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COMPLETE
JAPANESE
THE BASICS

Written by
Kumiko Ikeda Tsuji

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UNIT 1

Talking about yourself and making introductions

Konnichi wa! (*Hello!*) In Unit 1, you will learn how to greet people, introduce yourself, and ask other people for their personal information, such as nationality, place of origin, special area of study or work, or languages they speak. You will also learn a few essential Japanese courtesy expressions.

Lesson 1 (words)

WORD LIST 1

watashi	<i>I</i>
boku (<i>used only by male speakers</i>)	<i>I</i>
(o)namae (<i>polite with o</i>)	<i>name</i>
(go)juusho (<i>polite with go</i>)	<i>address</i>
denwa	<i>telephone</i>
keetai (denwa)	<i>cellular phone</i>
(o)denwa bangoo (<i>polite with o</i>)	<i>telephone number</i>
(go)shusshin (<i>polite with go</i>)	<i>place of origin, hometown</i>
dochira, doko	<i>where</i>
(go)senmon (<i>polite with go</i>)	<i>specialization, special area of study or work</i>
hooritsu	<i>law</i>
keezai	<i>economy</i>
keezai gaku	<i>economics</i>
daigaku	<i>university</i>
gakusee	<i>student</i>
daigakusee	<i>college student</i>
seminaa	<i>seminar</i>
bengoshi	<i>lawyer</i>
shigoto	<i>job, work</i>

tomodachi	<i>friend</i>
sakubun	<i>composition</i>
kaiwa	<i>conversation</i>
shitsumon	<i>question</i>
kotae	<i>answer</i>
jikan	<i>time</i>
ima	<i>now</i>
kedo (<i>at the end of a sentence</i>)	<i>though, but</i>
demo (<i>at the beginning of a sentence</i>)	<i>however, but</i>

NOTE 1

Generally, Japanese doesn't differentiate between the singular and plural forms of nouns. For instance, **tomodachi** can refer to either *friend* or *friends* depending on the context.

NUTS & BOLTS 1

JAPANESE MORAS

A mora is a unit of sound similar to a syllable and equivalent to a single beat in pronunciation. It can consist of a) a single vowel, such as /a/, /i/, /u/, /e/, or /o/, b) a combination of a consonant and a vowel, such as /ha/, /so/, /ke/, /go/, /do/, /pa/, or /po/, or c) a nasal consonant /n/, as in the word /se/n/mo/n/. In isolation, all moras have approximately the same length and loudness regardless of how many and which sounds they consist of. In Japanese writing, a single hiragana or katakana character corresponds to a mora, with some exceptions. The Japanese writing system will be discussed in more detail in the Nuts & bolts 2 section of this lesson.

Note that in Word list 1, Japanese words are written using Roman letters. In this course, we will use the standard Hepburn Romanization system with some variations to write Japanese, rather than actual Japanese characters.

In the standard Hepburn system, long vowels are represented by a single vowel or a combination of a vowel and **h**, as in **ah** and **oh**. In this text, as mentioned earlier, long vowels are represented by doubled vowels, like **aa** and **oo**, in order to remind students of their pronunciation. The following chart represents the different Japanese moras using Roman letters. Other mora types are used to write loanwords from other languages, such as /fi/ and /fe/, but those are not listed in this chart.

a	i	u	e	o					
ka	ki	ku	ke	ko	ga	gi	gu	ge	go
sa	shi	su	se	so	za	ji	zu	ze	zo
ta	chi	tsu	te	to	da	ji	zu	de	do
na	ni	nu	ne	no					
ha	hi	fu	he	ho	ba	bi	bu	be	bo
ma	mi	mu	me	mo					
ya		yu		yo					
ra	ri	ru	re	ro					
wa				wo					
n									

kya	kyu	kyo	gya	gyu	gyo			
sha	shu	sho	zya	ju	jo			
cha	chu	cho						
nya	nyu	nyo						
hya	hyu	hyo	bya	byu	byo	pya	pyu	pyo
mya	myu	myo						
rya	ryu	ryo						

Note that, as mentioned earlier, each mora consists of either a single vowel or a combination of a consonant and a vowel, and that there is no mora that consists of only a consonant, with the exception of the nasal /n/ and double consonants like /ss/ in **shushin** (*place of origin*), /kk/ in **gakkoo** (*school*), /tt/ in **chotto** (*a little*), and /pp/ in **roppyaku** (*six hundred*). Here are a few examples of Japanese words divided into moras:

keezai: /ke/e/za/i/

watashi: /wa/ta/shi/

senmon: /se/n/mo/n/

zyugyoo: /zyu/gyo/o/

PRACTICE 1

Divide the following words into moras. Refer to tables above for help.

1. ima
2. boku
3. tomodachi
4. hooritsu
5. sakubun
6. demo
7. bengoshi
8. shusshin
9. dochira
10. seminaa

WORD LIST 2

Nihongo	<i>Japanese (language)</i>
Eego	<i>English (language)</i>
Chuugokugo	<i>Chinese (language)</i>
Supeingo	<i>Spanish (language)</i>
Furansugo	<i>French (language)</i>
Doitsugo	<i>German (language)</i>
Nihonjin	<i>Japanese (person, people)</i>
Amerikajin	<i>American (person, people)</i>
Chuugokujin	<i>Chinese (person, people)</i>
Supeinjin	<i>Spanish (person, people)</i>

Furansujin	<i>French (person, people)</i>
Doitsujin	<i>German (person, people)</i>
Mekishikojin	<i>Mexican (person, people)</i>
shoorai	<i>future</i>
hanashimasu	<i>speak</i>
sukoshi	<i>a little, a few</i>
sugoi	<i>wonderful, amazing, great</i>
(o)zyoosu (polite with o)	<i>skillful</i>
tabun	<i>perhaps</i>

NUTS & BOLTS 2

THE BASICS OF THE JAPANESE WRITING SYSTEM

Three different types of characters are used to write Japanese: hiragana, katagana, and kanji characters. Hiragana and katakana are derived from simplified kanji, which derives from the Chinese script. In modern Japanese all three types of characters are used to write the language. The major difference between kanji and the other two scripts is that a kanji character is an ideographic symbol representing a concept or an idea rather than a single sound or a syllable. Each hiragana and katakana character, on the other hand, stands for a mora and is combined with other characters to form words.

Kanji is mainly used to write words of Chinese origin, but nouns, verb stems, and adjectives of Japanese origin are also written in kanji. Hiragana is used to write particles, postpositions, and endings of verbs and adjectives. Katakana is used to write foreign loanwords, such as **koo^{hi}** (*coffee*) and **tere^{bi}** (*television*). Hiragana and katakana characters together with their romanized transcriptions are listed in the *Japanese writing system* section at the beginning of the book.

Note that there are forty-six basic hiragana characters. Additional hiragana characters exist to represent moras consisting of voiced

consonants /g/, /z/, /d/, /b/ and a vowel, such as /ga/, /zu/, /de/, and /bi/, and those consisting of /p/ and a vowel, like /pa/ and /po/. Note that there are also special hiragana characters for moras consisting of a consonant followed by /y/ and a vowel, such as /kya/, /chu/, /nyu/, and /hyo/. These characters are combinations of hiragana characters representing /ki/, /shi/, /chi/, /ni/, /hi/, /mi/, or /ri/ and small-size characters representing /ya/, /yu/, or /yo/.

PRACTICE 2

What kind of Japanese characters would you use to write the following words?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. watashi | a. hiragana |
| 2. <i>particle wa</i> | b. kanji |
| 3. hanashimasu (<i>to speak</i>) | c. kanji and hiragana |
| 4. Amerika | d. katakana |
| 5. Nihongo | |

PRACTICE 3

What language or languages are spoken in the following countries? Answer the questions in Japanese.

1. England
2. China
3. Mexico
4. Belgium
5. Switzerland

Culture note

Particles attaching to the end of names are used in Japanese as forms of address equivalent to English titles. These particles are called honorifics, and they are used to indicate the level of formality or informality of a relationship. A very commonly used particle is **san**, which usually follows the last name, as in **Suzuki-san** and **Mori-san**. This honorific is roughly equivalent to the use of *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, or *Ms.* in English. In formal situations, including the workplace, first names are not used in Japan. Titles, such as **sensee** (*teacher*) or **buchoo** (*division manager*) are commonly used instead of **san**, as in **Suzuki sensee** (*teacher Suzuki*) and **Mori buchoo** (*division manager Mori*).

The way of addressing friends is more flexible. It is common for female speakers to address their female friends by their first name followed by **san**, like **Mariko-san** and **Sayuri-san**, but they may address each other by their first name without **san**, like **Mariko** and **Sayuri**. When they address their male friends, they often attach either **san** or **kun** to the last or the first name, like **Tanaka-san/Tanaka-kun** and **Kenji-san/Kenji-kun**. Male friends often address each other by their last name without **san** or **kun**, like **Suzuki** and **Mori**.

When male speakers address their female friends, they often attach **san** to the last or the first name, like **Yamada-san** and **Junko-san**, but they may address their female friends by their last or first name without **san**, like **Yamada** and **Junko**. Thus, there are many variations, and the form of address mainly depends on how the relationship was first established. Among teenagers the way of addressing friends is more flexible. It is also common to use nicknames among friends and family members.

ANSWERS

PRACTICE 1: 1. /i/ma/; 2. /bo/ku/; 3. /to/mo/da/chi/;
4. /ho/o/ri/tsu/; 5. /sa/ku/bu/n/; 6. /de/mo/; 7. /be/n/go/shi/;
8. /shu/s/shi/n/; 9. /do/chi/ra/; 10. /se/mi/na/a/

PRACTICE 2: 1. b; 2. a; 3. c; 4. d; 5. b

PRACTICE 3: 1. eego; 2. chuugokugo; 3. supeingo;
4. furansugo; 5. doitsugo, furansugo, itiago

PHRASE LIST 1

Ohayoo (gozaimasu). (polite with gozaimasu)	<i>Good morning.</i>
Konnichi wa.	<i>Good afternoon./Hello.</i>
Konban wa.	<i>Good evening.</i>
Oyasuminasai.	<i>Good night.</i>
Sayoonara.	<i>Good-bye.</i>
Hajimemashite.	<i>How do you do.</i>
Doozo yoroshiku (onegaishimasu).	<i>Nice to meet you.</i>
Kochira koso doozo yoroshiku (onegaishimasu).	<i>Nice to meet you, too.</i>
Tanaka-san	<i>Mr. Tanaka, Mrs. Tanaka, Ms. Tanaka</i>
sore kara	<i>and then</i>
Sore zya mata.	<i>See you then.</i>
mada mada	<i>not yet</i>
Soo desu ka?	<i>Is that so?</i>
Soo desu ka.	<i>I see.</i>
Soo desu ne.	<i>Yes, it is./Let me see.</i>

NOTE 1

Yoroshiku can have different meanings depending on the context. For instance, when it is used in a situation where a person is meeting someone for the first time, it is equivalent to *Nice to meet you*. It can also be used when asking someone to do something, but there is no exact English equivalent of this usage. It can be roughly translated as *Please do it properly* or *I leave it entirely to you*. If the words **doozo** and **onegaishimasu** are added to **yoroshiku**, as in **Doozo yoroshiku onegaishimasu** (*Nice to meet you*), the expression is more polite.

NUTS & BOLTS 1

THE POSSESSIVE CONSTRUCTION

Before getting into the structure of Japanese sentences, let's learn about how Japanese nouns can be combined to form the possessive construction. This construction is used to say that something or someone belongs to someone. For instance, the phrase *John's DVD* expresses a possessive relationship between the nouns *John* and *DVD*. In Japanese, the possessive marker **no** is used, roughly equivalent to the English 's or preposition *of*.

John no DVD

John's DVD

Mariko-san no tomodachi

Mariko's friend(s)

Suzuki-san no senmon

Mr./Mrs./Ms. Suzuki's specialization

The Japanese possessive construction can also indicate a location. In this case, the possessor (the location) consists of a noun and a postposition. A postposition is similar to a preposition, such as *at*, *to*, or *with*, but it follows the noun rather than preceding it, as in English. The Japanese postpositions **kara** (*from*) and **e** (*to*) are used in the following examples.

Amerika kara no tomodachi

a friend/friends from the U.S.A.

Nihon e no hikooki

an airplane/airplanes to Japan

No can also connect more than two nouns, as in the structure **X no Y no Z**, to indicate possession.

watashi no tomodachi no DVD

my friend's/friends' DVD

Supcingo no kaiwa no kurasu

Spanish conversation class

Lisa no Nihongo no kurasu no sensee

the teacher of Lisa's Japanese class

The Japanese possessive construction appears very simple, but be careful to keep straight the order of the different nouns, as word order indicates the relationship among them. Note that the noun denoting the possessed always comes last in a sequence.

PRACTICE 1

Translate the following English phrases into Japanese using the possessive marker **no**.

1. *Lisa's DVD*
2. *French class (lit., class of French)*
3. *John's friend*
4. *Mr. Smith's lawyer*
5. *economics seminar (lit., seminar of economics)*
6. *Bill's specialization*

PHRASE LIST 2

Nyuu Yooku no shusshin

native of New York, from New York

sakubun no kurasu

composition class

Nihongo no kaiwa no kurasu

Japanese conversation class

Eekaiwa no kurasu

English conversation class

Eego to Supeingo to Furansugo

English, Spanish, and French

tokorode

by the way

korekara

from now

Shitsuree desu ga . . .

Excuse me, but . . .

nizyugo sai

twenty-five years old

Ohisashiburi desu./	Long time, no see.
Shibaraku desu./	
Gobusatashite orimasu.	
Ogenki desu ka?/Ogenki?/Genki?	How are you?
Okagesama de. (formal)/	I'm fine, thank you.
Genki desu. (informal)	
Doomo arigatoo (gozaimasu).	Thank you (very much).

NOTE 1

Note the contracted form **Eekaiwa** (**Eego + kaiwa**), meaning *English conversation*. In contrast, the expressions meaning *Japanese conversation*, *Spanish conversation*, *German conversation*, and *French conversation* are not contracted, but the possessive particle **no** is optional: **Nihongo (no) kaiwa**, **Supeingo (no) kaiwa**, **Doitsugo (no) kaiwa**, **Furansugo (no) kaiwa**.

NOTE 2

Ogenki? is less formal than **Ogenki desu ka?**; **Genki?** is an informal question used in informal situations and among friends.

NUTS & BOLTS 2

JAPANESE SENTENCE STRUCTURE: X WA Y DESU

Now, let's talk about the following basic sentence construction.

X wa Y desu.

This construction corresponds to the English *X am/is/are Y* construction. In Japanese, X is a topic of a sentence (similar to the subject of a sentence in English), Y provides some information about X, and **desu** is a copula corresponding to the English *am/is/are*. The topic of the sentence is always followed by the particle **wa**. A direct English translation of this construction is *As for X, I/he/she/it/you/we/they am/is/are Y*.

John-san wa Amerikajin desu.

John is American.

Brown-san wa bengoshi desu.

Mr./Ms. Brown is a lawyer.

Mariko-san wa Ichiroo-san no tomodachi desu.

Mariko is Ichiro's friend.

In the above examples, Y is a noun. In the last example, Y, **Ichiroo-san no tomodachi**, is a possessive phrase. Y can also be an adjective, such as *interesting* or *expensive*; a numeral, such as *twenty-five years old* or *five hundred yen*; a demonstrative, such as *this* or *there*; or a time-adverb, such as *today*. Look at the following examples.

Hooritsu no seminaa wa omoshiroi desu.

Law seminars are interesting. (omoshiroi means interesting)

Tomoko-san wa juukyuu sai desu.

Tomoko is nineteen years old. (juukyuu sai means nineteen years old)

Watashi no daigaku wa are desu.

My university is that one (over there). (are means that one)

Keezaigaku no seminaa wa kyoo desu.

The economics seminar is today. (kyoo means today)

One of the characteristics of Japanese is that the topic of a sentence, or **X wa**, can be dropped if it can be understood from the context. For instance, if Mr. Tanaka is introducing himself to his new colleagues, he can just say **Tanaka desu**, instead of **Watashi wa Tanaka desu**, because his colleagues know that he is talking about himself. So, even though the basic sentence structure is **X wa Y desu**, you will often hear only **Y desu** without **X wa**.

PRACTICE 2

Choose the appropriate phrases to complete the sentences below. Each phrase can be used only once.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. John-san wa nyuuyooku no ____. | a. Pari (<i>Paris</i>) desu |
| 2. Lopez-san wa ____. | b. tomodachi desu |
| 3. Sayuri-san wa Mika-san no ____. | c. Mekishikojin desu |
| 4. Mariko-san no senmon wa ____. | d. bengoshi desu |
| 5. Shusshin wa ____. | e. hooritsu desu |

PRACTICE 3

Choose the appropriate expression on the right side in response to those on the left side.

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Ogenki desu ka? | a. Kochira koso doozo yoroshiku. |
| 2. Doozo yoroshiku. | b. Sanzyuuni sai desu. |
| 3. Oikutsu desu ka? | c. Ee, okagesama de. |
| 4. Sayoonara. | d. Soo desu ne. Ogenki desu ka? |
| 5. Ohisashiburi desu. | e. Zya mata. |

Tip!

If you'd like to practice reading the Japanese writing, do what Japanese children do and start practicing the hiragana and katakana first. Once you are able to recognize the hiragana and katakana, you can start learning kanji. A good way to practice the hiragana and katakana characters is to use flash cards, with words in Roman letters on one side and words in hiragana or katakana on the other. Of course, flash cards are also useful for practicing kanji. You can also browse Japanese websites, such as those of Japanese newspapers, in order to get an opportunity to practice the Japanese scripts. The URLs of two major newspapers are www.asahi.com and www.yomiuri.co.jp. Your persistence and practice will pay off soon.

ANSWERS

PRACTICE 1: 1. Lisa no DVD; 2. Furansugo no kurasu; 3. John no tomodachi; 4. Smith-san no bengoshi; 5. keezaigaku no seminaa; 6. Bill no senmon

PRACTICE 2: 1. d; 2. c; 3. b; 4. e; 5. a

PRACTICE 3: 1. c; 2. a; 3. b; 4. e; 5. d

Lesson 3 (sentences)

SENTENCE GROUP 1

Onamae wa?

What's your name?

John Clark desu.

My name is John Clark. (lit., It's John Clark.)

Watashi wa Amerikajin desu.

I'm American.

Goshusshin wa dochira desu ka?

Where are you from?

Shusshin wa Honkon desu.

I'm from Hong Kong. (lit., As for my place of origin, it is Hong Kong.)

Nyuu Yooku no shusshin desu.

I'm from New York. (lit., New York is my place of origin.)

Gosenmon wa (nan desu ka)?

What's your specialization?

Watashi no senmon wa keezai desu.

My specialization is economics.

Gakusee desu ka?

Are you a student?

Hai, gakusee desu.

Yes, I'm a student.

Oshigoto wa nan desu ka?

What's your occupation?

Bengoshi desu.

I'm a lawyer.

NUTS & BOLTS 1

JAPANESE SENTENCE STRUCTURE: WORD ORDER AND PHRASAL PARTICLES

Japanese word order is quite different from word order in English. Basic word order in English is Subject-Verb-Object (SVO), as in *Rebecca speaks Japanese*. In Japanese, on the other hand, it is Subject-Object-Verb (SOV).

Rebecca ga Nihongo o hanashimasu.

Rebecca speaks Japanese.

Kenta ga hon o yomimasu.

Kenta reads a book.

While the order of other sentence elements is relatively flexible in Japanese, the verb is always at the end of the sentence. Compare the English sentence

Ichiro speaks English.

with its Japanese translation,

Ichiroo-san ga Eego o hanashimasu.

Literally, the sentence can be translated as: *Ichiro (subject particle) English (object particle) speaks*. So, the verb *speaks* precedes the direct object in English, but its equivalent, **hanashimasu**, follows the direct object in Japanese.

While the basic word order in Japanese is SOV, the Object-Subject-Verb (OSV) word order is also possible. The OSV word order is used especially when the object needs to be emphasized.

In addition, the position of adverbs in the sentence is quite flexible. The following examples show different word orders that the same sentence can take.

Ichiroo-san wa mainichi Eego o hanashimasu.

Ichiroo speaks English every day. (lit., Ichiroo every day English speaks.)

Mainichi Ichiroo-san wa Eego o hanashimasu.

Every day, Ichiroo speaks English. (lit., Every day Ichiroo English speaks.)

Ichiroo-san wa Eego o mainichi hanashimasu.

Ichiroo speaks English every day. (lit., Ichiroo English every day speaks.)

Ego o ichiroo-san wa mainichi hanashimasu.

It is English that Ichiroo speaks every day. (lit., English, Ichiroo every day speaks.)

Ego o mainichi ichiroo-san wa hanashimasu.

It is English that Ichiroo speaks every day. (lit., English, every day Ichiroo speaks.)

In the last two sentences, the direct object **Ego** (*English*) is emphasized and therefore placed at the beginning of the sentence. As pointed out in Lesson 2, the topic of a sentence is often dropped when it can be understood from the context. If the situation or context allows, an object can be dropped, too.

Because the word order in Japanese is so free, phrasal particles are used to indicate the function of nouns in a sentence as either topic, subject, or object: **wa**, **ga**, or **o**. (Remember that we discussed the possessive particle **no** earlier.) **Ga** marks a subject noun, and a direct object noun is marked by the particle **o**. If a noun is familiar from the situational context or previous speech, it is followed by the topic marker **wa**. Like **no**, these particles always follow the noun.

John-san ga Nihongo o hanashimasu.

John speaks Japanese. (lit., John Japanese speaks.)

John-san wa Nihongo o hanashimasu.

As for John, he speaks Japanese. (lit., As for John, Japanese speaks.)

Note that in the second example above, **John** is the topic of the sentence, and **Nihongo o hanashimasu** (*speaks Japanese*) is the new information provided about it. As mentioned earlier, whenever a subject of a sentence has been introduced in previous speech and hence, is known to both the speaker and the listener, it has to be followed by the topic marker **wa**. Here are two more examples.

Kyoo John-san ga kimasu.

Today, John will come.

John-san wa Supeingo o hanashimasu.

As for John, he speaks Spanish.

The noun **John-san** cannot be marked by **ga** in the second example because it was already introduced in the first sentence.

PRACTICE 1

Fill in the blanks with the particles **wa**, **ga**, **o**, or **no**.

1. Suzuki-san _____ nihonjin desu.
2. Mariko-san _____ senmon _____ keezai desu.
3. Ichiroo-san _____ Yukari-san _____ tomodachi desu.
4. Lisa-san _____ sakubun o kakimasu (*write*).
5. John-san _____ doitsugo _____ hanashimasu.

PRACTICE 2

Pick the correct word order by choosing either *a* or *b*.

1. a. John-san wa Amerikajin desu.
b. John-san wa desu Amerikajin.
2. a. Ichiroo-san wa hanashimasu Eego to Supeingo o.
b. Ichiroo-san wa Eego to Supeingo o hanashimasu.
3. a. Lisa-san no Honkon desu shusshin wa.
b. Lisa-san no shusshin wa Honkon desu.
4. a. Suzuki-san ga Nihonjin desu.
b. Suzuki-san Nihonjin ga desu.
5. a. Ryooshin wa ima Itaria ni imasu.
b. Imasu ryooshin ima Itaria ni.

SENTENCE GROUP 2

Nanigo o hanashimasu ka?

What language(s) do you speak?

John-san wa Eego to Supeingo
o hanashimasu.

John speaks English and Spanish.

John-san wa Furansugo mo
hanashimasu.

John also speaks French.

Nihongo wa mada mada desu yo.

*As for Japanese, I'm not good at it
yet. (lit., As for Japanese, not yet,
not yet.)*

Oikutsu desu ka?/Nansai desu ka?

How old are you?

Nijuugo sai desu.

I'm twenty-five years old.

Korekara zyugyoo desu ka?

*Are you going to the class now?
(lit., From now is [it] a class?)*

Nihongo no kaiwa no kurasu desu.

It's a Japanese conversation class.

NUTS & BOLTS 2

PHRASAL PARTICLE MO

The particle **mo** corresponds to the English *too*, *also*, or *both . . . and*. It is used in the following constructions:

X mo
(*X too, also X*)

and

X mo Y mo
(*both X and Y*)

Mo can follow a noun, a time adverb, a demonstrative, or a numeral, but it cannot follow a verb or an adjective. Take a look at some examples.

John-san wa Amerikajin desu.

John is American.

Mary-san mo Amerikajin desu.

Mary is American, too. (lit., Mary too is American.)

Ichiroo-san no senmon wa hooritsu desu.

Ichiro's special area of study is law.

Mariko-san no senmon mo hooritsu desu.

Mariko's specialization is also law.

Tsuyoshi-san wa Supeingo o hanashimasu.

Tsuyoshi speaks Spanish.

Tsuyoshi-san wa Furansugo mo hanashimasu.

Tsuyoshi speaks French, too.

Kore (this) wa DVD desu.

This is a DVD.

Sore (that) mo DVD desu.

That is a DVD, too.

Kyoo (today) wa samui (cold) desu.

It's cold today.

Ashita (tomorrow) mo samui desu.

It will be cold tomorrow, too. (lit., It is cold tomorrow, too.)

Note that **mo** can also follow a postposition.

Amerika kara gakusee ga kimasu (come).

Students will come from the U.S.A.

Mekishiko kara mo gakusee ga kimasu.

Students will also come from Mexico.

Note that in the above examples, **mo** replaces phrasal particles **wa**, **ga**, and **o**, but co-occurs with postpositions, such as **kara** (*from*) and others. Now let's look at examples where **mo** is used in the structure **X mo Y mo**.

John-san mo Mary-san mo Amerikajin desu.

Both John and Mary are American.

Ichiroo-san no senmon mo Mariko-san no senmon mo hooritsu desu.

Both Ichiroo's specialization and Mariko's specialization are law.

Tsuyoshi-san wa Supeingo mo Furansugo mo hanashimasu.

Tsuyoshi speaks both Spanish and French.

PRACTICE 3

Combine sentences in *a* and *b* using the construction **X mo Y mo** by filling in the blanks in *c* with appropriate words and placing the appropriate particles in parentheses.

1. a. Suzuki-san wa Nihonjin desu.
b. Mori-san mo Nihonjin desu.
c. _____ () _____ () Nihonjin desu.
2. a. Ichiroo-san wa bengoshi desu.
b. Mariko-san mo bengoshi desu.
c. _____ () _____ () bengoshi desu.
3. a. Jiroo-san no senmon wa keezai desu.
b. Yukari-san no senmon mo keezai desu.
c. Jiroo-san () _____ () Yukari-san () _____ () keezai desu.
4. a. John-san wa Nyuu Yooku no shusshin desu.
b. Mary-san mo Nyuu Yooku no shusshin desu.
c. _____ () _____ () Nyuu Yooku no shusshin desu.
5. a. Lopez-san wa Supeingo o hanashimasu.
b. Lopez-san wa Eego mo hanashimasu.
c. Lopez-san wa _____ () _____ () hanashimasu.

Culture note

There are subtle differences in how everyday greetings are used in the United States and in Japan. For example, in the U.S., people may repeatedly say *hello* or *hi* to greet again someone they have already seen on the same day. The Japanese **konnichi wa** corresponds to *good afternoon* or *hello*, but it cannot be used for such repeated greetings. Instead, people usually just bow by moving their heads slightly downward to acknowledge the person; sometimes, the greeting **doomo** may also be used. This type of bow is called **eshaku**. Similarly, while the Japanese phrase **Ogenki desu ka?** can be translated as *How are you?*, it is actually not used in the same way as the English phrase. **Ogenki desu ka?** is used only with someone you have not seen in a while, and unlike the English phrase, it is meant as a real question demanding an answer.

ANSWERS

PRACTICE 1: 1. *ga/wa (depending on the context)*; 2. *no, ga/wa (depending on the context)*; 3. *ga/wa (depending on the context)*, *no*; 4. *ga/wa (depending on the context)*, *o*; 5. *ga/wa (depending on the context)*, *o*

PRACTICE 2: 1. a; 2. b; 3. b; 4. a; 5. a

PRACTICE 3: 1. Suzuki-san (mo) Mori-san (mo) Nihonjin desu.
2. Ichiroo-san (mo) Mariko-san (mo) bengoshi desu. 3. Jiroo-san (no) senmon (mo) Yukari-san (no) senmon (mo) keezai desu.
4. John-san (mo) Mary-san (mo) Nyuu Yooku (no) shushin desu. 5. Lopez-san wa Supeingo (mo) Eego (mo) hanashimasu.

Lesson 4 (conversations)

CONVERSATION 1

Lisa and John came to Japan to study Japanese. They meet before their Japanese class.

Lisa: Ohayoo gozaimasu. Lisa Chen desu.
John: Ah, hajimemashite. John Clark desu. Doozo yoroshiku.

Lisa: Kochira koso doozo yoroshiku.
 John: Lisa-san wa Chuugokujin desu ka?
 Lisa: Ee. Shusshin wa Honkon desu. John-san wa?
 John: Boku wa Amerikajin desu.
 Lisa: Soo desu ka. Goshusshin wa dochira desu ka?
 John: Nyuu Yooku desu.
 Lisa: Hee, Nyuu Yooku desu ka! Ii desu ne. John-san wa nanigo o hanashimasu ka?
 John: Eego to sukoshi Doitsugo to Nihongo o hanashimasu. Lisa-san wa?
 Lisa: Etto, watashi wa Chuugokugo to Eego to Furansugo o hanashimasu.
 John: Hee, sugoi desu ne. Sore kara Lisa-san wa Nihongo mo hanashimasu ne?
 Lisa: Ee, demo Nihongo wa mada mada desu yo.

Lisa: Good morning. I'm Lisa Chen.

John: Ah, how do you do. I'm John Clark. Nice to meet you.

Lisa: Nice to meet you, too.

John: Are you Chinese, Lisa?

Lisa: Yes, I'm from Hong Kong. What about you, John?

John: I'm American.

Lisa: I see. Where are you from?

John: I'm from New York.

Lisa: Oh, New York! That's nice. What languages do you speak, John?

John: I speak English and a little German and Japanese. What about you, Lisa?

Lisa: I speak Chinese, English, and French.

John: Wow, that's great. In addition, you also speak Japanese, right, Lisa?

Lisa: Yes, but my Japanese is not good yet.

NOTE 1

The hesitation markers **ano** and **etto** correspond to English *ah* and *uh* and can be used when a speaker needs time to produce the

next sentence, but they are often used even when a speaker knows exactly what he or she is going to say. This use of **ano** and **etto** is similar to *you know* in English. The exclamation **hee** corresponds to the English *wow* and is used when the speaker is impressed by what the addressee said. Your Japanese will sound much more natural if you use these discourse markers appropriately.

NUTS & BOLTS 1

QUESTIONS

There are two types of questions: *yes-no* questions, such as *Are you okay?*, and questions with question words, such as *Who is there?* It is very easy to make a *yes-no* question in Japanese. All you have to do is add a question marker, **ka**, to the end of a sentence, without changing the word order. Here are the schematic forms of the two most common types of *yes-no* questions in Japanese.

X wa Y desu ka?

X wa Y o (verb) ka?

Lopez-san wa Mekishikojin desu ka?

Is Mr./Ms. Lopez Mexican?

Ichiroo-san wa bengoshi desu ka?

Is Ichiro a lawyer?

Mariko-san wa Furansugo o hanashimasu ka?

Does Mariko speak French?

Notice that only the subject marker **wa** is used in questions. Now let's look at questions with question words. The following are common Japanese question words.

QUESTION WORDS	
nan(i)	<i>what</i>
dare	<i>who</i>
dochira, doko	<i>where</i>
itsu	<i>when</i>
ikura	<i>how much</i>
ikutsu	<i>how many, how old</i>
nande, naze, dooshite	<i>why</i>

To make a question with a question word, you just need to replace the word that the question is about with the right question word, without any change in word order, and add **ka** at the end.

Shusshin wa Tookyoo desu.

I'm from Tokyo.

(Go)shusshin wa dochira/doko desu ka?

Where are you from?

Mariko-san no senmon wa keezai desu.

Mariko's specialization is economics.

Mariko-san no senmon wa nan desu ka?

What's Mariko's specialization?

John-san wa Eego to Doitsugo o hanashimasu.

John speaks English and German.

John-san wa nanigo o hanashimasu ka?

What language(s) does John speak?

Lopez-san wa Mekishikojin desu.

Mr./Ms. Lopez is Mexican.

Lopez-san wa **nanijin** desu ka?

What nationality is Mr./Ms. Lopez?

The question word **nan(i)** (*what*) has two forms: **nan** and **nani**. Before **desu ka**, **nan** is always used, as in **Senmon wa nan desu ka?** (*What is your specialization?*). **Nani**, unlike **nan**, replaces the core part of a word—for example, **Doitsu** in **Doitsugo** (*German language*)—while the remaining **-go** is added to **nani**, which becomes **nanigo** (*what language*). Likewise, the **jin** in **Mekishikojin** (*Mexican [nationality]*) is added to **nani**, and it becomes **nanijin** (*what nationality*). Questions with question words will be further discussed in Lesson 7.

PRACTICE 1

Make questions for the given answers by filling in the blanks with appropriate question words.

nanigo, nanijin, doko, nansai, nan

1. Q. Ichiroo-san wa _____ desu ka?
A. Sanjuugo-sai desu.
2. Q. Shusshin wa _____ desu ka?
A. Koobe desu.
3. Q. Tanaka-san wa _____ o hanashimasu ka?
A. Nihongo to Eego o hanashimasu.
4. Q. Senmon wa _____ desu ka?
A. Hooritsu desu.
5. Q. John-san wa _____ desu ka?
A. Amerikajin desu.

CONVERSATION 2

Peter runs into Kenji at the university cafeteria.

Peter: Konnichi wa, Kenji-san.

Kenji: Ah, Peter-san. Konnichi wa. Korekara zyugyoo desu ka?

Peter: Ee, Nihongo no sakubun no kurasu desu. Sorekara keezaigaku no seminaa.

Kenji: Keezaigaku no seminaa? Sugoi desu ne.

Peter: Demo, seminaa wa Eego desu yo.

Kenji: Soo desu ka. Zyaa, Peter-san no senmon wa keezaigaku desu ka?

Peter: Ee. Kenji-san wa?

Kenji: Boku no senmon wa hooritsu desu.

Peter: Jaa, shoorai wa bengoshi desu ka?

Kenji: Uun, tabun ne.

Peter: Kenji-san mo korekara zyugyoo desu ka?

Kenji: Un. Boku wa Supeingo no kaiwa no kurasu desu.

Peter: Soo desu ka. Sorezya mata.

Peter: Hello, Kenji.

Kenji: Oh, Peter. Hello. Are you going to a class now?

Peter: Yes. It's a Japanese composition class. And then a seminar in economics.

Kenji: A seminar in economics? That's great.

Peter: But the seminar is in English.

Kenji: I see. Then, is economics your specialization, Peter?

Peter: Yes. What about you, Kenji?

Kenji: My specialization is law.

Peter: So, will you be a lawyer in the future?

Kenji: Well, perhaps.

Peter: Are you also going to a class now, Kenji?

Kenji: Yes. I have a Spanish conversation class.

Peter: I see. See you later.

NOTE 2

There are a few different words you can use when you want to say *yes* in Japanese. The most formal word is **hai**, but **ee** is also used frequently in daily conversations. **Un** is used to say *yes* when talking to friends and family. **Iie** and **ie** are formal ways of saying *no*, but among friends and family, **uun**—which can also mean *well*, according to the context—is more commonly used.

NOTE 3

We said earlier that a subject or an object can be omitted from a sentence if it is understood from the context. For instance, when asking for someone's personal information, it is common to say **Onamae wa?** (*[What's] your name?*), **Gojuusho wa?** (*[What's] your address?*), **Gosenmon wa?** (*[What's] your specialization?*), etc., without expressing **nan desu ka** (*what is it*) or **doko desu ka** (*where is it*). To ask *What about you?* use **X-san wa?**

NUTS & BOLTS 2

SENTENTIAL PARTICLES KA, YO, AND NE

The sentential particle **ka** is used when making questions, but it can also be used to express mild surprise. In this case, **ka** is often pronounced as **kaa**.

Akira-san wa nijuugo-sai desu yo.

Akira is twenty-five years old.

Nijuugo-sai desu kaa.

Twenty-five years old, right?

Nijuugo-sai desu ka?

Twenty-five years old? Really?

Nijuugo-sai desu kaa, with a falling intonation, expresses a speaker's mild surprise. **Nijuugo-sai desu ka?** with a rising intonation can either be used as an echo-question, confirming what a speaker heard, or as an expression of the speaker's surprise. Note that only the part of the sentence that a speaker wants to confirm,

such as **nijuugo-sai desu kaa** (*twenty-five years old*), is repeated. The difference between **ka** with a falling intonation and **ka** with a rising intonation is also demonstrated in the following examples.

Akira-san wa nijuugo-sai desu yo.

Akira is twenty-five years old.

Soo desu ka.

I see . . . /Really . . .

Soo desu ka?

Is that so?/Really?

When used with a falling intonation, **soo desu ka** indicates that a speaker is accepting the information he or she received with mild surprise. When **Soo desu ka?** is pronounced with a rising intonation, it indicates that a speaker does not fully accept the information he or she received.

In addition to **ka**, the sentential particles **ne** and **yo** are often added to sentences in daily conversations. **Ne** is used when seeking or expressing agreement.

Sugoi desu ne?

That's great, isn't it?

Soo desu ne.

Yes, it is.

Ne is also used when confirming a piece of information.

Sore kara Nihongo mo hanashimasu ne?

And you also speak Japanese, right?

Soo desu ne?

Right?

Note that, depending on the intonation, **soo desu ne** can be used to express (falling intonation) as well as seek (rising intonation) agreement. **Soo desu ne** can also mean *Let me see*, but in this case, **ne** is often lengthened to **nee**.

Paatii (party) wa itsu ga ii desu ka?

When shall we have a party? (lit., As for a party, when is good?)

Soo desu nee . . . Ashita (tomorrow) ga ii desu.

Let me see . . . Tomorrow is good.

The particle **yo** is used when making assertions.

Nihongo wa mada mada desu yo.

As for Japanese, I'm not good at it yet. (I assure you.)

Lopez-san wa Mekishikojin desu yo.

As for Mr./Ms. Lopez, he/she is a Mexican. (I assure you.)

Note that **yo** is usually not translated into English. The particles **ne** and **yo** are frequently used in everyday conversation, but they are not used in formal writing.

PRACTICE 2

Use the right particle: **ka**, **ne**, or **yo**. (Take a clue from the given answer or the definition.)

1. A: Nanijin desu ()?
B: Supeinjin desu.
2. A: Ojoozu desu ().
B: Iie, mada mada desu ().
3. A: Karin-san wa Doitsujin desu.
B: Hee, soo desu ().
4. John-san wa bengoshi desu (). (*assertion*)
5. Mariko-san no senmon wa keezai desu ()?
(*confirming the information*)

Cool links

Japanese culture is fascinating, so getting involved in Japanese cultural events in your area will make for an enriching experience. The homepage of the National Association of Japan-America Societies provides the links to the societies and centers in different states in the U.S. Go to www.us-japan.org, click on Societies/Centers, and then select your area to check out what's happening near you. This may also be an opportunity for you to meet Japanese people and practice your Japanese.

ANSWERS

PRACTICE 1: 1. nansai; 2. doko; 3. nanigo; 4. nan; 5. nanijin

PRACTICE 2: 1. ka; 2. ne, yo; 3. ka; 4. yo; 5. ka



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