

Japanese is Possible!

Lesson 9

A look back

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Review

It's been 8 weeks since the first JIP column. What have you learned since then? I hope you've learned a lot about Japanese in the last 2 months. Now would be an excellent time to go back and review the previous 8 lessons. You may catch something that you overlooked the first time through.

Since an actual review column would be about as long as the last 8 episodes put together, I see no reason to put all that material here! That's what the archives are for. I recommend you at least read through the last 8 episodes. It shouldn't take too long. There are a lot of important points in them, and I want to make sure everyone has absorbed that information!

Japanese is Logical

Learning Japanese, like most sports or activities, involves repetition. You start out able to do almost nothing. You are very unskilled at first, but you make yourself practice every day. After working at it for a while, you discover that you are becoming more and more capable.

I believe that most people can acquire a decent proficiency of Japanese, especially if they like Japanese music, video games, and/or Anime. The only catch is they have to believe they can do it. You can't make excuses. You have to tell yourself that everyone else is wrong - it's not hard. They just don't know how easy the grammar and spelling is.

To give you an idea of what awaits you in Japanese:

tekubi - wrist
(te = hand, kubi = neck)

koinu - puppy
(ko = child or small, inu = dog)

tatsumaki - tornado
(tatsu = dragon, maki = wind [as in "roll up," not the weather type of wind])

You know how English has about 100 different words for a group of animals? (herd, flock, ostentation, murder, gaggle, etc) In Japanese there is just one - "mure".

There are a great many words that are made from 2 "kanji", or Chinese characters. Over time, you get used to how the different kanji are read, and what their meanings are.

For example:

FU - un, not
AN - rest, ease, comfortable
SHIN - heart, feelings

ANSHIN - peace of mind
FUAN - anxiety, worry

The kanji are like building blocks, which are used to build different words. It does help to learn some of the more popular kanji. I don't recommend learning them right away, but after a while you may want to start learning them.

It doesn't take much effort to learn "tasumaki" when you know that "tatsu" is dragon and "maki" is wind up.

Regarding adjectives

It's about time you started learning the details of adjectives. Up to now, I haven't said much about them and it's already lesson 9. So let's start from the beginning. There are two types of adjectives, and learners of Japanese commonly call them na-adjectives and i-adjectives, and you will soon see why. I adjectives always end in the vowels -ai, -ii, -ui or -oi, never -ei or a consonant followed by -i. There is no real rule about what a na-adjective looks like, so they are everything else. Sometimes na-adjectives, such as *kirai*, can look just like i-adjectives. From now on, if there is a na-adjective that looks like an i-adjective, I will explicitly mark it in the word list at the end of a lesson. There aren't very many.

If you've been following the lessons well, chances are that you

already know pretty well how to use them as predicate adjectives in the form:

Something wa/ga adjective desu.

Unsurprisingly, you can also use adjectives to directly modify nouns, (i.e. "The black cat *did something*," instead of "The cat is black.") To modify a noun with an i-adjective, just place the adjective before the noun.

kuroi neko - black cat
atsui ocha - hot tea

This enables to to use a verb other than "to be" to say what the subject *did* or *does* rather than what it *is*. To modify a noun with a na-adjective, you must insert the word *na* between the adjective and the noun.

taisetsu na mono - important thing
kirei na onna no ko - pretty girl

Da the other copula

Up to now, you have used the word *desu* as the verb meaning "to be," but there is another word with the same meaning: *da*. *Da* is a little less polite than *desu*, but you will frequently hear it in anime and read it in manga, and once you begin to learn more complex sentences, you will need to use it no matter what (just not as the predicate verb). As a predicate verb, *da* works just like *desu*:

Boku ga gakusei da.
I am a student.

Sore wa taisetsu da.
That's important.

There is one important difference. When an i-adjective is the predicate of a sentence (such as, *noun is adjective*), there is no *da* after it. Do this if the rest of your sentences have *da*. Compare:

Ano neko wa kuroi desu. (*desu* level politeness)

Ano neko wa kuroi. (*da* level politeness) That cat is black.

Example Sentences

tsumetai mizu wa ichiban desu.
cold water is the best.

ore wa omae no otousan da.
I'm your father.

kono jigoku kara no pasokon wa atsui desu yo!
[This hell *from modifier* computer (subject) hot is!]
This computer from hell is hot!

yukina no koori wa samui.
Yukina's ice is cold.

rekka no honoo wa atsui.
Rekka's fire was hot.

omae o korosu.
I'm going to kill you.

ano furui neko wa akai desu.
That old cat is red.

kanarazu lina no okane wa taisetsu da.
Without a doubt, Lina's money is precious.

ano hidoi bakemono wa chi o nonda.
That awful monster drank blood.

Popular Words

New words for this week:

[Noun] honoo - fire

[Noun] koori - ice

[Noun] mizu - water

[Noun] ocha - tea

[Noun] onna no ko - girl

[Noun] ushi - cow

[Adj] ii - good

[Adj] kirai - unlikable (na-adjective)

[Adj] kirei - pretty

[Adj] taisetsu - precious, important

[Verb] tobu - to fly

[Verb] da - is (a less polite version of desu)

[Verb] datta - was (the past tense of da)

Here are more 129 VERY popular words. Each word you learn from this list will be extremely useful. Most of these appeared in previous lessons.

[Adj] akai - red

[Adj] amai - sweet, naive

[Adj] aoi - blue

[Adj] are - that over there

[Adj] atarashii - new

[Adj] atsui - hot

[Adj] chiisai - small

[Adj] chikai - near
[Adj] furui - old
[Adj] hayai - fast
[Adj] hidoi - terrible, awful
[Adj] hitsuyou - necessary
[Adj] hontou - true
[Adj] ichiban - number 1
[Adj] kore - this
[Adj] kuroi - black
[Adj] midori - green
[Adj] mijikai - short (hair, etc)
[Adj] muri - hopeless, impossible
[Adj] muzukashii - hard
[Adj] nagai - long
[Adj] ooki - big
[Adj] osoi - slow
[Adj] saigo - last, the end
[Adj] samui - cold
[Adj] shiroi - white
[Adj] sore - that
[Adj] tooi - far
[Adj] tsumetai - cold
[Adj] warui - bad

[Adv] itsumo - always
[Adv] yukkuri - slowly, leisurely

[Int] dare - who
[Int] doko - where
[Int] ikutsu - how many
[Int] itsu - when
[Int] nani - what

[Misc] arigatou - thank you
[Misc] kanarazu - without a doubt
[Misc] kesshite - never
[Misc] kudasai - please
[Misc] kure - please (informal)
[Misc] nante - a thing such as

[Noun] ai - love
[Noun] ame - rain
[Noun] asa - morning
[Noun] atama - head
[Noun] bakemono - monster
[Noun] boushi - hat
[Noun] chi - blood
[Noun] chikara - power
[Noun] densha - train
[Noun] heya - room
[Noun] hito - person
[Noun] hon - book
[Noun] inu - dog
[Noun] jibun - yourself
[Noun] jigoku - hell
[Noun] kage - shadow

[Noun] kami - god
[Noun] kami - hair
[Noun] ki - energy, spirit
[Noun] kokoro - heart
[Noun] kotae - answer
[Noun] kuchi - mouth
[Noun] kumo - cloud
[Noun] kuruma - car
[Noun] makoto - truth
[Noun] minna - everyone
[Noun] mise - store
[Noun] mono - thing
[Noun] neko - cat
[Noun] ningen - human
[Noun] obake - ghost
[Noun] okaasan - mother
[Noun] okane - money
[Noun] onna - woman
[Noun] otoko - man
[Noun] otousan - father
[Noun] pasokon - computer
[Noun] shoujo - girl
[Noun] shounen - boy
[Noun] sora - sky
[Noun] tabemono - food
[Noun] tatakai - (a) fight
[Noun] terebi - T.V.
[Noun] tomodachi - friend
[Noun] ude - arm
[Noun] uta - song

[Pron] aitsu - that guy
[Pron] aitsu - he, she (informal)
[Pron] anata - you (always appropriate)
[Pron] are - that over there
[Pron] atashi - I (said by females)
[Pron] boku - I (said by males)
[Pron] kanojo - she
[Pron] kare - he
[Pron] kisama - you (what you would say to a baby -- or an enemy)
[Pron] koitsu - same as aitsu
[Pron] kore - this
[Pron] omae - you (said to inferiors)
[Pron] ore - I (speaker thinks he is superior)
[Pron] sore - that
[Pron] temee - you (one step above kisama - still extremely rude!)

[Verb] aruku - to walk
[Verb] bakuhatsu suru - to explode
[Verb] erabu - to choose
[Verb] hanasu - to speak
[Verb] hashiru - to run
[Verb] iru - to be somewhere (for a person)
[Verb] iku - to go [Verb] kaesu - return something, give back
[Verb] kasegu - to earn (money)

[Verb] kikoeru - to be heard
[Verb] kiku - to listen
[Verb] kuru - to come[br] [Verb] korosu - to kill
[Verb] miru - to see
[Verb] miru - to see, watch
[Verb] mitsukeru - to find
[Verb] motsu - to have
[Verb] mukau - to face, to head for
[Verb] naru - to become
[Verb] nomu - to drink
[Verb] noru - to ride
[Verb] omou - to think
[Verb] osu - to push
[Verb] ou - to follow
[Verb] sagasu - to search (for)
[Verb] taberu - to eat
[Verb] tamesu - to test
[Verb] tasukeru - to rescue
[Verb] tatakau - to hit
[Verb] tekagen suru - to hold back
[Verb] tomaru - to stop
[Verb] toru - to take
[Verb] tsukeru - to attach
[Verb] tsukiau - to hang around, to date
[Verb] tsuzukeru - to continue
[Verb] unten suru - to drive
[Verb] utau - to sing

Hiragana

If you see garbled letters in the brackets [] below, you need to set up your computer to read Japanese text. The [Japanese encoding page](#) should be able to solve your problem. If it doesn't, somebody in the [JIP forum](#) will surely help you out.

In this lesson, you will learn the hiragana characters for the vowels *i* and *u*. In English the order of the vowels is "a, e, i, o, u," their order in the alphabet. In Japanese, it's "a, i, u, e, o," and this is a little more significant than it is in English, as you will see much later. Right now, here's what *i* and *u* look like:

い [い] and う [う]

Writing them is pretty simple. For *i* just draw the left stroke from top to bottom, then the right stroke from top to bottom. For *u*, first draw the top stroke from left to right, then the bottom stroke, starting to the left and finishing below. I'm sure you've gathered a pattern by now. For the most part, each stroke is drawn from top to bottom, left to right, and in a character, the top-leftmost strokes are drawn first, proceeding down to the bottom-right ones. When a stroke slants down and to the left or curls around, you usually start drawing from the higher tip and finish at the lower tip of the stroke.

With these new characters, you can already write a few simple words:

いい [いい] (ii-good) あう [あう] (au-to meet) あい [あい] (ai-love)

Be here for the next lesson where you'll learn:

More Grammar
Common Phrases
Two more hiragana
More Popular Words

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