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ASSiMiL
Phrasebook

Japanese



金閣寺に行きたいんですが…
I would like to go to Kinkakuji.

バスに乗った方がいいでしょうか。
Would it perhaps be better to get the bus?

Includes: 21 language lessons

Japanese

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This phrasebook doesn't claim to be a substitute for a language course, but if you devote a bit of time to reading it and learning a few useful phrases, you'll quickly find that you're able to participate in basic exchanges with Japanese speakers, enriching your travel experience.

A word of advice: don't aim for perfection! Those you're speaking to will forgive any mistakes and appreciate your efforts to communicate in their language. The main thing is to leave your inhibitions behind and speak!

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Getting started

➤ Day 1

A relaxed day

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | 早く 起きます か。
hayaku okimas(u) ka
early get-up [?]
<i>Do you get up early?</i> | 早く 起きません。
hayaku okimasen
early don't-get-up
<i>I don't get up early.</i> |
| 2 | 出掛けます か。
dekakemas(u) ka
go-out [?]
<i>Are you going out?</i> | 出かけます。
dekakemas(u)
go-out
<i>I'm going out.</i> |
| 3 | いつ 帰ります か。
itsu ka-erimas(u) ka
when return-home [?]
<i>When will you be home?</i> | 早く 帰ります。
hayaku ka-erimas(u)
early return-home
<i>I'll be home early.</i> |

Notes

In the **rōmaji** transcriptions, if a letter is not pronounced we've put it in parentheses. These are not part of the actual **rōmaji**!

To ask a question, simply place か **ka** at the end of a sentence (no question mark is used). This 'question' particle does not have an English translation, so we indicate its function with [?].

Conversing

➤ First contact

Greetings

If it's the first greeting of the day in the morning:

おはよう ございます。

ohayō gozaimas(u) (*Good morning.*)

If it's during the day:

こんにちは は。

kon'nichi wa (*Hello.*)

If it's the evening:

こんばん は。

konban wa (*Good evening.*)

Saying goodbye

If you know someone well and will be seeing them again soon, you can use this informal expression:

See you (tomorrow / next time / next week)!

では/じゃ また(明日/今度/来週)。

dewa/ja mata (ash(i)ta / kondo / raishū)

In formal contexts, use the following (it also implies gratitude):

Goodbye. ('Well then')

じゃ どうも。

ja dōmo

Or, if you want to politely excuse yourself to leave:

Excuse me, [I must go].

失礼 します。

sh(i)tsurei shimas(u)

One thing you'll be relieved to know is that Japanese verbs do not conjugate for person (i.e. depending on who the subject of the verb is). So 帰ります **ka-erimas(u)** can mean *I/you/we/they come home* or *he/she comes home*. Likewise, the questions in this lesson could equally be asking about *he, she, we* or *they*. The context typically makes it clear who/what is being spoken about.

However, a slightly more complicated aspect of Japanese verbs is that different forms are used to show the degree of politeness and respect depending on the relationship between the two people conversing. In this phrasebook, we've chosen a polite form used when speaking to someone you don't know well. This is indicated by the verb ending -ます **-mas(u)** and its variations. This ending is used to talk about both the present and the future. To make the verb negative, -ます **-mas(u)** becomes -ません **-masen**.

Practice—Translate the following sentences:

1. They don't get up early.
2. When will they return home?
3. **dekakemasen**
4. **hayaku ka-erimas(u) ka**

Answers:

1. **hayaku okimasen**
2. **itsu ka-erimas(u) ka**
3. I'm/You're/He's/She's/We're/They're not going/will not go out.
4. Are you (etc.) coming/Will you (etc.) come home early?

And finally, if you may not see the other person for a while:

さようなら。

sayōnara (*Goodbye.*)

Thanking someone

There are three ways to express gratitude, depending on the level of politeness or the intensity of appreciation. The longer the phrase, the politer it is!

Polite, mild gratitude:

Thanks.

どうも。 / ありがとう。

dōmo / arigatō

More formal, stronger gratitude:

Thank you!

どうも ありがとう。 / ありがとう ございます。

dōmo arigatō / arigatō gozaimas(u)

Most formal, very grateful:

Thank you very much!

どうも ありがとう ございます。

dōmo arigatō gozaimas(u)

If someone has made an effort on your behalf, you can say:

Thank you for your hard work!

お 疲れさま でした。

o ts(u)karesama desh(i)ta

[honorific prefix] being-tired-out you-were

To respond to any of these, you can say:

You're welcome, don't mention it.

どう いたしまして。

dō itashimash(i)te

how-to I-am-doing [to repay you]

Apologizing

There are also levels of intensity for apologies. A simple *sorry* or *excuse me* for a small thing, like passing in front of someone or accidentally bumping into them is:

Excuse me. / Pardon me. / I'm sorry.

すみません。

or

ごめん なさい。

sumimasen

gomen nasai

Whereas an apology for genuine rudeness or if you have really upset someone would be:

Please forgive me.

失礼 しました。

sh(i)tsurei shimash(i)ta

If you are late or someone has been waiting for you, you can use one of these two options:

Apologies for being late! / Sorry to keep you waiting.

遅く なって すみません。 / お 待たせ いたしました。

osoku nat'te sumimasen / o matase itashimash(i)ta

late become excuse-me / [honorific prefix] keep-waiting I-did

Offering wishes

For a happy event

Congratulations!

おめでとう ございます。

o medetō gozaimas(u)

On New Year's Eve or New Year's Day:

Happy New Year!

あけまして おめでとう ございます。

akemash(i)te o medetō gozaimas(u)

To give encouragement

Good luck! / Hang in there!

がんばって ください。

gambat'te kudasai

do-your-best please

Agreeing and disagreeing

To say *yes*:

はい

hai [hi]

To say *no*:

いいえ

i-ie [ee-eh]

However, it isn't very polite to simply answer with one word, so you should also use all or some of the words from the question.

Are you American/Australian/British/Canadian/Irish/a New Zealander?

アメリカ人／オーストラリア人／イギリス人／カナダ人／アイルランド人／
ニュージーランド人 です か。

**amerikajin/ōsutorariajin/igirisujin/kanadajin/airurandojin/
nyūjīrandojin des(u) ka**