

Japanese is Possible!
Week 13

Part 13

- Negative Form - NAI
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Negative Form - NAI

The form of the verb listed in the "Useful words" section is referred to as the "dictionary form" of the verb. This form is indeed used in sentences, but more often than not you have to drop a couple letters at the end of the verb, and add any one of a large number of useful endings to the verb "stem". This is called conjugating a verb.

-nai is one of those endings.

When you want to say:

I don't kill people.

He doesn't eat.

She can't find the treasure.

You would use the negative verb ending, **-nai**. Before you can add the **-nai**, you have to get the right verb "stem" to add it to.

In the last lesson, you learned that there are 2 main categories of verbs -- **Ichidan** and **Yodan**.

Ichidan Verbs

Verbs in the Ichidan category (which end with **-eru** or **-iru**) are conjugated this way:

Take the "dictionary" form of the verb:

taberu

Take off the **-ru**:

tabe

Now, add **-nai** to complete the conjugation:

tabenai

You can use it in a sentence now:

aitsu wa nanimo tabenai desu.
he (subject) nothing **doesn't eat**

ore wa daremo tabenai ze.
I don't eat anybody!

Yodan Verbs

Remember that most verbs are in this category. Yodan verbs are conjugated this way:

Take the "dictionary" form of the verb:

korosu

Take off the -u, and replace it with an 'a'.

korosa

Now, add **-nai** to complete the conjugation:

korosanaï

You can use it in a sentence now:

daremo korosanaï yo!
no one don't kill
I won't kill anyone!

mamono wo korosanaï no?
monster (what) don't kill?
You **won't kill** the monster? (said by a girl)

Double Negatives

In Japanese, double negatives are ok (just like in Spanish). Not only they are OK, but you're *expected* to use them.

Incorrect:

aitsu wa nanika tabenai desu.
he (subject) something doesn't eat

That wouldn't make any sense to a Japanese speaker. In English, the negatives seem to cancel each other out.

He didn't not go to the store.
You think to yourself, "If he didn't NOT go, then he must have GONE to the store, right?"

However, in Japanese and Spanish, the double negatives reinforce each other.

JA NAI - The opposite of DESU

When you want to say something ISN'T, you use *ja nai*.

Actually, it would be used in sentences such as:

Shouldn't you go with?

Wouldn't it be a good idea to forget about him?

Don't I look just like her?

Doesn't it look good on me?

niau ja nai?

to suit isn't it?

Doesn't it suit (look good on) me?

omae wa tsuyoi ja nai ze

you (subject) strong isn't (male ending)

You **are NOT** strong.

kisama wa ore no kashira ja nai yo!

You (subject) I ('s) leader isn't !

You **are not** my leader!

Contractions

Just like in English, there are cases where you can cut out a vowel to make a word easier to say. Of course, doing so makes the word less formal, but in casual speech you hear people doing it all the time. In this respect, Japanese has something in common with English.

NDA, NDESU

NDA - NO DA

NDESU - NO DESU

You'll often hear someone use one of the above contractions. The four words above (nda, no da, ndesu, no desu) have about the same meaning. Both **nda** and **ndesu** are contractions - words with a letter intentionally left out so you can more quickly say the word. We have several in English: *Can't*, *Don't*, and so on.

What does **no da** mean? It's about the same thing as **da** or **desu**, really. Sometimes you can translate it '**it is that**'. Chichiri from Fushigi Yuugi uses **no da** at the end of all of his sentences (they did that to make Chichiri even more unique). However, you can ignore the **no** and just treat it as a regular **da**.

Why say the **no** at all? It softens the sentence a bit. "How can a sentence be soft?", you ask? Well, it makes it more gentle. That's why girls often end sentences with **no**.

kore wa neko no da

This **is** a cat.

omae wa baka no da.

You **are** silly.

JAN

Pronounced JAHN, it is short for *ja nai* which means 'is not'. You use *ja nai* at the end of a sentence, just like *desu*.

It's used all the time in Japanese, and often it's used with the conditional, **-eba**.

aitsu o koroseba ii jan.

him (who) (if you were to kill) good isn't?

Wouldn't it be good if you killed him?

Or, "Why **don't** you kill him?"

hayaku shitara ii jan.

quickly if you did it good isn't?

If you did it quickly, wouldn't it be good?

Example Sentences

ittai doko e iku tsumori?

in the world where (toward) to go intention?

Where in the world do you plan on going?

doushitemo hitsuyou na no desu.

no matter what necessary is.

It is necessary no matter what.

dareka wo nagete ita ndesu.

someone (answers who) was throwing.

(He) was throwing someone.

shinji wa nanika wo tabete ita nda.

Shinji (subject) something (what) was eating.

Shinji was eating something.

Very Popular Words

nanika - something

nanimo - nothing

dareka - someone

daremo - no one

ittai - (what, where) in the world

doushite mo - absolutely

sokkuri - exactly like

nageru - to throw

tobu - to fly

tonde iku - to go flying

jishin - self-confidence

yappari - sure enough, after all

hen - strange

okama - gay person

hikari - light

kurayami - darkness

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