

Japanese Language Guide

While the Japanese language may seem difficult, in reality the grammar and sentence structure are much simpler than in English. What is difficult for most people, however, is the pronunciation of each sound. By using the following pronunciation guide carefully, you should be able to pronounce the sounds almost perfectly.

A..... “ah” as in “father”

I..... “ee” as in “machine”

U..... “oo” as in “June”

E..... “eh” as in “set”

O..... “oh” as in “go”

Just remember that in Japanese, all sounds are made by adding one of these five vowels to one of the following consonants: k, s, t, n, h, m, y, r, or w. When you do so, the sound you make will begin with the consonant and end with the vowel sound listed above. For example, *ka* is pronounced “kah,” *ki* is “kee,” *ku* is “koo,” *ke* is “keh,” *ko* is “koh.” Many words may look like English words when written in English letters, but be careful to pronounce them correctly. One example is the Japanese word for “who” (*dare*). It may look like the English word “dare,” but is pronounced *dah-reh*.

Greetings

ohayo (gozaimasu)	Good morning
kon-nichiwa	Good afternoon
kon-banwa	Good evening
sayonara	Goodbye

☆ Unfortunately, Japanese does not have a word like “hello” that can be used at any time of day, so the greeting used depends on what time it is.

Basic Phrases

hai	yes
ie	no
~kudasai	~please
ex: sushi kudasai	sushi please

arigato (gozaimasu)	thank you (very much)
doitashi-mashite	you are welcome
dozo	please go ahead
kekko-desu	no thank you; I am fine
sumimasen	excuse me (to get attention)
gomen-nasai	I am sorry
wakarimasu	I understand
wakarimasen	I don't understand

Question Words

dare	who
nani	what
itsu	when
nanji	what time
doko	where
doshite	why
ikura	how much

Adjectives

suki	to like (something)
kirai	to dislike (something)
omoshiroi	interesting
oishi	delicious
tanoshi	fun
yasashi	nice; friendly
tsukareta	tired
genki	energetic; lively
nemui	sleepy; tired

Basic Conversation

hajime-mashite	nice to meet you
watashi no namae wa...desu	my name is ...
genki-desuka	how are you?
genki-desu	I am fine

At Home

① itte-kimasu	I'm leaving; I'll be back
② itte-rashai	bye; see you; OK
③ tadaima	I'm home!
④ okaeri (nasai)	welcome back!

☆ While we often announce when we are leaving the home in America, there is no set phrase in English that is used every time we do so. The Japanese phrases above are used by all family members every time they go out or return home, so you will probably hear them often. ① and ③ are used by the person exiting from or returning to the house. ② and ④ are used by the people remaining in the house.

Mealtime

itadakimasu	(used before eating)
gochiso-sama-deshita	(used after eating)
kanpai	cheers!
onaka-ga-suita	I am hungry
onaka-ga-ippai	I am full

Numbers 1-10

ichi	one
ni	two
san	three
shi OR yon	four
go	five
roku	six
shichi OR nana	seven
hachi	eight
kyu OR ku	nine
jyu	ten