **handakuten** ゜ (a circle) is used only on the *は*-row.

PLAIN	WITH ゛	WITH ゜
か ka · き ki · く ku · け ke · こ ko	が ga · ぎ gi · ぐ gu · げ ge · ご go	—
さ sa · し shi · す su · せ se · そ so	ざ za · じ ji · ず zu · ぜ ze · ぞ zo	—
た ta · ち chi · つ tsu · て te · と to	だ da · ぢ ji · づ zu · で de · ど do	—

PLAIN	WITH ゛	WITH ゜
は ha · ひ hi · ふ fu · へ he · ほ ho	ば ba · び bi · ぶ bu · べ be · ぼ bo	ぱ pa · ぴ pi · ぷ pu · ぺ pe · ぽ po

Two rare kana, ぢ and づ, sound the same as じ and ず and appear only in a few words (はなぢ nosebleed, つづく to continue). In ordinary writing じ and ず are used.

> **Words change in compounds**
>
> When two words join, the second one often becomes voiced: て + かみ → てがみ tegami (letter); ひと + ひと → ひとびと hitobito (people). This voicing, called *rendaku*, explains why some counters change later (*ひとつ, さんぼん, ろっぽん*); Japanese Grammar 1, chapter 3, shows the pattern.

5. Combined sounds

A kana of the *-i* column followed by a **small や ゆ よ** makes a single beat with a *y* glide. Write the small kana at half size.

	+ や (YA)	+ ゆ (YU)	+ よ (YO)
き	きゃ kya	きゅ kyu	きょ kyo
し	しゃ sha	しゅ shu	しょ sho
ち	ちゃ cha	ちゅ chu	ちょ cho
に	にゃ nya	にゅ nyu	にょ nyo
ひ	ひゃ hya	ひゅ hyu	ひょ hyo
み	みゃ mya	みゅ myu	みょ myo
り	りゃ rya	りゅ ryu	りょ ryo
ぎ · じ · び · ぴ	ぎゃ じゃ びゃ ぴゃ gya ja bya pya	ぎゅ じゅ びゅ ぴゅ gyu ju byu pyu	ぎょ じょ びょ ぴょ gyo jo byo pyo

The size of the small kana is the whole difference between one beat and two:

TWO BEATS (FULL SIZE)	ONE BEAT (SMALL ゃゅょ)
びよういん *biyōin* (beauty salon: bi · yo · u · i · n)	びょういん *byōin* (hospital: byo · u · i · n)
りよう *riyō* (use)	りょう *ryō* (dormitory; a quantity)

Everyday examples: きょう kyō (today), しゅみ shumi (hobby), りょこう ryokō (travel), ひゃく hyaku (100), おちゃ ocha (tea).

6. Three scripts, one sentence

A normal Japanese sentence mixes three scripts, each with a job:

SCRIPT	USED FOR	EXAMPLE
Hiragana	grammar words (particles), verb and adjective endings, native words without kanji	は · を · ます · です · から
Katakana	loanwords, foreign names, sounds, emphasis	コーヒー · テレビ · アンナ
Kanji	the core of nouns, verbs and adjectives: the meaning part	私 · 食 · 日本

Put together: わたしは コーヒーを のみます。 shows hiragana and katakana. With the kanji it becomes 私は コーヒーを 飲みます。 In this course kanji appear **in brackets after the kana** (わたし(私), のみます(飲みます)), so you can learn to recognise them gradually; once the kanji courses have taught a character, it will appear on its own with its reading in brackets.

> **No spaces, but we add them**
>
> Written Japanese has no spaces between words: the change from kanji to kana shows where words begin and end. Because beginners read kana-only text, this course puts a space between phrases (わ

たしは すしを たべます) to help your eye. In a real book it would run together: わたしはすしをたべます.

Three spellings that differ from their sound

The particle **は** is spelled *ha* but read **wa**; the particle **を** is read **o**; the particle **へ** is read **e**. This applies only to the particles: はな (flower) is *hana*. Punctuation: 。 is the full stop, 、 the comma, and 「」 are quotation marks.

7. Pitch accent, in outline

Japanese words carry a **pitch pattern**: some beats are high, some low, and the pattern is part of the word. It is not stress (loudness), and it differs by region. In standard (Tokyo) speech, the first two beats always differ in pitch, and once the pitch drops in a word it does not rise again. A few pairs show why it matters:

WORD	PITCH	MEANING
あめ *ame*	high · low	rain (雨)
あめ *ame*	low · high	candy (飴)
はし *hashi*	high · low	chopsticks (箸)
はし *hashi*	low · high	bridge (橋)

You do not need to master pitch now: context removes most confusion, and a Japanese listener will understand you without it. A good habit is to **listen for it** and copy the pattern of words you learn, especially from a dictionary with audio or from the speakers in your Japanese Basic Conversation courses.

Two small sound habits to copy

The endings **です** and **ます** are usually said with the final *u* almost silent: *des'* and *mas'*. And **ん** sounds like *m* before *p, b, m* (さんぽ *sampo*, "a walk"). Both happen naturally when you speak at normal speed.

In Use — つかいかた

Pairs that only differ in length. Listen to the beats.

① Grandmother or aunt?

A:

あのひとは おばさんですか。

Ano hito wa obasan desu ka.

Is that person your aunt?

B:

いいえ、おばあさんです。

Iie, obāsan desu.

No, she is my grandmother.

② Building or beer?

A:

ビールを おねがいします。

Bīru o onegai shimasu.

A beer, please.

B:

ビルじゃありません、ビールですね。

Biru ja arimasen, bīru desu ne.

Not "building", but beer, right?

③ Hospital or beauty salon?

A:

きょうは びょういんへ いきます。

Kyō wa byōin e ikimasu.

Today I'm going to the hospital.

B:

びよういんじゃありませんか。

Biyōin ja arimasen ka.

Isn't it the beauty salon?

Quick Reference

FEATURE	HOW IT IS WRITTEN	EXAMPLE
Mora (beat)	one kana = one beat	にほん ni-ho-n (3)

FEATURE	HOW IT IS WRITTEN	EXAMPLE
Long vowel	add あ い う え (お) or ー	おかあさん · コーヒー
Doubled consonant	small っ before k s t p	きって · ざっし
Voiced sound	゛	か → が
P-sound	゜ on the は-row	は → ぱ
Combined sound	small や ゆ よ	きょう · りょこう
Particle spellings	は=wa, を=o, へ=e	わたしは · ほんを · がっこうへ
Scripts	hiragana grammar, katakana loanwords, kanji meaning	私は コーヒーを 飲みます

✍️ Practice — れんしゅう

Try each one, then click to check.

1. How many beats are in がっこう?

▼ Show answer

4: ga · k · ko · u. The small っ and the long う each count as a beat.

2. What is the difference between おじさん and おじいさん?

▼ Show answer

Uncle (*ojisan*) against grandfather (*ojīsan*); the long *ī* changes the word.

3. How is a long vowel written in katakana?

▼ Show answer

With the bar ー: コーヒー, ケーキ.

4. Read aloud and give the meaning: きて and きって.

▼ Show answer

kite = come!; *kitte* = stamp (with a held "t").

5. Add the mark: は → ? (b-sound) and ? (p-sound).

▼ Show answer

ば (with ゛) and ぱ (with ゜).

6. How many beats: びょういん and びよういん?

▼ Show answer

4 (byo · u · i · n) against 5 (bi · yo · u · i · n).

7. Write in hiragana: "today" (*kyō*) and "hobby" (*shumi*).

▼ Show answer

きょう and しゅみ.

8. Which script would you use for *coffee*, which for the ending of *tabemasu*, and which for the meaning part of *eat*?

▼ Show answer

Katakana (コーヒー); hiragana (ます); kanji (食 in 食べます).

9. How are the particles は, を and へ pronounced?

▼ Show answer

wa, *o* and *e*. (Inside words, *は* is still *ha*, as in はな.)

10. True or false: pitch accent is the same thing as English stress.

▼ Show answer

False. Pitch accent is a high/low pattern of the beats, not extra loudness, and it differs by region.

Coming up in Chapter 3: Nouns, Numbers and Counters. No plurals, but you will count everything: numbers to 10,000, the general counter ～つ, the common counters for people, flat things, long things and machines, and yen, times and dates.

🔢 Nouns, Numbers and Counters — めいし・かず・じょすうし

*Chapter 1 told you that Japanese nouns have no plural. This chapter shows what Japanese does instead: it **counts**, and it counts with a small word attached to the number, called a **counter**. You will learn the numbers up to 10,000, the all-purpose counter ～つ, five everyday counters, and then use the same machinery for money, clock times and dates.*

The rule in one box A noun never changes for number. To say how many, put **number + counter** *after the noun and its particle*, before the verb: **りんごを みっつ かいます** (I buy three apples). The counter depends on the **kind of thing** counted (people, flat things, long things, machines), and the number and counter often change sound when they meet.

1. No plural, but group endings for people

A bare noun can be singular or plural: ほん hon is "a book", "the book" or "books". Only for **people and (sometimes) animals** there are group endings:

ENDING	USE	EXAMPLE	SAY IT
～たち	a group of people, the usual plural	こどもたち · せんせいたち	*kodomo-tachi* (children)
～たち with a pronoun	we, you (plural)	わたしたち · あなたたち	*watashi-tachi, anata-tachi*
～ら	slightly rougher or written; they	かれら	*kare-ra* (they, mostly male or mixed)
Repeating the noun	"many, various" (a few words only)	ひとびと · やまやま	*hitobito, yamayama* (people; mountains)

Watch out: たち is not used for things or for "a lot"

～たち goes on people (*せんせいたち*, teachers). Never put it on *ほん* or *くるま*. And when the number is stated, you do not need it: *がくせいが さんにん います* (There are three students), not *がくせいたちが さんにん*.

2. Numbers 0 to 10

0	1	2	3	4	5
ゼロ / れい *zero / rei*	いち *ichi*	に *ni*	さん *san*	よん / し *yon / shi*	ご *go*

6	7	8	9	10
ろく *roku*	なな / しち *nana / shichi*	はち *hachi*	きゅう / く *kyū / ku*	じゅう *jū*

Four, seven and nine each have two readings. **よん, なな, きゅう** are the safest everywhere; *し, しち, く* survive in set expressions (*しがつ* April, *しちじ* seven o'clock, *くじ* nine o'clock).

3. Numbers 11 to 10,000

From 11 the numbers are built like a sum: tens, then units. Nothing to memorise beyond 1-10 and the place words.

NUMBER	JAPANESE	SAY IT	HOW IT IS BUILT
11	じゅういち	*jūichi*	10 + 1
20	にじゅう	*nijū*	2 × 10
34	さんじゅうよん	*sanjūyon*	3 × 10 + 4
99	きゅうじゅうきゅう	*kyūjūkyū*	9 × 10 + 9

NUMBER	JAPANESE	SAY IT	HOW IT IS BUILT
100	ひゃく	*hyaku*	
1,000	せん	*sen*	
10,000	いちまん	*ichiman*	one ten-thousand: *いち* is **required** before *まん*

Hundreds and thousands change their sound in three places. Learn these exceptions and the rest are regular:

NUMBER	HUNDREDS (百)	THOUSANDS (千)
1	ひゃく hyaku (100)	せん sen (1,000)
2	にひゃく nihyaku	にせん nisen
3	さんびゃく sanbyaku **(b)**	さんぜん sanzen **(z)**
4	よんひゃく yonhyaku	よんせん yonsen
5	ごひゃく gohyaku	ごせん gosen
6	ろっぴゃく roppyaku **(pp)**	ろくせん rokusen
7	ななひゃく nanahyaku	ななせん nanasen
8	はっぴゃく happyaku **(pp)**	はっせん hassen **(ss)**
9	きゅうひゃく kyūhyaku	きゅうせん kyūsen

Say big numbers in 10,000s

Japanese counts in units of **万** (*man*, 10,000), not thousands: 30,000 is さんまん (3 × 10,000) and 100,000 is じゅうまん (10 × 10,000). Prices and populations all follow this, so it is worth practising early.

4. The general counter 〜つ

For ordinary objects when you do not know a special counter, use the native series **ひとつ, ふたつ …** It counts up to ten; from 11 you use plain numbers (じゅういち) with no counter.

1	2	3	4	5
ひとつ *hitotsu*	ふたつ *futatsu*	みっつ *mittsu*	よっつ *yottsu*	いつつ *itsutsu*

6	7	8	9	10	HOW MANY?
むっつ *muttsu*	ななつ *nanatsu*	やっつ *yattsu*	ここのつ *kokonotsu*	とお *tō* (no つ)	いくつ *ikutsu*

5. Five everyday counters

A counter is a suffix that tells what kind of thing is counted. Five cover most of daily life:

COUNTER	FOR	EXAMPLES
〜人 *-nin* (people)	people	students, friends, customers
〜枚 *-mai*	flat, thin things	paper, tickets, shirts, plates, CDs
〜本 *-hon / -pon / -bon*	long, thin things	pens, bottles, trees, umbrellas, rolls (of film)
〜個 *-ko*	small, roundish things	apples, eggs, sweets, boxes
〜台 *-dai*	machines and vehicles	cars, computers, TVs, bicycles

People: 〜人

1	2	3	4	5	6-9	HOW MANY?
ひとり *hitori*	ふたり *futari*	さんにん *sannin*	よにん *yonin*	ごにん *gonin*	ろくにん, ななにん, はちにん, きゅうにん	なんにん *nannin*

One and two people are irregular (*ひとり, ふたり*), and four is *よにん* (not *よんにん*). From three on it is number + *にん*.

Flat things, long things, small things, machines

	～枚 (FLAT)	～本 (LONG)	～個 (SMALL)	～台 (MACHINES)
1	いちまい	いっぽん	いっこ	いちだい
2	にまい	にほん	にこ	にだい
3	さんまい	さんぼん	さんこ	さんだい
4	よんまい	よんほん	よんこ	よんだい
5	ごまい	ごほん	ごこ	ごだい
6	ろくまい	ろっぽん	ろっこ	ろくだい
7	ななまい	ななほん	ななこ	ななだい
8	はちまい	はっぽん	はっこ	はちだい
9	きゅうまい	きゅうほん	きゅうこ	きゅうだい
10	じゅうまい	じゅっぽん	じゅっこ	じゅうだい
How many?	なんまい	なんぼん	なんこ	なんだい

Where the sounds change

～枚 and ～台 are completely regular. ～本 and ～個 change after 1, 6, 8 and 10 (いっぽん, ろっぽん, はっぽん, じゅっぽん) and ～本 also after 3 (さんぼん) and in なんぼん. The rule behind it is the one from Chapter 2: the small っ and the voiced / half-voiced marks (ほん → ぼん, ぽん).

Counters in a sentence

PATTERN	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
noun + particle + quantity + verb	りんごを みっつ ください。 *ringo o mittsu kudasai*	Three apples, please.
noun + が + quantity + います / あります	がくせいが さんにん います。 *gakusei ga sannin imasu*	There are three students.
question	ペンは なんぼん ありますか。 *pen wa nanbon arimasu ka*	How many pens are there?

Notice there is **no particle** after the quantity (みっつ stands alone), and the counted noun still carries its own particle (を, が, は).

Other counters you will meet

～冊 -satsu (books), ～匹 -hiki (small animals), ～杯 -hai (cups, glasses), ～回 -kai (times), ～歳 -sai (age). If you do not know the counter, ～つ usually works for objects.

6. Money, time and dates

Yen: ～円

PRICE	JAPANESE	SAY IT
¥100	ひゃくえん	*hyaku-en*

PRICE	JAPANESE	SAY IT
¥350	さんびゃくごじゅうえん	*sanbyaku gojū-en*
¥1,000	せんえん	*sen-en*
¥6,800	ろくせんはっぴゃくえん	*rokusen happyaku-en*
¥10,000	いちまんえん	*ichiman-en*
How much?	いくらですか。	*ikura desu ka*

Clock times: 〜時 and 〜分

HOURS (〜時 *-JI*)	MINUTES (〜分 *-FUN / -PUN*)
1 いちじ · 2 にじ · 3 さんじ · **4 よじ** · 5 ごじ · 6 ろくじ · **7 しちじ** · 8 はちじ · **9 くじ** · 10 じゅうじ · 11 じゅういちじ · 12 じゅうにじ	1 いっぷん · 2 にふん · 3 さんぷん · 4 よんぷん · 5 ごふん · 6 ろっぷん · 7 ななふん · 8 はっぷん · 9 きゅうふん · 10 じゅっぷん · half はん

Morning is ごぜん gozen and afternoon ごご gogo, placed before the hour: ごご さんじ じゅうごふん (3:15 p.m.). "What time is it?" is なんじですか。

Dates: year, month, day

Dates run from the **largest unit to the smallest**: year, month, day.

MONTHS (〜月 *-GATSU*)	DAY OF THE MONTH (〜日)
Just number + がつ: いちがつ Jan · にがつ Feb · さんがつ Mar · **しがつ Apr** · ごがつ May · ろくがつ Jun · **しちがつ Jul** · はちがつ Aug · **くがつ Sep** · じゅうがつ Oct · じゅういちがつ Nov · じゅうにがつ Dec	**1-10 and some others are special:** 1 ついたち · 2 ふつか · 3 みっか · 4 よっか · 5 いつか · 6 むいか · 7 なのか · 8 ようか · 9 ここのか · 10 とおか · 14 じゅうよっか · 20 はつか · 24 にじゅうよっか. All others: number + にち (11 じゅういちにち, 25 にじゅうごにち)

Years: number + ねん: 2026 is にせんにじゅうろくねん nisen nijūroku-nen. A full date: にせんにじゅうろくねん じゅういちがつ いつか (5 November 2026).

🗣️ In Use — つかいかた

Numbers in real situations. Read each aloud.

① At the café

A:

コーヒーを ふたつ おねがいします。

Kōhī o futatsu onegai shimasu.

Two coffees, please.

B:

はい。ぜんぶで はっぴゃくえんです。

Hai. Zenbu de happyaku-en desu.

Certainly. That's 800 yen altogether.

② What time is it?

A:

いま なんじですか。

Ima nanji desu ka.

What time is it now?

B:

ごご さんじ じゅうごふんです。

Gogo sanji jūgo-fun desu.

It's 3:15 in the afternoon.

③ A birthday

A:

たんじょうびは いつですか。

Tanjōbi wa itsu desu ka.

When is your birthday?

B:

ごがつ みっかです。

Gogatsu mikka desu.

It's the 3rd of May.

📋 Quick Reference

IDEA	PATTERN	EXAMPLE
Plural of people	noun + たち	こどもたち
Quantity in a sentence	noun + particle + number-counter + verb	ペンを にほん かいます。
General counter	ひとつ … とお; いくつ	たまごを みっつ
People	ひとり, ふたり, さんにん …	よにん
Big numbers	count in 万 (10,000)	さんまん
Time	～じ + ～ふん/ぷん	くじ はん
Date	year · month · day	しがつ ようか

✍️ Practice — れんしゅう

Try each one, then click to check.

1. Say "Three apples, please." (use ～つ)

▼ Show answer

りんごを みっつ ください。 (ringo o mittsu kudasai)

2. Write 300 yen and 600 yen.

▼ Show answer

さんびゃくえん and ろっぴゃくえん.

3. How do you say "four people"? And "two people"?

▼ Show answer

よにん and ふたり.

4. Which counter would you use for three umbrellas? Say it.

▼ Show answer

～本 (long, thin things): さんぼん.

5. Say "8:30" and "4:00".

▼ Show answer

はちじ はん and よじ.

6. Say "4 March" and "20 July".

▼ Show answer

さんがつ よっか and しちがつ はつか.

7. Say "10,000 yen" and "30,000 yen".

▼ Show answer

いちまんえん and さんまんえん.

8. Make "children" plural in Japanese. Can you do the same for *ほん* (books)?

▼ Show answer

こどもたち. No: *たち* is for people only; *ほん* stays unchanged.

9. Ask "How many pens are there?"

▼ Show answer

ペンは なんぼん ありますか。 (pen wa nanbon arimasu ka)

10. What is wrong with がくせいが さんにんを います?

▼ Show answer

No particle follows the quantity. Correct: がくせいが さんにん います。

Coming up in Chapter 4: は, です and the Copula. The sentence pattern *AはBです*, with *も*, *か*, *の*, the negative *～じゃありません*, the past *～でした*, and what really separates the topic

は from the subject.

🧩 は, です and the Copula — 「AはBです」

*The first full sentence pattern in any Japanese course is **AはBです**: "A is B". It uses the topic particle は from Chapter 1 and the polite copula です. This chapter gives you the whole pattern: questions with か, "also" with も, noun links with の, the negative じゃありません, the past でした, and the difference between a topic and a subject.*

The rule in one box **A は B です** = "As for A, (it) is B." です ends the sentence and makes it polite; it is the **copula** (the "is" of identity and description), not an ordinary verb. Four endings cover everything: **です** (is), **じゃありません** (is not), **でした** (was), **じゃありませんでした** (was not). Add **か** to ask.

1. AはBです

JAPANESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
わたしは がくせいです。	*watashi wa gakusei desu*	I am a student.
たなかさんは せんせいです。	*Tanaka-san wa sensei desu*	Mr Tanaka is a teacher.
フィリップさんは エディンバラの エンジニアです。	*Firippu-san wa Edinbara no enjinia desu*	Philip is an engineer from Edinburgh.
これは ほんです。	*kore wa hon desu*	This is a book.

です never changes for person or number: *わたしは がくせいです*, *かれは がくせいです*, *わたしたちは がくせいです* all use the same ending.

> **Watch out: さん is for other people**
>
> Add **さん** (Mr / Ms / Mrs) to someone else's name, never to your own: *わたしは フィリップです* ("I am Philip"), but *フィリップさんは …* for him. It is a polite suffix, not part of the name, and it works for any gender and for first or family names.

2. か: asking a yes / no question

Add **か** at the end of a sentence to turn it into a question. Japanese needs no word order change: only the か. A rising voice is optional, as か already marks the question. In writing, the question mark is optional too, and the full stop 。 is used.

STATEMENT	QUESTION	ANSWER
がくせいです。 *gakusei desu*	がくせいですか。 *gakusei desu ka*	はい、がくせいです。 / いいえ、がくせいじゃありません。
スミスさんは アメリカじんです。	スミスさんは アメリカじんですか。	はい、そうです。 (Yes, that's right.)

The short answers are はい hai (yes) and いいえ iie (no). そうです sō desu means "that's right", and そうじゃありません "that's not so".

3. も: "also"

も means "also, too" and **takes the place of は** (it never appears together with は on the same word).

JAPANESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
わたしは がくせいです。 アンナさんも がくせいです。	*watashi wa gakusei desu. Anna-san mo gakusei desu*	I am a student. Anna is a student too.
わたしも コーヒーです。	*watashi mo kōhī desu*	I'll have coffee too.
アンナさんも イギリスじんじゃありません。	*Anna-san mo Igirisu-jin ja arimasen*	Anna is not British either.

Notice the last example: with a negative, も means "either" (and in the same way "neither … nor" when repeated).

4. の: linking two nouns

の joins two nouns. The first one describes or owns the second: **A の B** = "B of A" or "A's B". It is the most flexible link in the language and covers ownership, belonging, field, and origin.

PATTERN	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
owner の thing	わたしの ほん *watashi no hon*	my book
group の member	だいがくの がくせい *daigaku no gakusei*	a university student
subject の teacher	にほんごの せんせい *nihongo no sensei*	a Japanese-language teacher
place の person	エディンバラの ともだち *Edinbara no tomodachi*	a friend from Edinburgh
a chain	ともだちの おかあさんの くるま *tomodachi no okāsan no kuruma*	my friend's mother's car

When the noun after の is obvious, it can be dropped: これは わたしのです。 kore wa watashi no desu ("This is mine").

> **Watch out: の goes where English says "of" or 's, in reverse order**
>
> English says *a teacher of Japanese*; Japanese says *Japanese's teacher*: *にほんごの せんせい*. The descriptive noun always comes first and the main noun last.

5. The negative: じゃありません

The negative of です is **じゃありません**. In careful writing or very formal speech you will also see **ではありません**; they mean the same, and じゃ is the everyday spoken form.

JAPANESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
わたしは せんせいじゃありません。	*watashi wa sensei ja arimasen*	I am not a teacher.
これは ペンではありません。	*kore wa pen dewa arimasen*	This is not a pen. (formal)

6. The past: でした

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Present	がくせいです *gakusei desu* (is)	がくせいじゃありません *gakusei ja arimasen* (is not)
Past	がくせいでした *gakusei deshita* (was)	がくせいじゃありませんでした *gakusei ja arimasen deshita* (was not)

JAPANESE	ENGLISH
きのうは あめでした。 *kinō wa ame deshita*	It was rainy yesterday.
ちちは せんせいでした。 *chichi wa sensei deshita*	My father was a teacher.
きのうは にちようびじゃありませんでした。 *kinō wa nichiyōbi ja arimasen deshita*	Yesterday was not Sunday.

Rule of thumb: *です* → *でした* for the past, and add *でした* after *じゃありません* for the negative past. The past of a question is *でしたか*.

7. は and が: topic or subject?

Both can look like "the subject" in English, but they do different jobs. A quick distinction, which Chapter 5 completes:

	は (TOPIC)	が (SUBJECT)
Job	sets what the sentence is *about*	names *who or what* does or is (new or specific information)
Information	already known or assumed	new, or the answer to "who?"
Example	フィリップさんは エンジニアです。 (As for Philip, he is an engineer.)	フィリップさんが エンジニアです。 (It is Philip who is the engineer.)

Answering a question shows the difference: to *だれが エンジニアですか。* ("Who is the engineer?") you answer *フィリップさんが エンジニアです*, because "Philip" is the new information. To *フィリップさんは なにですか。* ("What is Philip?") you answer *フィリップさんは エンジニアです*.

> **は can also mean "contrast"**
>
> Using *は* on something other than the topic sets it against something else: *コーヒーは のみます* ("Coffee I drink [but not tea]"), *わたしは がくせいじゃありません* can sound like "I'm not [though others are]". When you only want to state a fact, a plain *は* as topic is the safe choice.

8. Dropping は and the topic

When the topic is clear from the conversation, Japanese drops it, together with its *は*.

FULL	NATURAL CONVERSATION
わたしは たなかです。	たなかです。 *Tanaka desu* (I'm Tanaka.)
おなまえは なんですか。	おなまえは？ — たなかです。 (Your name? — Tanaka.)
あなたは がくせいですか。	がくせいですか。 (Are you a student?)

> **"I am coffee"? The です of ordering**
>
> In an order, *です* does not mean "is": わたしは コーヒーです。 means "I'll have coffee" (literally "as for me, it's coffee"). The topic plus *です* is a flexible frame: Japanese speakers fill in the

relationship from the situation. You will see this "eel sentence" pattern often in cafés and restaurants.

In Use — つかいかた

The pattern in real exchanges. Read each aloud.

① Introductions

A:

はじめまして。わたしは フィリップです。

Hajimemashite. Watashi wa Firippu desu.

How do you do. I'm Philip.

B:

たなかです。フィリップさんは がくせいですか。

Tanaka desu. Firippu-san wa gakusei desu ka.

I'm Tanaka. Are you a student, Philip?

A:

いいえ、がくせいじゃありません。エンジニアです。

Iie, gakusei ja arimasen. Enjinia desu.

No, I'm not a student. I'm an engineer.

② Me too

A:

わたしは イギリスじんです。

Watashi wa Igirisu-jin desu.

I'm British.

B:

アンナさんも イギリスじんですか。

Anna-san mo Igirisu-jin desu ka.

Is Anna British too?

A:

いいえ、アンナさんは アイルランドじんです。

Iie, Anna-san wa Airurando-jin desu.

No, Anna is Irish.

③ Yesterday

A:

きのうは にちようびでしたか。

Kinō wa nichiyōbi deshita ka.

Was yesterday Sunday?

B:

いいえ、にちようびじゃありませんでした。どようびでした。

Iie, nichiyōbi ja arimasen deshita. Doyōbi deshita.
No, it wasn't Sunday. It was Saturday.

📋 Quick Reference

FORM	PATTERN	EXAMPLE
A is B	AはBです	わたしは がくせいです。
A is not B	AはBじゃありません	わたしは せんせいじゃありません。
A was B	AはBでした	きのうは あめでした。
A was not B	AはBじゃありませんでした	にちようびじゃありませんでした。
Question	… か	がくせいですか。
Also	AもBです	アンナさんも がくせいです。
Linking nouns	AのB	わたしの ほん

✍️ Practice — れんしゅう

Try each one, then click to check.

1. Say "Mr Tanaka is a teacher."

▼ Show answer

たなかさんは せんせいです。

2. Add "too": わたしは がくせいです。 → "I am a student too."

▼ Show answer

わたしも がくせいです。 (も replaces は.)

3. Make negative: これは ペンです。

▼ Show answer

これは ペンじゃありません。

4. Put in the past: きょうは あめです。 (use "yesterday")

▼ Show answer

きのうは あめでした。

5. Say "my friend's book" and "a Japanese-language teacher".

▼ Show answer

ともだちの ほん and にほんごの せんせい.

6. What is wrong with わたしは フィリップさんです?

▼ Show answer

さん is never added to your own name. Correct: わたしは フィリップです。

7. Say "Anna is not a student either."

▼ Show answer

アンナさんも がくせいじゃありません。

8. Say "He was not a teacher."

▼ Show answer

かれは せんせいじゃありませんでした。

9. Answer だれが エンジニアですか。 ("Who is the engineer?") with "Philip is."

▼ Show answer

フィリップさんが エンジニアです。 (が, because "Philip" is the new information.)

10. In a café, say "I'll have coffee."

▼ Show answer

わたしは コーヒーです。 (or simply コーヒーです。)

Coming up in Chapter 5: The Core Particles I: が, を, に, で, へ. The subject marker が in full, を for objects, and に, で and へ for time, place and direction.

🏷️ The Core Particles I — が・を・に・で・へ

*Particles are the glue of Japanese: small words that follow a noun and say what job it does. You already know は (topic), も (also), の (of) and か (question). This chapter adds five more, the ones that appear in nearly every sentence: **が, を, に, で, へ**. The verbs here (たべます, いきます, あります and so on) are used as ready-made words; the ます-form is explained in Japanese Grammar 1, chapter 8.*

The rule in one box **が** marks the *subject* (who does or is). **を** marks the *object* (what is acted on). **に** marks a *point*: a time, a destination, a place where something exists, a receiver. **で** marks the *place where an action happens* and the *means* used. **へ** marks *direction*. Each particle goes straight after its noun, and the verb comes last.

1. が: the subject

Chapter 4 showed that *は* sets a topic and *が* names the subject, often as new information. Two things make *が* special for a learner.

が answers "who?" and "what?"

JAPANESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
だれが きましたか。 たなかさんが きました。	*dare ga kimashita ka. Tanaka-san ga kimashita*	Who came? — Mr Tanaka came.
なにが ありますか。	*nani ga arimasu ka*	What is there?
あめが ふっています。	*ame ga futte imasu*	Rain is falling. (new information: "it's raining")

A question word (*だれ, なに, どれ*) as the subject always takes *が*, never *は*.

が with liking, ability and knowing

A small group of words describe a feeling or ability, and **the thing liked or known takes が, not を**:

WORD	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
すき (like)	わたしは すしが すきです。 *watashi wa sushi ga suki desu*	I like sushi.
きらい (dislike)	ちちは さかなが きらいです。 *chichi wa sakana ga kirai desu*	My father dislikes fish.
じょうず / へた (good / bad at)	アンナさんは うたが じょうずです。 *Anna-san wa uta ga jōzu desu*	Anna is good at singing.
わかります (understand)	にほんごが すこし わかります。 *nihongo ga sukoshi wakarimasu*	I understand a little Japanese.
あります / います (exist; have)	くるまが あります。 *kuruma ga arimasu*	I have a car. / There is a car.

> **Watch out: すきです takes が, not を**
> *わたしは すしを すきです* is a very common learner error. In Japanese, liking is a state of the subject, not an action done to the sushi, so the sushi takes が. The same applies to *きらい*, *じょうず*, *へた*, *ほしい* (want) and *わかる*.

2. を: the object

を (read *o*) marks what the verb acts on: the direct object.

JAPANESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
パンを たべます。	*pan o tabemasu*	I eat bread.

JAPANESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
おちゃを のみます。	*ocha o nomimasu*	I drink tea.
にほんごを べんきょうします。	*nihongo o benkyō shimasu*	I study Japanese.
えいがを みます。	*eiga o mimasu*	I watch a film.

を is also used with verbs of **movement through or away from** a place: こうえんを あるきます kōen o arukimasu (I walk through the park), いえを でます ie o demasu (I leave the house).

3. に: a point in time, space or relationship

に picks out a **point**. It has four main jobs.

JOB	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
Time (a clock time, a day, a date)	しちじに おきます。 *shichiji ni okimasu* にちようびに あいます。 *nichiyōbi ni aimasu*	I get up at seven. We meet on Sunday.
Destination	がっこうに いきます。 *gakkō ni ikimasu*	I go to school.
Where something exists	ここに ねこが います。 *koko ni neko ga imasu*	There is a cat here.
Receiver / target	ともだちに でんわを します。 *tomodachi ni denwa o shimasu* せんせいに あいます。 *sensei ni aimasu*	I phone a friend. I meet the teacher.

Watch out: no に with "relative" times

> Use に after a **specific** time (しちじに, にちようびに, しがつに, ごがつ いつかに) but **not** after words that already point to a time relative to now: きょう, あした, きのう, まいにち, まいあさ, いま, らいしゅう, せんしゅう. So あした いきます (not あしたに), but にちようびに いきます.

4. で: where it happens and how

で marks **the place where an action takes place** and **the means** by which it is done.

JOB	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
Place of action	としょかんで べんきょうします。 *toshokan de benkyō shimasu*	I study in the library.
Means of transport	バスで がっこうに いきます。 *basu de gakkō ni ikimasu*	I go to school by bus.
Tool / instrument	はしで たべます。 *hashi de tabemasu*	I eat with chopsticks.
Language / material	にほんごで はなします。 *nihongo de hanashimasu*	I speak in Japanese.
Total / group	ぜんぶで ごひゃくえんです。 *zenbu de gohyaku-en desu*	It's 500 yen in all.

に or で for a place?

PLACE	PARTICLE	EXAMPLE
Where something **is** (exists)	に	うちに ねこが います。 (There is a cat at home.)
Where an **action** takes place	で	うちで ねこと あそびます。 (I play with the cat at home.)

5. へ: direction

へ (read *e*) marks the **direction** of movement. With *いきます, きます, かえります* it overlaps with *に*, and both are correct.

JAPANESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
にほんへ いきます。	*Nihon e ikimasu*	I'm going to Japan. / towards Japan
うちへ かえります。	*uchi e kaerimasu*	I'm going home.
いえに かえります。	*ie ni kaerimasu*	I'm going home. (same meaning)

> **へ is not "to a point"**
> へ only expresses direction; it cannot mark where something is, when, or who receives. For those, use *に*. When you are unsure of a destination, *に* is always safe with *いきます, きます, かえります*.

6. Particles together: は and も

When you want to make a noun the topic or add "also", *は* and *も* combine with the other particles in two different ways:

RULE	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
は / も replace が and を	パンは たべません。 ねこも います。	Bread, I don't eat (but rice, yes). There is a cat too.
は / も are added after に, で, へ (and と, から)	とうきょうには いきません。 ここでも べんきょうします。	To Tokyo, I'm not going (but elsewhere). I study here as well.

Notice the order: *に + は = には, で + も = でも*. A common word order in a sentence is **topic → time → place → object → verb**: わたしは まいあさ しちじに いえで ごはんを たべます。 watashi wa maiasa shichiji ni ie de gohan o tabemasu ("I eat breakfast at home at seven every morning").

In Use — つかいかた

The five particles in real exchanges. Read each aloud.

① Where, how and when

A:

あした どこへ いきますか。

Ashita doko e ikimasu ka.

Where are you going tomorrow?

B:

きょうとへ いきます。でんしゃで いきます。

Kyōto e ikimasu. Densha de ikimasu.

I'm going to Kyoto. I'm going by train.

A:

なんじに でますか。

Nanji ni demasu ka.

What time do you leave?

② Likes

A:

なにが すきですか。

Nani ga suki desu ka.

What do you like?

B:

すしが すきです。アンナさんも すしが すきです。

Sushi ga suki desu. Anna-san mo sushi ga suki desu.

I like sushi. Anna likes sushi too.

③ Where do you study?

A:

どこで べんきょうしますか。

Doko de benkyō shimasu ka.

Where do you study?

B:

としょかんで べんきょうします。いえでは しません。

Toshokan de benkyō shimasu. Ie de wa shimasen.

I study in the library. At home I don't.

📋 Quick Reference

PARTICLE	MARKS	EXAMPLE
が	subject; the thing liked or known; "who?"	すしが すきです。
を	object; path through	パンを たべます。
に	specific time; destination; where something is; receiver	しちじに おきます。
で	place of action; means; tool	バスで いきます。
へ	direction (read *e*)	にほんへ いきます。

✍️ Practice — れんしゅう

Try each one, then click to check.

1. Fill in the particle: わたしは すし___ すきです。

▼ Show answer

が: すしが すきです。 Liking takes *が*.

2. Fill in: しちじ___ おきます。

▼ Show answer

に: a specific time takes *に*.

3. Fill in: としょかん___ べんきょうします。

▼ Show answer

で: place where the action happens.

4. Fill in: バス___ いきます。 ("I go by bus.")

▼ Show answer

で: means of transport.

5. Which particle(s) can complete がっこう___ いきます。?

▼ Show answer

に or へ; both are correct with *いきます*.

6. Which is correct: あしたに いきます or あした いきます?

▼ Show answer

あした いきます。 No *に* after a relative time word like *あした*.

7. Say "I eat rice with chopsticks."

▼ Show answer

はしで ごはんを たべます。 (hashi de gohan o tabemasu)

8. Say "There is a cat here." Then "I play with the cat here."

▼ Show answer

ここに ねこが います。 (existence → に) and ここで ねこと あそびます。 (action → で).

9. Add は: とうきょうに いきません。 → "To Tokyo I'm not going (but elsewhere)."

▼ Show answer

とうきょうには いきません。 (*は* follows *に*.)

10. Correct the error: わたしは すしを すきです。

▼ Show answer

わたしは すしが すきです。 *すき* takes *が*, not *を*.

Coming up in Chapter 6: The Core Particles II: と, や, から, まで, より, も. "And" and "with", "and so on", from and until, comparison, *だけ* and *しか*, and the sentence-final *ね* and

よ.

🏷️ The Core Particles II — と・や・から・まで・より・も

*Chapter 5 gave you the five particles that mark the main jobs in a sentence. This chapter adds the ones that **connect, limit and compare**: と and や for "and", から and まで for "from" and "until", より for "than", だけ and しか for "only", and the two small sentence-ending words ね and よ that shape how a sentence sounds. By the end you can say most everyday things in Japanese, apart from the verb forms that come in Chapter 8.*

The rule in one box **と** joins nouns completely ("A and B, nothing else") or means "with". **や** joins nouns as examples ("A, B and so on"). **から** = from, **まで** = until or as far as, **より** = than. **だけ** = only (positive), **しか** = only (always with a negative). **ね** asks for agreement, **よ** gives information.

1. と: "and" and "with"

MEANING	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
and (complete list)	パンと たまごを かいます。 *pan to tamago o kaimasu*	I buy bread and eggs. (only those two)
with (accompanying)	ともだちと えいがを みます。 *tomodachi to eiga o mimasu*	I watch a film with a friend.
with (a partner in the action)	せんせいと はなします。 *sensei to hanashimasu*	I talk with the teacher.

Watch out: と joins nouns only

> Use と between **nouns** (パンと たまご). It cannot join verbs or whole clauses: to say "I eat and drink" you need a different construction (the て-form, Japanese Grammar 2). Also, there is no と after the last noun in a list: りんごと みかんと バナナ is correct.

2. や: "and so on"

や lists examples, with the sense "A, B, among others". It is often followed by **など** ("etc.") at the end.

JAPANESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
パンや たまごを かいます。	*pan ya tamago o kaimasu*	I buy things like bread and eggs.
りんごや みかんなどを たべます。	*ringo ya mikan nado o tabemasu*	I eat apples, mandarins and so on.

と (COMPLETE)	や (EXAMPLES)
パンと たまご → exactly bread + eggs	パンや たまご → bread, eggs, maybe more

3. から and まで: "from" and "until"

から marks the starting point and **まで** the end point. They work for both time and place, together or separately.

USE	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
time, a span	くじから ごじまで はたらきます。 *kuji kara goji made hatarakimasu*	I work from nine to five.
place, a journey	とうきょうから おおさかまで しんかんせんで いきます。 *Tōkyō kara Ōsaka made shinkansen de ikimasu*	I go from Tokyo to Osaka by bullet train.

USE	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
starting point only	あしたから べんきょうします。 *ashita kara benkyō shimasu*	I'll study from tomorrow.
end point only	ごじまで まちます。 *goji made machimasu*	I'll wait until five.

まで against までに

まで says a state or action *continues up to* a point: *ごじまで はたらきます* (I work until five). **までに** says something *happens at or before* a deadline: *ごじまでに かえります* (I'll be home by five). Learners often mix them up.

Heads-up: から also means "because"

After a whole sentence, **から** means "because": *あめですから、いきません* ("It's raining, so I won't go"). That use belongs to complex sentences (Japanese Grammar 3); for now, *から* after a noun means "from".

4. より: "than"

Comparison uses **より** after the thing that is *less*: **A は B より [adjective] です** = "A is more [adjective] than B". The adjectives themselves are taught in Chapter 9; here are a few as vocabulary.

JAPANESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
このかばんは あのかばんより たかいです。	*kono kaban wa ano kaban yori takai desu*	This bag is more expensive than that one.
エディンバラは とうきょうより ちいさいです。	*Edinbara wa Tōkyō yori chiisai desu*	Edinburgh is smaller than Tokyo.
でんしゃの ほうが バスより はやいです。	*densha no hō ga basu yori hayai desu*	The train is faster than the bus.

The pattern **A の ほうが B より …** ("A is the more … one, compared with B") puts the winner first and is very common in speech.

5. も again: with numbers and question words

You met も as "also" in Chapter 4. Two more uses are essential:

USE	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
After a number: "as many as"	ともだちが さんにんも きました。 *tomodachi ga sannin mo kimashita*	As many as three friends came.
Question word + も + negative: "none, not any"	だれも いません。 *dare mo imasen* なにも たべません。 *nani mo tabemasen*	There is nobody. I don't eat anything.
	どこへも いきませんでした。 *doko e mo ikimasen deshita*	I didn't go anywhere.

Notice that after *だれ, なに* the particle *が* or *を* disappears (*だれも*), but after *へ, に* or *で* it stays (*どこへも, どこにも*).

6. だけ and しか: "only"

Both limit something to a single thing or amount, but they are built differently.

	だけ	しか
Verb	positive or negative	**always negative**
Feeling	neutral "only, just"	"only, and that's not much / not enough"

	だけ	しか
Example	コーヒーだけ のみます。 *kōhī dake nomimasu* I drink only coffee.	コーヒーしか のみません。 *kōhī shika nomimasen* I drink nothing but coffee.
With numbers	ひとりだけ います。 There is just one person.	ひとりしか いません。 There is only one person (a pity).
Money	ひゃくえんだけ あります。 I have just 100 yen.	ひゃくえんしか ありません。 I have only 100 yen (not enough).

だけ and *しか* replace *が* and *を*, but sit before *に*, *で*, *へ* and similar particles: ここでだけ koko de dake ("only here").

7. ね and よ: the sentence-final voices

Two tiny words at the very end of a sentence change how it sounds: they are essential to speaking naturally and add no grammar.

WORD	ROLE	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
ね	asks for agreement, shares a feeling	いい てんきです ね。 *ii tenki desu ne*	Nice weather, isn't it?
ね	confirms something	あした いきます ね。 *ashita ikimasu ne*	You're going tomorrow, right?
よ	gives new information, a gentle assertion	あした いきます よ。 *ashita ikimasu yo*	I am going tomorrow, you know.
よ	warns, reminds	もう くじです よ。 *mō kuji desu yo*	It's already nine, you know!

Use よ with care

ね is friendly and almost always safe. よ tells the listener something they may not know, which can sound pushy or like a correction if used with a superior or a stranger. In polite speech, use it with a soft tone, and prefer ね when you only want to agree.

🗣️ In Use — つかいかた

The particles in real exchanges. Read each aloud.

① Shopping

A:

パンと たまごを ください。

Pan to tamago o kudasai.

Bread and eggs, please.

B:

ほかに なにか ありますか。

Hoka ni nanika arimasu ka.

Anything else?

A:

いいえ、それだけです。

Iie, sore dake desu.

No, that's all.

② Work hours

A:

しごとは なんじから なんじまでですか。

Shigoto wa nanji kara nanji made desu ka.

What are your work hours?

B:

くじから ごじまでです。

Kuji kara goji made desu.

Nine to five.

③ Small talk

A:

きょうは いい てんきですね。

Kyō wa ii tenki desu ne.

Nice weather today, isn't it?

B:

ええ、そうですね。あしたも いい てんきですよ。

Ē, sō desu ne. Ashita mo ii tenki desu yo.

Yes, it is. Tomorrow will be nice too, you know.

📋 Quick Reference

PARTICLE	MEANING	EXAMPLE
と	and (complete); with	パンと たまご · ともだちと
や	and so on	りんごや みかん
から	from	くじから
まで	until, as far as	ごじまで
より	than	バスより はやい
も	also; as many as; none (with question words)	だれも いません
だけ	only	コーヒーだけ
しか	only (with negative)	ひとりしか いません
ね / よ	agreement / information	いい てんきですね

✍️ Practice — れんしゅう

Try each one, then click to check.

1. Fill in: ともだち___ えいがを みます。 ("I watch a film with a friend.")

▼ Show answer

と: ともだちと えいがを みます。

2. Say "I eat apples, mandarins and so on."

▼ Show answer

りんごや みかんなどを たべます。

3. Say "I work from nine to five."

▼ Show answer

くじから ごじまで はたらきます。

4. Say "I'll be home by six." Which is right, *まで* or *までに*?

▼ Show answer

ろくじまでに かえります。 A deadline takes *までに*.

5. Say "The train is faster than the bus."

▼ Show answer

でんしゃは バスより はやいです。 (or でんしゃの ほうが バスより はやいです。)

6. Say "Nobody came."

▼ Show answer

だれも きませんでした。

7. Say "There is only one person" in two ways, with だけ and with しか.

▼ Show answer

ひとりだけ います。 and ひとりしか いません。 (*しか* needs the negative.)

8. Which ends the sentence naturally: いい てんきですね or いい てんきですよ, if you want your listener to agree?

▼ Show answer

ね: it asks for agreement. *よ* gives information the listener may not know.

9. Correct: ひゃくえんしか あります。

▼ Show answer

ひゃくえんしか ありません。 *しか* always takes a negative verb.

10. Say "I didn't eat anything."

▼ Show answer

なにも たべませんでした。

Coming up in Chapter 7: This, That and Where. *これ, それ, あれ, この, その, あの, ここ, そこ, あそこ, あります* and *います*, and the words for place: *うえ, した, なか, となり*.

📍 This, That and Where — これ・それ・あれ・どれ

*How do you point at things, ask where they are, and say what is where? This chapter has two parts. The first is the neat family of "this / that / which" words that all follow one pattern, the **ko-so-a-do** series. The second is **existence**: あります for things, います for people and animals, and the words for position (うえ, した, なか, となり).*

The rule in one box Every pointing word starts with one of four sounds: **ko-** (near me), **so-** (near you), **a-** (far from both), **do-** (which?). Add a fixed ending to get *this one* (*-re*), *this …* (*-no*), *here* (*-ko*) or *this way / polite* (*-chira*). For existence use **あります** (things) and **います** (people, animals): **PLACE に THING が あります / います**.

1. The ko-so-a-do table

	KO- NEAR ME	SO- NEAR YOU	A- FAR FROM BOTH	DO- WHICH?
thing (pronoun) -re	これ *kore* this one	それ *sore* that one	あれ *are* that one over there	どれ *dore* which one?
before a noun -no	この *kono* this …	その *sono* that …	あの *ano* that … over there	どの *dono* which …?
place -ko	ここ *koko* here	そこ *soko* there	あそこ *asoko* over there	どこ *doko* where?
direction / polite -chira	こちら *kochira*	そちら *sochira*	あちら *achira*	どちら *dochira*

これ is alone, この needs a noun

JAPANESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
これは ほんです。	*kore wa hon desu*	This is a book.
この ほんは わたしのです。	*kono hon wa watashi no desu*	This book is mine.
それは なんですか。	*sore wa nan desu ka*	What is that (near you)?
あの ひとは だれですか。	*ano hito wa dare desu ka*	Who is that person over there?
どれが たなかさんの かさですか。	*dore ga Tanaka-san no kasa desu ka*	Which one is Mr Tanaka's umbrella?

Watch out: you cannot say これの ほん

これ stands alone as a pronoun ("this one"). Before a noun, use **この**: *この ほん*, *その かばん*, *あの いえ*. Compare: *これは ほんです* but *この ほんは*. The same difference exists between *それ* and *その*, and *あれ* and *あの*.

When is it そ and when is it あ?

The **ko / so / a** choice depends on *distance from the speaker and listener*. **So** is also the word for something the other person just mentioned, even if it is far away: *A: きのう えいがを みました。B: それは どんな えいがでしたか。* ("A: I saw a film yesterday. B: What kind of film was it?"). **A** is used for things both of you know, but are not present.

Pointing at people: use こちら

これ is for things; pointing at a person with it is rude. To introduce someone politely, say **こちらは たなかさんです** ("This is Mr Tanaka"). For a person you point to at a distance, *あの ひと* or the more polite *あの かた* works.

2. あります and います: existence

Japanese has two verbs for "there is, exists", chosen by **what exists**:

VERB	USE FOR	NEGATIVE	PAST	PAST NEGATIVE
あります *arimasu*	things, plants, events (non-moving)	ありません	ありました	ありませんでした
います *imasu*	people and animals (moving, alive)	いません	いました	いませんでした

Two patterns

The same fact can be said in two shapes, depending on what you want to emphasise:

PATTERN	USE	EXAMPLE
PLACE に THING が あります / います	introduce what is in a place (new information); answers "what is there?"	つくえの うえに ほんが あります。 *tsukue no ue ni hon ga arimasu* There is a book on the desk.
THING は PLACE に あります / います	say where a known thing is; answers "where is it?"	ほんは つくえの うえに あります。 *hon wa tsukue no ue ni arimasu* The book is on the desk.

QUESTION	ANSWER
ここに なにが ありますか。 (What is here?)	ほんが あります。 (There is a book.)
ほんは どこに ありますか。 (Where is the book?)	つくえの うえに あります。 (On the desk.)
ここに だれが いますか。 (Who is here?)	アンナさんが います。 (Anna is.)

> **Watch out: trees are あります, cats are います**

あります is for things that don't move on their own, so *き* (tree) and *はな* (flower) take *あります*: *こうえんに きが たくさん あります*. Anything that moves by itself (a cat, a bird, a person, an insect) takes *います*. Events (*かいぎが あります* "there is a meeting") and possession (*くるまが あります*, "I have a car") also use *あります*.

Watch out: に with existence, で with action

As in Chapter 5: where a thing *is*, use *に* (*へやに ねこが います*); where an action *happens*, use *で* (*へやで ねこと あそびます*). A meeting taking place somewhere is an exception: *かいぎは かいぎしつで あります* ("The meeting is held in the meeting room").

3. Words for position

Japanese has no prepositions. Position words are **nouns**, and they follow the reference object with **の**: **[object] の [position word] に**.

POSITION	JAPANESE	EXAMPLE
on, above	うえ *ue*	テーブルの うえ on the table
under, below	した *shita*	いすの した under the chair
inside	なか *naka*	かばんの なか in the bag
outside	そと *soto*	いえの そと outside the house
in front of	まえ *mae*	えきの まえ in front of the station
behind	うしろ *ushiro*	ドアの うしろ behind the door
next to (a thing of the same kind)	となり *tonari*	ぎんこうの となり next to the bank
beside	よこ *yoko*	ベッドの よこ beside the bed
near	ちかく *chikaku*	えきの ちかく near the station

POSITION	JAPANESE	EXAMPLE
between	あいだ *aida*	ぎんこうと ゆうびんきょくの あいだ between the bank and the post office
left / right	ひだり / みぎ *hidari / migi*	みぎに あります it's on the right

A few examples with あります and います

JAPANESE	ENGLISH
かばんの なかに さいふが あります。 *kaban no naka ni saifu ga arimasu*	There is a wallet in the bag.
いすの したに ねこが います。 *isu no shita ni neko ga imasu*	There is a cat under the chair.
えきの となりに コンビニが あります。 *eki no tonari ni konbini ga arimasu*	There is a convenience store next to the station.
こうえんは えきの ちかくに あります。 *kōen wa eki no chikaku ni arimasu*	The park is near the station.

When the question is only "where is X?", you can also use **です** instead of *あります*: えきは どこですか。 — あそこです。 eki wa doko desu ka. — asoko desu ("Where is the station? — Over there.").

🗣️ In Use — つかいかた

Pointing and placing in real exchanges. Read each aloud.

① What's this?

A:

それは なんですか。

Sore wa nan desu ka.

② Asking the way

A:

What is that?

B:

これは かさです。あの かさは たなかさんのです。

Kore wa kasa desu. Ano kasa wa Tanaka-san no desu.

This is an umbrella. That one over there is Mr Tanaka's.

すみません、ぎんこうは どこですか。

Sumimasen, ginkō wa doko desu ka.

Excuse me, where is the bank?

B:

えきの となりに あります。あそこです。

Eki no tonari ni arimasu. Asoko desu.

It's next to the station. Over there.

③ In the bag

A:

かばんの なかに なにが ありますか。

Kaban no naka ni nani ga arimasu ka.

What is in the bag?

B:

ほんと さいふが あります。ねこは いません。

Hon to saifu ga arimasu. Neko wa imasen.

There's a book and a wallet. There's no cat.

📋 Quick Reference

IDEA	PATTERN	EXAMPLE
This / that one	これ · それ · あれ · どれ	これは ほんです。
This / that + noun	この · その · あの · どの + N	この ほん
Here / there / where	ここ · そこ · あそこ · どこ	どこですか。
Introduce what is there	PLACE に THING が あります / います	へやに ねこが います。

IDEA	PATTERN	EXAMPLE
Say where it is	THING は PLACE に あります / います	ねこは へやに います。
Position	N の うえ / した / なか / となり に	つくえの うえに

✍️ Practice — れんしゅう

Try each one, then click to check.

1. Choose これ or この: ___ ほんは わたしのです。

▼ Show answer

この: before a noun, use この.

2. You point at something near your listener. Ask "What is that?"

▼ Show answer

それは なんですか。

3. Say "Where is the station?" in two ways.

▼ Show answer

えきは どこですか。 and えきは どこに ありますか。

4. Choose あります or います: こうえんに きが ___。 and こうえんに ねこが ___。

▼ Show answer

あります for the tree (it doesn't move on its own); **います** for the cat.

5. Say "There is a wallet in the bag."

▼ Show answer

かばんの なかに さいふが あります。

6. Say "The cat is under the chair."

▼ Show answer

ねこは いすの したに います。

7. Say "The bank is next to the station."

▼ Show answer

ぎんこうは えきの となりに あります。

8. Ask "Who is here?" and answer "Anna is."

▼ Show answer

ここに だれが いますか。 / アンナさんが います。

9. Introduce Mr Tanaka politely: "This is Mr Tanaka."

▼ Show answer

こちらは たなかさんです。 (not *これは*)

10. Say "Nobody is here" (*だれも* + negative).

▼ Show answer

ここに だれも いません。

Coming up in Chapter 8: Polite Verbs: the ます-form. The verb in full: present, negative, past and past negative, the three verb groups in outline, *〜に いきます*, time expressions, and the dictionary form as your reference.

⚙ Polite Verbs — ます・ません・ました

*You have been reading たべます, いきます, あります as ready-made words since Chapter 1. Now you learn how they are made. The polite **ます-form** is the verb ending you will use with everyone you do not know well, and once you can build it you can turn any dictionary verb into polite speech. The chapter also gives the dictionary form as your reference, the three verb groups in outline, and the everyday patterns around verbs: going to do something and how often.*

The rule in one box Four forms: **〜ます** (does / will do), **〜ません** (doesn't / won't), **〜ました** (did), **〜ませんでした** (didn't). Japanese has **no separate future**: *あした いきます* means "I will go tomorrow". The forms never change for person or number. Add **か** to ask.

1. The four forms

	PRESENT / FUTURE	NEGATIVE	PAST	PAST NEGATIVE
to eat	たべます *tabemasu*	たべません *tabemasen*	たべました *tabemashita*	たべませんでした *tabemasen deshita*
to go	いきます *ikimasu*	いきません *ikimasen*	いきました *ikimashita*	いきませんでした *ikimasen deshita*
to do	します *shimasu*	しません *shimasen*	しました *shimashita*	しませんでした *shimasen deshita*

Once you have the *ます* form, the other three come mechanically: change *ます* to *ません*, *ました* or *ませんでした*. This is the same system as *です* in Chapter 4 (*です, じゃありません, でした, じゃありませんでした*).

JAPANESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
まいにち コーヒーを のみます。	*mainichi kōhī o nomimasu*	I drink coffee every day.

JAPANESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
あした ともだちに あいます。	*ashita tomodachi ni aimasu*	I'll meet a friend tomorrow.
きのう テレビを みませんでした。	*kinō terebi o mimasen deshita*	I didn't watch TV yesterday.
けさ なにを たべましたか。	*kesa nani o tabemashita ka*	What did you eat this morning?

2. The dictionary form and the three groups

A dictionary lists a verb in its **dictionary form** (also called the plain present). Every dictionary-form verb ends in the sound **-u**: *たべる taberu*, *のむ nomu*, *いく iku*. To make the ます-form you need to know which of three groups the verb belongs to.

GROUP	NAME	HOW TO RECOGNISE IT	DICTIONARY FORM → ます-FORM
Group 2	ru-verbs (る-verbs)	end in **る** and the sound before る is **i** or **e**	**drop る, add ます** たべる → たべます みる → みます おきる → おきます ねる → ねます
Group 1	u-verbs	everything else: ends in **う, く, ぐ, す, つ, ぬ, ぶ, む**, or in る after **a, u, o**	**change the last sound from the *u*-row to the *i*-row, add ます** かく → かきます のむ → のみます はなす → はなします まつ → まちます かう → かいます
Group 3	irregular	only two	する → します くる → きます and all *noun* + *する*: べんきょうする → べんきょうします

Group 1: the u-row to the i-row

ENDING	→ I-ROW	EXAMPLE
う	い	かう kau → かいます kaimasu (buy)
く	き	かく kaku → かきます kakimasu (write)
ぐ	ぎ	およぐ oyogu → およぎます oyogimasu (swim)
す	し	はなす hanasu → はなします hanashimasu (speak)
つ	ち	まつ matsu → まちます machimasu (wait)
ぬ	に	しぬ shinu → しにます shinimasu (die)
ぶ	び	あそぶ asobu → あそびます asobimasu (play)
む	み	のむ nomu → のみます nomimasu (drink)
る (after a, u, o)	り	のる noru → のります norimasu (ride); ある aru → あります arimasu

> **Watch out: some る-verbs belong to Group 1**
>
> The sound-before-る rule has a small set of exceptions that *look* like Group 2 but belong to Group 1. The common ones are **かえる** (return) → *かえります*, **はいる** (enter), **はしる** (run), **しる** (get to know) and **きる** (cut). Learn them as exceptions when you meet them; they are a short list.

> **How the groups matter later**
>
> In the ます-form, Group 1 and 2 verbs differ only in how you build the stem. In Japanese Grammar 2 the groups matter a lot more, because the te-form, plain negative and past follow group-specific rules. Learn the group of every verb as you learn the verb.

3. Verbs to learn first

MEANING	DICTIONARY FORM	ます-FORM	GROUP
eat	たべる *taberu*	たべます	2
drink	のむ *nomu*	のみます	1
see, watch	みる *miru*	みます	2
listen	きく *kiku*	ききます	1
read	よむ *yomu*	よみます	1
write	かく *kaku*	かきます	1
speak	はなす *hanasu*	はなします	1
buy	かう *kau*	かいます	1
meet	あう *au*	あいます	1
go	いく *iku*	いきます	1
come	くる *kuru*	きます	3
return	かえる *kaeru*	かえります	1 (exception)
get up	おきる *okiru*	おきます	2
sleep	ねる *neru*	ねます	2
work	はたらく *hataraku*	はたらきます	1
do	する *suru*	します	3
study	べんきょうする *benkyō suru*	べんきょうします	3

4. Going to do something: 〜に いきます

To say you go (or come, or return) **in order to do something**, put the purpose before **に**, then the movement verb. Two shapes:

SHAPE	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
action noun + に + いきます	かいものに いきます。 *kaimono ni ikimasu*	I go shopping.
	りょこうに いきます。 *ryokō ni ikimasu*	I go on a trip.
verb stem + に + いきます (the ます-form without ます)	ともだちに あいに いきます。 *tomodachi ni ai ni ikimasu* えいがを みに いきます。 *eiga o mi ni ikimasu*	I go to meet a friend. I go to see a film.
with **きます / かえります**	にほんへ にほんごを べんきょうしに きました。 *Nihon e nihongo o benkyō shi ni kimashita*	I came to Japan to study Japanese.

The "stem" is simply the *ます*-form minus *ます*: *たべます* → *たべ*, *のみます* → *のみ*. So *たべにいきます* means "I'm going to eat". You will use this stem again in Chapter 11 for *〜たいです* and *〜ましょう*.

5. When and how often

Time words go **before the verb**, normally right after the topic. Remember from Chapter 5 that *に* follows specific times but not relative ones.

TIME	WORDS
now / relative to today	きょう today · あした tomorrow · きのう yesterday · けさ this morning · こんばん tonight · せんしゅう last week · こんしゅう this week · らいしゅう next week
every …	まいにち every day · まいあさ every morning · まいばん every evening/night · まいしゅう every week

HOW OFTEN	WORD	EXAMPLE
always	いつも *itsumo*	いつも コーヒーを のみます。 I always drink coffee.
often	よく *yoku*	よく えいがを みます。 I often watch films.
sometimes	ときどき *tokidoki*	ときどき りょうりを します。 I sometimes cook.
not often *(+ negative)*	あまり *amari*	あまり おさけを のみません。 I don't drink much alcohol.
never *(+ negative)*	ぜんぜん *zenzen*	ぜんぜん たばこを すいません。 I never smoke.

A typical sentence puts the pieces in this order: **topic, time, place, object, verb**: わたしは まいあさ うちで コーヒーを のみます。 watashi wa maiasa uchi de kōhī o nomimasu ("I drink coffee at home every morning").

🗣️ In Use — つかいかた

The ます-form in real exchanges. Read each aloud.

① A daily routine

A:

まいあさ なんじに おきますか。

Maiasa nanji ni okimasu ka.

What time do you get up every morning?

B:

しちじに おきます。それから コーヒーを のみます。

Shichiji ni okimasu. Sorekara kōhī o nomimasu.

I get up at seven. Then I drink coffee.

② Last weekend

A:

しゅうまつは なにを しましたか。

Shūmatsu wa nani o shimashita ka.

What did you do at the weekend?

B:

ともだちと えいがを みに いきました。

Tomodachi to eiga o mi ni ikimashita.

I went to see a film with a friend.

③ How often?

A:

よく りょうりを しますか。

Yoku ryōri o shimasu ka.

Do you often cook?

B:

いいえ、あまり しません。ときどき します。

Iie, amari shimasen. Tokidoki shimasu.

No, not much. I sometimes do.

📋 Quick Reference

IDEA	HOW	EXAMPLE
Group 2 (る-verbs)	drop る + ます	たべる → たべます
Group 1 (u-verbs)	u-row → i-row + ます	のむ → のみます
Group 3 (irregular)	learn two	する → します · くる → きます
Negative	ます → ません	たべません
Past	ます → ました	たべました
Past negative	ます → ませんでした	たべませんでした
Going to do	noun / verb stem + に いきます	かいものに いきます
Frequency	いつも · よく · ときどき · あまり ~ない · ぜんぜん ~ない	あまり のみません

✍️ Practice — れんしゅう

Try each one, then click to check.

1. Give the ます-form of のむ, たべる, かく and かえる.

▼ Show answer

のみます, たべます, かきます, かえります. (*かえる* is a Group 1 exception.)

2. Which group: みる, かう, くる?

▼ Show answer

みる is Group 2 (i before る); *かう* is Group 1; *くる* is Group 3 (irregular).

3. Make negative: ききます

▼ Show answer

ききません

4. Make past: いきます and past negative: します

▼ Show answer

いきました and しませんでした.

5. Say "I didn't eat breakfast this morning."

▼ Show answer

けさ あさごはんを たべませんでした。

6. Say "I never drink coffee."

▼ Show answer

コーヒーは ぜんぜん のみません。 (*ぜんぜん* needs a negative.)

7. Say "I'm going to Tokyo to meet a friend."

▼ Show answer

ともだちに あいに とうきょうへ いきます。

8. Say "I go shopping on Saturdays."

▼ Show answer

どようびに かいものに いきます。

9. Correct: きのう いきます。

▼ Show answer

きのう いきました。 Yesterday needs the past form.

10. Why is かえる not かえます in the ます-form?

▼ Show answer

かえる looks like Group 2 but belongs to Group 1 (an exception), so it becomes *かえります*.

Coming up in Chapter 9: Adjectives: i and na. The two adjective types in the present, negative and past, joining with ～くて / ～で, adjectives before nouns, とても and *あまり*, and the pattern *AはBが～です*.

🎨 Adjectives — い-けいようし と な-けいようし

Japanese has two kinds of adjective, and the difference decides everything about how they behave. ***I-adjectives*** *end in* い *and change their own ending for negative and past, like a verb.* ***Na-adjectives*** *behave like nouns: they take* です *for the work and a* な *before a noun. This chapter gives you both, the four forms of each, how to put them before nouns, how to join two adjectives, and the useful pattern A はBが〜です.*

The rule in one box **い-adjective:** the adjective itself changes (たかい → たかくない → たかかった), and です adds politeness. **な-adjective:** the adjective never changes; です changes (しずかです → しずかじゃありません → しずかでした). Before a noun, an い-adjective keeps its い (おおきい いえ) and a な-adjective takes な (しずかな まち).

1. I-adjectives

I-adjectives end in **い**, and that final い is the part that changes (たかい, おいしい, ちいさい).

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	PAST	PAST NEGATIVE
how it is made	adjective + です	drop い, add **くないです**	drop い, add **かったです**	drop い, add **くなかったです**
high, expensive	たかいです *takai desu*	たかくないです *takaku nai desu*	たかかったです *takakatta desu*	たかくなかったです *takaku nakatta desu*
delicious	おいしいです	おいしくないです	おいしかったです	おいしくなかったです
big	おおきいです	おおきくないです	おおきかったです	おおきくなかったです

In more formal speech and writing, the negative forms can also be **くありません** (*たかくありません*) and **くありませんでした**. They mean the same as くないです and くなかったです.

> **Watch out: いい is irregular**
>
> **いい** ("good") comes from an older word *よい*, and all its other forms use **よ-**: よくないです (not good), よかったです (was good), よくなかったです (was not good). Only the present positive uses いい. The same happens with compounds like かっこいい (cool): かっこよかったです.

> **Watch out: い-adjectives never take だ in polite speech**
>
> Say たかいです, never たかいだです. です only adds politeness; it does not carry the tense. The tense lives in the adjective (たかかった), so たかかったです is the past, and たかいでした is wrong.

2. Na-adjectives

Na-adjectives behave like nouns, and the tense and negative are carried by です, exactly as in Chapter 4:

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	PAST	PAST NEGATIVE
quiet	しずかです *shizuka desu*	しずかじゃありません *shizuka ja arimasen*	しずかでした *shizuka deshita*	しずかじゃありませんでした *shizuka ja arimasen deshita*
pretty, clean	きれいです	きれいじゃありません	きれいでした	きれいじゃありませんでした
lively	にぎやかです	にぎやかじゃありません	にぎやかでした	にぎやかじゃありませんでした

> **Watch out: some na-adjectives end in い**

きれい (pretty, clean), **ゆうめい** (famous) and **きらい** (dislike) end in い but are **na-adjectives**: *きれいな はな*, *ゆうめいな ひと*, *きれいじゃありません*. If the ending is not a changing い as in ～い → ～くない, treat it as *na*. These three are the ones you will meet first; learn them as you meet each one.

3. Adjectives before a noun

TYPE	PATTERN	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
い-adjective	adjective + noun	おおきい いえ *ōkii ie*	a big house
い-adjective		あたらしい くるま *atarashii kuruma*	a new car
な-adjective	adjective + **な** + noun	しずかな まち *shizuka na machi*	a quiet town
な-adjective		きれいな へや *kirei na heya*	a clean room

In a sentence: エディンバラは しずかな まちです。 Edinbara wa shizuka na machi desu ("Edinburgh is a quiet town"), and これは あたらしい くるまです。 kore wa atarashii kuruma desu ("This is a new car").

4. Joining adjectives: ～くて and ～で

To say "X and Y" about the same thing, change the first adjective into its **connecting form**:

TYPE	HOW	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
い-adjective	drop い, add くて	やすくて おいしいです。 *yasukute oishii desu*	It is cheap and delicious.

TYPE	HOW	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
い-adjective, いい	**よくて**	よくて やすい みせです。	It's a good and cheap shop.
な-adjective	add **で**	しずかで きれいな まちです。 *shizuka de kirei na machi desu*	It is a quiet and pretty town.
negative	**くなくて / じゃなくて**	たかくなくて おいしいです。	It isn't expensive, and it is delicious.

This **くて / で** link is the adjective version of the te-form you will meet for verbs in Japanese Grammar 2.

5. とても, あまり and other degree words

WORD	MEANING	USE	EXAMPLE
とても *totemo*	very	positive	とても おいしいです。 It's very delicious.
すこし / ちょっと *sukoshi / chotto*	a little	positive	ちょっと たかいです。 It's a bit expensive.
あまり *amari*	not very	**negative**	あまり おおきくないです。 It's not very big.
ぜんぜん *zenzen*	not at all	**negative**	ぜんぜん たかくないです。 It's not expensive at all.

Adverbs: an early look

An adjective becomes an adverb by changing its ending: **い-adjective → drop い, add く** (*はやい → はやく*, "quickly": *はやく あるきます*), **な-adjective → add に** (*しずか → しずかに*, "quietly": *しずかに はなします*). You will use these often once the verbs are in place.

6. AはBがCです: the "topic, part, description" pattern

Japanese describes a person or thing by naming a **topic** (*は*) and then a **part or quality** of it (*が*) with its description. It looks like "As for A, its B is C".

JAPANESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
アンナさんは かみが ながいです。	*Anna-san wa kami ga nagai desu*	Anna has long hair. (As for Anna, her hair is long.)
エディンバラは まちが きれいです。	*Edinbara wa machi ga kirei desu*	Edinburgh's streets are pretty. (Edinburgh, the town is pretty.)
わたしは あたまが いたいです。	*watashi wa atama ga itai desu*	I have a headache. (As for me, my head hurts.)
にほんは ぶっかが たかいです。	*Nihon wa bukka ga takai desu*	Prices are high in Japan.

This is the same *は … が* structure you saw with *すき* in Chapter 5: *わたしは すしが すきです* ("As for me, sushi is liked"). Japanese uses it whenever a quality belongs to part of the topic.

🗣️ In Use — つかいかた

Adjectives in real exchanges. Read each aloud.

① About a restaurant

A:

このラーメンは おいしいですか。

Kono rāmen wa oishii desu ka.

Is this ramen delicious?

B:

はい、とても おいしいです。やすくて おいしいです。

Hai, totemo oishii desu. Yasukute oishii desu.

② About a town

A:

エディンバラは おおきいですか。

Edinbara wa ōkii desu ka.

Is Edinburgh big?

B:

いいえ、あまり おおきくないです。ちいさくて しずかな まちです。

Yes, it's very delicious. It's cheap and delicious.

Iie, amari ōkikunai desu. Chiisakute shizuka na machi desu.
No, it's not very big. It's a small, quiet town.

③ About yesterday's film

A:

きのうの えいがは どうでしたか。
Kinō no eiga wa dō deshita ka.
How was yesterday's film?

B:

たのしかったです。でも ちょっと ながかったです。
Tanoshikatta desu. Demo chotto nagakatta desu.
It was fun. But it was a little long.

📋 Quick Reference

FORM	い-ADJECTIVE (たかい)	な-ADJECTIVE (しずか)
Positive	たかいです	しずかです
Negative	たかくないです	しずかじゃありません
Past	たかかったです	しずかでした
Past negative	たかくなかったです	しずかじゃありませんでした
Before a noun	たかい ほん	しずかな まち
Joining	たかくて	しずかで
Adverb	たかく	しずかに

✍️ Practice — れんしゅう

Try each one, then click to check.

1. Make negative: たかいです

▼ Show answer

たかくないです。

2. Make past: おいしいです and past negative: たのしいです

▼ Show answer

おいしかったです and たのしくなかったです.

3. Make negative: いいです

▼ Show answer

よくないです。 (いい uses よ- everywhere except the positive.)

4. Make negative and past for しずかです.

▼ Show answer

しずかじゃありません (negative); しずかでした (past); しずかじゃありませんでした (past negative).

5. Say "a quiet town" and "a big house".

▼ Show answer

しずかな まち and おおきい いえ.

6. Join: "It is cheap and delicious."

▼ Show answer

やすくて おいしいです。

7. Join: "It is a quiet, pretty town."

▼ Show answer

しずかで きれいな まちです。

8. Which type is きれい, and what is the wrong form in きれいくないです?

▼ Show answer

きれい is a **na**-adjective, so the negative is きれいじゃありません, not *きれいくない*.

9. Say "It's not very big."

▼ Show answer

あまり おおきくないです。 (*あまり* needs a negative.)

10. Say "Anna has long hair." (use *は* … *が*)

▼ Show answer

アンナさんは かみが ながいです。

Coming up in Chapter 10: Questions and Question Words. *か*, *だれ*, *なに*, *いつ*, *どこ*, *どう*, *いくら*, *いくつ*, *どちら*, indirect questions, and how to answer.

❓ Questions and Question Words — しつもん

Asking questions in Japanese is simpler than in English: there is no change of word order and no helper verb like "do". You add か to the end of a sentence, and for "who, what, where, when" you put a question word in the place where the answer would go. This chapter gives you all the question words, shows how the same word becomes "somebody / something / somewhere", how to ask questions inside a sentence (I don't know where it is) and how to answer, including the tricky answer to a negative question.

The rule in one box **Statement + か = question.** A question word **takes the place of the answer, with its own particle** (*だれが, なにを, どこへ, いつ*), and the sentence ends in *か*. Answer by replacing the question word with the information and keeping the rest: *どこへ いきますか → とうきょうへ いきます.*

1. Yes / no questions

STATEMENT	QUESTION
コーヒーを のみます。 *kōhī o nomimasu*	コーヒーを のみますか。 *kōhī o nomimasu ka*
がくせいです。	がくせいですか。
おいしかったです。	おいしかったですか。

The answer is はい (yes) or いいえ (no), followed by the verb or adjective: はい、のみます。 / いいえ、のみません。 In writing, a question mark is optional; the full stop 。 is the usual ending.

2. The question words

QUESTION WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE
だれ *dare* (polite: どなた *donata*)	who	だれが きましたか。 Who came?
なに / なん *nani / nan*	what	なにを たべますか。 What will you eat?
いつ *itsu*	when	いつ いきますか。 When will you go?
どこ *doko*	where	どこで べんきょうしますか。 Where do you study?
どう *dō*	how (is it?)	にほんは どうですか。 How is Japan?
どんな *donna* + noun	what kind of	どんな えいがが すきですか。 What kind of films do you like?
いくら *ikura*	how much (price)	これは いくらですか。 How much is this?
いくつ *ikutsu*	how many (things); how old	りんごを いくつ かいますか。 How many apples will you buy?
どちら *dochira*	which of two; where (polite)	どちらが すきですか。 Which do you prefer?
どれ / どの *dore / dono*	which one / which …	どの かばんが あなたのですか。 Which bag is yours?
なぜ / どうして *naze / dōshite*	why	どうして いきませんでしたか。 Why didn't you go?
なんじ · なんにん · なんさい · なんがつ	what time · how many people · how old · which month	なんじに おきますか。 What time do you get up?

Watch out: なに or なん?

The word for "what" has two forms. **なん** comes before *です, だ, の*, before a counter (*なんじ, なんにん, なんさい, なんがつ*) and before the sounds *t, d, n*: *それは なんですか*, *なんの ほんですか*. Elsewhere, especially before *を, が, も, か*, use **なに**: *なにを たべますか*, *なにが ありますか*. When in doubt, say it aloud: you will hear which sounds natural.

3. Word order and particles

The question word sits **where the answer would sit**, with the same particle. Nothing else changes.

STATEMENT	QUESTION
ともだちが きました。	だれが きましたか。
パンを たべます。	なにを たべますか。
うちで べんきょうします。	どこで べんきょうしますか。
バスで いきます。	なんで いきますか。 (by what means)
ともだちと いきます。	だれと いきますか。
くじに おきます。	なんじに おきますか。

Two details: **いつ** never takes *に* (*いつ いきますか*), and a question word as subject takes **が**, never **は** (Chapter 5).

どちら: which of two

For choosing between two items, use **A と B と どちらが … ですか**, answered with **〜のほうが** (Chapter 6):

QUESTION	ANSWER
コーヒーと おちゃと どちらが すきですか。 *kōhī to ocha to dochira ga suki desu ka*	コーヒーの ほうが すきです。 *kōhī no hō ga suki desu*

QUESTION	ANSWER
Which do you like better, coffee or tea?	I like coffee better.

4. The same words as "some-" and "no-"

Add **か** to a question word and it means "some-" in a sentence; add **も** with a negative verb and it means "no-" (Chapter 6).

QUESTION WORD	+ か (SOME-)	+ も ... NEGATIVE (NO-)
だれ who	だれか somebody	だれも nobody
なに what	なにか something	なにも nothing
どこ where	どこか somewhere	どこにも nowhere
いつ when	いつか some day	いつも always (with a positive verb)

JAPANESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
なにか たべますか。	*nanika tabemasu ka*	Will you eat something?
だれか いますか。	*dareka imasu ka*	Is anyone there?
どこかへ いきましたか。	*dokoka e ikimashita ka*	Did you go anywhere?

5. Questions inside a sentence

To say "I don't know where it is" or "please tell me when it starts", place the question inside the sentence, **before か**, and add the main verb: *わかりません* (don't know), *しりません* (don't know), *おしえて ください* (please tell me).

JAPANESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
えきが どこに あるか わかりません。	*eki ga doko ni aru ka wakarimasen*	I don't know where the station is.
だれが くるか しりません。	*dare ga kuru ka shirimasen*	I don't know who is coming.
いつ いくか おしえて ください。	*itsu iku ka oshiete kudasai*	Please tell me when you are going.
かれが だれか わかりません。	*kare ga dare ka wakarimasen*	I don't know who he is.

Inside the sentence, the verb is in its **dictionary form** (*ある, くる, いく*), not the ます-form, and a noun or na-adjective simply stands before か with no だ. The full rules for these plain forms come in Japanese Grammar 2 and 3; for now, copy the pattern: **question word + dictionary form + か + わかりません**.

6. Answering

QUESTION TYPE	ANSWER BY …	EXAMPLE
Yes / no	はい / いいえ + the verb	はい、いきます。
Question word	replace it with the answer, keep the particle	どこへ いきますか。→ とうきょうへ いきます。
Why?	reason + **から / からです**	どうして いきませんでしたか。→ あめでしたから。 (Because it rained.)

Watch out: answering a negative question

A negative question such as *さかなを たべませんか。* ("Don't you eat fish?") is answered according to **whether the statement is true**, not according to whether the answer is yes or no in English. If you really *don't* eat fish, say **はい、たべません** ("Yes, [that's right,] I don't"). If you do eat it, say **いい**

え、たべます ("No, [that's not so,] I eat it"). *はい* means "what you said is right", and *いいえ* means "it is not".

Polite question words

In shops and offices you will hear the polite forms: *どなた* (who), *どちら* (where, which), *おいくつ* (how old). A good model is *どちらさまですか* ("who is it?", at a door or on the phone) and *おいくつですか* ("how old are you?", politely).

In Use — つかいかた

Questions and answers in real exchanges. Read each aloud.

① Getting to know you

A:

おなまえは なんですか。

Onamae wa nan desu ka.

What is your name?

B:

フィリップです。エディンバラから きました。

Firippu desu. Edinbara kara kimashita.

I'm Philip. I came from Edinburgh.

A:

おしごとは なんですか。

Oshigoto wa nan desu ka.

What do you do for work?

② Shopping

A:

この かばんは いくらですか。

Kono kaban wa ikura desu ka.

How much is this bag?

B:

にせんごひゃくえんです。

Nisen gohyaku-en desu.

It's 2,500 yen.

③ Choosing

A:

コーヒーと おちゃと どちらが すきですか。

Kōhī to ocha to dochira ga suki desu ka.

Which do you like better, coffee or tea?

B:

コーヒーの ほうが すきです。

Kōhī no hō ga suki desu.

I like coffee better.

📋 Quick Reference

IDEA	PATTERN	EXAMPLE
Yes / no question	statement + か	いきますか。
Question word	word + its particle + … か	どこで べんきょうしますか。
what	なん before です, の, counters, t/d/n; なに elsewhere	なんですか · なにを
Which of two	AとBとどちらが … → 〜のほうが	コーヒーの ほうが
some- / no-	か / も + negative	なにか · なにも
Indirect	question word + dictionary form + か + わかりません	どこに あるか わかりません
Why?	どうして → … から	あめでしたから。

✍️ Practice — れんしゅう

Try each one, then click to check.

1. Choose *なに* or *なん*: それは ___ですか。 and ___を たべますか。

▼ Show answer

なん (before です) and **なに** (before を).

2. Ask "Who came?"

▼ Show answer

だれが きましたか。

3. Ask "How much is this?"

▼ Show answer

これは いくらですか。

4. Ask "Where are you going tomorrow?"

▼ Show answer

あした どこへ いきますか。

5. Ask "Which do you like better, coffee or tea?" and answer "Coffee."

▼ Show answer

コーヒーと おちゃと どちらが すきですか。 / コーヒーの ほうが すきです。

6. Ask "What time do you get up?" and "How old are you?" (polite)

▼ Show answer

なんじに おきますか。 and おいくつですか。

7. Say "I don't know where the station is."

▼ Show answer

えきが どこに あるか わかりません。

8. Say "I ate something" and "I ate nothing".

▼ Show answer

なにか たべました。 and なにも たべませんでした。

9. Someone asks さかなを たべませんか。 and you do not eat fish. How do you answer?

▼ Show answer

はい、たべません。 *はい* confirms the negative statement.

10. Answer どうして いきませんでしたか。 with "Because it rained."

▼ Show answer

あめでしたから。

Coming up in Chapter 11: Wants, Invitations and Requests. *〜たいです* (want to), *〜ませんか / 〜ましょう* (shall we?), *〜をください*, *〜てください* as a set phrase, *ほしいです*, and how to accept or decline politely.

🙋 Wants, Invitations and Requests — のぞみ・さそい・おねがい

Now you can build full sentences, so it is time to use them to do things with people: say what you want, invite someone, ask for something and say yes or no politely. Everything in this chapter uses the ます-stem from Chapter 8 (the ます-form without ます): のみます → のみ-. You will meet 〜たいです (want to), ほしいです (want a thing), 〜ませんか and 〜ましょう (let's), をください (please give me) and a first, frozen form of 〜てください (please do).

The rule in one box With the **ます-stem**: + **たいです** = I want to; + **ませんか** = won't you ...? (invitation); + **ましょう** = let's .... With a noun: **noun** + **が ほしいです** = I want it; **noun** + **をください** = please give me it. A request to do something is **〜てください**, which you can use now as a set phrase.

1. 〜たいです: wanting to do

Take the ます-stem and add **〜たいです**: "I want to ...".

VERB	ます-FORM	STEM + たいです	ENGLISH
to go	いきます	いきたいです *ikitai desu*	I want to go.
to eat	たべます	たべたいです *tabetai desu*	I want to eat.
to drink	のみます	のみたいです *nomitai desu*	I want to drink.
to do	します	したいです *shitai desu*	I want to do.
to come	きます	きたいです	I want to come.

In a sentence the object can take either **を** or **が**: みずを のみたいです。 / みずが のみたいです。 mizu o / ga nomitai desu ("I want to drink water"). Other particles stay as they are: にほんへ いきたいです。 ("I want to go to Japan").

～たい behaves like an い-adjective

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	PAST	PAST NEGATIVE
want to eat	たべたいです	たべたくないです	たべたかったです	たべたくなかったです

> **Watch out: ～たい talks about your own wants**
>
> In a statement, *～たいです* describes **your own** wish; to say what someone else wants, Japanese uses a different form (*～たがっています*, Japanese Grammar 2). Asking *なにを たべたいですか* ("What do you want to eat?") is fine between friends, but with a customer or a superior it sounds too direct: use *～ませんか* or *いかがですか* instead.

2. ほしいです: wanting a thing

ほしい is an *い*-adjective meaning "want (a thing)". The thing wanted takes **が**: わたしは くるまが ほしいです。 watashi wa kuruma ga hoshii desu ("I want a car"). It conjugates like any *い*-adjective: *ほしくないです*, *ほしかったです*.

WANT A THING	WANT TO DO SOMETHING
あたらしい かばんが ほしいです。 I want a new bag.	あたらしい かばんを かいたいです。 I want to buy a new bag.

ほしい cannot follow a verb: for "want to do", always use *～たい*.

3. Inviting: ～ませんか and ～ましょう

FORM	USE	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
〜ませんか	invitation, softly: "Wouldn't you like to …?"	いっしょに えいがを みませんか。 *issho ni eiga o mimasen ka*	Would you like to see a film with me?
〜ましょう	suggestion or acceptance: "Let's …"	いきましょう。 *ikimashō*	Let's go.
〜ましょうか	"Shall we …?" or "Shall I …?" (offering)	でんしゃで いきましょうか。 てつだいましょうか。	Shall we go by train? Shall I help you?

A typical invitation sequence: *ませんか* to ask, *ましょう* to accept or settle the plan.

JAPANESE	ENGLISH
A: こんばん いっしょに ごはんを たべませんか。	A: Would you like to have dinner together tonight?
B: いいですね。なにを たべましょうか。	B: That sounds good. What shall we eat?
A: ラーメンは どうですか。	A: How about ramen?
B: ええ、ラーメンを たべましょう。	B: Yes, let's have ramen.

Watch out: ませんか is a question, ましょう is not

〜ませんか really asks (*Will you … ?*) and leaves the other person free to decline, which makes it the polite choice for a first invitation. *〜ましょう* proposes and assumes agreement, and it is also the natural reply: *いきませんか* → *ええ、いきましょう*.

4. Asking for things: をください

PATTERN	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
noun + を ください	コーヒーを ください。 *kōhī o kudasai*	Coffee, please.
noun + quantity + ください	りんごを みっつ ください。	Three apples, please.
noun + を おねがいします	おみずを おねがいします。 *omizu o onegai shimasu*	Water, please. (a little more polite)
more of something	もう すこし ください。	A little more, please.

5. ～てください: a first, frozen form

To ask someone to *do* something ("please wait, please tell me"), Japanese uses the **te-form** of the verb plus **ください**. You will learn how to build the te-form in Japanese Grammar 2. For now, learn these requests as **set phrases**:

JAPANESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
ちょっと まって ください。	*chotto matte kudasai*	Please wait a moment.
みせて ください。	*misete kudasai*	Please show me.
おしえて ください。	*oshiete kudasai*	Please tell / teach me.
ここに かいて ください。	*koko ni kaite kudasai*	Please write here.
ゆっくり はなして ください。	*yukkuri hanashite kudasai*	Please speak slowly.
もういちど いって ください。	*mō ichido itte kudasai*	Please say it once more.

Soften a request

A bare *〜てください* is polite but firm, like an instruction. Add *すみません、* in front, or *ちょっと* inside, to soften it: *すみません、ちょっと まって ください*. *〜をおねがいします* is softer still for requests for things.

6. Accepting and declining politely

A flat "no" is rare in Japanese. People decline by apologising, giving a hint of a reason and often leaving the sentence unfinished.

	JAPANESE	SAY IT	ENGLISH
Accepting	いいですね。いきましょう。	*ii desu ne. ikimashō*	That sounds good. Let's go.
	はい、ぜひ。	*hai, zehi*	Yes, by all means.
	はい、よろこんで。	*hai, yorokonde*	Yes, gladly.
Declining	すみません、きょうは ちょっと…。	*sumimasen, kyō wa chotto…*	I'm sorry, today is a bit (difficult)…
	ざんねんですが、あしたは いそがしいです。	*zannen desu ga, ashita wa isogashii desu*	It's a pity, but tomorrow I'm busy.
	また こんど おねがいします。	*mata kondo onegai shimasu*	Please ask me again another time.

Watch out: いいです can mean yes or no

いいですね means "that's good". But *いいです* on its own to an offer (*コーヒーは いかがですか。— いいです。*) can mean "No, thank you, I'm fine". To refuse clearly and politely, say **けっこうです** or **だいじょうぶです**; to accept, say **おねがいします** or **はい、ぜひ**.

🗣️ In Use — つかいかた

Wants, invitations and requests in real exchanges. Read each aloud.

① An invitation

A:

どようびに いっしょに えいがを みませんか。

Doyōbi ni issho ni eiga o mimasen ka.

Would you like to see a film together on Saturday?

B:

いいですね。なにを みたいですか。

Ii desu ne. Nani o mitai desu ka.

That sounds good. What would you like to see?

A:

にほんの えいがを みたいです。

Nihon no eiga o mitai desu.

I'd like to see a Japanese film.

② In a café

A:

すみません。コーヒーを ふたつ ください。

Sumimasen. Kōhī o futatsu kudasai.

Excuse me. Two coffees, please.

B:

はい。ほかに なにか ありますか。

Hai. Hoka ni nanika arimasu ka.

Certainly. Anything else?

A:

おみずも おねがいします。

Omizu mo onegai shimasu.

Water as well, please.

③ Politely saying no

A:

あした いっしょに のみに いきませんか。

Ashita issho ni nomi ni ikimasen ka.

Would you like to go for a drink together tomorrow?

B:

すみません、あしたは ちょっと…。また こんど おねがいします。

Sumimasen, ashita wa chotto… Mata kondo onegai shimasu.

I'm sorry, tomorrow is a bit difficult. Please ask me another time.

📋 Quick Reference

IDEA	PATTERN	EXAMPLE
Want to do	stem + たいです	いきたいです。
Don't want to	stem + たくないです	いきたくないです。
Want a thing	noun + が ほしいです	くるまが ほしいです。
Invite	stem + ませんか	いきませんか。
Let's / accept	stem + ましょう	いきましょう。
Please give me	noun + を ください	みずを ください。
Please do (set phrase)	～て ください	まって ください。
Decline softly	すみません、～は ちょっと…	きょうは ちょっと…

✍️ Practice — れんしゅう

Try each one, then click to check.

1. Make "I want to drink": のみます →

▼ Show answer

のみたいです。

2. Say "I don't want to go."

▼ Show answer

いきたくないです。

3. Say "I wanted to eat sushi."

▼ Show answer

すしが たべたかったです。 (or すしを たべたかったです。)

4. Say "I want a car." Why does the thing wanted take が?

▼ Show answer

くるまが ほしいです。 *ほしい* describes a feeling of the speaker, like *すき* (Chapter 5), so the thing takes *が*.

5. Invite someone: "Would you like to see a film with me?"

▼ Show answer

いっしょに えいがを みませんか。

6. Accept the invitation in question 5.

▼ Show answer

いいですね。みましょう。 (or はい、ぜひ。)

7. Offer to help: "Shall I help you?"

▼ Show answer

てつだいましょうか。

8. Say "Please wait a moment."

▼ Show answer

ちょっと まって ください。

9. Order "Two coffees, please."

▼ Show answer

コーヒーを ふたつ ください。

10. Politely decline an invitation for tomorrow without saying "no".

▼ Show answer

すみません、あしたは ちょっと…。また こんど おねがいします。

Coming up in Chapter 12: Putting It Together. One sentence built step by step, a decision procedure (topic, particle, verb form), an error-spotting clinic, the Course Complete recap and a pointer to Japanese Grammar 2.

🧩 Putting It Together — まとめ

You now have every piece of a basic Japanese sentence: topic, particles, polite verbs, adjectives, questions, wants and invitations. This last chapter shows how the pieces fit, gives you a short checklist for building any sentence, and trains your eye for the mistakes learners make most.

The rule in one box Japanese sentences are built **around the verb, which comes last**. Everything before it is a **noun + particle** block, and the blocks can come in almost any order. Decide: **1) the topic (は), 2) each role (が, を, に, で, へ …), 3) the verb or adjective form at the end.**

1. One sentence, built step by step

English: "Yesterday I went to the library by train with my friend." Build it one block at a time.

STEP	ADD	RESULT
1. The verb, last, polite past	went → *いきました*	いきました。
2. The destination (に / へ)	to the library	としょかんへ いきました。 *toshokan e ikimashita*
3. The means (で)	by train	でんしゃで としょかんへ いきました。
4. The companion (と)	with my friend	ともだちと でんしゃで としょかんへ いきました。
5. The time	yesterday	きのう ともだちと でんしゃで としょかんへ いきました。
6. The topic (は)	as for me	わたしは きのう ともだちと でんしゃで としょかんへ いきました。

STEP	ADD	RESULT
		watashi wa kinō tomodachi to densha de toshokan e ikimashita

Watch out: the topic is usually dropped

In real conversation *わたしは* is left out whenever it is obvious who is speaking: *きのう ともだちと でんしゃで としょかんへ いきました。* is the natural sentence. The verb is the one block you can never leave out.

2. A decision procedure

ASK YOURSELF	IF YES	CHAPTER
What am I talking *about*?	mark it with **は**	4
Who or what does the action?	**が** (new information, or after question words)	5
What receives the action?	**を**	5
Where to, or at what time?	**に** (**へ** for direction)	5
Where does the action happen, or by what means?	**で**	5
With whom, and what else, from where, until when?	**と, や, から, まで, より, も**	6
Is the predicate a verb?	polite **〜ます** forms (positive, negative, past)	8
Is it a description?	い-adjective or な-adjective, then **です**	9
Is it a question?	add **か**; use a question word in the slot being asked	10
Do I want, invite or request?	**〜たいです, 〜ませんか, 〜ましょう, をください**	11

3. Error-spotting clinic

Each sentence below has one error. Find it, then check the correction.

WRONG	WHY	RIGHT
パンは たべます わたしは。	The verb must come last.	わたしは パンを たべます。
みずは のみます。 (meaning "I drink water")	*は* makes water the topic and implies a contrast; the object of a plain statement takes *を*.	みずを のみます。
がっこうを いきます。	A destination takes *に* or へ, not *を*.	がっこうへ いきます。
としょかんに べんきょうします。	The place where an action happens takes *で*.	としょかんで べんきょうします。
この ほんは たかいくないです。	An い-adjective drops *い* and adds *くない*.	この ほんは たかくないです。
しずかいです。	*しずか* is a な-adjective; it takes *です* directly.	しずかです。
きのう いきます。	The tense must match the time word.	きのう いきました。
なにが たべたいですか。 and the answer なにを たべたい…	Not an error: *たい* allows *を* or *が*. Don't "fix" it.	なにを / なにが たべたいですか。
いっしょに いきましょうか、はい。 (as an invitation to a stranger)	For a first invitation *〜ませんか* is softer than *〜ましょう*.	いっしょに いきませんか。

In Use — つかいかた

The whole course in three short exchanges. Spot the particles and verb forms as you read.

① Meeting

A:

はじめまして。わたしは エマです。イギリスから きました。

Hajimemashite. Watashi wa Ema desu. Igirisu kara kimashita.

Nice to meet you. I'm Emma. I came from Britain.

B:

そうですか。にほんは はじめてですか。

Sō desu ka. Nihon wa hajimete desu ka.

Is that so? Is Japan new to you?

② Plans

A:

あしたは なにを しますか。

Ashita wa nani o shimasu ka.

What will you do tomorrow?

B:

ともだちと レストランで ひるごはんを たべます。いっしょに いきませんか。

Tomodachi to resutoran de hirugohan o tabemasu. Issho ni ikimasen ka.

I'll have lunch with a friend at a restaurant. Would you like to come along?

A:

いいですね。ぜひ いきたいです。

Ii desu ne. Zehi ikitai desu.

That sounds good. I'd love to go.

③ Describing

A:

この まちは どうですか。

Kono machi wa dō desu ka.

How is this town?

B:

しずかで きれいな まちです。でも、ものは すこし たかいです。

Shizuka de kirei na machi desu. Demo, mono wa sukoshi takai desu.

It's a quiet, pretty town. But things are a little expensive.

🎓 Course Complete — Recap

CHAPTERS	WHAT YOU CAN NOW DO
1-3	See how a Japanese sentence works; read the sounds and writing system; use nouns, numbers and counters.
4-6	Use は and です; choose from the core particles (が, を, に, で, へ, と, や, から, まで, より, も).
7	Point and ask where with *これ, それ, あれ, ここ* and friends.
8-9	Use polite verbs in the present, negative and past; describe with い- and な-adjectives.
10-11	Ask questions; say what you want; invite, request, accept and decline politely.
12	Build sentences with a checklist and spot common errors.

✍️ Practice — れんしゅう

Try each one, then click to check.

1. Build: "I eat bread at home." (topic, place, object, verb)

▼ Show answer

わたしは うちで パンを たべます。

2. Build: "Yesterday I didn't go to school."

▼ Show answer

きのう がっこうへ いきませんでした。

3. Correct: レストランを いきます。

▼ Show answer

レストランへ いきます。 (destination: へ or に)

4. Correct: この カレーは からいくないです。

▼ Show answer

この カレーは からくないです。

5. Correct: ゆうめいいです。 (famous)

▼ Show answer

ゆうめいです。 (*ゆうめい* is a な-adjective)

6. Ask: "Who came?" (Which particle follows the question word?)

▼ Show answer

だれが きましたか。 (*が* follows a question word as subject)

7. Say: "I want to go to Japan."

▼ Show answer

にほんへ いきたいです。

8. Invite: "Shall we eat together?"

▼ Show answer

いっしょに たべませんか。 (or たべましょうか。)

9. Describe: "It is a quiet town." (な-adjective + noun)

▼ Show answer

しずかな まちです。

10. Build a three-block sentence of your own about yesterday, using one time word, one particle block and a past polite verb.

▼ Show answer

Any answer of the form *time* + *noun* + *particle* + *verb-ました*, for example きのう ほんを よみました。 ("Yesterday I read a book.")

Next: Japanese Grammar 2. The te-form (behind 〜てください), the plain form, 〜ている, 〜たがる and more, building on everything here. Congratulations on finishing Japanese Grammar 1! 🎉