

5 noun も

In Lesson 1, we learned how to say “Item A is this, item B is that.” We now learn how to say “Item A is this, and item B is this, too.”

たけしさんは にほんじんです。 *Takeshi is a Japanese person.*
 Takeshi san wa nihonjin desu.

みちこさんも にほんじんです。 *Michiko is Japanese, too.*
 Michiko san mo nihonjin desu.

Note that these two sentences are almost identical in shape. This is natural, as they both claim that a certain person is Japanese. The second sentence, however, is different from the first in that we do not find the particle *wa* in it. We have *mo* instead. *Mo* is a particle that indicates that that item, *too*, has the given property. One thing that you should watch out for is exactly where the particle is placed. In English, the word “too” can be placed after the sentence as a whole, as in the example above. Not so in Japanese. In the above example, *mo* must directly follow *Michiko san*.

A	は	X	です。	<i>A is X.</i>
B	も	X	です。	<i>B <u>too</u> is X.</i>
↑		↑		
two items		shared property ¹		

6 noun じゃないです

To negate a statement of the form *X wa Y desu*, where *Y* is a noun, you replace *desu* with *ja nai desu*.²

やまださんは がくせいじゃないです。 *Mr. Yamada is not a student.*
 Yamada san wa gakusee ja nai desu.

¹We cannot use *mo* to describe a situation like the following: Our friend, Pat, has dual citizenship; Pat is a Japanese, but at the same time, she is an American. To describe the second half of this situation, we cannot say, *Patto mo amerikajin desu*, because the sentence would mean that Pat, in addition to somebody that has been mentioned, is an American. Neither can we say, *Patto wa amerikajin mo desu*. (Japanese speakers would say, *Patto wa amerikajin demo arimasu*.)

²In the dialogues, there are two sentences that end with *desu*, which call for special attention: *Are mo takai desu ne* (That one too is expensive), and *Oishii desu yo* (It is delicious). These sentences cannot be negated by replacing *desu* with *ja nai desu*, because *takai* and *oishii* are not nouns. *Are mo takai ja nai desu* and *oishii ja nai desu* are therefore not grammatical. Instead, one would have to say *takaku nai desu* and *oishiku nai desu*. We will learn about the conjugation pattern of adjectives in Lesson 5.

私は 今日 図書館で 日本語を 勉強します。
わたし きょう としよかん にほんご べんきょう
 topic time place object verb

I will study Japanese in the library today.

私は よく 七時ごろ うちへ 帰ります。
わたし よく しちじ うちへ かえ
 topic frequency time goal verb

I often go back home at around seven.

7 Frequency Adverbs

You can add a frequency adverb such as 毎日 (everyday), よく (often), and ときどき (sometimes) to a sentence to describe how often you do something.

私はときどき喫茶店に行きます。 *I sometimes go to a coffee shop.*
わたし ときどき きっさてん いく

In this lesson, we also learn two adverbs which describe how *infrequent* an activity or an event is; ぜんぜん (never; not at all) and あまり (not often; not very much). These adverbs anticipate the negative at the end of the sentence. If you use ぜんぜん or あまり, in other words, you need to conclude the sentence with ません.

私はぜんぜんテレビを見ません。 *I do not watch TV at all.*
わたし ぜんぜん テレビ みる

たけしさんはあまり勉強しません。 *Takeshi does not study much.*
たけしさん あまり べんきょう せん

8 The Topic Particle は

As we saw in Lesson 1, the particle は presents the topic of one's utterance ("As for item X, it is such that . . ."). It puts forward the item that you want to talk about and comment on. You may have noted that the topic phrases in sentences such as メアリーさんは二年生です (Mary is a sophomore), and 私の専攻は日本語です (My major is the Japanese language), are the subjects of those sentences. A topic phrase, however, need not be the subject of a sentence. We see three sentences in the dialogue of this lesson where nonsubject phrases are made topics with the help of the particle は.

メアリーさん、週末はたいてい何をしますか。
メアリーさん しゅうまつ 何に
Mary, what do you usually do on the weekend?

今日は京都に行きます。
きょう とう きょうと いく
I'm going to Kyoto today.

In the above two examples, は promotes time expressions as the topic of each sentence. Its effects can be paraphrased like these: “Let’s talk about weekends; what do you do on weekends?” “Let me say what I will do today; I will go to Kyoto.”

晩ご飯は？

ばん はん
How about dinner?

食べません。

た
I will not eat.

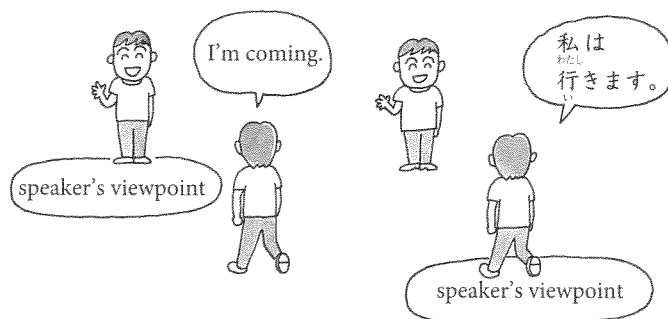
In this example, は is used in directing the listener’s attention and thereby inviting a comment or completion of a sentence. You may also note that the broached topic, 晩ご飯, does not stand in subject relation to the verb, but is rather its direct object.

表現ノート………4

ひょうげん

Expression Notes 4

行く/来る ▶ When you move to a place where the hearer is, you say “I’m coming.” in English. However in the same situation, 私 わたし は行きます is used in Japanese. 来る is a movement toward the place where the speaker is, while 行く is a movement in a direction away from the speaker.



ちょっと ▶ ちょっと literally means “a little,” “a bit,” “a small amount,” as in ちよっとください (Please give me a little) and ちよっと待ってください (Please wait for a moment). It is commonly used for a polite refusal. In this case, it means “inconvenient,” “impossible,” and so on. Japanese people don’t normally reject requests, suggestions, or invitations with いいえ (No), because it sounds too direct.

A: 土曜日に映画を見ませんか。 Will you see a movie on Saturday?

B: 土曜日は、ちょっと。

Saturday is not convenient.

(lit., Saturday is a little bit.)