

Japanese 1

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Foreword:

Hello, these notes include comprehensive guidance regarding all the content covered in Japanese 1 (Genki 1, chapters 1 to 6). For each chapter, I've gone into detail concerning each grammar point, both for the purposes of Japanese 1, but also sometimes adding in a little extra information if you want to extend your Japanese learning as you go!

Also note that the full vocab lists are best looked at in the Genki 1 textbook. I'd also really recommend the genki website and youtube videos for extra vocab and grammar practice!

Use of Kanji:

As you will soon see, kanji (the dense complicated looking characters based on Chinese) become pretty prominent when learning Japanese. However, at first it is best not to be overwhelmed by them all, I suggest taking time each chapter (starting from chapter 3, after you've mastered hiragana and katakana) to really nail the prescribed lists. In these notes, I've decided to use a bunch of kanji that are very common/will come up within the subject (or in Japanese 2). I've done this to hopefully help you build some familiarity with them, so when you do reach them in class you will already be several steps ahead! Also, don't freak out if you've never seen them before – I've included the hiragana readings for ones not yet introduced in each chapter (but ease you into them without readings as the subject progresses).

Also, for those of you who may have a Chinese language background, you will certainly have an advantage for some kanji, however it is very important to realise that a lot of kanji are not completely identical to their Chinese derivation. That is, the readings are of course completely different, the meanings are sometimes different (notwithstanding really basic ones like 食 or 飲), and very importantly, the stroke composition and orders are different a lot of the time as well. This is because some Chinese characters have been altered in Japanese over time, while others still may be based on traditional characters or vice versa. Also note that the Japanese 1 staff are very strict about students not using kanji not present in the prescribed lists for each chapter.

Lesson 1:

1. XはYです

The first grammar point introduced, **XはYです**, allows us to say one thing is another.

~**です** can be thought of 'it is...'. While **は** serves as a topic marker. This means that we must add **は** after the topic of the sentence – the thing that **is** something else. Please note that for obscure historical reasons, the **は** particle is pronounced as 'wa', not 'ha' like it usually is.

For example:

- わたしはオーストラリア人**です**。 = I am Australian.
- おかあさんはか**んごし**です。 = (My) mum is a nurse.
- やまださんはせん**せい**です。 = Mr Yamada is a teacher.

However, if you are referring to yourself in Japanese, it is oftentimes more natural to leave out 'I' (わたし), which means you elide **は** as well. You do this when it is obvious who you're referring to.

For example:

- オーストラリア人**です**。 = (I am) Australian.
- だいがく**せい**です。 = (I am) a university student.

Or in response to someone asking you what your major is:

- に**ほんご**です。 = (My major is) Japanese.

2. Making Questions

The use of the hiragana character **か** allows us to form questions by simply adding it to the end of a sentence.

For example:

- だいがく**せい**です。 (I'm a university student) , can be changed to だいがく**せい**です**か**。(Are you a university student?).
- いまなんじ**です**か。 = What time is it?
- たけしさんはなん**さい**です**か**。 = How old is Takeshi?
- でんわばんごうはなん**ばん**です**か**。 = What is (your) phone number).

3. Noun₁のNoun₂

This grammar point allows us to give extra information about a noun. You can think of it saying that **Noun₂ has the quality of, or belongs to, Noun₁. Or saying that one main idea has a certain 'restriction' placed on it in terms of its meaning.**

1. Word Order in Sentences:

Thankfully, we have some flexibility in the way in which we construct sentences (always put verbs at the end though!). We'll learn a lot more about the different literary and socially nuanced ways of constructing sentences in later Japanese subjects. But for now, know that there are two general sentence structures (note that you don't always need all parts of the sentences below, but when you do include them all, this is the order you do it in):

Topic Time Place Object Verb

わたし じゅうじ としょかん にほんご べんきょう
私は十時に図書館で日本語を勉強します。

Topic Frequency Time Goal Verb

やまだ しちじごろうにうち
山田さんはよく七時ごろに家へかえます。

Also note all the appropriate particles for each part of the sentence. It's pretty cool to see everything coming together, right? 😊 (It was for me at least, haha).

Lesson 4:

1. Xがあります/います:

= There is/there are X.

- We use **あります** for non-living things and **います** for living things.
- The thing being presented is accompanied by the particle **が** (not **は** like we usually do with nouns).
- The place the thing is in is followed by the particle **に** (as opposed to **で** when we're talking about where an action takes place). Usually we say the place first (if it's included) before the thing. For example:

- あそこに犬がいます。
- 図書館にたくさん本があります。

- You can also use **あります** and **います** to say that you have or own something, i.e.:
 - はい、ペンがあります。
 - テレビがあります。
 - 猫がいます。
 - 日本人のともだちがいます。
 - おねえさんがいます。
- You can use **あります** when saying an event will/will not take place. Note that if you want to say where this event will take place, you must use the **で** particle as with verbs, not the **に** particle like you need with others uses of X **があります**. If you want to indicate a numerical/date time, always use **に** though.

- 月曜日に日本語のクラスがありません。

Lesson 6:

1. て-forms:

In this section, we learn another really cool verb form, with even more crazy rules 😊. Although these て-verbs are kind of tricky at the start, they allow us to expand our range of expression greatly, helping us to say things such as:

- Making requests (“Please do X”)
- Forming sentences that describe two or more events or activities – the と for verbs (“I did X and then I did Y”)
- Allowing us to give and ask for permission (“you may do X”/“May I do X?”)
- Or stating firmly that something is forbidden (“You must not do X”)

As I alluded to, the conjugation rules can be rather complicated upon first viewing as you need to learn separate rules for Ru-, U- and irregular verbs. To further complicate things, the rule for U-verbs is then divided into five different subrules! But as usual, don’t fret, you’ll definitely get them with time and practice! 😊

See the table below for each of the rules:

Ru-verbs	Change the る to て	i.e., 食べる → 食べて
U-verbs, with final [] sound:	う	i.e., あう → あって
	つ → っ	まつ → まって
	る	とる → とって
	む	i.e., 飲む → 飲んで
	ぶ → ん	あそぶ → あそんで
ぬ	しぬ → しんで	
	く → いて	i.e., かく → かいて Note that 行く is an exception, changing to 行って, not いて.
	ぐ → い	i.e., およぐ → およいで
	す → して	i.e., はなす → はなして
Irregular verbs	する → して	i.e., べんきょうする → べんきょうして
	きく → きて	もってくる → もってきて