

Japanese is Possible!  
Lesson 7

## Wait a minute

- Basic expressions
- Nationality
- Two more particles: yo and ne
- Kara
- Some more useful words
- How are you doing so far?

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### Basic expressions

All of this time, you've been going along learning Japanese vocabulary and grammar, but there's a chance that you don't even know simple Japanese greetings yet (through no fault of your own). So here they are, learn them well:

**ohayou (gozaimasu)** - good morning

**konnichi wa** - hello

**konban wa** - good evening (said when meeting someone)

**oyasumi (nasai)** - good night (said when departing)

**hajimemashite** - I'm pleased to meet you, how do you do?

**sayounara** - good bye

**dewa mata** - good bye, later (more informal than sayounara)

**jaa mata** - see you later (more informal than dewa mata)

**(doumo) arigatou (gozaimasu)** - thank you (add the words in () to increase politeness)

**dou itashimashite** - you're welcome, don't mention it

**(o)genki( desu ka)?** - how are you? (lit. are you well?)

Not the shortest list in the world, but an important one. Learn those expressions well as soon as you can.

### Nationality

Another important topic you should know before we go any further is the way to express nationality. In English, we use suffixes like -ish, -ese, -an and sometimes it's completely irregular (Holland<->Dutch?) In Japanese, you simply add the suffix -jin to the name of a country:

Amerika + jin = **Amerikajin**    American person

Nihon + jin = **Nihonjin**

Japanese person

these words are always *nouns* (in English they're sometimes used as adjectives), and they *only apply to people* (not cars, etc.)

Supeinjin desu ka. (Are you Spanish?)

lie, Itariajin desu. (No, I'm Italian.)

## More on Particles

### The particle NE

The particle *ne* is a sentence particle, that means that it's used at the end of a sentence in the manner that *ka* is. It means "eh?" or "right?" As a way of looking for agreement, sometimes rhetorically.

#### Examples:

*Ano tatemono wa takai desu ne.*

[That building *as for* tall is huh?]

That building is tall, isn't it?

*Nihongo no hon o yonda ne.*

[Japanese language *attribute* book *of* read right?]

You read the Japanese book, didn't you?

### The particle YO

The particle *yo* is also a sentence particle, and it is used to assert (usually strongly) some information that the speaker believes that the listener does not already know, perhaps to explain something that the listener is questioning. It is similar to the English expression "you know."

#### Example:

*Biifu o tsuku ka. Kyou sakana o katta yo.*

[Beef *of* make? Today fish *of* bought you know.]

You're going to make beef? I bought fish today, you know.

## Kara

*Kara* is a very important particle that literally means "from," but in Japanese it can idiomatically mean "because." To use it this way, just put it after a verb or adjective expressing the reason, and express the consequence afterward. *Kara* is called a clause particle because it follows a chunk of words that would otherwise be a complete sentence. Note that the subject of the clause must be followed with *ga*, not *wa*.

#### Examples:

*Kono heya ga hiroi kara, ii desu ne.*  
[This room *is wide from*, good is right?]  
Since this room is large, it's nice, isn't it?

*Koko e hashitta kara, tsukareta.*  
[Here *to ran from*, tired.]  
I'm tired because I ran here.

### More Useful Words

These words should be added to everyone's list if you don't know them. They are the most popular words in Anime and video games - they are well worth learning!

### Pronouns

**kisama** - you (what you would say to a baby -- or an enemy)  
**temee** - you (one step above kisama - still extremely rude!)

### Nouns

**bakemono** - monster  
**obake** - ghost  
**sakana** - fish  
**chi** - blood  
**ningen** - human

### Adjectives

**amai** - sweet, naive  
**atarashii** - new  
**furui** - old  
**hidoi** - terrible, awful  
**hontou** - true  
**muzukashii** - hard  
**yasashii** - easy

### Verbs

**hashiru** - to run (godan verb)  
**mitsukeru** - to find (use it with the particle o)  
**nomu** - to drink  
**sagasu** - to search (for)  
**tsukareru** - to become tired  
**tsukiaiu** - to hang around, to date  
**tsuzuku** - to continue

### Miscellaneous

**kyou** - today

## How are you doing so far?

At the very beginning of this column (Part 1), I told you that learning Japanese isn't hard, but it is different from other languages you may have encountered. I will clarify what I said, so you won't get the wrong idea.

I would compare Japanese to a musical instrument. They are not "hard" per se. Calculus - that can be hard. Some people just can't seem to grasp its concepts, while some don't find it all that difficult. With that definition of hard in mind, I can truly say that Japanese isn't hard. You have to slowly beat it into your head over a period of years, just like when you learn an instrument. At first, you can't do much - but you know that you can eventually be a virtuoso. As long as you stick to it, you'll slowly and surely get better. It's the same way with Japanese (or any language). Practice makes perfect. If you don't see instant results, that's perfectly natural and is not bad news at all.

I believe that some people out there consider Japanese to be "hard" the way that calculus is hard - and they think, "I can't learn it!". In fact, I personally know many people who believe that!

The learning curve is pretty steep at first - you learn tons of stuff every day and every week. However, there are also periods where you feel like you're not learning anything. Don't worry - you'll get through those dry periods if you stick with it.

When you're learning words, don't worry about the thousands of words you don't know - instead concentrate on the 10's or 100's that you do know. Think of each word you learn as ONE LESS WORD you'll need to look up when you're reading something. Just learn 5 or 10 words at a time. My experience tells me that is the best way.

Each time you learn a new word or piece of grammar, there are infinitely more sentences you can make (or understand!). Your Japanese skills can increase every day, and become more powerful by the week and by the month. As long as you keep trying, you will become very proficient in several months' time. You will be surprised what you can do if you only BELIEVE that you can. Whenever you're learning something, the most important thing is your mindset. If you believe you can do it, you can. If you believe you can't, you probably won't.

## **Tune in next time, when you'll see:**

- More particles
- Common phrases
- More popular words (surprised?)
- Intro to Japanese writing

