

How to get started

LEARNING JAPANESE

[The Right Way]

A logical step by step guide to
JAPANESE SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Learn how and where to get started on your journey to learning Japanese so you can become the bad-ass ninja master you've always dreamed of becoming...



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A logical step by step guide to
JAPANESE SENTENCE STRUCTURE

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Introduction ^_^)/

Howdy there! I'm Cameron Scott from Japanimal.

I'll be taking you through this exciting step by step guide to Japanese sentence structure. I teach English to Japanese people, and I also teach Japanese to Americans. I've got a 360-degree view on the subject. You're in good hands. So, let's start! :)

Languages are huge!

Where do you even start?

Flash cards? Rosetta Stone? Wikipedia? Workbooks from Amazon.com? Ninja school?



Yes, you could go with any one of the above, but chances are those methods will either:

- 1) Teach you unnecessary stuff you don't even need to know (making you frustrated)
- 2) Start in at too high a level of complexity, and skip the basics (making you confused)
- 3) Avoid essential grammar (making you confused)
- 4) Rely on memorization, making you a robot who can't think in Japanese (>_<)

To hell with that!

We at Japanimal are taking an entirely different approach. We're not making any assumptions.

We're starting in at the most basic of basics, so that nothing gets missed.

Additionally, our approach is highly organized. We remove the confusion of learning a new language and make things easy to digest.

Our Method ^-^)

A language is actually a highly organized thing. If you know all the components, you can break it down into individual pieces and then it becomes way easier to confront and digest.

That's what we are going to do. We are going to take the most common sentence patterns of Japanese and break it down into logical pieces and make it easy for you to digest. **In this guide we will be taking the one most versatile sentence pattern and then work the hell out of it.**

But it doesn't stop there... we don't just dump the Japanese sentence patterns on you and hope you get it. No! We first teach it to you in English, so you can think with it, and make it yours.

Don't know anything about English grammar or sentence structure?

No problem! We assume you don't know any English grammar.

This is a key point which many others neglect. They assume you already know English grammar. This is a huge mistake. Native speakers of English **rarely** understand the sentence structure of their language.

This is why learning Japanese can be so confusing. You're trying to learn the sentence structure of a foreign language when you don't yourself have a **full command** of your own language's sentence structure

and component parts in the first place!

Before one can understand a foreign language he must must must be able to deeply understand his native language and its component parts, and sentence patterns. So in our approach we teach you both, side by side, so you can have maximum understanding and minimum confusion.

Kanji and Roumaji *_*)

All Japanese in this guide is written in Roumaji. Learning the Chinese character-based writing system of Kanji is a whole subject in itself and is **NOT NECESSARY** when learning the sentence structure of Japanese.

Expectations

This step by step guide will give you a solid introduction to Japanese.

By the time you are done with it you will have the ability to **describe** anything, anyone and any place. (with the use of a dictionary). Not sure what that means exactly? Read on.

Let's get into it, but first, let's go over some basic basics.

Takeaways:

- 1) Learning Japanese is hard, there are many wrong ways to do it
- 2) Our method is awesome, and logical
- 3) Other methods... not so much
- 4) We keep it very simple
- 5) You will learn sentence structure, so you can **think in Japanese**

Section One

Basic Grammar

Section One

Basic Grammar

We're going to start from the most basic basics, (also known as the Parts of Speech):

- 1) nouns
- 2) verbs
- 3) adjectives

ATTENTION!

In this section we **won't be teaching any Japanese**. We just want to make sure we're all on the same page in regards to basic English grammar. Because, if you are not 100% confident on your understanding of this section then you will have tremendous difficulty learning Japanese.

Please do not skim through this section!

If it is confusing, go back to the beginning and re-read.

Nouns

There are basically three types of nouns:

People - anyone that has an identity:

Joe, Bruce Willis, Homer Simpson, Mom, Me, You, I

Places – any location, real or imagined:

Tokyo, Neverland, The Milky Way, Florida, Lake Biwa

Things – any object, item, feeling, thing:

Taxes, sunscreen, apples, beauty, confusion, appetite, happiness

Examples:

- 1) Tokyo is very nice
- 2) Bruce Willis is strong
- 3) Beauty is in you
- 4) I like apples

Sentences usually start with nouns.

Nouns are either being something, doing something, or having something.

Nouns are usually the main subject of a sentence.

Verbs

Verbs tell you if the noun is being, doing or having.

Verbs can tell you what action the noun is doing. These are the three different types of verbs.

Being (identity): be, am, is, are, was, were

Doing (action): eat, walk, drive, jump, enter, drink, push
Having: have

Examples:

- 1) Tokyo **is** beautiful (Tokyo is **being** beautiful)
- 2) Cats **eat** fish (Cats are **doing** the action of eating fish)
- 3) I **have** chocolate (I am **having** chocolate)

In this guide, we will only be working with the ‘being’ verbs. (be, am, is, are, was, were).

This is the simplest way to approach the Japanese language. Let’s learn more about the ‘be verb’

The ‘be verb’ (be, am, is, are)

‘Be’, ‘am’, ‘is’ and ‘are’ all mean the **same thing**. They are just written differently depending on who it refers to. (‘I am’, ‘you are’, ‘he is’, etc).

Dig?

But what does ‘be’ actually mean?

‘be’ has about nine different meanings. But for the purpose of this guide we will only discuss three of them:

- 1) identity
- 2) characteristics/qualities
- 3) existence

Identity

“I **am** John”

“I” has the **identity** of John, “I” is being John

Characteristics

“You **are** beautiful”

“You” has the **characteristics** of ‘beautiful’, it has the qualities of it. It doesn’t have the identity of ‘beautiful’ (that is the previous meaning).

Existence

“He **is** in Japan”

“He” is **existing** in the location of Japan. That is where he is existing; it is in space. He doesn’t have the quality/characteristics of Japan, and he isn’t being the identity of Japan. He is existing in Japan.

Other Verbs?

Other verbs that are ‘action’ verbs (eat, drink, walk, run, talk) are not discussed in this guide. They require a much deeper and lengthier explanation. For now, we are just talking about the ‘be verb’.

Adjectives

Adjectives can go before or after a **noun**, it depends on the sentence. They describe a **noun** and give you details about it.

Adjectives can describe many different qualities of a **noun**. Such as:

Color: pink, brown, black (black car)

Distance: close, far (far hotel)

Which one: this, that, a, an, the (that movie)

Qualities: smart/Stupid, Pretty/Ugly, Fast/Slow, Tall/Short, Heavy/Light (heavy man)

Degree: very, really, so, pretty, kind of (pretty funny)

Possession: my, your, his, her, our, their (my bike)

Amount: any, many, several, some, few (many children)

Origin: American, Japanese, British, French, (French bread)

Examples:

1) Tokyo is very beautiful ('very' and 'beautiful' are both adjectives)

2) John is short

3) My hair is black ('my' and 'black' are both adjectives)

4) I have many

Adjectives in Depth

Adjectives help us give more detail and understanding about nouns (people/things/places).

If I said: “I have an apple”. You might wonder: “what kind of apple? What else could we say about this apple?”

We can use adjectives to describe what kind of apple and what it looks like, or its qualities, like weight and taste, etc.

I have a **tasty, crunchy, fresh, green, large, juicy** apple. Those are all adjectives. Using those adjectives, we now know a lot about this apple.

You can place adjectives together in pairs. Such as: **so heavy**, or **pretty smart**, or **very beautiful**. ‘so’, ‘pretty’, and ‘very’ are all saying to what degree the next adjective is.

How heavy? So heavy! How smart? Pretty smart! How beautiful? Very beautiful!

You can say: “a car is **heavy**”. Heavy is the adjective. But... how heavy is it? “a car is **really heavy**”. ‘really’ is an adjective and so is ‘heavy’.

Do you see now that adjectives can be used in pairs?

Bam! Got it?

You can even use three adjectives in this way: “the apple is **really bright green**”

Really = degree

Bright = quality

Green = color

Adjective Test

Some people have difficulty determining if a word is an adjective or not. (because as you saw there are many different types).

There is a quick way you can test if something is an adjective, but it only works on the **quality/character-istic** adjectives. The test is: If you put ‘very’ before the word, does it sound natural? If so, then it is an adjec-

tive.

Example:

Is ‘difficult’ an adjective? Let’s check: ‘very difficult’. Sounds good!

Is ‘beauty’ an adjective? Let’s check: ‘very beauty’. Nope! Does not sound natural. Beauty is a noun. As I said this does not work on all types of adjectives. ‘that’ and ‘this’ are adjectives. If you put ‘very’ in front of them, it would not make sense.

The best way to find out if a word is an adjective or not, is to look it up in the dictionary. It will tell you clearly.

No Adjectives

Also, sentences **don’t have to have** adjectives. They are optional.

Examples:

- 1) I am John
- 2) You are here
- 3) This is Earth

In these three examples there are only nouns and verbs.

NOTE: Yes... 'a' is an adjective. It tells you how many! Adjectives describe 'amount' as well as other things.

Had enough? Ok, let's move on!

Wrapping it Up

Let's make a simple sentence with a noun, verb and adjective.

Apples are delicious

Apples = noun

Are = verb

Delicious = adjective

Easy right?

Another:

Japan is so beautiful.

In this example we have two adjectives next to each other. Don't worry, it's totally legal, as we mentioned earlier.

'So' is an adjective because it tells us how beautiful it is (what degree). Beautiful is an adjective because it describes how Japan is.

'Japan' is a place, and is the thing we are talking about, so it is the noun.

'is' is the verb. It says that the noun (Japan) has the characteristics of the adjective (beautiful). Japan 'is being' beautiful.

Last one:

That movie was pretty funny

‘That’ is an adjective, because it tells us ‘which one’.

‘Pretty’ is an adjective because it tells us how funny it is. ‘Funny’ is an adjective because it describes how the movie was.

‘Movie’ is a thing, and it is what we are talking about, it is the noun.

‘Was’ is the verb. It says that the noun (Movie) has the characteristics of the adjective (funny). The movie ‘was being pretty funny’.

Confused?

If you have any confusions go back to the beginning of this section and read forward and find the section where you are not 100%, and look for a word/term/description you don't understand, and clarify it.

IMPORTANT!

Some nouns are also verbs. And some nouns are also adjectives. They have multiple definitions/meanings.

Examples:

- 1) I hate you (hate is the verb)
- 2) I found no hate in him (hate is a noun)
- 3) That is so funny (that is the noun) (it tells us 'the thing that is/exists')
- 4) That car is fast (that is an adjective) (It tells us which car)

This is just a heads-up, don't worry.

Takeaways:

- 1) Nouns are: people, things or places
- 2) Verbs mean: action/doing, or just being/identity/existing/having characteristics, or having/owning (be, do, have).
- 3) Adjectives give more description to nouns. They describe its qualities, size, amount, degree shape, color, etc.
- 4) You can use many adjectives together: ‘really bright green’ are all adjectives.
- 5) We are only using the ‘be verb’ (is, am, are, be) in this guide.
- 6) The definition of ‘be’ which we are using is: the noun has the characteristics/qualities of the adjective. (example: Florida is sunny).
- 7) Some words can be both verbs and nouns, or even both nouns and adjectives.
- 8) A quick test which does not always work... put ‘very’ before the word to find out if it is an adjective. It will either sound weird or normal. The best way to know for sure is to look it up in the dictionary.

Section Two

Sentence Structure: Subject, Verb, Adjective

Section Two

Sentence Structure: Subject, Verb, Adjective

You know what nouns, verbs and adjectives are now. These are the pieces that make up a sentence.

Let's take it to the next level and see **how a sentence is made** in English and Japanese. And look at the rules.

A sentence must have two things:

- 1) A subject
- 2) A verb

Anything else (including adjectives) is optional.

Example:

- 1) You are.

This is a complete sentence. It has a subject (you) and a verb (are).

More complex example:

You are funny.

This is also a complete sentence. It has a subject (you), a verb (are), and it has an adjective (funny).

What's a Subject?

The subject is nearly always a **noun**, and it is usually the first word of a sentence. It is the main topic of that sentence. It is **what** we are talking about. It is the **person**, **place** or **thing** we are talking about. The verb (action) is not the subject. The adjective (descriptive words) is not the subject either. The adjective can describe the subject, but it is not the subject.

What's Verb?

As discussed in Section Two. A **verb** is a word which shows either: 1) **Being**, 2) **Doing**, or 3) **having**. Examples: are, is, have, eat, drink, give, buy.

What's the Point?

An English sentence is: Subject, Verb, Adjective. (**Kyoto is awesome**)

A Japanese sentence is: Subject, Adjective, Verb. (**Awesome Kyoto is**)

Hate to break it to you but, you're going to have to learn how to speak backwards, if you want to learn Japanese.

But don't worry, you can do it, and it's nothing horrifying. Let me explain.

In English we would say:

Pikachu is cute.

In Japanese you would say:

Pikachu cute **is**.

In English:

Japan was fun.

Japanese:

Japan fun was.

What does this mean? It means the verb goes at the end of the sentence. The subject is at the beginning (same as English), and the adjective goes in the middle (if there is an adjective).

English:

Tokyo is so fun

Japanese:

Tokyo so fun is

‘Tokyo’ is the subject (and noun).

‘Is’ is the **verb**.

‘So fun’ is the **adjective**. (in this case a pair)

DON’T FREAK OUT!

The only thing that is happening is the verb is being moved to the end. Everything else stays in place!

NOTE: a long sentence can have TWO subjects. For example: “**Tokyo** is fun, but **Osaka** is the best”. In this example there are two small sentences connected together with ‘but’. Tokyo is the subject, and so is Osaka.

Takeaways:

- 1) The smallest sentence has a subject and a verb
- 2) A sentence does not have to have an adjective
- 3) The subject is a noun
- 4) The subject does the action of the verb
- 5) In Japanese the verb is at the end
- 6) In English the verb is in the middle
- 7) ‘is/am/are/be’ is a verb, so it goes at the end of a Japanese sentence

Section Three

Your First Japanese Sentence

Section Three

Your First Japanese Sentence

We're finally here. It took a while, but we made it.

Every piece of information from the previous sections was needed in order to make your first Japanese sentence enjoyable and understandable.

Let's do some examples:

In English: I am pretty

I (subject)

am (verb)

pretty (adjective)

In Japanese: Watashi ha kirei desu

Watashi (subject)

ha (subject marker)

kirei (adjective)
desu (verb)

NOTE: desu is pronounced 'dess'. The 'u' is cut off.

What is 'ha' ?

Japanese has a little special something, which English does not have. They are called 'particles'. In this case it is that little 'ha' that goes after 'watashi'.

'ha' is pronounced 'wa' but written as 'ha'.

'ha' simply means that just before it is the subject (in this case 'watashi' is the subject). It's simply a marker. Think of it as a little post-it. It says (the word just before me, is the subject for this sentence).

I'll repeat that. Whatever word is just to the left of 'ha' is the subject. So, whenever you write the subject in Japanese you write a 'ha' after it, which notes that it is the subject. It has no other meaning.

Got it?

What is 'desu'?

'desu' is the Japanese verb for 'be'. Basically, it means: be/am/is/are. Japanese verbs go at the end, so in all of our examples **when** we use 'desu', it will be at the end. **In some of our examples we won't actually need 'desu'. Yes that is right. It depends on the type of Japanese adjective we are using.**

This is a big difference between English and Japanese.

We'll come back to that in the next section. In the meantime let's look at a few more examples.

Let's do another sentence.

In English: Computers are convenient

Computers (subject)

are (verb)

convenient (adjective)

In Japanese: konputa ha benri desu

konputa (subject)

ha (subject marker)

benri (adjective)

desu (verb)

‘Computers’ (konputa) is the subject, therefore ‘ha’ will go right after it (because it is the subject marker). Then we put the adjective for ‘convenient’ (benri) and then we put the verb ‘are’ (desu).

English: Computers are convenient!

Japanese: Konputa ha benrei desu!

Got it?

Pronunciation?

At this point and time don’t even worry about pronunciation. You just need to understand the sentence

structure. Just remember that the particle ‘ha’ is written as ‘ha’, but pronounced as ‘wa’. And that ‘desu’ is pronounced ‘dess’.

Takeaways:

At this point you need to understand 7 critical things:

- 1) English goes: subject, verb, adjective (she is smart)
- 2) Japanese goes: subject, adjective, verb (she smart is)
- 3) Sentences don't have to have an adjective (She is)
- 4) The subject is a noun
- 5) In Japanese the subject is followed by ‘ha’ (pronounced ‘wa’), which is simply a post-it, a marker which says the previous word is the subject
- 6) **DON'T WORRY ABOUT PRONUNCIATION RIGHT NOW.** You will tackle that later on in your study. We're doing one thing at a time.
- 7) ‘desu’ is the Japanese ‘to be’ verb. It means: am, is, are. We do not use it **ALL** the time. It depends on the type of Japanese adjective. We will explain this in the next section.

Section Four

The Japanese Adjective

Section Four

The Japanese Adjective

Reminder!

First we have to remind ourselves that the sentence patterns we are learning in this guide will be about describing things (water is blue). Not doing things (I eat fish) and not being people (I am John). All our example sentences will have adjectives in them.

We spent a lot of time earlier going over the English adjective. Now we must have a very firm understanding of the Japanese adjective! Because it has its own rules and forms which English does not.

Two types of adjectives

Japanese has two types of adjectives.

1. 'i' adjectives
2. 'na' adjectives

This is unique to Japanese. You will handle them in different ways. Meaning, if you want to make them into present, past, negative, future, etc, you do things differently **depending on if it is a ‘i’ or a ‘na’ adjective.**

In English we can just say: is beautiful, is not beautiful, was beautiful, was not beautiful, etc etc for all of our descriptive adjectives.

In Japanese the ‘is, is not, was, was not’ changes if it is an ‘i’ or a ‘na’ adjective.

They have their own format.

Let’s look at them.

‘na’ Adjectives

‘Benri’ is a ‘na’ adjective. It means ‘convenient’

It is called ‘na’ because you need to add a ‘na’ after it, if you want it to describe the noun directly to the right.

There are TWO ways we can use a ‘na’ adjective. One with the ‘na’, and one without the ‘na’.

WITH THE ‘na’

Example:

watashi no **benri na konputa** desu

(my convenient computer)

(‘na’ is connecting ‘benri’ and ‘konputa’. It is modifying the noun to the right of it. It needs ‘na’ to connect them. It simply means: ‘convenient computer’, in this sense.)

WITHOUT THE ‘na’

Example:

Konputa ha **benri** desu

(computers are convenient)

(there is no ‘na’ adjective after ‘computer’. ‘computer is by itself, there is just the ‘ha’. And ‘benri’ is by itself. So you don’t need the ‘na’ to connect it, because there is no noun to the right of ‘benri’. In this case you don’t need to use ‘na’)

Do you see the difference in the position of the word ‘benri’?

Let's go over it one more time.

If we took the English adjective 'convenient' we could use it in two ways:

1. That is a convenient car (sore ha benri na kuruma desu)
2. That car is convenient (sono kuruma ha benri desu)

'na' Adjectives: Past, Present, Future, Negative, Positive

It is super easy to change the 'tense' of 'na' adjectives.

Here it is:

Present

I am pretty (watashi ha kirei desu)

Present Negative

I am not pretty (watashi ha kirei dewanai)

Past

I was pretty (watashi ha kirei deshita)

Past Negative

I was not pretty (watashi ha kirei dewanakatta)

Future

I will be pretty (watashi ha kirei ni naru)

Future Negative

I will not be pretty (watashi ha kirei ni naranai)

‘i’ Adjectives

‘i’ Adjectives always end with an ‘i’. They are easy to spot.

HOWEVER!

There are some Japanese ‘na’ adjectives that end with ‘i’, but they are not ‘i’ adjectives... Common ones are: kirei, benri, genki, etc. **Watch out for these imposters!**

How do I know if an adjective is an ‘i’ or a ‘na’?

Get this dictionary and look it up:

Japanese-English English-Japanese Dictionary
by Seigo Nakao

It will have a (na) next to the word if it is a ‘na’ adjective. And if it is an ‘i’ adjective it will simply say: adj.

Usage

Just like the ‘na’ adjectives you can put an ‘i’ adjective right before a word you want to modify, as a pair, or you can put it by itself.

‘i’ adjective by itself:

Watashi ha kashikoi

(I am clever)

(‘desu’ is not necessary here)

‘i’ adjective modifying the word to its right:

Watashi ha kashikoi hito desu

(I am a clever person)

Got it?

(i) Adjectives: Past, Present, Future, Negative, Positive

Rule: You don’t need to add ‘desu’ to the end of the following sentences. You can, but it is not necessary. If

you do, you are just putting emphasis on the fact, and making it sound more polite.

Rule: Cut off the last 'I' from the 'I' adjective and add on the ending of your choice when you are changing it from its plain present form:

Present

I am hot (watashi ha [atsui](#))

Present Negative

I am not hot (watashi ha [atsu-kunai](#))

Past

I was hot (watashi ha [atsu-katta](#))

Past Negative

I was not hot (watashi ha [atsu-kunakatta](#))

Future

I will be hot (watashi ha [atsu-kunaru](#))

Future Negative

I will not be hot (watashi ha [atsu-kunaranai](#))

Exceptions

The word ‘kakkoi’ has a double ‘ii’. In this case you cut off **BOTH**.

The word ‘utsukushi’ **ALSO** ends with a double ‘ii’, but in this case you just cut off one. If you are uncertain you should look up individual adjectives on Google, to find out.

Let’s Compare

This is where Japanese differs from English. In this case you are changing the adjective to make it past or future, or negative!

In English we don’t change the adjective. It stays the same. All we change is the ‘be verb’ (was, is, was not, is not). It is interesting to note that the ‘na’ adjectives do follow this pattern of English, but the ‘i’ adjectives do

not.

Takeaways:

- 1) Two types of adjectives in Japanese: 'na' and 'i'
- 2) When a 'na' adjective is before a noun it needs a 'na' in order to modify that noun
- 3) When an 'i' adjective is before a noun, it doesn't need anything
- 4) 'na' and 'i' adjectives have different ways of becoming: past, present, future, negative and positive
- 5) There are some 'na' adjectives which end with 'i', so it can be tricky telling them apart
- 6) Use a dictionary to tell if it is a 'na' or an 'i' adjective
- 7) A sentence with an 'i' adjective at the end, does not need 'desu', but you can add it for politeness
- 8) A sentence that ends with a 'na' adjective needs to have **noun** to its right, and then a 'desu', in order to be correct.

Let's make this REALLY clear:

Correct: Watashi ha kirei desu (I am pretty)

Incorrect: Watashi ha kirei na desu (remove the 'na'!)

Correct: Watashi ha kirei na hito desu (I am a pretty person)

Incorrect: Watashi ha kirei hito desu (needs the 'na' between 'kirei' and 'hito')

Correct: Watashi ha kakkoii (I am cool)

Correct: Watashi ha kakkoii hito (I am a cool person)

Section Five

The Sentence Pattern

Section Five

The Sentence Pattern

In this section you will learn the simplest, most versatile sentence pattern in Japanese.

With this sentence pattern you will be able to describe anyone, anything, any place.

Sentence Pattern for (na) adjectives:

[Subject] ha [adj] desu

Sentence Pattern for (i) adjectives:

[Subject] ha [adj] (desu is optional)

Remember that the subject is the noun which is the main topic of the sentence.

Let's fill in some random words and see what kind of sentences we can create with this pattern:

‘You are clever’ would be:

[anata] ha [kashikoi]

(anata = you)

(kashikoi = clever)

“I am John” would be:

[watashi] ha [John] desu

(watashi = I)

(No adjective in this example)

“That movie is great” would be:

[sono eiga] ha [sugoi]

(sono = that)

(eiga = movie)

(sugoi = great)

“she is so stupid” would be:

[kanojo] ha [chou baka] desu

(kanojo = she)

(chou = so)

(baka = stupid)

(desu = is)

(‘na’ adjective, so we will use ‘desu’)

“Osaka is really fun” would be:

[Osaka] ha [meccha tanoshii]

(meccha = really)

(tanoshii = fun)

(‘i’ adjective, we don’t need to use ‘desu’)

Powerful!

Take a moment and see what we just did. We just described a person (she), a place (Osaka), and a thing (a movie).

Do you see the potential? At this point all you have to do is learn tons of Japanese nouns and adjectives, and you'll be able to describe anything, any place, anyone, and have decent conversation!

BUT wait! We are not done!

In the next section we are going to tie it all together, using past, present, future, negative, positive AND different subjects! (I, you, he, she, they, we)

Takeaways:

- 1) ([subject] ha [adj] desu) is a very versatile sentence pattern
- 2) If you learn enough nouns and adjectives you will be able to describe anything, making you pretty decent at Japanese

Section Six

Conjugate That Verb & Adjective!

Section Six

Conjugate that Verb & Adjective!

Remember in section four when we took ‘na’ and ‘i’ adjectives and made them: past, present, future, positive and negative? Well THAT process is called: CONJUGATION!

Let’s take the simple verb ‘eat’. If I want to say that I had already eaten in the past, I need to change the spelling of ‘eat’ to show that it is ‘in the past’. It becomes: ate.

Bam, we just conjugated a verb. The meaning went from eating in the present, to eating in the past.

Verbs also are conjugated **differently** according to the **subject** of the sentence:

Example:

I am [adj]

You are [adj]

She is [adj]

He is [adj]

We are [adj]
They are [adj]

Notice that the 'be verb' changed from 'am' to 'are' to 'is', etc etc etc.

This is conjugation. **In this case (of different subjects) the *meaning* of the 'be verb' didn't change at all.**

Japanese verbs and adjectives also conjugate, but a little bit differently. We already did that in section four.

For 'na' adjectives we used 'desu': the 'be verb'

Desu = is/am/are

Dewa nai = is not

Deshita = was

Dewa nakatta = was not

Ni naru = will be (we must use different words for future tense in Japanese)

Ni naranai = will not be (we must use different words for future tense in Japanese)

Sentence pattern for 'na' adjectives with different subjects

NOTE: the following conjugation table ONLY works if you are putting a 'na' adjective in the brackets [adj]. If you put a verb there it will not work. If you put an 'i' adjective, it will sound unnatural.

Present Positive

I am [adj] = Watashi ha [adj] desu
You are [adj] = Anata ha [adj] desu
He is [adj] = kare ha [adj] desu
She is [adj] = kanojo ha [adj] desu
We are [adj] = watashitachi ha [adj] desu
They are [adj] = karera ha [adj] desu

Present Negative

I am not [adj] = Watashi ha [adj] dewa nai
You are not [adj] = Anata ha [adj] dewa nai
He is not [adj] = kare ha [adj] dewa nai
She is not [adj] = kanojo ha [adj] dewa nai
We are not [adj] = watashitachi ha [adj] dewa nai
They are not [adj] = karera ha [adj] dewa nai

Past Positive

I was [adj] = Watashi ha [adj] deshita

You were [adj] = Anata ha [adj] deshita

He was [adj] = kare ha [adj] deshita

She was [adj] = kanojo ha [adj] deshita

We were [adj] = watashitachi ha [adj] deshita

They were [adj] = karera ha [adj] deshita

Future Positive

I will be [adj] = Watashi ha [adj] ni naru

You will be [adj] = Anata ha [adj] ni naru

He will be [adj] = kare ha [adj] ni naru

She will be [adj] = kanojo ha [adj] ni naru

We will be [adj] = watashitachi ha [adj] ni naru

They will be [adj] = karera ha [adj] ni naru

Past Negative

I was not [adj] = Watashi ha [adj] dewa nakatta

You were not [adj] = Anata ha [adj] dewa nakatta

He was not [adj] = kare ha [adj] dewa nakatta

She was not [adj] = kanojo ha [adj] dewa nakatta

We were not [adj] = watashitachi ha [adj] dewa nakatta

They were not [adj] = karera ha [adj] dewa nakatta

Future Negative

I will not be [adj] = Watashi ha [adj] ni naranai

You will not be [adj] = Anata ha [adj] ni naranai

He will not be [adj] = kare ha [adj] ni naranai

She will not be [adj] = kanojo ha [adj] ni naranai

We will not be [adj] = watashitachi ha [adj] ni naranai

They will not be [adj] = karera ha [adj] ni naranai

Sentence pattern for ‘i’ adjectives with different subjects:

Present Positive (‘desu’ is not necessary)

I am [adj] = Watashi ha [adj]

You are [adj] = Anata ha [adj]

He is [adj] = kare ha [adj]

She is [adj] = kanojo ha [adj]

We are [adj] = watashitachi ha [adj]

They are [adj] = karera ha [adj]

Past Positive

I was [adj] = Watashi ha [adj] katta

You were [adj] = Anata ha [adj] katta

He was [adj] = kare ha [adj] katta

She was [adj] = kanojo ha [adj] katta

We were [adj] = watashitachi ha [adj] katta

They were [adj] = karera ha [adj] katta

Present Negative

I am not [adj] = Watashi ha [adj] kunai

You are not [adj] = Anata ha [adj] kunai

He is not [adj] = kare ha [adj] kunai

She is not [adj] = kanojo ha [adj] kunai

We are not [adj] = watashitachi ha [adj] kunai

They are not [adj] = karera ha [adj] kunai

Past Negative

I was not [adj] = Watashi ha [adj] kunakatta

You were not [adj] = Anata ha [adj] kunakatta

He was not [adj] = kare ha [adj] kunakatta

She was not [adj] = kanojo ha [adj] kunakatta

We were not [adj] = watashitachi ha [adj] kunakatta

They were not [adj] = karera ha [adj] kunakatta

Future Positive

I will be [adj] = Watashi ha [adj] ku naru

You will be [adj] = Anata ha [adj] ku naru

He will be [adj] = kare ha [adj] ku naru

She will be [adj] = kanojo ha [adj] ku naru

We will be [adj] = watashitachi ha [adj] ku naru

They will be [adj] = karera ha [adj] ku naru

Future Negative

I will not be [adj] = Watashi ha [adj] ku naranai

You will not be [adj] = Anata ha [adj] ku naranai

He will not be [adj] = kare ha [adj] ku naranai

She will not be [adj] = kanojo ha [adj] ku naranai

We will not be [adj] = watashitachi ha [adj] ku naranai

They will not be [adj] = karera ha [adj] ku naranai

Takeaways:

- 1) In Japanese if you want to make a sentence negative, or make it in past tense, then you must change the spelling of the verb or the adjective; this is called conjugation. If it is a 'na' adjective then you change 'desu' to its different forms. if it is an 'i' adjective then you change the adjective to its different forms.
- 2) For past positive tense desu become deshita (was) (used for 'na' adjectives)
- 3) For present negative desu becomes dewanai (is not) (used for 'na' adjectives)
- 4) For past negative desu becomes dewa nakatta (was not) (used for 'na' adjectives)
- 5) For past positive 'i' adjectives you add: katta (was)
- 6) For present negative 'i' adjectives you add: kunai (is not)
- 7) For past negative 'i' adjectives you add: kunakatta (was not)
- 8) The above patterns only work if you plug an adjective within the brackets. They will not work if you put a verb instead of an adjective.
- 9) You can also conjugate other verbs like: swim -> swam, eat -> ate. But that is not within the scope of this guide.

Section Six

Japanese Vocabulary

Section Six

Japanese Vocabulary

Now that you know the sentence structure, and how to change the adjective and verb ‘to be’ into past, present, future, positive and negative... all you need to do now is expand your Japanese vocabulary so you can simply plug words into the sentence pattern, and start putting all your concepts into Japanese!

NOTE: ONLY conjugate the adjectives of *quality* and *color*. Don’t conjugate the rest...

Adjective List:

Adjectives of Quality (do conjugate!)

Fast = hayai
Slow = osoi
Difficult = muzukashii
Easy = kantan (na)
Complicated = fukuzatsu (na)
Simple = shimpuru (na)
Cool = kakkoii
Uncool = dasai
Weird = hen (na)
Awesome = sugoi
Cute = kawaii
Ugly = busai
Creepy = kimoii (na)
Lovely = suteki (na)

Pretty = kirei (na)
Beautiful = utsukushii
Clever = kashikoi
Stupid = baka (na)
Heavy = omoi
Light = karui (weight)
Dark = kuroi
Light = akarui (brightness)
Big = ooki
Small = chiisai
Fun = tanoshii
Boring = tsumaranai
Close = chikai
Far = tooi
Expensive = takai

Cheap = yasui
Short = mijikai
Tall = takai
Dirty = kitanai
Clean = kirei (na)
Satisfying = manzoku (na)
Disappointing = zannen (na)
Wonderful = subarashii
Horrible = yabai
Scary = kowai
Sweet = amai
Sour = suppai
Mean = hidoi
Kind = yasashii

Adjectives of Color (do conjugate!)

pink = pinku (na)
black = kuroi
blue = aoi
green = midori
red = akai
brown = chairoi
orange = orenji
yellow = kiiroi
white = shiroi

Adjectives of Degree (do not conjugate)

Very = totemo

Really = honto ni

very = meccha (Osakan Japanese)

Really = honma ni (Osakan Japanese)

Kind of = chotto

So = chou

Super = chou

Adjectives of Amount (do not conjugate)

Any___ = nandemo no___

Many___ = takusan ___

Few___ = chotto ___

**Adjectives of indication (pointing things out)
(do not conjugate)**

This ___ = kono ___

That ___ = sono ___

a, an___ = hitotsu no ___

The ___ = sono ___

Example: This car = kono kuruma

Example: That man = sono otoko

Adjectives of Possession (do not conjugate)

My___ = watashi no___

Your___ = anata no___

His___ = kare no___

Her___ = kanojo no___

Our___ = watshitachi no___

Their___ = karera no___

Adjectives of Origin (do not conjugate)

American___ = amerika no___

Japanese___ = nihon no___

British___ = igirisu no___

French___ = furansu no___

Noun List

People

I = watashi (polite)
I = boku (male, informal)
I = ore (male, more informal)
I = watakushi (very polite)
I = atashi (female, informal)
You = anata (polite)
You = kimi (vulgar)
You = omae (vulgar)
He = kare
She = kanojo
We = watashitachi
We = oretachi (male, very informal)
They = karera (male)
They = kanojora (female)
Friend = tomodachi
Best Friend = mabudachi
Boyfriend = kareshi
Girlfriend = kanojo
Mom = oka-san
Dad = oto-san
Brother = oni-san
Sister = one-san
Grandpa = ossan
Grandma = oba-san
Police Officer = omawari-san
Office Worker (male) = salariman
Office Worker (female) = OL

Entertainment

Movie = eiga
Movie theater = eigakan
Book = hon
Music = ongaku
TV show = terebi bangumi
Computer = pasokon
Toy = omocha
Game = ge-mu
Hobby = shumi

Transport

Car = kuruma
Bicycle = jitensha
Train = densha
Subway = chikatetsu

Buildings

Building = biru
Wall outlet = consento
Table = teburu
Door = doa
Room = heya
Window = mado
Floor = yuka
Wall = kabe
Bathroom = basurumu
Kitchen = kichin
Closet = kurozeto

Food

Drink = nomimono
Food = tabemono
Water = mizu
Meat = niku
Sea food = shifudo
Veggies = yasai
Fruit = kudamono
Ice cream = aisu kurimu
Chicken = chikkin
Fish = sakana
Beef = gyū
Breakfast = asa-gohan
Lunch = hiru-gohan
Diner = ban-gohan
Donut = donatsu

The City

Restaurant = Resutoran
Airport = kuukou
Hospital = byouin
Fire Station = Shoubousho
Police Station = Kouban
Shopping mall = shoppingu mo-ru
Convenience store = konbini
Food store = suupa
School = gakkou
City hall – shiyakusho
Ramen shop = ramenya-san

WOW!

Using the above awesome word list, you can plug those nouns and adjectives into our sentence pattern:

[subject] ha [adj] desu, and make some awesome sentences:

- 1) Your car is so slow = anata no kuruma ha chou osoi
- 2) This donut is really sweet = kono donatsu ha meccha amai
- 3) Japanese food is kind of boring = nihon no tabemono ha chotto tsumaranai
- 4) That office lady is really pretty = sono OL ha meccha kirei desu
- 5) Japanese policemen are cruel = nihon no omawari-san ha hidoi

Bam!

Do you see now how versatile this sentence pattern is?

NOTE: the sentences sound even better when you do adjective pairs. Like: ‘so slow’, ‘really sweet’.

Warning!!! We gave you many different types of adjectives. (possession, degree, indication,

amount, origin). Only conjugate adjectives of quality or color!

Example: ‘meccha’ means ‘very’, so you don’t put: ‘Watashi ha meccha deshita’, or ‘watashi wa meccha katta’. That is like saying: “I was very”.

You need to add in an adjective of quality, or color!

Only conjugate the adjectives the first page of the list (qualities and colors).

Home Work

Make a list of 50 made-up sentences! Use our sentence pattern, and plug in different nouns and adjectives. Write them down on a piece of paper. You must get this ingrained in your mind so you can start thinking in Japanese.

Takeaways:

- 1) Now that you have the sentence pattern to describe anything (past, present, future, and positive & negative) all you need is to learn a bunch of Japanese nouns and adjectives.
- 2) Make tons of examples using the above word list. Plug them into the sentence pattern. Make them your own.

Section Seven

**Practice, Practice,
Practice!**

Section Seven

Practice, Practice, Practice!

You have what you need now to get a very basic but workable foundation of the Japanese language. At this point all you need to do is practice, over and over, making new sentences with the above pattern and word list. Keep doing this until you feel confident. Then, use a Japanese dictionary to learn some more nouns and adjectives which you can use in the sentence pattern!

Once that is done you're ready for your next step:

Next Steps

Ready to learn more sentence patterns? Want to be able to communicate any concept? Want to be able to use more verbs than just 'desu'? And be able to say what you want to do? Where you want to go? How to ask questions?

We hear you!

We are currently creating a full Introduction to Japanese Grammar, which will include:

- all the sentence patterns you will ever need
- explanations of polite and casual Japanese
- a conjugation table so you can conjugate without even thinking
- simple explanations of difficult small words: in, on, of, for, etc

This will take you to an intermediate level, where you will be able to communicate almost any concept you have, in Japanese.

Check out our website [Japanimal](#) to see what we have.

Section Eight

BONUS Lesson!

Section Eight

BONUS Lesson!

Because we love you, we want to give you just a little more! Here is an excellent, simple but essential bonus lesson!

How to say: I want [noun]

Here is the sentence pattern:

[subject] ha [noun] ga hoshii

Take any noun from the above noun list and plug them in.

Examples:

1) I want a donut = watashi ha hitotsu no donatsu ga hoshii

2) I want ice cream = watashi ha aisu kurimu ga hoshii

3) She wants dinner = **kanojo ha ban-gohan** ga **hoshii**

In this specific sentence pattern, we need to conjugate 'hoshii', which is an adjective.

In English we have the verb 'want', but in Japanese they use an adjective instead of a verb. Don't let this confuse you. Just understand that some things don't transfer over exactly between the languages. Where we use a verb, they might use an adjective which 'acts' like a verb.

Present Negative:

I don't want a computer = **watashi ha** hitotsu no pasokon ga **hoshikunai**

Past Negative:

I didn't want ice cream = **watashi ha**aisu kurimu ga **hoshikunakatta**

Future Positive:

I will want ice cream = **watashi ha**aisu kurimu ga **hoshikunaru**

Future Negative:

I will not want ice cream = **watashi ha**aisu kurimu ga **hoshikunaranai**