

≡ *Fast Talk*

# Japanese

Guaranteed to get you talking

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# Before You Go

*You can have a fantastic time in Japan's major cities without speaking Japanese, but even just a few phrases will help you make friends, attract smiles and advice from locals, and ensure you have a rich and rewarding travel experience. You could experience the best meal of your trip in a hidden-away izakaya, find a tiny art gallery off the tourist trail or taste delicious locally brewed sake.*

## PRONUNCIATION TIPS

Japanese pronunciation is not considered difficult for English speakers. Unlike some other Asian languages, it has no tones and most of its sounds are also found in English.

★ Vowels in Japanese can be either short or long. The long ones should be held twice as long as the short ones and are represented in our pronunciation guides with a horizontal line on top of them.

★ Most consonant sounds are pretty close to their English counterparts. Pronounce the double consonants with a slight pause between them, as this can change the meaning.

## MUST-KNOW GRAMMAR

★ Japanese does not have words equivalent to the English indefinite and definite articles 'a/an' and 'the':

It's a/the hotel. ホテルです。  
(lit: hotel is) **ho-te-ru des**

**present  
positive**

です  
**des**

**present  
negative**

じゃありません  
**ja a-ri-ma-sen**

**past  
positive**

でした  
**desh-ta**

**past  
negative**

じゃありません  
でした  
**ja a-ri-ma-sen  
desh-ta**

★ Japanese has various levels of formality. The standard polite ending *-mas* ます (given in this book) is the safe middle ground, and suitable for most situations

★ As in English, adjectives come before the noun eg:  
あれはきれいな建物です。  
(lit: that-over-there wa beautiful building is) a-re wa ki-rē na ta-te-mo-no des

★ **There is/There are**  
There are two ways of expressing that something exists in Japanese. For animate objects (people and animals) the verb *i-mas* (います) is used. For inanimate objects (things) *a-ri-mas* (あります) is used.

★ **Possessives** The easiest way to indicate possession is to use the possessive particle *no* (の) after the noun, pronoun or proper noun that indicates who or what possesses something, eg: **my friend** (私の友達)  
*wa-ta-shi no to-mo-da-chi*

## SOUNDS FAMILIAR?

Numerous Japanese words are already part of English vocabulary – most of us are familiar with *karaoke*, *sushi*, *ramen*, *anime*, *sake*...

## Fast Talk Japanese

Don't worry if you've never learnt Japanese (日本語 *ni-hon-go*) before – it's all about confidence. You don't need to memorise endless grammatical details or long lists of vocabulary – you just need to start speaking. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain when the locals hear you making an effort. And remember that body language and a sense of humour have a role to play in every culture.

*“you just need to start speaking”*

Even if you use the very basics, such as greetings and civilities, your travel experience will be the better for it. Once you start, you'll be amazed how many prompts you'll get to help you build on those first words. You'll hear people speaking, pick up sounds and expressions from the locals, catch a word or two that you know from TV already, see something on a billboard – all these things help to build your understanding.

## 5

Phrases  
to Learn Before You Go

- 1. How do I get to...?**  
 ...へはどう行けばいいですか?  
 ... e wa dō i-ke·ba i des ka

Finding a place can be difficult in Japan. Addresses usually give an area, not a street; practice asking directions.

- 2. What's the local speciality?**  
 地元料理は何がありますか?  
 ji·mo·to·ryō·ri wa na·ni ga a·ri·mas ka

Throughout Japan most areas have a speciality dish and locals usually love to talk about food.

- 3. Please bring a (knife/fork/spoon).**  
 (ナイフ/ フォーク/スプーン)をください。  
 (nai·fu/fō·ku/spūn) o ku·da·sai

If you haven't quite mastered the art of eating with chopsticks, don't be afraid to ask for cutlery in a restaurant.

- 4. I'd like a nonsmoking seat, please.**  
 禁煙席をお願いします。  
 ki·nen·se·ki o o·ne·gai·shi·mas

There are smoking seats in many restaurants and on some bullet trains so be sure to specify if you want smoke-free.

- 5. Can you recommend any local tourist attractions?**  
 地元の観光スポットをお勧めしますか?  
 ji·mo·to no kan·kō su·pot·to o o su·su·me shi·mas ka

Locals will be happy to recommend places for you to visit, and often will go out of their way to tell you the best way to get there and enjoy it to the fullest.

# 10 Phrases to Sound Like a Local

**Great!**

すごい!

su-goy

**Sure**

もちろん

mo-chi-ron

**Hey!**

ちょっと

cho-to

**Just a minute**

ちょっとまって

cho-to mat-te

**It's OK**

いいよ

i-yo

**No problem**

大丈夫

dai-jō-bu

**Good luck!**

頑張って!

gam-bat-te

**Seriously?**

マジ?

ma-ji

**Really?**

ほんと?

hon-to

**No way!**

ありえない!

a-ri-e-nai

## 10

Phrases  
to Start a Sentence**What time is  
(the next bus)?**(次のバスは)何時ですか?  
(tsu·gi no bas wa) nan·ji des ka**Where is  
(the station)?**(駅)はどこですか?  
(e·ki) wa do·ko des ka**Where can I  
(buy a ticket)?**(切符は)どこで(買え)ますか?  
(kip·pu wa) do·ko de ka·e·mas ka**Do you have (a  
map)?**(地図)がありますか?  
(chi·zu) ga a·ri·mas ka**Is there  
(a toilet)?**(トイレ)がありますか?  
(toy·re) ga a·ri·mas ka**I'd like  
(the menu).**(メニュー)をお願いします。  
(me·nyū) o o·ne·gai shi·mas**How much is  
(this dress)?**(このドレス)はいくらですか?  
(ko·no do·re·su) wa i·ku·ra des ka**Can I (take a  
photo)?**(写真を撮って)もいいですか?  
(sha·shin o tot·te) mo ī des ka**Do I need a  
(reservation)?**(予約)が必要ですか?  
(yo·ya·ku) ga hi·tsu·yō des ka**Can you (write  
down the price)?**(値段を書いて)もらえますか?  
(ne·dan) o kai·te mo·ra·e·mas·ka



# Chatting & Basics

## ≡ Fast Phrases

<b>Hello/Goodbye</b>	こんにちは/さようなら kon-ni-chi-wa/sa-yō-na-ra
<b>Please/Thank you</b>	ください/ありがとう ku-da-sai/a-ri-ga-tō
<b>Do you speak English?</b>	英語が話せますか? ē-go ga ha-na-se-mas ka

## Essentials

Hello/Hi	こんにちは kon-ni-chi-wa
Goodbye	さようなら sa-yō-na-ra
Yes/No	はい/いいえ hai/I-ye
Please (asking)	ください ku-da-sai
Please (offering)	どうぞ dō-zo
Thank you (very much).	(どうも)ありがとう(ございます)。 (dō-mo) a-ri-ga-tō (go-zai-mas)
You're welcome.	どういたしまして dō i-ta-shi-mash-te

Do you speak English?	英語が話せますか? ē·go ga ha·na·se·mas ka
Excuse me (to get attention)	すみません su·mi·ma·sen
Sorry	ごめんなさい go·men·na·sai

## Meeting & Greeting

Hello/Hi	こんにちは kon·ni·chi·wa
Good morning	おはよう(ございます) o·ha·yō (go·zai·mas)
Good afternoon	こんにちは kon·ni·chi·wa
Good evening	こんばんは kom·ban·wa
Goodbye/See ya	さようなら / じゃ、また sa·yō·na·ra / ja ma·ta
How are you?	お元気ですか? o·gen·ki des ka
Fine, thanks. And you?	はい、元気です。あなたは? hai, gen·ki des a·na·ta wa

## Titles

Mr/ Ms/Mrs/Miss	…さん san
Sir/Madam	…さま sa·ma

## Language Difficulties

Do you speak English?	英語が話せますか? ē-go ga ha-na-se-mas ka
Does anyone speak English?	どなたが英語が話せますか? do-na-ta ga ē-go ga ha-na-se-mas-ka
Do you understand?	わかりましたか? wa-ka-ri-mash-ta-ka
I don't understand.	わかりません。 wa-ka-ri-ma-sen
I speak a little.	少し話せます。 su-ko-shi ha-na-se-mas
What does ... mean?	... はどういう意味ですか? ... wa dō yū i-mi des ka
Could you please repeat that?	繰り返してくれませんか? ku-ri-ka-e-shi-te ku-re-ma-sen ka
How do you pronounce this?	これはどう発音しますか? ko-re wa dō ha-tsu-on shi-mas ka
How do you write ...?	... はどう書きますか? ... wa dō ka-ki-mas ka
Could you please speak more slowly?	もっとゆっくり話してくれませんか? mot-to yuk-ku-ri ha-na-shi-te ku-re-ma-sen ka
 <b>Slowly, please!</b>	ゆっくり話して。 yuk-ku-ri ha-na-shi-te
Could you please write it down?	書いてくれませんか? kai-te ku-re-ma-sen ka

## Fast Talk

### Starting Out

When starting to speak another language, your biggest hurdle is saying aloud what may seem to be just a bunch of sounds. The best way to do this is to memorise a few key words, like 'hello', 'thank you' and 'how much?', plus at least one phrase that's not essential, eg 'how are you', 'see you later' or 'it's very cold/hot' (people love to talk about the weather!). This will enable you to make contact with the locals, and when you get a reply and a smile, it'll also boost your confidence.

## Introductions

**(Excuse me but) What's your name?** (失礼ですが、)お名前は何ですか?  
(shi-tsu-rē des ga) o-na-ma-e wa  
nan des ka

**My name is ...** 私の名前は ... です。  
wa-ta-shi no na-ma-e wa ... des

### PHRASE BUILDER

<b>This is my ...</b>	こちらは 私の…です。	ko-chi-ra wa wa-ta-shi no ... des
<b>child</b>	子供	ko-do-mo
<b>colleague</b>	同僚	dō-ryō
<b>friend</b>	友達	to-mo-da-chi
<b>husband/wife</b>	主人/妻	shu-jin/tsu-ma
<b>partner (initmate)</b>	パートナー	pā-to-nā

**I'd like to introduce you to ...** …を紹介します。  
... o shō-kai shi-mas

**I'm pleased to meet you** お会いできてうれしいです。  
o-ai de-ki-te u-re-shī des

## Personal Details

Where are you from?      どちらから来ましたか?  
do·chi·ra ka·ra ki·mash·ta ka

### PHRASE BUILDER

I'm from...	… から来ました。	... ka·ra ki·mash·ta
Australia	ストラリア	ō·sto·ra·rya
Canada	カナダ	ka·na·da
New Zealand	ニュージーランド	nyū jī·ran·do
The UK	英国	i·gi·ri·su
The USA	アメリカ	a·me·ri·ka

I'm single      私は独身です。  
wa·ta·shi wa do·ku·shin des

I'm married      私は結婚しています。  
wa·ta·shi wa kek·kon shi·te i·mas

divorced/  
separated      私は離婚しました。  
wa·ta·shi wa ri·kon shi·mash·ta

### PHRASE BUILDER

Here's my ...	これが私の…	ko·re ga wa·ta·shi no...
What's your ...	あなたの…は 何ですか?	a·na·ta no ... wa nan des ka
phone number	電話番号	den·wa·ban·gō
email address	メールアドレス レス	mē·ru·a·do·res
address	住所	jū·sho

## Occupations & Study

### PHRASE BUILDER

I'm a/an...	私は ...です。	wa·ta-shi wa ... des
office worker	会社員	kai-sha·in
student/university student	学生/ 大学生	ga·ku·sei/ dai·ga·ku·sei
retired	退職者です	ji·ē·gyō-sha des
self-employed	自営業者	shi·tsu·gyō-sha des

What are you studying? 何を勉強していますか?  
na·ni o ben·kyō shi·te i·mas ka

### PHRASE BUILDER

I'm studying...	...を勉強 しています	... o ben·kyō shi·tei·mas
science	自然科学	shi·zen·ka·ga·ku
humanities	人文科学	jin·bun·ka·ga·ku
business	ビジネス	bi·ji·nes

## Age

How old are you? おいくつですか?  
o·i·ku·tsu des ka

How old is your (daughter/son)? (息子/娘)さんは  
おいくつですか?  
(mu·su·ko/mu·su·me)·san wa  
o·i·ku·tsu des ka

I'm ... years old

私は…歳です。  
wa·ta·shi wa ...·sai des

He/she is ... years old

彼/彼女は…歳です。  
ka·re/ ka·no·jo wa ...·sai des

## Interests

What do you do in  
your spare time?

ひまなとき何をしますか？  
hi·ma na to·ki na·ni o shi·mas ka

### PHRASE BUILDER

I like...

…が好きです。

...ga su·ki des

cooking

料理

ryo·ri

dancing

踊り

o·do·ri

music

音楽

on·ga·ku

movies

映画

ē·ga

shopping

買い物

kai·mo·no

Do you like ...?

…が好きですか？

... ga su·ki des ka

I don't like (...) very  
much

…があんまり好きじゃない。

...ga an·ma·ri su·ki ja nai

### PHRASE BUILDER

Do you...

…ますか？

...·mas ka

go to concerts

ライブに行き

rai·bu ni i·ki

listen to music

音楽を聴き

on·ga·ku o ki·ki

play an instrument

楽器を演奏し

gak·ki o en·sō shi

What bands do you like?	どんなバンドが好きですか? don-na ban-do ga su-ki des ka
What music do you like?	どんな音楽が好きですか? don-na on-ga-ku ga su-ki des ka
Do you like movies?	映画がすきですか? ei-ga ga su-ki
What kind of movies do you like?	どんな映画が好きですか? don-na ei-ga ga su-ki des ka

## Feelings

### PHRASE BUILDER

I'm ...	私は…です。	wa-ta-shi wa ... des
cold	寒い	sa-mui
hot	暑い	at-sui
happy	嬉しい	u-re-shī
thirsty	喉が渴いた	no-do ga ka-wa-i-ta
sad	悲しいです	ka-na-shī
well	元気	gen-ki

I'm hungry	お腹が空いています。 o-na-ka ga sui-te-i-mas
I'm tired	私は 疲れました。 wa-ta-shi wa tsu-ka-re-mash-ta
I'm in a hurry	私は急いでね。 wa-ta-shi wa i-soi-de-ne



## Numbers

### Cardinal Numbers

The numbers 4, 7 and 9 – and all other numbers containing these numbers – have alternative pronunciations that are completely interchangeable.

1	一	i·chi
2	二	ni
3	三	san
4	四	shi/yon
5	五	go
6	六	ro·ku
7	七	shi·chi/na·na
8	八	ha·chi
9	九	ku/kyū
10	十	jū
11	十一	jū·i·chi
12	十二	jū·ni
20	二十	ni·jū
21	二十一	ni·jū·i·chi
22	二十二	ni·jū·ni
30	三十	san·jū
40	四十	yon·jū
50	五十	go·jū
60	六十	ro·ku·jū
70	七十	na·na·jū
80	八十	ha·chi·jū
90	九十	kyū·jū
100	百	hya·ku

200	二百	ni-hya-ku
300	三百	sam-bya-ku
1,000	千	sen
10,000	一万	i-chi-man
1,000,000	百万	hya-ku-man
100,000,000	一億	i-chi-o-ku

## Ordinal Numbers

1st	一番	i-chi-ban
2nd	二番	ni-ban
3rd	三番	sam-ban

## Useful Amounts

<b>How many?</b>	どのくらい?	do-no ku-rai
<b>How much?</b>	いくつ?	i-ku-tsu
<b>a little</b>	ちょっと	chot-to
<b>a lot/many</b>	たくさん	ta-ku-san
<b>(100) grams</b>	(100)グラム	hya-ku-gu-ra-mu
<b>a kilo</b>	1キロ	i-chi-ki-ro
<b>a half</b>	半分	ham-bun
<b>all</b>	全部	zem-bu
<b>none</b>	なし	na-shi

## Time

<b>What time is it?</b>	何時ですか? nan-ji des ka
<b>It's (ten) o'clock.</b>	(10)時です。 (jū)-ji des

Five past (ten).	(10)時5分です。 (jū)·ji go·fun des	
Quarter past (ten).	(10)時15分です。 (jū)·ji jū·go·fun des	
Half past (ten).	(10)時半です。 (jū)·ji han des	
Quarter to (ten).	(10)時15分前です。 (jū)·ji jū·go·fun ma·e des	
Twenty to (ten).	(10)時20分前です。 (jū)·ji ni·jup·pun ma·e des	
At what time ...?	何時に...? nan·ji ni ...	
At (ten).	(10時)に。 (jū·ji) ni	
am	午前	go·zen
pm	午後	go·go
morning	朝	a·sa
day	日中	nit·chū
midday	正午	shō·go
afternoon	午後	go·go
evening	夕方	yū·ga·ta
midnight	真夜中	ma·yo·na·ka
night	夜	yo·ru

## Days

Monday	月曜日	ge·tsu·yō·bi
Tuesday	火曜日	ka·yō·bi
Wednesday	水曜日	su·i·yō·bi
Thursday	木曜日	mo·ku·yō·bi

Friday	金曜日	kin-yō-bi
Saturday	土曜日	do-yō-bi
Sunday	日曜日	ni-chi-yō-bi

## Months

January	1月	i-chi-ga-tsu
February	2月	ni-ga-tsu
March	3月	san-ga-tsu
April	4月	shi-ga-tsu
May	5月	go-ga-tsu
June	6月	ro-ku-ga-tsu
July	7月	shi-chi-ga-tsu
August	8月	ha-chi-ga-tsu
September	9月	ku-ga-tsu
October	10月	jū-ga-tsu
November	11月	jū-i-chi-ga-tsu
December	12月	jū-ni-ga-tsu
summer	夏	na-tsu
autumn	秋	a-ki
winter	冬	fu-yu
spring	春	ha-ru

## Tenses

### Present

now	今	i-ma
this afternoon	今日の午後	kyō no go-go

this morning	今朝	ke-sa
this month	今月	kon-ge-tsu
this week	今週	kon-shū
this year	今年	ko-to-shi
today	今日	kyō
tonight	今夜	kon-ya

## Past

(three days) ago	(3日)前	(mik-ka) ma-e
day before yesterday	おととい	o-to-toy
last month	先月	sen-ge-tsu
last night	ゆうべ	yū-be
last week	先週	sen-shū
last year	去年	kyo-nen
since (May)	(5月)から	(go-ga-tsu) ka-ra
yesterday	きのう	ki-nō

## Future

day after tomorrow	あさって	a-sat-te
in (six days)	(6日)後	(mu-i-ka) go
next ...	来...	rai ...
next month	来月	rai-ge-tsu
next week	来週	rai-shū
next year	来年	rai-nen
tomorrow	明日	a-shi-ta
until (June)	(6月)まで	(ro-ku ga-tsu) ma-de

## Weather

What's the weather like?	天気はどうですか？ ten-ki wa dō-des ka?
What's the weather forecast?	天気予報はどうですか？ ten-ke-yo-hō wa dō-des ka?
Today is ...	今日は ... です。 kyō wa ... des

### PHRASE BUILDER

Will it be ... tomorrow?	明日は ... でしょうか？	ash-ta wa ... de-shō ka
cold	寒い	sa-mui
raining	雨が降る	a-me-ga-fu-ru
snowing	雪が降る	yu-ki-ga-fu-ru
sunny	晴れ	ha-re
warm	暖かい	a-ta-ta-kai
windy	風がなる	ka-ze ga na-ru

## Directions

Where's ...?	... はどこですか？	... wa do-ko des ka
What's the address?	住所は何 ですか？	jū-sho wa nan des ka
How do I get there?	そこへはどう 行けばいいですか？	so-ko e wa dō i-ke-ba i des ka
Can you show me (on the map)?	(地図で) 教えて くれませんか？	(chi-zu de) o-shi-e-te ku-re-ma-sen ka
What (street) is this?	この(道路)の 名前は何 ですか？	ko-no (dō-ro) no na-ma-e wa nan des ka