

Japanese Language Basics

日本語

英語

Anime Boston 2010 Edition

By Roehl Sybing

(roehl.sybing@gmail.com)

話し方

アニメ



A short, simple test

- これは初級の日本語です。1年以上日本語を勉強したことがあったら、このクラスはたぶんつまらなくて、すみません。



So many reasons...

- To understand anime/manga without subtitles/translations
- To help create subtitles/translations for anime/manga
- To study or work abroad in Japan
- To communicate with Japanese speakers
- Um...it's a hobby



Elements of Japanese

- Writing system
 - Kanji
 - Hiragana and katakana
- Grammar
- Politeness and honorifics



Kanji (Chinese characters)

- At least 50,000 characters
- 1,945 commonly used characters
 - Kyouiku kanji: 1,006 characters (elementary school)
 - Jouyou kanji: kyouiku + 939 (junior/high school)
- Jinmeiyou kanji (jouyou + 983) for people's names



More on kanji

- Pictographs

- 一、二、三 = one, two, three...

- 人 = person

- 木 = tree 林 = forest

- 口 = mouth

- Compounds

- 言 = word

- 信 = person with his word = trust/belief



More on kanji

- Pronunciation (there are so many!)
 - 人 = “hito” (person)
 - 日本人 = “nihonjin” (Japanese person)
 - 二人 = “futari” (two people)
 - 三人 = “sannin” (three people)

Don't worry!

- Standardization
 - Hiragana: derivation of kanji
 - 以 -> “i” -> い
 - 女 -> “me” -> め
 - Katakana: radicals (parts) of kanji
 - 礼 -> “re” -> レ
 - 呂 -> “ro” -> ロ



Pronunciation

- Vowels
 - あ “a” as in “father”
 - い “i” as in “see”
 - う “u” as in “do”
 - え “e” as in “weigh”
 - お “o” as in “low”
 - Everything else
 - “k” sounds: ka, ki, ku, ke, ko
 - “s” sounds: sa, shi, su, se, so
 - “t” sounds: ta, chi, tsu, te, to
 - ...
-
-

The standard alphabet

a	i	u	e	o
ka	ki	ku	ke	ko
sa	<u>shi</u>	su	se	so
ta	<u>chi</u>	<u>tsu</u>	te	to
na	ni	nu	ne	no
ha	hi	<u>fu</u>	he	ho
ma	mi	mu	me	mo
ya		yu		yo
ra	ri	ru	re	ro
wa				wo
n				

The standard alphabet

row + column
“s” + “e” = “se”

a	i	u		o
ka	ki	ku		ko
			se	
ta	<i>chi</i>	<i>tsu</i>		to
na	ni	nu		no
ha	hi	<i>fu</i>		ho
ma	mi	mu		mo
ya		yu		yo
ra	ri	ru		ro
wa				wo
n				

The standard alphabet

Exceptions:

a	i	u	e	o
ka	ki	ku	ke	ko
sa	<u>shi</u>	su	se	so
ta	<u>chi</u>	<u>tsu</u>	te	to
na	ni	nu	ne	no
ha	hi	<u>fu</u>	he	ho
ma	mi	mu	me	mo
ya		yu		yo
ra	ri	ru	re	ro
wa				wo
n				

The standard alphabet

Hiragana:

あ	い	う	え	お
か	き	く	け	こ
さ	し	す	せ	そ
た	ち	つ	て	と
な	に	ぬ	ね	の
は	ひ	ふ	へ	ほ
ま	み	む	め	も
や		ゆ		よ
ら	り	る	れ	ろ
わ				を
ん				

The standard alphabet

Katakana:

ア	イ	ウ	エ	オ
カ	キ	ク	ケ	コ
サ	シ	ス	セ	ソ
タ	チ	ツ	テ	ト
ナ	ニ	ヌ	ネ	ノ
ハ	ヒ	フ	ヘ	ホ
マ	ミ	ム	メ	モ
ヤ		ユ		ヨ
ラ	リ	ル	レ	ロ
ワ				ヲ
ン				

Elements of Japanese

- Writing system
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Who doesn't love grammar?

- Word order
 - English: I *eat* pizza.
 - subject -> verb -> object
 - Japanese: **Watashi** wa piza wo *taberu*.
 - subject -> object -> verb
 - Particles (think of prepositions)
 - wa: topic marker
 - wo: object marker
 - ga, ni, de, kara, made...
-
-

But here's some easy stuff

- One fish, two fish...
 - sakana (fish, singular) sakana (fish, plural)
the same!
- **Suru.**
 - I **do.** -or- He **does.** -or- She **does.** -or- They **do.**
 - subjects can be omitted (implied)
 - verbs are unchanged, regardless of subject

Elements of Japanese

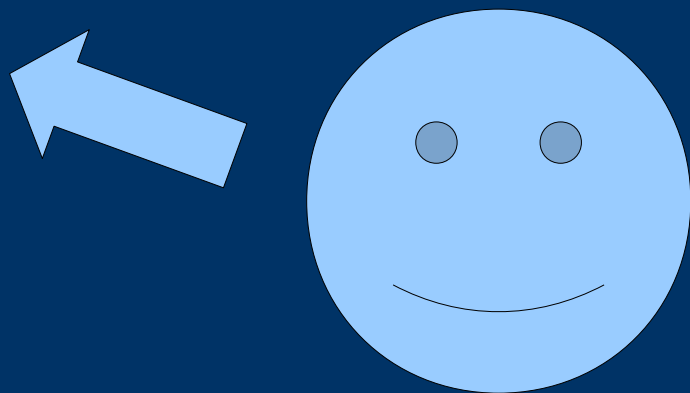
- Writing system
 - Kanji
 - Hiragana and katakana
- Grammar
- Politeness and honorifics

May I talk about politeness, please?

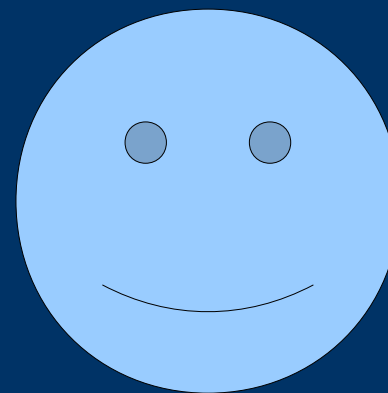
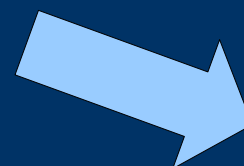
- “I ate sushi.”
 - *Sushi wo tabeta.* (plain / casual)
 - *Sushi wo tabemashita.* (formal / polite)
- rule of thumb:
the longer the sentence, the more polite
 - (Please) listen.
 - Kike! -> Kite. -> Kite kudasai.

Know your role!

Watashi wa ie ni imasu. - I am in the house.

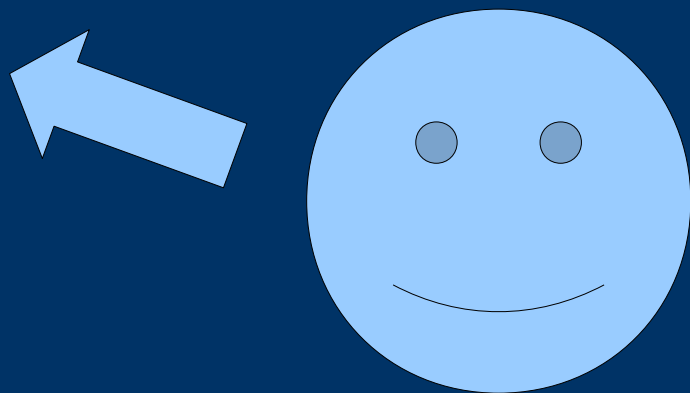


sonkeego
(respectful expressions)



kenjoogo
(humble expressions)

Know your role!



sonkeego

- giving respect to seniors, superiors, etc.

Sensei wa **kurasu** ni irasshaimasu.

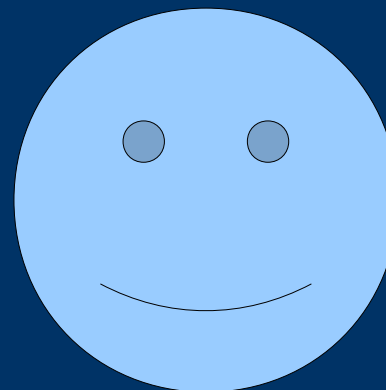
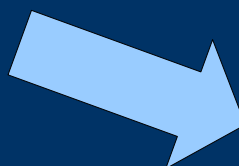
- *My teacher is in class.*



Know your role!

kenjoogo

- humbling oneself to seniors, superiors, etc.



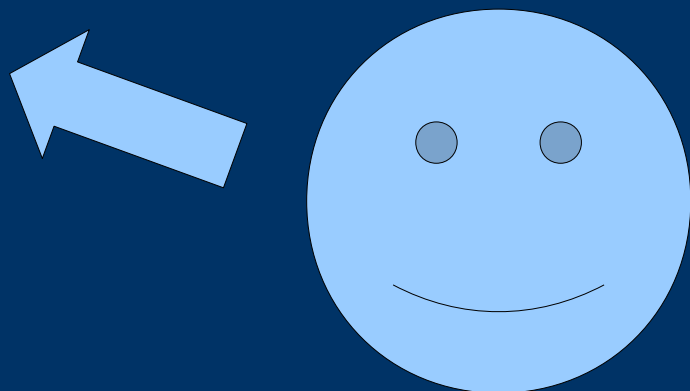
Watashi wa kaishaa ni orimasu.

- I am at work.

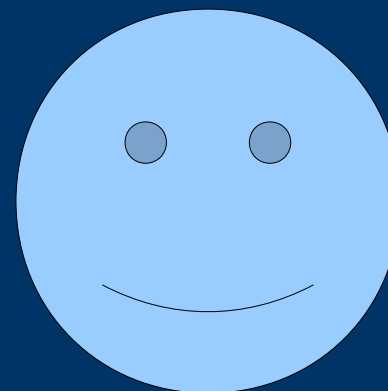
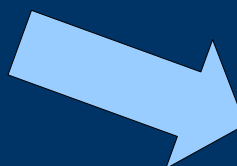


Know your role!

To be (regular) - *imasu*



to be (respectful)
irasshaimasu



to be (humble)
orimasu
