

JP

JAPANESE LESSON

Where Is The Cat

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Where Is the Cat?

猫はどこにいますか

Neko wa doko ni imasu ka?

Learn how to ask where things (and cats!) are in Japanese. This lesson covers position words, household locations, and how to say a living creature *is somewhere* in Japanese.

Your cats: **Thor** → トール (Tōru)Your cats: **Loki** → ロキ (Roki)

GRAMMAR

The key patterns

Japanese uses a very consistent structure for "where is X?" and "X is [somewhere]." The good news: once you know the formula, every dialogue in this lesson works the same way.

PATTERN 1 — ASKING "WHERE IS...?"

[subject] は どこ に いますか？

wa (は) marks the topic — what you're asking about.**doko** (どこ) = "where"**ni** (に) is the location particle — it always follows the place word.**imasu ka?** (います か ?) = "is [it]?" — **imasu** is for living things (people, animals).

Example: トールはどこにいますか？ → "Where is Thor?"

PATTERN 2 — ANSWERING "X IS [LOCATION]"

[place] の [position word] に います。

no (の) connects two nouns — like "of" or "'s" in English.
So ソファの上に = "on (top of) the sofa" (literally: sofa's top/above, at).
imasu (います) = "[it] is" — the full stop ends the sentence.

For places with no direction word needed, just use the place + に:
キッチンにいます。 → "He is in the kitchen."

⚠ **Critical: いる (iru) vs ある (aru)**

LIVING THINGS — PEOPLE & ANIMALS

います (imasu)

猫はソファの上に**います**。
The cat IS on the sofa.

NON-LIVING THINGS — OBJECTS & PLACES

あります (arimasu)

本はテーブルの上に**あります**。
The book IS on the table.

Cats are living → always use **います**. This is one of the most important distinctions in Japanese — and one of the most common mistakes for beginners.

VOCABULARY — POSITION WORDS

Where exactly?

These words always follow **の (no)** + place name, then **に (ni)**. Pattern: *[place] の [position] に*

JAPANESE	READING	MEANING	FULL EXAMPLE WITH ソファ
上	うえ / ue	on top of / above	ソファのうえに
下	した / shita	under / below	ソファのしたに
中	なか / naka	inside / in	ベッドのなかに
後ろ	うしろ / ushiro	behind / at the back of	ソファのうしろに
前	まえ / mae	in front of	まどのまえに
そば / 隣	そば / soba となり / tonari	next to / beside	わたしのそばに

JAPANESE	READING	MEANING	FULL EXAMPLE WITH ソファ
間	あいだ / aida	between	クッションのあいだに

Memory trick: Think of の as "apostrophe-s" — ソファの上 = "sofa's top" = "on (top of) the sofa." Then に just means "at" that location. So the whole thing is: "**at sofa's top**" = on the sofa.
✓

VOCABULARY — PLACES

Locations around the house

キッチン

kicchin

kitchen

キッチンにいます
He is in the kitchen

ソファ

sofa

sofa

ソファの上にあります
He is on the sofa

ベッド

beddo

bed

ベッドの中にいます
He is in/on the bed

パソコンデスク

pasokon desuku

computer desk

デスクの上にあります
He is on the desk

車

くるま / kuruma

car

車の上にあります
He is on the car

窓

まど / mado

window / windowsill

窓の前にいます
He is at the window

階段

かいだん / kaidan

stairs

階段の上にあります
He is on the stairs

クローゼット

kurōzetto

wardrobe / closet

クローゼットの中に
Inside the wardrobe

膝

ひざ / hiza

lap / knee

膝の上にあります
He is on my lap

庭

にわ / niwa

garden

庭にいます
He is in the garden

椅子

いす / isu

chair

椅子の上にあります
He is on the chair

本棚

ほんだな / hondana

bookshelf

本棚の上にあります
He is on the bookshelf

Note on キッチン vs 台所: キッチン (kicchin) is the modern loanword and the one you'll hear most in everyday speech. 台所 (だいどころ, daidokoro) is the traditional Japanese word — both are correct, but キッチン feels natural for a modern home conversation.

VOCABULARY — KEY QUESTION WORDS

猫 / ねこ

neko

cat

私の猫はどこ？
Where is my cat?

どこ

doko

where

どこにいますか？
Where is [it]?

私の

わたしの / watashi no

my

私の猫 = my cat

彼の / 彼女の

kare no / kanojo no

his / her

Often dropped — implied in context

Japanese often drops pronouns. You don't need to say "he is on the sofa" — just ソファの上 **に** います is natural and complete. The subject (Thor, Loki, the cat) is understood from context. In these dialogues the answer lines are often just the location + います with no pronoun at all — that's perfectly natural Japanese.

DIALOGUES

12 mini conversations

Each dialogue is two lines: a question and an answer. **Blue speaker** = question · **Pink speaker** = answer. Thor = **トール** · Loki = **ロキ**

DIALOGUE 01 — MY CAT / COMPUTER DESK

QUESTION

私の猫はどこにいますか？

Watashi no neko wa doko ni imasu ka?

Where is my cat?

ANSWER

パソコンデスクの上にあります。

Pasokon desuku no ue ni imasu.

DIALOGUE 02 — THOR / HIS BED

QUESTION

トールはどこにいますか？

Tōru wa doko ni imasu ka?

Where is Thor?

ANSWER

ベッドの中にいます。

Beddo no naka ni imasu.

He is on the computer desk.

He is in his bed.

DIALOGUE 03 — LOKI / KITCHEN

QUESTION

ロキはどこにいますか？

Roki wa doko ni imasu ka?

Where is Loki?

ANSWER

キッチンにいます。

Kicchin ni imasu.

He is in the kitchen.

DIALOGUE 04 — THE CAT / ON THE CAR

QUESTION

猫はどこにいますか？

Neko wa doko ni imasu ka?

Where is the cat?

ANSWER

車の上にいます。

Kuruma no ue ni imasu.

He is on the car.

DIALOGUE 05 — THOR / BEHIND THE SOFA

QUESTION

トールはどこにいますか？

Tōru wa doko ni imasu ka?

Where is Thor?

ANSWER

ソファの後ろにいます。

Sofa no ushiro ni imasu.

He is behind the sofa.

DIALOGUE 06 — LOKI / UNDER THE BED

QUESTION

ロキはどこにいますか？

Roki wa doko ni imasu ka?

Where is Loki?

ANSWER

ベッドの下にいます。

Beddo no shita ni imasu.

He is under the bed.

DIALOGUE 07 — MY CAT / IN FRONT OF THE WINDOW

QUESTION

私の猫はどこにいますか？

Watashi no neko wa doko ni imasu ka?

Where is my cat?

ANSWER

窓の前にいます。

Mado no mae ni imasu.

He is in front of the window.

DIALOGUE 08 — THOR / NEXT TO ME

QUESTION

トールはどこにいますか？

Tōru wa doko ni imasu ka?

Where is Thor?

ANSWER

私のそばにいます。

Watashi no soba ni imasu.

He is next to me.

DIALOGUE 09 — LOKI / ON THE SOFA

QUESTION

ロキはどこにいますか？

Roki wa doko ni imasu ka?

DIALOGUE 10 — THE CAT / IN THE WARDROBE

QUESTION

猫はどこにいますか？

Neko wa doko ni imasu ka?

Where is Loki?

ANSWER

ソファの上にいます。

Sofa no ue ni imasu.

He is on the sofa.

Where is the cat?

ANSWER

クローゼットの中にいます。

Kurōzetto no naka ni imasu.

He is inside the wardrobe.

DIALOGUE 11 — THOR / ON THE STAIRS

QUESTION

トールはどこにいますか？

Tōru wa doko ni imasu ka?

Where is Thor?

ANSWER

階段の上にいます。

Kaidan no ue ni imasu.

He is on the stairs.

DIALOGUE 12 — LOKI / ON MY LAP

QUESTION

ロキはどこにいますか？

Roki wa doko ni imasu ka?

Where is Loki?

ANSWER

私の膝の上にいます。

Watashi no hiza no ue ni imasu.

He is on my lap.

Dialogue 12 has a double の! 私の膝の上 = "my lap's top" — two の in a row is perfectly normal in Japanese. It works the same as "my knee's top" → "on top of my knee" → "on my lap." Don't let double-の throw you — just read them left to right.

QUICK REFERENCE

All the sentences at a glance

猫はどこにいますか？

Neko wa doko ni imasu ka?

Where is the cat?

ソファの上にいます。

Sofa no ue ni imasu.

He is on the sofa.

ベッドの中にいます。

Beddo no naka ni imasu.

He is in the bed.

ソファの後ろにいます。

Sofa no ushiro ni imasu.

He is behind the sofa.

ベッドの下にいます。

Beddo no shita ni imasu.

He is under the bed.

窓の前にいます。

Mado no mae ni imasu.

He is in front of the window.

私のそばにいます。

Watashi no soba ni imasu.

キッチンにいます。

Kicchin ni imasu.

He is next to me.

He is in the kitchen.

車の上にあります。

Kuruma no ue ni imasu.

He is on the car.

クローゼットの中にいます。

Kurōzetto no naka ni imasu.

He is inside the wardrobe.

階段の上にあります。

Kaidan no ue ni imasu.

He is on the stairs.

私の膝の上にあります。

Watashi no hiza no ue ni imasu.

He is on my lap.

CHALLENGE

Build your own sentences

Try these in Japanese — answers below (no peeking first!):

1. Where is Thor? (you ask)

トールはどこにいますか？

Tōru wa doko ni imasu ka?

2. Loki is on the bookshelf. (you answer)

本棚の上にあります。

Hondana no ue ni imasu.

3. My cat is in the garden. (you answer)

庭にいます。

Niwa ni imasu.

4. Thor is between the cushions.

クッションの間にいます。

Kushshon no aida ni imasu.

Real-life practice tip: Next time you're looking for Thor or Loki around the house, say the question out loud in Japanese — トールはどこにいますか？ — and then answer yourself when you find him. It sounds silly but it's incredibly effective for building the pattern into muscle memory. Cats are excellent Japanese tutors. They won't correct your pronunciation but they also won't judge it. 🐱

Dinner in the diner, nothing could be finer Than to have your ham & eggs in Carolina I rembered the lyric just after the call ended :)