

JAPANESE  
PARTICLES  
IN ACTION

## Introduction

Japanese particles can be a frustration point for a lot of Japanese learners. But, they are everywhere. They are like the glue that holds together Japanese sentences. Not only that, but one particle can be used in several 2 different ways.

This book is meant to serve as both a reference book and learning book. If you are studying something and don't understand a particle, you might learn about it here. Or, if you learned about a particle in some other textbook, you should read about it here too. It will make you understand the particle a little bit better. Then when you go back to class you'll impress your teacher and your classmates and everyone will love you, or think you're a sesame grinder.

That being said, this isn't a textbook! Sure, you could read through it, and it'll probably be helpful, but it's mainly to be used as a supplement to your current studies or as a reference when you don't understand something fully.

Each section of the book goes something like this:

1. Introduce the particle.

2. Introduce what the particle does (if it does multiple things).
3. Explain the particle.
4. Show you example sentences. Lots and lots of example sentences. Sometimes there will even be an explanation between them!
5. Tell you some things about the particle you ought to know.
6. Probably more example sentences.

The idea is that you should get a working knowledge of the particle and how it works. Then after that, you get to see it in context. Use the example sentences as your guide.

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This is version 1.0.2.

*This is Important for Studying*

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# { は }

Probably the first particle you ever learn, or close to it. This is pronounced like “wa” when used as a particle, not “ha”. This confuses people early on, but it pops up so much that you get used to it very quickly. A really long time ago people used to pronounce it as “ha”, but don’t do that now. Those people are all dead and you’ll sound weird.

As a *particle*, there are two ways in which は can be used.

## **a. Marking a topic**

What does this mean? This is a fancy grammar way to say that は shows in a sentence *what it is we’re talking about*. This could be a person, a thing, or anything else. We’re relaying information *about* something. Another way we’ll describe it a lot is that it shows the “context” of the sentence.

This might be confusing right now (it will either become more confusing or make more sense when you get to

the very similar particle が), but let’s look at some simple examples.

1. 今日は暑いです。（きょうはあついです。）  
Today is hot.

2. あれはウサギです。  
That over there is a rabbit.

3. ベーコンは美味しいです。（ベーコンはおいしいです。）  
The bacon is tasty.

The above English translations don’t actually do the particle は very much justice, but that’s how most people would translate it. If we do a very direct and literal translation, they would become:

1. *As for today*, it is hot.
2. *As for that over there*, it is a rabbit.
3. *As for the bacon*, it is tasty.

Remember how “は marks in a sentence what it is we’re talking about?” The part that it is marking is the part it comes *after*. In the case of these first three example sentences, we’re talking *about* “today.” We’re talking

about “that thing over there.” We’re talking *about* the “bacon.” That’s the context of the sentence. Everything else has to do with that context in some way.

Some more example sentences:

4. 野球は楽しいです。(やきゅうはたのしいです。)  
Baseball is fun / As for baseball, it is fun.

5. 彼女は看護婦です。(かのじょはかんどぶです。)  
She is a nurse / As for her, is a nurse.

は itself isn’t *too* hard, I think. It’s manageable, at least. Only when the particle が gets introduced does は get really confusing. In many cases, they *seem* interchangeable, though they’re kind of not, sometimes. We’ll dive more deeply into this relationship in the が section, but for now I’ll just ask you a simple question. You should ask this question every time you’re not sure which particle (は or が) to use.

*Q. If you remove the topic (the “ \_\_\_は” part), will the sentence still make sense?*

Let’s take a look at an example sentence to try this question out.

6a. 私は寿司を食べた。(わたしはすしをたべた。)  
I ate the sushi.

6b. 私が寿司を食べた。(わたしがすしをたべた。)  
I ate the sushi.

**(1) Yes, the sentence still makes sense without the “ \_\_\_は”!**

Let’s say the sentence still makes sense, even without the “私は” portion. You now just have “寿司を食べた”. This on its own would be “ate sushi.” But *in context*, it could make sense. For example, what if someone asks “what did you eat?” Now we know that the topic is me, because they’re asking me what I ate. I can just say 寿司を食べた. Or, I can say 私は寿司を食べた. In both cases, based on the context, they make sense. So, the correct particle to use here is は.

**(2) No, this sentence doesn’t make sense without the “ \_\_\_は” part.**

Let's look at another example. What if someone is asking "Who is the person who ate the sushi?" Now you need the topic (the 私は). Because, we're identifying the person who ate the sushi. We already know the sushi was eaten. In this case, without the 私は the sentence won't make sense. If that happens, well, it's probably better to use the particle が instead of は. You'll learn more *why* this is the case in the が chapter, but please do keep these two questions in mind as they will help.

One more way to tell the two apart. は places importance and emphasis on what comes *after* it. が places that emphasis and importance on what comes *before* it. In the above example, we needed to know who the person was that ate the sushi. In that situation, your reply would probably be 私が寿司を食べた. Emphasis on the part *before* the particle. That *is* the important part of this sentence, after all.

It's not a fail-safe way of thinking about these two particles, but it does help quite a bit in most situations. Just ask, what part of this sentence is necessary? What isn't necessary, based on the context? From there, you can figure out whether you should use は or が in most situations.

But, we should be focusing on は for now. With all that in mind, let's look at some more example sentences.

7. 飛行場はここです。(ひこうじょうはここです。)  
The airport is here / as for the airport, it is here.

8. これは豆腐です。(これはとうふです。)  
This is tofu / as for this, it is tofu

The important part of these sentences is what comes after the particle は. The fact that the airport is **here** is what's important. The fact that this is **tofu** is important. It's like asking "what is this?" and then someone telling the other person that this is **tofu**. Oh, so that's what this is.

9. 彼は邪魔です。(かれはじゃまです。)  
He is a nuisance. / As for him, is a nuisance.

Here's another example. Maybe you have someone in front of you, and someone asks you to describe that person. So, you say "oh, he is 邪魔." We already know about him, so the important part (where the emphasis is), goes to the 邪魔. You don't even need the 彼は part, necessarily (passes the "is it necessary" check). If

someone asked you “is that person over there a nuisance?” you could simply respond with うん、邪魔です (yeah, [he is] a nuisance).

Alright, after writing all that about the particle は, here’s an appropriate example sentence to leave you with.

10. 私はクタクタです。(わたしはクタクタです。)  
I’m exhausted. / As for me, am exhausted.

Go through all the steps of thinking about the particle は and apply it to this sentence. Do the “is it necessary” check. Also think about where the emphasis goes. If you’re having trouble, be sure to read the chapter about が as well. It’s basically the other half of this picture and will either make you feel more sad about particles or provide you with some insight into the inner workings of the universe.

### **b. Contrasting elements**

This particular use of は is a little more complicated. It usually involves the use of several different particles. So, it might be a good idea to come back to this one after you’ve read up on everything else.

Did you do it? Okay, let’s contrast.

Using は for contrasting elements is a lot like doing algebra. Don't worry, I’m really bad at math so I’ll keep it simple.

[ X は A ] \* [ Z は A ]

1. みさきは背が高いが、のりこは低い。(みさきはせがたかいが、のりこはひくい。)  
Misaki is tall, but Noriko is short.

X = みさき  
A = 背が高い  
\* = が  
Z = のりこ  
A = 低い

[ (みさき) は (背が高い) ] が [ (のりこ) は (ひくい) ]

MATH!

2. いぬは好きだが、ねこはきらいだ。(いぬは好きだが、ねこはきらいだ。)

I like dogs, but I don't like cats.

If you look at it, this isn't all that different from the particle は when it is "marking a topic". You're just marking two topics, saying something about those topics, and then contrasting them.

3. 父は運転できるが、母は運転できない。(ちちはうんてんできるが、はははうんてんできない。)

(My) father can drive, but (my) mother can't.

Sadly, it's not this simple all the time. Using は to contrast elements can happen with much shorter sentences (which ironically makes things more complicated).

4. **私は**学生です。(わたしはがくせいです)

I am a student.

What's up with this bolding? That's how I'm telling you that emphasis has been put on that part of the sentence. It's hard to get this context in writing, but in speech you can hear it.

When you put emphasis on the **私は** part of that sentence, you are contrasting with an assumed element. Maybe you know it via context, maybe you're just guessing. For example, **私は**学生です might be translated to mean "I'm not sure about *other* people, but **I am** a student." That "I'm not sure about other people" part? It was made up based on some context you didn't know about.

That little emphasis suddenly turned a simple sentence into a contrasting one, though you need to know the context in order to figure out *what* we're trying to contrast.

"**This is** a really good particle ebook..." (but maybe others aren't as good? That's what the emphasis suggests.)

# { が }

If there's anything worse than the particle は, it's when you have to decide whether or not you should be using は or が. It's probably the single most confusing particle conundrum you'll ever have to figure out. I'd definitely recommend reading about は before reading about が.

We'll try to demystify some of this は/が confusion right here and now, though. Put on your science jacket, friend. We're going to break these particles apart in the Large Hadron Collider that is your brain. Ha! Science jokes!

## **a. Indicating the subject.**

You'll remember that は marks a topic. Well, が "indicates a subject."

Ugh, grammar terms. What do they even mean??

Are you lost? Great, now the linguists have won. We'll still retaliate, but let's start simple.

1. コーヒーが飲みたいです。（コーヒーがのみたいです。）  
(I) want to drink coffee.

2. おしりが痒いです。（おしりがかゆいです。）  
(My) butt is itchy.

3. 自動ドアが開きました。（じどうドアがひらきました。）  
The automatic door opened.

The subject is the part before the が. What happens to the subject, or what the subject is, is the part after the が.

1. The coffee is the subject. What about the subject? Oh, (I) want to drink it.
2. (My) butt is the subject. What about it? It's itchy.
3. The automatic door is the subject. What about it? It opened.

That's simple enough, but you'll notice that it's kind of similar to は in a lot of ways. There are two ways that は could mess with these sentences.

First, は could get in there and provide context (but only if necessary). For example sentence 1, it could just as easily be:

私はコーヒーが飲みたいです。(わたしはコーヒーがのみたいです。)

I want to drink coffee / As for me, want to drink coffee.

So when would you include the は and when would you omit it? That depends on context. Or how you feel that day. Most likely, the listener can figure out that it's *you* (the topic) who wants the coffee, so you don't need to include it. Say you're standing in front of the barista slack jawed, drool going down your face and you're about to make your order. You don't need to say 私は because the context (the topic) is already established. You're there in line, you order coffee at a coffee place. It's obvious. You can just say コーヒーが飲みたいです。 Jump straight to the subject, which is coffee, and what you want to do with it, which is drink it. It's already known that *you* are the topic who wants to drink coffee.

But, let's think of another situation where you *would* want to provide some context to the subject of coffee and drinking it. Maybe you know that Tom, in particular, wants to drink coffee. Then you might say:

トムさんはコーヒーが飲みたいです。

As for Tom, (he) wants to drink coffee.

You have to specify. From this perspective, you can see that は indicates what we're talking about. The topic, or the "context." が on the other hand just indicates a subject, then tells us something about it / tells us what's happening to or with it.

Now, you'll remember that there was another way that は can rear its ugly head in these examples. You may remember how は also contrasts elements? Maybe you didn't read that because I told you to come back to it later. If so, don't worry about this section and skim ahead a little bit.

4. ヒマワリの花が咲きました。(ヒマワリのはながさきました。)

The sunflower bloomed.

What if we change the が to は?

5. ヒマワリの花は咲きました。(ヒマワリのはなはさきました。)

The sunflower bloomed, but as for the (other flowers) I'm not sure.

It is comparing the act of the sunflowers blooming with the act of other flowers blooming. We are contrasting with something else.

You'll also want to remember how with は, it's the part that comes *after* the particle that has the emphasis / importance. The important part of the sentence is that the sunflower bloomed. Not the fact that it's a sunflower that's blooming.

But, with example number 4 we have a different feeling. The part before the が is what's important. It's the fact that it's a sunflower that bloomed. What bloomed? Oh, it was the sunflower that bloomed.

We should take a closer look at this "interchangeability" of は and が though. Actually, they're not really interchangeable, though it feels like it. Let's figure out the difference.

My favorite way to explain it involves aliens making a clone of your good friend. Let's name him Tom. One Tom says "I am Tom!" The other says "No, I am Tom!" But, which particle do you use to say this in Japanese, は or が? (Think about it for a moment)

私はトムです。  
I am Tom.

私がトムです。  
I am Tom.

The same translation? BLRALRHGG!

(ノ益々)ノニニニ

Don't be mad. Put that table back.

トニニニ(° - °)

I'll explain the difference.

**私はトムです。**

Emphasis is placed on what comes *after* the は. That's the important part. We know that we're talking about I (私). But, who am I? I am Tom.

## 私がトムです。

Emphasis is placed on what comes before the *が*. That's the important part. The fact that *you* are the one who is Tom. Someone is asking "which one of you is Tom?"

Ah, I am the Tom (and none of these other people are the Tom, I am the Tom you're looking for).

So back to aliens and clones. You have your gun out, and you have to shoot one of them, because one of them is definitely not Tom. You ask "Hey, which one of you is Tom?"

How should Tom respond? (you have to figure this out on your own, think about it!)

Or, what if you ask "Who are you?" Then how would one of the Toms respond? You should be able to figure it out from the info in the previous paragraphs.

Now that you understand the basic difference, we can look at more example sentences.

6. 彼はこの地図が必要です。(かれはこのちずがひつようです。)

He needs this map / As for him, he needs this map.

The topic is "him." We're talking about "him." What are we saying about him? That the map is necessary (in relation to him). So, we end up with "he needs this map."

7. クリップが外れました。(クリップがはずれました。)

The clip came off.

The subject is the clip. What happens to it? It 外れました, or it came off. Maybe someone asked "What happened to the clip?" Context was already known that something happened to the clip, though we don't know what.

8. 誰がこれを書いたの？(だれがこれをかいたの?)

Who wrote this?

One interesting factoid: You can never follow a word like 誰(だれ), 何(なに), or どこ with は. Why? Because these WH-words are not concrete. They can be a subject, but

not the topic. So you wouldn't ever say 誰はこれを書いたの. It would be like saying "as for who, wrote this?" Doesn't make much sense.

9. プステ4が買いたいです。(プステ4がかいたいです。)

(I) want to buy a Playstation 4.

10. かおりさんは、日本語が読めません。(かおりさんは、にほんごがよめません。)

Kaori can't read Japanese / As for Kaori, (she) can't read Japanese.

は and が are fairly confusing. Sometimes it's confusing for native speakers too. But, each time you see a は or a が and you're confused, make sure to think through these things:

1. What is the topic / context? Does it need to be expressed? If so, why?
2. What is the subject? What is happening with the subject or how is it being described?
3. The part that comes before the が. It is "important" or "emphasized." Why is it important in this sentence

based on the known context? Why does it need to be here?

4. The part that comes after the は. It is "important" or "emphasized." Why is it important in this sentence based on the known context?
5. Could the は be contrasting something else that I don't know about? What is the context from before?
6. Should I just move on? I'm way too confused and I'll never figure this out. Maybe my time is better spent coming back to this later.

Whether you're making your own sentences, or reading Japanese sentences that already exist, if you go through these questions ~100 times, by the end it will all be automatic. Most people try to skim over asking questions like these, and it really hurts them in the long run. Spend the time now to figure it out and you'll thank yourself later.

### Side Note:

I bet that some of you who have been around the Japanese language block a few times are asking "where is が to mean '**butt**' 'but'?"

Actually, that's not a particle! Though it does seem like it should be one. It's, like, a grammar thing or a word or a

mystery or something (actually, it's a "disjunctive coordinate conjunction that combines two sentences", but nobody knows what that means. We'll just call it an ancient Jomon secret, lost forever).

And, this book focuses only on particles. Sorry pal!

# { の }

Many of you will know part **(a)** of this particle, which has to do with possession. The second use of the particle の isn't something you learn for a while, but it's quite simple and easy to understand.

## **a. Possession**

This shows who/what owns who/what. Some very simple examples:

1. 私の犬 (わたしのいぬ)  
My dog / Dog of I

Whatever is *before* the の is the thing/person that possesses the thing that's after it.

2. トムさんのビール  
Tom's beer

Tom owns / possesses the beer! Lucky Tom.

But, it doesn't have to be things that *people* have. Inanimate objects can have things too, though maybe not in the way you're thinking.

3. 木の花 (きのはな)  
A tree's flowers / Flower of the tree(s)

4. 英語の先生 (えいごのせんせい)  
An English teacher / A teacher of English

In these examples, we see that a tree can have flowers. Even the concept of "English" can have a teacher, making it "A teacher of English". English doesn't *own* the teacher or anything, but the teacher is of English, making them an English teacher.

You can even extend this by adding more のs.

5. 英語の先生の本 (えいごのせんせいのほん)  
The book of the teacher of English → "The English teacher's book"

If we break this apart, it gets easier to understand:

[英語の先生] の本

The first part, 英語の先生 is a “teacher of English.” What does the “teacher of English” possess? A book. That makes this “The teacher of English’s book” or “An English teacher’s book.”

Alright, now I think we can look at some longer, more complicated sentences. The above examples were really just parts of sentences to help get your feet wet.

6. 机の下に落ちていますよ。(つくえのしたにおちていますよ。)  
It’s lying under the table.

7. この指輪は彼からのプレゼントなんです。(このゆびわはかれからのプレゼントなんです。)  
This ring is a present from my boyfriend.

This sentence is a little tricky, but we can break it up into the [の part] and everything else.

この指輪は + [彼からのプレゼント] なんです。

The 「彼からのプレゼント」 portion can be translated to “the present from (my) boyfriend”. The topic is “this ring”. So you’re saying that “this ring is [a present from

my boyfriend].” Usually phrases that use の can be broken up in this way, where the の portion is its own section and you can apply other grammar rules to the whole thing.

8. これは、祖父が書いた祖母への手紙です。(これは、そふがかいたそぼへのてがみです。)  
This is a letter from my grandfather to my grandmother.

Let’s break this one up:

これは = this is

[祖父が書いた祖母への手紙です] = the letter written by my grandfather to my grandmother.

(let’s break this part of the sentence up even more)

祖父が書いた祖母へ = Written by (my) grandfather to my grandmother

の手紙です = the letter of

This is the letter of the thing that was written by the grandfather to the grandmother.

That sentence had a lot of parts to it, but even something like this can be broken down into littler parts. If this went over your head don't worry about it too much. Try doing this with shorter sentences, and your ability to break phrases up like this will get stronger and stronger with experience.

9. 私は、トヨタの大竹です。（わたしは、トヨタのおおたけです。）

I am Ootake of Toyota.

This is an interesting one. People can be of a company, or a group. In this example, Ootake is an employee of Toyota, so he can say that he is "Ootake of Toyota" or "Toyota's Ootake." Since Japanese people tend to like to be part of a group, and/or like associating themselves with groups, this is something you'll see a lot.

10. それは学校の備品です。（それはがっこうのびひんです。）

That is school equipment. / That is the equipment of the school

11. それは私の字じゃありません。（それはわたしのじじゃありません。）

That is not my writing. / That is not the writing of me.

12. 中国での仕事を探しています。（ちゅうごくでのしごとをさがしています。）

I am looking for a job in China. / I am looking for a job of "in China".

As you can see, it's possible to add の after other particles (like で, though it's not limited to で). The translation becomes "of in China" instead of "of China."

### **b. A sentence-ender that shows assumed common interest or gives an "explanatory" feeling**

This use of the particle の is a little more specific. If you're a beginner of Japanese, you can probably not worry too much about this right now. Just knowing it exists is pretty good. You have other grammar fish to fry.

This の is a sentence-ender (meaning it goes on the end of a sentence, like the particles ね or よ) that has a couple of purposes:

- When used in a statement, it can be because you are explaining something. "Why are you eating?" "Because I'm hungry."
- On the other hand, when used as a question, you're asking for explanation. "Why are you eating?" (can I get an explanation on this?)
- When used in a statement, it can also be because you think the other person has an assumed common interest in what you're saying. "Was it big?" "Yeah, it was bigggg."

One important thing to keep in mind though is that this use of the particle の tends to be reserved for women and children. While a man using the sentence ending particle の in this way won't be grammatically incorrect, it does sound a little weird or out of place.

Let's break this up into the three parts:

### Explanation の:

1. 膝が痛いの！ (ひざがいたいの！)  
My knee hurts!

Perhaps someone is asking a question about why they are crying. This is your explanation as to why you're crying. But how would they do that? How would they request an explanation??

### Requesting Explanation の:

2. どうして泣いてるの？ (どうしてないてるの？)  
Why are you crying?

Ah, there it is. Using の to request an explanation. If you add sentence 1 to the end of this, it all makes sense.

「どうして泣いてるの？」  
「膝が痛いの！」

### Assumed Common Interest:

3. トムさんは本当にひどいの。(トムさんはほんとうにひどいの。)  
Tom is really terrible, you know?

It's like you're getting someone involved with what you're saying, or you're pushing your viewpoints on

them. They *have* to agree, or you assume they're going to agree. At least, that's the feeling.

We've gone through all three ways the sentence ending particle *の* can be used. Some of you may have realized that there's another bit of grammar that does the same thing, that being *のだ*. In fact, it's exactly the same, though some things like formality and gendered language change a bit. The sentence ending particle *の* originally came from *のだ*. The *だ* was dropped, probably to make it easier to say. Unfortunately, *のだ* isn't a particle anymore, though, so it won't be covered in this particular book.

(;´Д`)

In the end, at least with *の* as a sentence ending particle, *most* (though not all) of the use will come from questions. People requesting explanation. That's where the rest of our examples will lie.

4. 振られたの？ (ふられたの？)  
Did (he/she) break up with you?

5. ギターが弾けるの？ (ぎたーがひけるの？)  
Can you play the guitar?

6. 歯は磨いたの？ (ははみがいたの？)  
Did you brush your teeth?

7. 幼稚園はどうしたの？ (ようちえんはどうしたの？)  
What happened to kindergarten? / Why aren't you at kindergarten?

8. シャワーを浴びてきたらどうなの？ (シャワーをあびてきたらどうなの？)  
Why don't you take a shower?

# { で }

The particle で can be confusing for some learners. I think it's because there are a lot of ways to use で. But, the first two explanations for で are going to be the two most important ones to focus on. If you're a beginner, it might be best to just do that. If not, learning those other two and/or making them more solid in your mind will improve your Japanese.

## a. Indicating location

The most common way to use the particle で is to show where something is happening. A location!

1. 公園でテニスをした。(こうえんでテニスをした。)  
I played tennis at the park.

Where is "tennis being played" happening? At the park!

2. 図書館で本を読んだ。(としょかんでほんをよんだ。)  
I read a book at a library.

Where is a book being read? At the library!

3. これは日本で流行っています。(これはにほんではやっています。)  
This is popular in Japan.

Where is "this" getting popular? In Japan!

You get the picture.

As you can see, the basic patterns are:

"[Locationで] + [something about that location or something that happened at that location]"

or

"[Something is] + [locationで] + [the thing that is happening]."

4. 父は家で待っています。(ちちはいえでまっています。)  
Dad is waiting at home.

5. どこで買ったの? (どこで買ったの?)

Where did you buy it?

**Note:** Although this particle indicates the location, it does not indicate the location where something / someone exists. So you can't say 先生は部屋にいる (you would want to use *こ* instead). Though, there are some exceptions to this. If you're using ある (not いる), and it's being used to show the location of an event, then you can use it. Events are things like 飲み会s or パーティーs. For example, 私達はバーで飲み会があった (we had the drinking party at the bar).

### **b. Using X to do Y**

で isn't just for locations, though. You can use it to show how something is used to do something else. It's almost like saying "by way of X, I do Y" though we'll come up with nicer sounding translations for the English in the examples.

1. 金槌で釘を打ちなさい。(かなづちでくぎをうちなさい。)

Drive the nail in with a hammer.

We're using the hammer (金槌で = by way of the hammer) to do an action. In this case it's hitting the nail with it.

2. パソコンで仕事をしています。(パソコンでしごとをしています。)

(I'm) working with my computer.

Another way to say it is: "by way of computer" (パソコンで), "I am working" (仕事をしています。).

3. 綿棒で耳掃除をします。(めんぼうでみみそうじをします。)

(I) clean (my) ears with cotton swabs.

aka "by way of cotton swabs" (綿棒で), "I do ear cleaning."

Are you getting the picture? Try to change the rest of the sentences to "by way of \_\_\_\_" translations.

4. 車で行きます。(くるまでいきます)

(I) will go by car.

5. どの教科書で勉強していますか？（どのきょうかしょでべんきょうしていますか？）

Which textbook are you studying from?

6. フライパンでステーキを焼きます。（フライパンでステーキをやきます。）

(I) fry steak using a frying pan.

### c. “Because of”

This is really similar to “b”, I think. But, it’s considered its own thing so we’ll separate it.

Instead of being “by way of \_\_\_”, で can be used to say “because of \_\_\_.” It’s showing a causal relationship (not a *casual* relationship, that’s something different. *Causal* means that something causes something else).

1. 雪で学校に遅刻した。（ゆきでがっこうにちこくした。）

Because of the snow, I was late for school.

In this case, 雪で means “because of the snow” and not “by way of the snow.” You’ll have to figure out when to use which by context, though usually it’s pretty obvious. You aren’t usually going to get to school “via the snow”

or “by way of the snow”, and you wouldn’t say “by way of the snow I was late for school.” You can see the similarity between this で particle usage and “b” though, right? More examples:

2. みちこさんは失恋で食欲が無い。（みちこさんはしつれんでしょくよくがない。）

Because Michiko was dumped she doesn’t have an appetite.

3. 雑音でよく聞こえません。（ざつおんでよくきこえません。）

Because of the noise I can’t hear you well.

4. コピー機は故障で使えません。（コピー機はこしょうでつかえません。）

Because the copy machine is out of order I/we can’t use it.

5. カラオケで声が枯れました。（カラオケでこえがかれました。）

Because of karaoke my voice got hoarse.

6. 台風で電車が止まりました。(たいふうででんしゃがとまりました。)

Because of the typhoon the train was stopped.

#### **d. The time when something stops or the time an activity has taken.**

The last で particle sounds complicated but it's actually quite simple. It's also used in very finite ways, so it won't take too many examples to get across.

1. 明日で六十歳になります。(あしたでろくじゅうさいになります。)

Tomorrow I will turn 60.

In this example, we are seeing the time it takes for me to become 60 years old and when you stop not being 60 years old.

2. 三時間でできると思います。(さんじかんでできるとおもいます。)

I think I will finish it in 3 hours.

The 三時間で shows how long until something stops. The thing that is stopping is you being able to finish "it," whatever "it" is.

3. この映画は一時間で終わります。(このえいがはいちじかんで終わります。)

This movie will end in one hour.

この映画は is the topic or the context. The important part for this particle is the 一時間で, which means "in one hour" and the verb that follows, which is 終わります (to end). So, in one hour [topic] will end.

4. 娘は二歳で言葉を話し始めました。(むすめはにさいでことばをはなしはじめました。)

My daughter started talking at the age of two.

This example shows how で can be used to show the time an activity has taken. In this case, it took until the daughter was 2 years old to be able to speak.

5. この会社は、来年で創立から五年です。（このかいしゃは、らいねんでそうりつからごねんです。）

Next year will be the 5th anniversary of the founding of this company.

来年で (the time an activity has taken) + 創立から五年です (from the founding, five years). A little bit of から and で action all in one sentence.

### **e. A quantity for a quantity**

What I mean by this, is that for one amount (let's say 1 hour) it requires another amount (let's say \$50). For one hour, it will be fifty dollars. A quantity for a quantity. You separate the quantities using で.

1. 十キロで一万円になります。（じゅっキロでいちまんえんになります。）

It will be 10,000 yen per 10kg.

You have 10kg + で + how much it will cost (in this case it's 10,000 yen).

2. このレッスンは、三ヶ月で一万八千円です。（このレッスンは、さんかげつでいちまんはっせんえんです。）

This lesson is 18000 yen for three months.

You have the first amount (三ヶ月) and the cost for that amount (一万八千円).

3. この車は、1リットルで10キロ走ります。（このくるまは、いちリットルでじゅっキロはしります。）

This car runs 10km per 1L.

With the first amount (1 liter) you can drive it for another amount (10 kilometers).

4. この国では、10円でみかんを三つ買えます。（このくにでは、じゅうえんでみかんをみっつかえます。）

In this country, you can buy three oranges for 10 yen.

With the first amount (10 yen) you can buy the second amount (3 mikan).

Are you starting to get the picture? Try to figure out what quantity you get for the other quantity in the rest of the example sentences.

5. このりんごは、四つで398円です。（このりんごは、よっつでさんびやくきゅうじゅうはちえんです。）

This apple is four for 398 yen.

6. この醤油は、一本で498円です。（このしょうゆは、いっぽんでよんひやくきゅうじゅうはちえんです。）

This soy sauce is 498 yen per a bottle.

7. このタイプの車なら、一台で五人まで乗れます。（このタイプのくるまなら、いちだいでごにんまでのれます。）

Up to 5 people can ride in this type of car.

8. このホテルの宿泊費は、二人で五千円です。（このホテルのしゅくはくひは、ふたりでごせんえんです。）

The accommodation of this hotel is 5,000 yen for two people.

9. この七面鳥は、一羽で七千円です。（このしちめんちょうは、いちわでななせんえんです。）

This turkey is 7,000 yen per one turkey.

# { と }

There's a surprising number of different ways to use the と particle. I'd list them out, but I don't know how. I guess I'll have to learn *right now*. Ohhh snap! \*high fives\*

## a. An exhaustive list

By exhaustive, I don't mean exhausting, as in "wow, learning particles is exhausting," although that is true. An "exhaustive" list means that *everything* is listed. There's nothing else on the list, to the speaker's knowledge.

**Exhaustive (と):** Eggs, bacon, and ham.

**Not Exhaustive (や):** Eggs, bacon, ham, and maybe some other things I'm not listing.

The list that could have other things in it uses や instead of と, but that lesson is for another chapter (the one that covers や, of course).

Let's take a look at some of those と examples.

1. 犬と猿は仲が悪い。(いぬとさるはなかがわるい。)  
Dogs and monkeys are not good friends.

2. これとこれとこれは私のです。(これとこれとこれはわたしのです。)  
This and this and this are mine.

3. あなたと私はこの電車に乗ります。(あなたとわたしはこのでんしゃにのります。)  
You and I are riding/taking this train.

4. 父と兄は納豆が嫌いです。(ちちとあにはなっとうがきらいです。)  
(My) dad and older brother don't like natto.

You can see the most basic pattern in these sentences. It goes something like:

[the list] + [something about the list].

Go through each sentence and identify this pattern.

That being said, it could just as easily be:

[the topic we're listing about] + [the list] + [something about the list].

As in:

5. この子は、私とあなたの娘です。（このこは、わたしとあなたのむすめです。）

This child is my and your daughter.

### **b. Doing something together with someone or something**

This is sort of like a list. Lists put things together. It's not a huge leap to imagine this particle putting things together... that are doing things together.

1. 両親と暮らしています。（りょうしんとくらしています。）

I live with my parents.

We're assuming that we're talking about you here (this sentence could also be 私は両親と暮らしています, if the context that we're talking about *you* wasn't known). You

have your parents (両親) and what you're doing together with them (と暮らしています).

One thing to note about this particle use is that the relationship is *reciprocal*. You are both living together, which means you can use と. Take these examples:

2. 両親と話しました。（りょうしんとはなしました。）

I talked with my parents.

Because we're using と, you are talking *with* your parents. It's reciprocal. However, take this example:

3. 両親に話した。（りょうしんにはなした。）

I talked *to* my parents.

It's no longer reciprocal because we're using the particle に. See the difference? You both have to be equal parties in the action to use と.

4. 日曜日、俺と海に行かない？（にちようび、おれとうみにいかない？）

On Sunday, do you want to go to the sea with me?

5. 友人と映画を見ていました。(ゆうじんとえいがをみてました。)

I was watching a movie with my friend.

6. 圭佑は父親とよく似ている。(けいすけはちちおやとよくにている。)

Keisuke really resembles his father.

7. 私と一緒に来なさい。(わたしといっしょにきなさい。)

Come together with me.

### **c. A quotation, sound.**

"The particle と can be used to mark a quotation or sound," Koichi said.

1. 加奈さん、「三時半には着く」と言っていましたよ。(かなさん、「さんじはんにはつく」と言っていましたよ。)

Kana said, "I'll be there by 3:30."

You can even omit the 加奈さん part to make the sentence simpler and easier to understand.

「三時半には着く」と言っていましたよ。

You have the thing that's being quoted inside the 「」 marks. Then, you have と and the verb that is used to quote them. They could "say" something, they could "yell" something. Really that's up to you, though 言う is going to be very common.

2. 夜寝る時には、「お休みなさい」と言います。(よるねるときには、「おやすみなさい」といいます。)

When you go to bed, you say "good night."

You can also use this particle to sort of "quote" a sound.

3. この漢字は「あい」と読みます。(このかんじは「あい」とよみます。)

This kanji is read as "ai."

So far you've seen "to say" and "to read". There's a handful of verbs that tend to use と in this way. A Dictionary of Basic Japanese Grammar lists out 思う, 考える, 書く, 聞く, and 説明する as examples.

4. 優君ハンサムだと思います。(まさるハンサムだとおもいます。)

I think Masaru is handsome.

5. 「これを読まないで下さい」と書きました。（「これをよまないでください」とかきました。）

“Please don’t read this,” I wrote.

**Side Note:** There is also a と that is used like “if \_\_\_ happens then\_\_\_,” but that is not a particle, even though it kind of seems like it should be. So, not covered here. Sorry!

# { に }

When it comes to the particle に, it always seems to come back to movement. Either it's movement in time, space, or something in between. That being said, there are many distinct ways to use the particle に, making に kind of the ultimate particle, at least when it comes to use quantity.

## a. The time at which something takes place

What time does something take place? What date does it take place? What month does it take place? What year does it take place? These are all things that will use this version of the に particle.

1. 六時にベーコン祭りに行く。(ろくじにベーコンまつりにいく。)

At 6 o'clock I will go to the bacon festival.

We have the time (六時) and then the に right after. That makes it "at 6 o'clock \_\_\_\_". You can do this with other time-related words as well.

2. 午前中に病院に行きます。(ごぜんちゅうにびょういんにいきます。)

In the morning I will go to the hospital.

3. 春に花が咲きました。(はるにはながさきました。)

In the spring the flowers bloomed.

4. うちの家族は、お正月の朝に、お餅をたべます。(うちのかぞくは、おしょうがつのあさに、おもちをたべます。)

My family, on the morning of the New Year, eats mochi.

There are time related words that cannot use に, though. The "rule" basically goes like this: If the time is a uniquely identifiable time, then it can have に. If not, then it will not use に, though there is some grey area. For example, 10月 is an identifiable time. You can point to it and say "in October, this is gonna happen."

However, there are many time-words that don't accept に. Some examples: 朝, 明日, 昨日, 今日, 明後日, 今年, etc. These are not specific dates (like 5日に), specific times (2時半に), or specific days (クリスマスに). Think of it this way. Usually, if you can say "on [time]," "in [time]" or "at [time]" in English, then chances are you can say "\_\_\_\_に" in Japanese, too.

“In October.” ← Guess what, 10月に is okay!

“On January 1.” ← 1月1日に is okay!

“At 3:30pm.” ← Great! 3時半に totally works.

“On Christmas.” ← That’s a thing! クリスマスに is no problem.

“On today.” ← Uhh… That doesn’t work. 今日に is *not* okay.

“In morning.” ← 朝に is *not* okay.

“In the morning.” ← 朝中に is okay, however, because the 中 specifies things!

“On tomorrow.” ← 明日に doesn’t work.

### **b. Where something or someone moves to**

First we looked at time, now let’s look at movement. Specifically, the location to which someone or something moves. As in, “I go to the store” (the “go” part is the movement, and the “store” is the location where I’m going).

1. 日本に行く。(にほんにいく。)

(I) will go to Japan.

There is the location (日本) and the movement action (行く). You are going to (に) Japan.

2. いつアメリカに帰るんですか？(いつアメリカにかえるんですか？)

When will (you) go back to America?

America is the location. The movement is 帰る. Think of it like “to america” plus the movement action of 帰る. “To America, return!”

3. 先月、家族で温泉に行きました。(せんげつ、かぞくでおんせんにいきました。)

Last month, we went to the hot spring as a family

We have the location (温泉) and the movement (行きました).

4. どうしてここに来たんですか？(どうしてここに来たんですか？)

Why did you come here?

The location (ここ) and the movement (来たん[…])

Do you see the pattern?

5. この車はどこに向かっているのですか？ (このくるまはどこにむかっているのですか？)

Where is this car heading to?

6. これをあの部屋に運んでください。 (これをあのへやにはこんでください。)

Please carry this to that room over there.

7. あの男がマクドナルドに入るのを見ました。 (あのおとこがマクドナルドにはいるのをみました。)

I saw that guy over there entering McDonalds.

8. 彼は待ち合わせ場所に遅れて来ました。 (かれはまちあわせばしょにおくれてきました。)

He was late getting to the meeting place.

Although some of the later sentences get more complicated, you can still see the pattern: “Locationに movement-action.” Try to find just this pattern even if

there are sentences that are still too difficult for you to understand 100%.

### **c. An action that “transfers”**

Think of verbs that involve transferring something from one person to another. With these verbs, you’ll usually want to use the particle に. Remember, に has to do with movement, whether that’s time (a), or going someplace (b). In this case, it’s the movement of transferring something between people or things.

1. 私は日本人に英語を教えています。 (わたしはにほんじんにえいごをおしえています。)

I teach English to Japanese people.

The key word here is “to”. The act of teaching English is transferring *to* the Japanese people.

2. 木村さんが私にキムチをくれました。 (きむらさんがわたしにキムチをくれました。)

Mr. Kimura gave me kimchee.

Once again, something is being transferred. This time it’s more tangible, in that it’s some delicious kimchee.

3. 大きな犬が私に吠えました。（おおきくないぬがわたしにほえました。）  
A large dog barked at me.

A little less obvious, but the dog is transferring its bark to you / at you.

4. 松本さんにこの写真を見せます。（まつもとさんにこのしゃしんをみせます。）  
(I) will show this photo to Matsumoto-san.

The act of showing the photo is being transferred to Matsumoto-san.

5. 母が弟に説教をしました。（ははがおとうとにせっきょうをしました。）  
My mom lectured my younger brother.

The lecture is being transferred to your younger brother.

6. 妹に飴を分けてあげた。（いもうとにあめをわけてあげた。）  
I split up my candies with my younger sister.

7. アメリカの大統領に手紙を送った。（アメリカのだいとうりょうにてがみをおくった。）  
I sent a letter to the president of America.

8. 後であなたにメールをします。（あとであなたにメールをします。）  
I will email you later.

Make sure you can identify what's being transferred in the final three examples.

#### **d. The surface upon which something takes place**

This is a really specific use case, but does come up quite a bit. When one thing is happening on the surface of another thing, you use に to indicate that.

1. こちらにハンコを押してください。(こちらにハンコをおしてください。)

Please stamp your seal here.

Upon the surface of こちら (we're assuming this is referring to paper or something similar) you are stamping (or pushing) your seal.

2. ノートに書いてください。(ノートにかいてください。)  
Please write this down in your notebook.

Once again, we are doing something on the surface of something else. In this case, that surface is the notebook, and what you're doing to it is writing on it.

3. 猫が屋根の上に登りました。(ねこがやねのうえにのぼりました。)

The cat climbed up on the roof.

4. 机の上に本を置きました。(つくえのうえにほんをおきました。)

I placed a book on the desk.

5. 兄はソファに横になっています。(あにはソファによこになっています。)

My older brother is lying down on the couch.

One thing you may have noticed is that in all of these examples, something is doing something *directly* to something else. These are all direct actions. You are doing something *to* the surface. Don't get this confused with the particle で in this regard. で is "by way of the surface", に is "on the surface."

This use of the particle に also doesn't have anything to do with existence. Although you can and will say にあります (you'll learn that next), it's a different category of the に particle, though super similar.

### **e. Showing where something exists**

In **(d)** you learned how に is used to show what's happening on a surface. I also mentioned at the end that you can't use it to show existence on a surface or otherwise (that's usually あります and います), because it's a different use of this particle. We're going to learn that now.

1. 部屋にいる。(へやにいる)  
(I'm) in the room.

We have the location (部屋) and the person/thing exists (にいる).

2. 先生は教室にいますか？(せんせいはきょうしつにいますか?)  
Is the teacher in the classroom?

This sentence is a little longer, but you can see the pattern there right? The location is the 教室 and the existence is います. Something exists in the classroom, and that is the teacher (because it is the topic).

3. 醤油はその棚の上にあります。(しょうゆはそのたなのうえにあります。)  
The soy sauce is on top of that shelf.

4. 休みの日はいつもここにいます。(やすみのひはいつもここにいます。)  
I'm always here on my days off.

This isn't all that different from particle に version (d), but I think it's good to separate them out. When combined, you have an increased overall knowledge of the particle に.

#### **f. Showing why someone moves from one place to another.**

This feels a little more like a grammar pattern to learn, but it's a particle nonetheless. It goes something like this.

[thing you are doing in stem form] + に + [movement verb]

You are going/coming/etc to do something to something else.

1. あなたに会いに来ました。(あなたにあいにきました。)  
I came (here) to meet you.

会う changes to stem form (会い) and then you add に plus the movement verb (来る, in this case). You come to meet the person.

2. 映画を見に行きませんか？（えいがをみにいきませんか？）  
Do you want to go see a movie?

You are going (行く) to see (見に) a movie (映画を).

3. ジムに水泳をしに行きます。（ジムにすいえいをしに行きます。）  
I'm going to the gym to swim.

You're going (行きます) to do swimming (水泳をしに) at the gym (ジムに)

4. 日本に英語を教えに行きます。（にほんにえいごをおしえに行きます。）  
I'm going to Japan to teach English.

You're always moving somewhere to do something with this pattern and に particle.

5. 本を読み公園に行きます。（ほんをよみにこうえんにいきます。）  
I will go to the park to read books.

6. お酒を飲みに来たんじゃないんですか？（おさけをのみにきたんじゃないんですか？）  
Didn't you come here to drink alcohol?

7. 何をしに来たんですか？（なにをしにきたんですか？）  
What are you here for?

8. かさを売りに町に来ました。（かさをうりにまちにきました。）  
I came to this town to sell umbrellas.

### **g. The source in passive, causative, receiving**

Passive and causative forms are just about the last thing that Japanese learners are able to learn. So don't get too worked up if you don't understand this. You'll need to understand passive and causative forms first, after all.

1. 立花さんに小説を書かせます。（たちばなさんにしょうせつをかかせます。）  
I will make Mr. Tachibana write a novel.

(that was a causative example).

2. ビエトはコウイチに褒められました。(ビエトはコウイチにほめられました。)

Koichi praised Viet.

(that was a passive example).

Besides causative and passive, you can also use this particle with “receiving” related words.

3. 知らない人に、宝くじをもらいました。(知らないひとに、たからくじをもらいました。)

A stranger gave me a lottery ticket.

This one is pretty straight forward, because もらう is pretty much as receive-related as it gets.

4. 吉田教授に、日本語を教わっています。(よしだきょうじゅに、にほんごをおそわっています。)

Professor Yoshida teaches me Japanese.

In this case, you’re receiving Japanese from Professor Yoshida.

Let’s move on with examples from all three possible situations:

5. 友達に裏切られました。(ともだちにうらぎられました。)

My friend betrayed me.

6. 蜂に刺されました。(はちにさされました。)

I was stung by a bee.

7. 掃除は夫にやらせます。(そうじはおつとにやらせます。)

I will make (my) husband do the cleaning.

8. あの人にそう言われたんです。(あのひとにそういわれたんです。)

That person over there told me so.

9. 警察に追われています。(けいさつにおわれています。)

I’m being pursued by the police.

This is one of the most difficult to acquire grammar rules in Japanese (at least the passive and causative parts), so don’t feel bad if it was confusing. Come back when you understand and this section will be useful.

## h. A sentence ender that expresses regret or sympathy

When placed onto the end of a sentence, with でしょう or だろう before it, this particle indicates that the speaker regrets or has sympathy for something.

1. あの事故がなければ、辰夫も卒業できただろうに。(あのじこがなければ、たつおもそつぎょうできただろうに。)

If there wasn't that accident, Tatsuo could have graduated.

There is a sense of regret about the accident. If only Tatsuo didn't have that accident, then maybe he would have graduated. Sad.

2. 仕事が早く終われば、あなたも誕生日会に来られたでしょうのに。(しごとがはやくおわれば、あなたもたんじょうびかいにこられたでしょうに。)

If your work was done earlier, you could have attended at the birthday party.

There is some regret about not having done your work, which leads to another regret, not being able to attend the birthday party.

3. 初めてで緊張したでしょうに。(はじめてできんちょうしたでしょうに。)

You must have been so nervous because it was your first time.

In this sentence, we are experiencing empathy. Aw, you must have been nervous! I feel yah, bro.

4. 母親を亡くして、辛い思いをしたらだろうに。(ははおやをなくして、つらいおもいをしたらだろうに。)

You must have felt so tough when you lost your mother.

Some more empathy going on here.

Try to figure out whether each sentence is empathy or regret, or a little of both!

5. もう少し勉強すれば合格できたでしょうに。(もうすこしべんきょうすればごうかくできたでしょうに。)

If you studied a little more, you could have passed the exam.

6. いつもの電車に乗っていれば、助かっただろうに。(いつものでんしゃにのっていれば、たすかっただろうに。)

If he was on the usual train, he could have lived.

7. カメラを忘れなければ、いい写真が撮れただろうに。(カメラをわすれなければ、いいしゃしんがとれただろうに。)

If I didn't forget my camera, I could have taken good pictures.

8. 駅の近くに住んだら、便利でしょうに。(えきのちかくにすんだら、べんりでしょうに。)

If we lived near the station, it would be convenient.

9. 子どもはお菓子の方が嬉しいでしょうに。(こどもはおかしのほうがうれしいでしょうに。)

Kids would be happier if you give them snacks.

10. もう少し安ければ、私にも買えるだろうに。(もうすこしやすければ、わたしにもかえるだろうに。)

If this is a little cheaper, I would be able to buy it.

that \_\_\_\_ happened, \_\_\_\_\_ happened." This is different from that.

Don't confuse this for のに, which is a conjunction that means something like "even though" or "despite the fact



This particle is a lot like に, but the use is much more specific. It just does one thing, and that's to show the direction in which something or some action is going.

**a. The direction toward which something or some action goes.**

1. 私達は、病院へ走りました。（わたしたちは、びょういんへはしりました。）  
We ran to the hospital.

In this case, we did the action of running towards the hospital. Simple, right? Just like particle に.

2. たまには家の外へ出なさい。（たまにはいえのそとへでなさい。）  
You should get out of the house sometime.

3. 男は、国外へ脱走した。（おとこは、こくがいへだっそうした。）

The man escaped the country.

4. 四月にイギリスへ帰国します。（しがつにイギリスへきこくします。）

I'm going back to England in April.

5. フィリピンの友人へ手紙を出しました。（フィリピンのゆうじんへてがみをだしました。）

I sent a letter to my friend in the Philippines.

6. 大学へは行かないつもりだ。（だいがくへはいかないつもりだ。）

I'm planning to not go to university.

The only time that に and へ are *not* interchangeable is when you need to follow up the particle with の. In that case, you have to use the particle へ, *not* に.

7. これは地獄への扉です。（これはじごくへのとびらです。）

This is the door that goes to hell.

# { を }

Kind of like the particle は, the particle を has a slightly weird pronunciation. Instead of a “wo” sound, it is an “o” sound. Basically 99% the same as hiragana お, though occasionally you hear a little “w” sound depending on the speaker. I wouldn’t worry too much about that, though. Just think of it as an “o” sound and you’ll be more than okay.

## a. Marking a direct object

Stupid grammar terms! What does “marking a direct object” mean?

Essentially, it means you are taking an object and you’re doing something directly to it. For example:

1. 寿司を食べる。(すしをたべる。)  
I will eat sushi.

You are marking the object, which is “sushi.” The “direct” part of “direct object” is referring to the fact that you are

doing something directly to the object, in this case you’re eating it.

You are doing something to it. The object itself isn’t doing something.

2. 寿司が食べる。  
The sushi will eat.

Take this nonsense of a sentence. When you use が, it is indicating the subject, which makes it so we’re talking about the sushi and what it’s doing. So, “the sushi will eat.” Whoops. That’s an embarrassing (but easy) mistake to make.

3. 私はテニスをする。(わたしはテニスをする。)  
I will play tennis.

In this case, the direct object is テニス. What are you directly doing to tennis? You are doing it, i.e. you are playing it. So, you end up with “I am playing tennis.”

4. コンタクトを外します。(コンタクトをはずします。)  
I will take my contacts out.

5. 新しい口紅を買いました。(あたらしいくちべにをかいました。)

I bought new lipstick.

6. 誰を誘いましたか?(だれをさそいましたか?)

Who did you invite?

7. 眼鏡を探しています。(めがねをさがしています。)

I'm looking for my glasses.

8. 父は、サングラスをかけています。(ちちは、サングラスをかけています。)

My father is wearing sunglasses.

Some things to know about を when it is marking a direct object:

Sometimes other particles can also mark the direct object. It's confusing!

**が** - for example: 日本語がわからない (I don't understand Japanese).

Just think of this as an exception. . . that happens a lot.

たい form: 寿司が食べたい (I want to eat sushi)

Potential form: 寿司が食べれる (I can eat sushi)

What's even more confusing is that you *could* use を for these two as well.

Also, に. For example: トムさんに話した (I talked to Tom). This is because you're transmitting one thing to another thing.

For the most part, though, if you're doing something directly to something else, you can use を.

**Note:** You can't have more than one を in a clause! A good thing to know when you're self correcting.

### **b. Someone or something moving on/through/along something**

You'd think this job would be given to the particle に because there's movement, but nooooooo, Japanese has to be weird like that. The use of this particle in this way is pretty specific, though.

1. あの橋を渡るのですか？（あのはしをわたるのですか？）  
Are (we) going to cross that bridge?

In the case of this bridge, you are moving on it / moving through it. Or, at least talking about it. You are doing the action of crossing it. If you used に in this situation, it would be like you're crossing *to* the bridge, instead of crossing the bridge itself. That's the difference.

2. 川岸を散歩しました。（かわぎしをさんぽしました。）  
I walked the riverbank.

In this case, you are walking along the riverbank. If you used に, you would be saying you are walking *to* the riverbank. By using を you are saying you are doing the action on the object, which is the riverbank.

3. 名古屋から、奈良を通過して大阪に着いた。（なごやから、ならをとっておおさかについた。）  
I left Nagoya and passed through Nara before arriving at Osaka.

You are passing through 奈良 in this example. You are doing the action of passing through Nara. That's why it's を.

### **c. Where a movement begins**

If you want to show where a movement begins from, look no further than the particle を.

1. 実家を出て一人暮らしを始めるつもりです。（じっかをでてひとりぐらしをはじめるとりです。）  
I'm going to leave my parents' home and start living by myself.

The important part of the sentence is 実家を出て. The "movement" begins from 実家, and the movement is the person leaving.

2. 東京駅で電車を降りてください。（とうきょうえきででんしゃをおりてください。）  
Please get off the train at Tokyo Station.

The important part here is 電車を降りてください (please get off the train). The movement begins from the train, and the movement is someone getting off it.

3. 先生に見つからないように、教室を抜け出した。(せんせいにみつからないように、きょうしつをぬけだした。)

I escaped the classroom without being seen by the teacher.

You are escaping (抜け出した), which is the movement.  
And, the location from which this movement begins from is from the classroom.

# { から }

This particle shows where something is from. Words like “from” and “since” come to mind.

## a. A starting point or source.

A “starting point” or “source” can mean several things. It can relate to time. It can relate to a physical location. It can even relate to what something was made out of (its source). We’ll cover all of these things and more.

Let’s start with time.

1. 飲み会は六時からです。(のみかいはろくじからです。)  
The drinking party starts from 6 o’clock.

The important part of this sentence is the 六時から bit. This means “From 6 o’clock.” What about other kinds of “time”?

2. まさおは四月から中学生になります。(まさおはしがつからちゅうがくせいになります。)

Masao will be a junior high school student (starting) from April.

Now we see an example of から with time being applied to something bigger. A whole month! You can say 1月から, 八月から, and 12月から as well. As you can probably imagine, years will also work. 1999年から, etc.

3. 朝から気分が悪いです。(あさからきぶんがわるいです。)

From the morning, I have felt sick.

Here’s something a little more general. “Since this morning” or “from this morning.” You could also say 昼ごはんから (from lunch) or any time related thing you desire.

But it doesn’t just have to be time. You can use から to describe a source, too.

4. チョコレートは、カカオ豆から作られます。(チョコレートは、カカオまめからつくられます。)

Chocolate is made from cacao beans.

The source of chocolate is cacao. カカオ豆から作られます is “made *from* cacao beans.”

5. 私の母は、風邪から肺炎になった。（わたしのははは、かぜからはいえんになった。）

As for my mother, from her cold she got pneumonia.

The source of the pneumonia was the cold. 風邪から.

Similar to source, locations are a good way to use から as well.

6. えんとつから煙が出ています。（えんとつからけむりがでています。）

From the chimney, smoke is exiting (rising).

えんとつから = *From* the chimney.

7. アメリカから来ました。（あめりかからきました。）

(I) came from America.

アメリカから = From America. You can replace this with your own country, or town, or city, or building if you

want. Heck, you can replace America with “your mom” too, if you want to get really specific for some reason.

8. ここから先は立入禁止です。（ここからさきはたちいりきんしです。）

You’re not allowed beyond (from) this point.

The ここから is “from here…” You could say そこから to mean “from there” or あそこから to say “from over there”. Anyways, you get the picture. From \_\_\_\_\_ location \_\_\_\_\_.

# { か }

Most of you will know this particle as the question marker particle. But, it also does some other neat things too.

## **a. A sentence-ender that indicates the sentence is a question.**

If a sentence ends with か, that sentence is probably a question. Simple as that. か is almost like a question mark, in that sense, though sometimes in Japanese you have both (a question mark and a か), though you don't have to.

1. タバコを吸いますか？（タバコをすいますか？）  
Do you smoke (tobacco)?

What if this sentence *didn't* have the か on the end, and no question mark?

2. タバコを吸いますか。（タバコをすいますか。）  
Do you smoke (tobacco)?

Look at that, it's the same exact thing! Japanese sentences don't *need* question marks, though they do often help to make sentences more clear. For example, when you ask a question with casual speech, sometimes you don't use a か. It's all in the tone of your voice. But with writing, there is no tone of voice, so without a question mark questions without the か are very ambiguous.

タバコを吸う。

vs.

タバコを吸う？

Without the question mark, there'd be no way to know if the first sentence is a question or not. I mean, it probably *isn't*, because anybody with half a mind would use a question mark there to avoid confusion, but you never know, right? Japanese writing existed before question marks made their way into Japanese, after all.

There's not much to do here other than examples. This use of the particle is very straightforward.

3. お酒を飲みますか？(おさけをのみますか？)  
Do you drink alcohol?

4. ストーブは消しましたか？(ストーブはけしましたか？)  
Did you turn off the heater?

5. イギリスに行ったことはありますか？(イギリスにいったことはありますか？)  
Have you ever been to England?

6. 本気ですか？(ほんきですか？)  
Is that true?

7. 薬は飲みましたか？(くすりはのみましたか？)  
Did you take the medicine.

8. 病院に行きますか？(びょういんにいきますか？)  
Will you go to the hospital?

9. 今、私の名前を呼びましたか？(いま、わたしのなまえをよびましたか？)  
Did you just call my name?

Can you figure out what all these sentences would be if the か wasn't included at the end?

### **b. When there is an alternative**

If か isn't the *end* of a sentence, then perhaps it is marking an alternative. Essentially, this is the word "or" in English.

1. コーラかペプシ、どっちがいい？  
Which do you prefer, Coke or Pepsi?

2. どうせ陽子か香織の仕業でしょう。(どうせようこかかおりのしわざでしょう。)  
Yoko or Kaori probably did it.

Something *or* something. You see the pattern there. When used in this way, it can mark an alternative between two nouns or even two sentences. You've seen the "two nouns" example already, so let's look at some sentences.

3. ジュースを飲むか、ケールを食べなさい。(ジュースをのむか、ケールをたべなさい。)  
Drink your juice or eat your kale.

With nouns, か can mark alternatives between more than two nouns too. When this happens, the very last か is omitted.

4. ベーコンかステーキかチキンを買って下さい。(ベーコンかステーキかチキンをかってください。)  
Please buy bacon, steak or chicken.

See how there's no か after the final noun, チキン?

Let's finish up with more examples.

5. 猫か犬なら犬派です。(ねこかいぬならいぬはです。)  
Between cats and dogs, I'm a dog person.

6. 明日か明後日に返事をします。(あしたかあさってにへんじをします。)  
I will reply to you either tomorrow or the day after tomorrow.

7. SサイズかLサイズしかありません。  
There are only small and large sizes.

8. 電車かバスで行きます。(でんしゃかバスでいきます。)  
I will go by train or bus.

9. ハサミか包丁はありますか?(ハサミかほうちょうはありますか?)  
Do you have scissors or a knife?

10. 運転免許証か保険証を出して下さい。(うんてんめんきょうしょうかほけんしょうをだしてください。)  
Please show your drivers license or health card.

### **c. Uncertainty of the topic**

When you are uncertain about something, you can use か to show that. This is a little more advanced compared

to the other two uses of this particle, but I think those of you at an intermediate+ level should be able to figure this one out.

First you start with the thing you're unsure about, then you put in か, then you add the verb that shows in what way you are unsure. It makes a lot more sense if we just do it.

1. いつ病気が治るか分かりません。(いつびょうきがなおるかわかりません。)  
I don't know when the disease will be cured.

The part before the か shows what you have uncertainty about (when the disease will cure). After the か is the verb that shows what kind of uncertainty. In this case, you simply don't understand or know (when the disease will cure).

This version of the particle is actually a lot like (b), marking when there's an alternative. The alternative is just omitted. See this example:

2. ビキニを買おうか迷っています。(ビキニをかおうかまよっています。)  
I wonder if I should buy a bikini (or not).

The "(or not)" part is what's being omitted in the sentence, though it's definitely there whether or not you write it out. It's like saying "buy a bikini... or what? I am confused." What a terrible sounding translation, though it's probably more accurate in some ways than the good sounding version.

3. どの話が本当か分からない。(どのはなしがほんとうかわからない。)  
I don't know which story is true (or not).

Once again, we have the first part "which story is true." The か is suggesting that what you're really saying is "which story is true (or not)," where "or not" is the alternative that is being alluded to. Then, you add 分からない, which means you don't know "which story is true (or not)."

4. どの本を買うかまだ決めてません。(どのほんをかうかまだきめてません。)  
I haven't decided which book to buy yet.

5. 明日までに終わるか微妙です。(あしたまでにおわるかびみょうです。)

I don't know whether or not I can finish by tomorrow.

6. どこで妥協するか難しいところです。(どこでだきようするかむずかしいところです。)

It's difficult to judge where to make a compromise.

7. 予約が確定したか不確かです。(よやくがかくていしたかふたしかです。)

It's uncertain if my reservation was placed.

8. いつ日本に行くかまだ分かりません。(いつにほんにいくかまだわかりません。)

I don't know when I'll go to Japan yet.

9. うまくいくか不安です。(うまくいくかふあんです。)

I'm nervous about it not going well.

10. 日本に行くかどうか分かりません。(にほんにいくかどうか分かりません。)

I don't know if I will go to Japan or not.

It's pretty much the same as if you just did か there instead of かどうか, but かどうか suggests there is a clear yes or no answer. Either I will go to Japan or I will not. Just か on its own marks uncertainty. Sure, some of those will have yes or no answers, but if you specifically want to mark a question with a yes or no answer, use かどうか. Plus, it's fun to say.

You may also find this use of the particle somewhat familiar. The pattern \_\_\_\_かどうか is another particle that is pretty common. かどうか marks a question with a yes or no answer. For example:

# { も }

“Also” is probably the best word to describe the particle も, at least when it comes to section (a). Section (b) is a little more advanced, but simple enough.

## **a. When two subjects are the same**

“When two subjects are the same” is a terrible title. So let’s start really simple. Like, one-word simple.

1. 私も (わたしも)  
I, too / I also / I as well

Now let’s add something to it.

2. 私もジョンです。(わたしもじょんです。)  
I am also John. / I’m John, too.

Do you see what’s happening here? 私も is “I also” or “I, too.” What are you also? You are also “John.” “I also am John” is just a funny way to say “I’m John, too.” Both “I” and “John” are one in the same. I am John. John am I.

Let’s look at some other nouns + も.

3. 先週もこの映画を見たじゃない。(せんしゅうもこのえいがをみたじゃない。)

We watched this movie last week too.

The key part of this sentence is 先週も. So you already know that whatever follows has something to do with “last week also” \_\_\_\_\_. The subject of last week and whatever follows it are one in the same.

4. 今日もいい天気ですね。(きょうもいいてんきですね。)  
The weather is nice today also, isn’t it?

今日も means “today also” or “today too,” so if “today also” is “good weather” then the weather is nice today too.

も can get a little more complicated, though. You can put *other* particles before the も. For example:

5. アメリカからも注文が来ています。(アメリカからも  
ちゅうもんがきています。)

We also got orders from America.

Now you have to look at アメリカから as a separate thing. That alone is “from America,” so when you add も to it you have “Also [from America].”

6. 日本でも有名ですよ。(にほんでもゆうめいですよ。)  
It's famous in Japan too.

Once again we're looking at the part before the も, which is 日本で. You know that 日本で is “In Japan,” so if you add も to that you get “Also [in Japan].” In this case, something is famous “also in Japan.”

7. 正明君とも仲良くしなさい。(まさあきくんともなかよく  
しなさい。)

You should be friendly with Masaaki-kun as well.

正明君と means “with Masaaki.” So when you add も to it you get “also [with Masaaki].”

8. コウイチさんにもベーコンをあげます。

I will also give Koichi bacon.

コウイチさんに means “to Koichi.” With も, it is “also [to Koichi].” In this case you are *also* giving bacon to Koichi.

### **b. Emphasizes something measurable**

By measurable things I mean quantity, distance, or frequency.

1. 千人も来ました!(せんにんもきました!)

A thousand people came!

2. 冬休みに五キロも太りました。(ふゆやすみにごキロもふ  
とりました。)

I gained five kilos over winter break.

3. 麻里子は、十メートルも泳げないんです。(まりこはじゅ  
うメートルもおよげないんです。)

Mariko can't even swim ten meters.

It's hard to see "emphasis" in text, but that's what も is doing here, and in the examples above you see it happening to quantity and distance.

4. ケーキを十個も食べました。(ケーキをじゅっこも食べました。)

I ate ten pieces of cake!

Yeah, that sounds like something I'd want to emphasize.

# { よ }

If you've studied Japanese for a little while, chances are you've come across this particle. It goes onto the end of sentences, yo.

## **a. A sentence ender particle that turns the sentence into an exclamation.**

By exclamation, I mean that the speaker is making a strong assertion about something. The speaker is assuming that they are saying something only known to them.

Really, though, it's easier to simplify this down even further. Just translate it to "you know," at least with non-negative sentences.

1. 東京へ行くよ。(とうきょうへいくよ。)  
I will go to Tokyo, you know.

2. ベーコンを食べたよ。(ベーコンをたべたよ。)  
I ate bacon, you know.

With negative sentences, it isn't as cut and dry as adding "you know" or even the feeling of "you know" to the sentence.

Otherwise, the sentence just becomes an exclamation. You're exclaiming something! It's not quite the same, but it sort of has the feeling of adding an exclamation mark to a sentence in English. Just like か as a "question mark," similar but not 100% the same. I'd also say that よ is about 50% as exciting as an exclamation mark, but maybe that's just me. The Japanese language uses exclamation marks too, so if you want to really make something exciting just use that.

3. 早く言いなさいよ！(はやくいなさいよ。)  
Hurry up and say it!

4. ここがあなたの寝室ですよ。(ここがあなたのしんしつですよ。)  
This is your bedroom.

5. 絶対に買いませんよ。(ぜったいにかいしませんよ。)

I will never buy it.

6. いいよ。

Sure / That's fine.

7. 君のペンを借りたよ。(きみのペンをかりたよ。)

I borrowed your pen, you know.

8. どうしてあのネクタイを捨てたんだよ。(どうしてあのネクタイをすてたんだよ。)

Why did you throw away the necktie?

# { ね }

This often gets paired with よ, just because it's also an extremely common sentence ending particle. The meaning and feelings between them are totally different, though.

## a. A sentence-ender particle that is looking for some agreement.

There's a couple important parts to this particle. First, it's fishing for agreement. That's why it's often translated as "isn't it?"

1. トムさんは可愛いですね。（トムさんはかわいいですね。）

Tom is cute, **isn't he?**

The second important thing is that the thing the speaker is saying is assumed to be "shared knowledge." It's almost as if the speaker is assuming that the person agrees and thinks the same way. Or, they expect the other person to agree and think the same way, even if they don't actually.

2. トーフグのコウイチさんですよ。ね。  
You're Koichi from Tofugu, aren't you?

It's assumed that both people know that this person is Koichi from Tofugu. And, they are fishing for agreement. You're him, *right?*

3. 雪の日が続いて嫌になりますね。（ゆきのひがつづいていやになりますね。）

It's tough that snow days keep on coming, isn't it?

4. 満点を取ったらしいですね。（まんてんをとったらしいですね。）

I heard you got a perfect score, didn't you?

5. ここが壊れているね。（ここがこわれているね。）

This part is broken, isn't it.

6. 朝食はちゃんと食べてきたね？（ちょうしょくはちゃんと食べてきたね？）

You had breakfast, didn't you?

You can also combine this particle with よ, creating よね. You're not going to see ねよ though, so make sure you remember that order. Now the sentence is a fishing-for-agreement-on-shared-knowledge-exclamation!

7. 洗い物をするように言ったよね。（あらいものをするようにいったよね。）

Didn't I tell you to wash the dishes?

8. これが初めてでしたよね。（これがはじめてでしたよね。）

This is your first time, right?

9. チーズを買ってきてくれましたよね。（チーズをかってきてくれましたよね。）

You bought cheese, didn't you?

# { まで }

This particle tells you the limit on something. You get to know *until* which point something happens.

## a. Until

By “until” we mean a spatial or temporal limit.

You can have time related limits. Until 5:00pm. Until March. Until tonight.

1. 九時まで働きます。（くじまではたらきます。）  
I will work until 9pm.

2. 7月20日から8月31日まで夏休みです。（しちがつはつかからはちがつさんじゅういちにちまでなつやすみです。）  
Summer break is from July 20 to August 31.

You can also have limits on quantity of something. An amount of money, food, or haunted dolls that you keep in your home are all examples.

3. 一番の人から十二番の人まで入ってください。（いちばんのひとからじゅうにばんのひとまではいってください。）  
People with the numbers 1-12, please come in.

4. 年齢制限は三十歳までだ。（ねんれいせいげんはさんじゅっさいまでだ。）  
The age limit is until 30 years old.

You can have limits on location. Until you get to school. Until you reach America. Etcetera.

5. 家から駅まで毎日歩きます。（いえからえきまでまいにちあるきます。）  
I walk from my house to the station every day.

6. この道はどこまで続いているのかな。（このみちはどこまでつづいているのかな。）  
I wonder where this road leads to.

And finally, you can have limits on actions as well.

7. 宿題が終わるまで、ゲームをしてはいけません。(しゅくだいがおわるまで、ゲームをしてはいけません。)

Until you finish your homework, you can't play games.

8. ケーキを食べるまで、ケールを食べてはいけません。(ケーキをたべるまで、ケールをたべてはいけません。)

Until you eat your cake, you can't eat kale.

As you can see from the examples, one very common pattern is “\_\_\_から\_\_\_まで.” This is saying “from \_\_\_ until \_\_\_” in English. For example, 10歳から12歳まで means “from 10 to 12 years old.” And, 子供から大人まで means “from kids to adults.” With まで, you'll see this pattern surface *all the time*. So become familiar with it and look out for it. Good thing you know all about the particle から by this point in the ebook.

**One tricky note.** When used with time, まで is a little different from English. For example, if you say “I'll sleep until February” in English, that means the month of February is when you stop sleeping. But in Japanese, if you say 2月まで寝ます, that means you're going sleep through February, and stop sleeping when March starts and February ends. Something like this can become a terrible misunderstanding, so make sure you're careful!

**Also,** please be sure to read the までに chapter. It's so similar yet so different.

# { までに }

This particle (or combination of particles) is similar to *まで*, with one subtle but important change. *までに* is about time limits on actions.

## **a. Indicates a limit on an action**

Unlike *まで*, *までに* feels like it's putting a hard limit on the "until." Instead of "until," it's easier to think of *までに* as the word "by." As in "by 6:00pm" or "by the time you get to school."

1. 八時までに宿題を終わらせなさい。(はちじまでにしゅくだいをおわらせなさい。)  
Finish your homework by 8 o'clock.

This one is simple - it's a time limit. *By* 8 o'clock you do something, in this case it's "finish your homework."

2. 死ぬまでに一度来てみたかったんだ。(しぬまでにいちどきてみたかったんだ。)

I wanted to come here once before I die.

This one is a little bit tougher. Instead of a straight up dose of time, you are saying by the time you die. But, death is still a time limit, and you're doing something by the time you die.

Let's compare two similar sentences. One is *まで* and the other is *までに*.

3. 死ぬまでタバコを吸いたい。(しぬまでタバコをすいたい。)

Until I die I want to smoke (tobacco).

4. 死ぬまでにタバコを吸いたい。(しぬまでにタバコをすいたい。)

Before I die I want to smoke (tobacco).

See the difference? In (3) (*まで*), you keep smoking tobacco until you die. In (4) (*までに*) you want to smoke before the time limit of "your life coming to an end."

5. 明日の会議までにプレゼン資料を作らなくてははいけません。(あしたのかいぎまでにプレゼンしりょうをつくらなくてははいけません。)

I have to make a presentation document before the meeting starts tomorrow.

6. 今度までにできるようになります。(こんどまでにできるようになります。)

I will make myself able to do that come the next time.

7. 卒業までに告白します。(そつぎょうまでにこくはくします。)

I will make my love confession by graduation.

8. 三十歳になるまでに子どもが欲しい。(さんじゅっさいになるまでにこどもがほしい。)

I want a child by the time I turn 30.

9. 今までにない経験ができました。(いままでにないけいけんができました。)

I experienced something I've never experienced before now.

Compare these example sentences to if they only included **まで** and not **までに**. What would the differences be in translation?

# { より }

より is all about comparisons. You are comparing something or someone and then following the より with the criteria in which you're comparing those things with.

## **a. Something / Someone is being compared with Something / someone**

There's two main ways to use より, I'd say. One involves comparing the two things up front. The other involves comparing after.

A は B より \_\_\_\_\_. A is \_\_\_\_\_ more than B.

1. コーヒーはお茶より美味しいです。(コーヒーはおちゃよりおいしいです。)

Coffee tastes better than tea.

2. 日本語はどの言語より難しい。(にほんごはどのげんごよりむずかしい。)

Japanese is more difficult to learn than any other language.

3. 君は経理より営業に向いているんじゃないか。(きみはけいりよりえいぎょうにむいているんじゃないか。)

You are better at sales than book keeping, don't you think?

The other pattern switches things around, though the meaning on the English side doesn't change much.

Aより B は \_\_\_\_\_. More than A, B is \_\_\_\_\_.

4. コーヒーよりお茶が美味しいです。(コーヒーよりおちゃがおいしいです。)

More than coffee, tea tastes good / Tea tastes better than coffee.

5. 寒いより暑い方がいい。(さむいよりあついほうがいい。)

More than cold, hot is good. / Hot is better than cold.

6. ハンサムな男性より、おもしろい人の方が好みます。(ハンサムなだんせいより、おもしろいひとのほうがこのみです。)

I prefer a man who is funny to one that is handsome.

Let's look at more examples.

7. 今よりはマシだろう。(いまよりはマシだろう。)

It would be slightly better than now

8. 飛行機で行くより仕方がない。(ひこうきでいくよりしかたがない。)

There is no other way than to go by airplane.

9. こないだよりうんと上達しているね。(こないだよりうんとじょうたつしているね。)

You've improved a lot compared to last time.

10. あなたより背が高い人はこの世にいません。(あなたよりせがたかいひとはこのよにいません。)

There is no one in the world who is taller than you.

Try to change these sentences around so that they follow the first pattern or the second pattern (whichever one the sentence is *not*).

# { かい }

This is similar to か, but tends to be masculine speech (typically used by dudes). Also, it is usually used together with a yes-or-no question as if you're expecting a yes-or-no answer.

## **a. A masculine sentence-ender for yes-or-no questions**

There's not too much to say about this particle. If you know how か works (which you should at this point), and you remember that this is mainly used by guys for typically yes-or-no questions, then you know what you need to know.

1. あそこにはもう行って見たかい？（あそこにはもう行って見たかい？）

Have you gone there already?

2. お金は持ってるかい？（おかねはもってるかい？）

Do you have any money?

3. 夕飯は食べたかい？（ゆうはんは食べたかい？）

Have you eaten supper?

4. この株は買いたと思うかい？（このかぶはかいだとおもうかい？）

Do you think this stock is a buy?

5. お前の父さんの足も臭いかい？（おまえのおとうさんのあしもくさいかい？）

Are your father's feet stinky too?

6. このニュースを聞いたかい？（このニュースをきいたかい？）

Have you heard the news?

7. それで、キスはしたのかい？

So, you kissed her/him?

8. それはちょっと酷すぎやしないかい？（それはちょっとひどすぎやしないかい？）

Don't you think it's too cruel?

9. 手術は成功したのかい？（しゅじゅつはせいこうしたのかい？）

Was the surgery successful?

10. 学校は楽しいかい？（がっこうはたのしいかい？）

Do you enjoy school?

You'll notice that all these questions have possible yes-or-no answers.

Another thing to note is that *かい* tends to be somewhat casual. So don't use it with your boss or people you're not familiar with, as it'll come off as a bit juvenile or rude.

分かるかい？

# { や }

This is very similar to と, in that you use it to list things out. It might be good to review と (when used to list things) before reading this one.

**a. A particle that lists two or more items, but there may be more things on that list that aren't being listed.**

With と, everything you list is everything you list. There's nothing more. With や, there might be more that wasn't listed. It's like saying: "Go buy some salmon, chips, (and some other things)."

1. 僕は脚本や小説を書いています。(ぼくはきゃくほんやしょうせつをかいています。)  
I'm writing screenplays and novels (and other things)

When you use や, it's suggesting that there's something else, but maybe it's not important enough to say, or the listener can just guess it. If you replaced that や with a と, then you'd be saying that you *only* write screenplays and novels, nothing else.

2. ビールやワインならありますよ。  
There's beer and wine (and some other stuff).

Most likely, there are some other alcoholic beverages as well. In general, the things that are not on the list share a category (though sometimes a very, very broad category) with the things that *are* on the list.

3. サンドイッチやピザを用意します。(サンドイッチやピザをよういします。)  
I'll prepare some sandwiches and pizza (and some other stuff).

4. スマートフォンやタブレットはお持ちですか？(スマートフォンやタブレットはおもちですか？)  
Do you have a smartphone or tablet (or something else)

You can list off more than two things too, of course.

5. 赤や青や黄色の花が咲いていました。(あかやおおやきいろのはながさいていました。)

The red, blue, and yellow (and some other colors too) flowers were in bloom.

6. 私は演歌やJPOPやロックが好きです。(わたしはえんかやJPOPやロックがすきです。)

I like enka and JPOP and rock (and some other music types).

7. この辺りには熊や鹿、猪などが出ます。(このあたりにくまやしか、いのししなどがでます。)

Bears, deer, and boars (and some others) show up around here.

# { かしら }

Another sentence ending particle that has to do with gendered language.

## **a. A sentence-ending particle that shows the speaker wonders about something.**

かしら tends to be used by females, and falls within the category of “gendered language,” where you wouldn’t be grammatically incorrect to use this if you were a man, but you would sound a bit girly. When placed at the end of the sentence, it suggests that the speaker is wondering about something.

1. 真美さんは来るかしら。（まみさんはくるかしら。）  
I wonder if Mami-san will come.

2. うちの息子は試験に合格できるかしら。（うちのむすこはしげんにごうかくできるかしら。）  
I wonder if my son can pass the exam.

3. 手術は成功するかしら。（しゅじゅつはせいこうするかしら。）

I wonder if the surgery will be a success.

As you can see, with all of them the speaker is wondering about X. There is a hint right in the particle, in fact.

The か in かしら is like the question marker か. So, you already know there’s some question. The しら actually comes from 知らない（しらない), which means “to not know.” If you’re questioning something and you don’t know something, then you are *wondering* something. Everything just fell into place. How nice!

4. 電車に間に合うかしら。（でんしゃにまにあうかしら。）  
I wonder if I’ll catch the train.

5. ポテチは売ってるかしら。（ポテチはうってるかしら。）  
I wonder if (they) sell potato chips.

6. これは何かしら。（これはなにかしら。）  
I wonder what this is.

7. どうやって説明すればいいかしら。(どうやってせつめいすればいいかしら。)

I wonder how I should explain.

8. 彼のシャツにはどっちのネクタイがいいかしら。(かれのシャツにはどっちのネクタイがいいかしら。)

I wonder which necktie would look better with his shirt.

The male version of かしら? Ask and you shall receive.

It's coming up next:

# { かな }

Like かしら, but for guys. And girls. But mostly guys.

## **a. A sentence ending particle that expresses some doubt. Similar to “I wonder.”**

Like かしら, かな is usually translated as “I wonder,” and I think this fits well. It’s supposed to be on the male side of the gendered language tables, but females will use it too, in casual speech.

1. 彼はどんな話を書くかな。(かれはどんなはなしをかくかな。)

I wonder what kind of story he will write.

2. 日本がかつかな。(にほんがかつかな。)

I wonder if Japan will win.

3. 彼女、いつまでつづくかな。(かのじょ、いつまでつづくかな。)

I wonder how long she will last.

4. テントを張るのはここでいいかな。(テントをはるのはここでいいかな。)

I wonder if this is a fine place to put the tent up.

5. この鍋はどこにしまえばいいかな。(このなべはどこにしまえばいいかな。)

I wonder where I should put this pot.

6. そろそろ寝る時間かな。(そろそろねるじかんかな。)

I wonder if it’s time for bed.

7. 明日も雪かな?(あしたもゆきかな。)

I wonder if it will be snow again tomorrow.

8. 一人でできるかな。(ひとりでできるかな。)

I wonder if I can do it by myself.

9. いつアメリカに帰ろうかな。(いつアメリカにかえろうかな。)

I wonder when I should go back to America.

10. 戦争が起きるかな。（せんそうがおきるかな。）

I wonder if war will break out.

As you can see, they're all questions, generally directed at yourself. Things you wonder about. That being said, it can also be directed at people who are in your inner circle, so friends, relatives, etc.

# { くらい }

The first version of this particle (a) is more on the beginner level. The second one (b) is a little more complicated and might be worth coming back to later.

## a. An approximation

First you'll want something that can be measured by an amount. Usually something with numbers. Then you add くらい (or ぐらい) to it, and it suddenly becomes an approximation. "About \_\_\_\_" or "approximately \_\_\_\_."

1. 三歳くらいの男の子が迷子になっていました。(さんさいくらいのおとこのこがまいごになっていました。)  
A boy who was about three years old got lost.

三歳 (3 years old) becomes "about three years old" because of the くらい attached to it.

2. お水をコップ半分くらい注いでもらえますか。(おみずをコップはんぶんくらいそそいでもらえますか。)  
Can you fill this glass about half way up please?

It doesn't have to be a hard number. It can be any amount. In this case, "half" became "about half."

3. 身長は170センチくらいです。(しんちょうはひゃくななじゅっセンチくらいです。)  
(My) height is about 170cm.

4. 体重は、50キロくらいです。(たいじゅうは、ごじゅっキロくらいです。)  
(My) weight is about 50 kilograms.

5. 車が十台くらい事故に巻き込まれたようです。(くるまがじゅうだいくらいじこにまきこまれたようです。)  
I heard that approximately 10 cars were involved in the accident.

6. ホッチキスを五十個くらい発注しました。(ホッチキス  
をごじゅっごくらいはちゅうしました。

I ordered about 50 staplers.

You can also ask for a number as an approximation.

7. 煙草は一日何本くらい吸いますか？(たばこはいちにち  
なんぼんくらいすいますか？)

About how many cigarettes do you smoke a day?

8. 合計でいくらくらいになりそうですか。(ごうけいでいく  
らくらいになりそうですか。)

What would the total amount be, approximately?

One thing to note, you'll also see くらい as ぐらい. There isn't a good rule as to when you'd use each (it doesn't follow the normal rendaku rules you'd expect). So, just know that either could show up, but it's all the same.

### **b. A degree of a state, showing its extent**

The first くらい shows an approximation for something that can be measured. This くらい shows to what extent something is, well, something.

It'll be easier to show you.

1. 私は涙が出るくらい嬉しかった。(わたしはなみだがでる  
くらいうれしかった。)

I was so happy that I almost cried.

In this situation, you were so happy that you almost cried. The extent to which you were happy was such that you almost cried.

2. あの男のことは、顔も見たくないくらい嫌いです。(あの  
おとこのことは、かおもみたくないくらいきらいです。)

I hate him so much that I don't even want to see his face.

To the extent that you don't want to see (that man's) face, you hate him. Or, the degree to which you hate him is such that you don't want to see his face. Is this starting to make sense?

Try to figure out what part of the sentence is the extent or state, and what it is related to.

3. コーヒーを飲む時間もないくらい忙しい。(コーヒーをのむじかんもないくらいいいそがしい。)  
I'm so busy that I don't even have time to drink coffee.

4. この車は、ゾウが踏んでも壊れないくらい頑丈だ。(このくるまは、ゾウがふんでもこわれなくらいがんじょうだ。) This car is so strong that even an elephant couldn't crush it.

5. 指にタコができるくらい、一生懸命勉強しました。(ゆびにタコができるくらい、いっしょうけんめいべんきょうしました。)  
I studied so hard that I got a callus on my finger.

6. 泥まんじゅうでも食べちゃうくらい、お腹がすいているわ。(どろまんじゅうでもたべちゃうくらい、おなかがすいているわ。)  
I'm so hungry that I could eat a mud manjū.

7. その荷物は腰が抜けるくらい重いです。(そのにもつはこしがぬけるくらいおもいです。)  
This package is so heavy that I will probably pull my back out.

8. この問題は、へそで茶を沸かすくらい簡単だ。(このもんだいは、へそでちゃをわかすくらいかんたんだ。)  
This quiz is so easy that I could even boil tea on my belly button.

(note that this last one is some weird Japanese saying, when something is stupidly easy, you can say it's so easy that you could even boil tea in your belly button. Weird.)

9. この英語の本は、私が読めるくらい簡単です。(このえいごのほんは、わたしがよめるくらいかんたんです。)  
This English book is so easy that even I can read it.

When used in this fashion, it's possible that you're genuine in saying it's so easy you could read it, and you're happy about that. *Or*, you could be belittling the fact that it's so easy. It's going to come down to tone and context.

# { ごとに }

Don't confuse this with ことに, it's ごとに, and it's completely different.

## a. Something that takes place in regular succession

"Every" is a good word to use to translate this particle. "Every 5 minutes" or "every third building." Something is happening in some kind of predefined succession.

1. 私は5時間ごとにベーコンを食べた。(わたしはごじかんにごとにベーコンを食べた。)  
I ate bacon every 5 hours.

When you add ごとに to 5時間, it goes from "5 hours" to "every five hours." In regular succession, you are eating bacon every 5 hours.

2. この電車は10分ごとにきます。(このでんしゃはじゅうぷんごとにきます。)  
This train comes every 10 minutes.

10分ごとに is every 10 minutes. What is every 10 minutes? this train. You might see this at a train station, for example.

Try to figure out what is taking place in regular succession with the rest of these sentences.

3. 2月29日は、四年ごとに来る。(にがつにじゅうくにちは、よねんごとにくる。)  
February 29th comes every 4 years.

4. この電話は、1分ごとに20円かかります。(このでんわは、いっぷんごとににじゅうえんかかります。)  
This phone call will cost 20 yen per minute.

5. 最後に研究結果をグループごとに発表してもらいます。(さいごにけんきゅうけっかをグループごとにはっぴょうしてもらいます。)  
At the end, each group will make a presentation about the results of their study.

In this translation, you are saying "each" instead of "every," though it's really all the same. In regular succession, each group is doing the presentation.

6. 日本には、地域ごとに、異なる方言があります。（にほんには、ちいきごとに、ことなるほうげんがあります。）  
In Japan, each region has a different dialect.

Same with this one - instead of “every” we’re translating it as “each,” though “every” would make sense too.

7. 一泊ごとに違うホテルを予約することは可能です。（いっぱくごとにちがうホテルをよやくすることはかのうです。）  
It’s possible to book a different hotel for each night.

8. 三名様ごとに一名様分のお食事代金が無料になります。  
（さんめいさまごとにいちめいさまぶんのおしょくじだいきんがむりょうになります。）  
In groups of three or more, every third meal is free of charge.

9. 記事ごとに画像を変更したいんです。（きじごとにがぞうをへんこうしたいんです。）  
I want to change the image for each article.

10. メールアドレスごとにメールボックスを分けています。  
（メールアドレスごとにメールボックスをわけています。）  
I use different mailboxes for each mail address.

11. 赤ん坊に、3時間ごとにお乳をあげています。（あかんばんょうに、さんじかんごとにおちちをあげています。）  
I breastfeed my baby every three hours.

As you can see, there are a lot of good ways to use ごとに. Let’s take a look at the similar particle ずつ, and figure out how it differs.

# { ずつ }

This is somewhat similar to ごとに. Let's figure out how they differ.

## a. Equal divisions

Used after some kind of quantity of something, this shows the equal distribution of quantity. Often this is translated as "each" (as in: "you get two **each**") or "at a time" (as in: "I will eat one **at a time**").

1. お札を一枚ずつ数えた。(おさつをいちまいずつかぞえた。)

I counted the bills one by one.

2. 一人三百円ずつ払ってください。(ひとりさんびゃくえんずつはらってください。)

Please pay 300 yen each.

3. 毎日漢字を十個ずつ覚えています。(まいにちかんじをじゅっごずつおぼえています。)

I am memorizing 10 kanji every day.

The main difference between ずつ and ごとに is that ごとに has to do with something taking place. ずつ is the distribution of something, broken up into equal divisions. ごとに has to do with the distribution of the time / place that something is happening, but ずつ is just the distribution of the quantity.

Try to figure out what is being distributed in equal divisions with each sentence before looking at the translation.

4. 少しずつ上達している気がします。(すこしずつじょうたつしている気がします。)

I feel I'm improving little by little.

5. 子供達には、百万円ずつプレゼントしました。(こどもたちには、ひゃくまんえんずつプレゼントしました。)

I gave my children 1,000,000 yen each.

6. ペットボトルの水を一本ずつ配りました。(ペットボトルのみずをいっぽんずつくばりました。)

We handed out water bottles one by one.

7. 一日一本ずつ映画を観ています。(いちにちいっぽんずつ  
えいがをみています。)

I watch one movie every day.

8. 毎日50ページずつ本を読んでいます。(まいにちご  
じゅっページずつほんをよんでいます。)

I am reading 50 pages of a book every day.

# { しか }

This is a really useful particle, though it's very difficult to explain. I'll try anyways.

## a. Negates everything except which precedes it

When you place it after a noun, it means something like "only \_\_\_\_." It's confusing though, because it is always followed by a negative. It's like saying "only \_\_\_\_ is not \_\_\_\_."

1. もうそうするしかないでしょう。  
Now there's nothing to do but that.

そうする is "to do (that)." しかない is しか plus the negative (ない). You add the negative to the thing that しか is attached to, and you have "nothing to do (but that).

2. アイスティーしか無いんですが、いいですか？（アイスティーしかないんですが、いいですか？）  
I have nothing but ice tea, is that okay?

In this case, you only have ice tea, because you have nothing but ice tea.

3. 日本語しか話せません。（にほんごしかはなせません。）  
I can only speak Japanese.

Or, I can speak nothing but Japanese. Of course, you can switch 日本語 out with any language. Try it with your own native language to say "I can speak nothing but \_\_\_\_."

4. 英語しかはなせません。（えいごしかはなせません。）  
I can only speak English.

That's a good one if you are visiting Japan and don't want to learn anything else.

5. 奈良にしか住んだことがありません。（ならにしかすんだことがありません。）  
I have only lived in Nara.

Or, I have not lived anywhere but Nara.

6. 耕一くんとしか、遊びません。（こういちくんとしか、あそびません。）

I play with no one but Koichi-kun.

You have noticed from the last couple examples that し  
か can follow another particle too. That's A-okay!

7. ミステリー小説しか読みません。（ミステリーしょうせつ  
しかよみません。）

I read nothing but mystery novels.

8. 大卒しか採用しません。（だいそつしかさいようしませ  
ん。）

We only hire those who have graduated from university.

9. 私は野菜しか食べません。（わたしはやさいしかたべませ  
ん。）

I eat nothing but vegetables.

10. 私には、仕事しかありません。（わたしには、しごとしか  
ありません。）

I have nothing but work.

Now that that's over, let's next look at another particle  
that is somewhat similar: だけ.

# { だけ }

This is kind of similar to *しか*, but where *しか* is kind of like a double negative, *だけ* is more straight forward.

## a. A limit on something that is growing.

Usually translated as “only” or “just” or even “merely.”

There’s an amount, and now it is limited with *だけ*.

Although the two are somewhat different, most people at a beginner or intermediate level will get more use out of *だけ* compared to *しか*.

1. アニメは、ディズニーだけ見ます。(アニメは、ディズニーだけ見ます。)

The only anime I watch is Disney.

Of anime, it’s *ディズニーだけ* that you watch. Only Disney.

2. 私だけ出席しました。(わたしだけしゅっせきしました。)

Only I attended.

*私だけ* = only I, or only me. What was the thing that only I did? It was attend the thing.

3. 彼だけ助かりました。(かれだけたすかりました。)

Nobody but him was saved.

*彼だけ* = only him. What happened to only him? He was saved.

As you can see, *だけ* is very useful to place after all kinds of nouns.

You can also place a particle before the *だけ* too.

4. 君にだけ秘密を打ち明けるよ。(きみにだけひみつをうちあけるよ。)

With you only I will confide my secret.

Now it’s “to you only” instead of just “you only.” When you put the particle before the *だけ* it has a higher sense of exclusiveness. I know that both of the translations

would be “only you” but with 君にだけ it really feels like it’s really is only with you. You’re special!

Here are some more examples. Try to figure out what is “\_\_\_\_\_ only” and what happens to “\_\_\_\_\_ only.”

5. あなただけは信じてくれると思っていたのに。（あなただけはしんじてくれるとおもっていたのに。）  
I thought only you would trust me.

6. 私に分かることは、これだけです。（わたしにわかることは、これだけです。）  
The only thing I understand is this.

7. お湯を注げば、あとは三分待つだけです。（おゆをそそげば、あとはさんぷんまつだけです。）  
After pouring the hot water, the only thing left is to wait for three minutes.

8. 彼女だけが僕の味方だ。（かのじょだけがぼくのみかただ。）  
Only she is my ally.

# { だい }

This particle is similar to か or かい. Be sure to take a look at those before reading this one to complete the particle question marking Triforce.

## a. A sentence ender which indicates a wh-question

Kind of like か, だい marks a question. But, it's for wh-questions (what, who, where, etc). It's also a particle that tends to be used by males in male speech.

1. これは一体何なんだい？（これはいったいなんだい？）  
What the heck is this?

The WH-question comes from “**what**”.

2. どこへ行ってたんだい？（どこへいったんだい？）  
Where the heck were you?

The WH-question comes from **where**.

3. どの子が一番ハンサムだい。（どのこがいちばんハンサムだい。）

Which one is the most handsome?

The WH-question comes from **which**.

4. 君は誰だい？（きみはだれだい？）

Who the heck are you?

The WH-question comes from **who**.

As you can see we were a little liberal with the translations (“where the *heck* are you”). This isn't *literally* what the sentence is saying, but it gives off the same feeling and vibe. More casual, more abrasive, more dude-full.

Here's some more random examples.

5. どこに行けば安全だい？（どこにいけばあんぜんだい？） Where would be safe to go?

6. これでどうだい？  
How about this?

Maybe you noticed this, but だい doesn't follow a verb, just nouns and na-adjectives. That being said, it does follow verbs sometimes, but the verb has ん added to it. When you add ん to a verb, it becomes のです, which is kind of like turning a verb into a noun. It has been *nominalized*.

Check out these examples.

7. 要するに何が言いたいんだい？（ようするになにが言いたいんだい？）

If there's a point to this, please get to it.

8. どうやって日本語を勉強してるんだい？（どうやってにほんごをべんきょうしてるんだい？）

How do you study Japanese?

9. どちらを選んだんだい？（どちらをえらんだんだい？）

Which one did you choose?

# { っ て }

There are two っ て particles, and both come down to casual speech (but are useful!).

## a. Introduces a topic

It's almost like saying "speaking of \_\_\_\_\_" + the thing you want to say about it. You are introducing \_\_\_\_\_ as a topic that you're talking about.

1. ふるさと納税って、本当にお得なの？ (ふるさとのうぜいって、ほんとうにおとくなの?)  
Is a hometown tax really worth it?

The topic is ふるさと納税って, and in this sentence you are introducing it. Then, you're saying something about it (in this case, "is it really worth it?")

2. 結婚って、やっぱりいいもの？ (けっこんって、やっぱりいいもの?)  
Is marriage a good thing in the end?

The topic you're introducing is the idea of "marriage."  
You're wondering if it's actually a good thing or not.

3. あなたって、本当に嘘が上手ね。(あなたって、ほんとうにうそがじょうずね。)  
You are such a good liar.

The topic being introduced is "you" and the thing you're saying about "you" is that "you are a good liar."

4. バスケって、こんなにおもしろかったんだ。  
So basketball was this much fun?

5. 数学って、マジつまんない。(すうがくって、マジつまんない。)  
Mathematics is really boring.

You've maybe noticed that this っ て is kind of like the particle は, which marks a topic. They are quite similar, though っ て is going to be more casual and emotive.

Here are more examples:

6. 君って、彼氏いるの？（きみって、かれしいるの？）  
Do you have a boyfriend?

7. 子どもって、素直だけど残酷だよな。（こどもって、すなおだけどざんこくだよな。）  
Children are innocent and cruel.

8. 人生って、どうしてうまくいかないんだろう。（じんせいってどうしてうまくいかないんだろう。）  
Why doesn't the life go well?

9. 昌美って、ちょっと変わってるよね。（まさみってちょっとかわってるよね。）  
Masami is a bit strange.

10. 省吾って、お医者さんなの？（しょうごって、おいしゃさんなの？）  
Is Shogo a doctor?

ました。（“A cat!” (he) said.）. って is more casual / colloquial, though, compared to the particle と.

One important thing to know about this particle is that it doesn't have to have the “said” verb in it. If there is no verb after the って, the “said” part is assumed. If the verb is something else you definitely need to include it though.

1. 春子、今日は遅くなるって。（はるこ、きょうはおそくなるって。）  
Haruko said she will be late today.

2. アイツ、部活辞めるんだって。（アイツ、ぶかつやめるんだって。）  
He said he will quit the club activity.

3. 美咲、アメリカに留学するんだって。（みさき、アメリカにりゅうがくするんだって。）  
Misaki said she will got to America to study.

### **b. A casual quotation marker**

This is a shortened version of the particle と, when と is used to quote something. For example: 「ねこ！」と言

4. 辰雄、幼稚園に行かないって。(たつお、ようちえんにいかないって。)

Tatsuo said he won't go to the kindergarten.

5. 樋口さん、パート始めたんだって。(ひぐちさん、パートはじめたんだって。)

Ms. Higuchi said she started a part-time job.

With the right context, って can be used for hearsay too. It's like saying "Someone said that..." You're not quoting anyone specific, but you're quoting something you heard.

6. 杉原さん、宝くじが当たったんだって。(すぎはらさん、たからくじがあたったんだって。)

I heard Mr. Sugihara won the lottery.

7. 多田さん、東京に転勤になったんだって。(たださん、とうきょうにてんきんになったんだって。)

I heard Mr. Tada was transferred to Tokyo.

8. あそこの家族、借金で夜逃げだって。(あそこのかぞく、しゃっきんでよにげだって。)

I heard that that family ran away at night because of the debt.

9. あの会社、倒産するんだって。(あのかいしゃ、とうさんするんだって。)

I heard that that company will go on bankrupt.

10. 遠藤、お笑い芸人になったんだって。(えんどう、おわらいげいにんになったんだって。)

I heard that Endo became a comedian.

# { でも }

## a. Even

でも is the て-form of です (で) plus the particle も.  
Trying to break the particle down this way would get confusing, though. Just think of it as “even.” As in:

1. このショットはプロゴルファーでも難しい。(このショットはプロゴルファーでもむずかしい。)  
This shot is difficult even for a professional golfer.

2. こんな問題、ネイティブ・スピーカーでも解けないよ。(こんなもんだい、ネイティブ・スピーカーでもとけないよ。)  
This kind of question won't be answered even by a native speaker.

3. 専門家でも意見が分かれる。(せんもんかでもいけんがわかれる。)  
There are divergent opinions even by a number of experts.

4. いくらお前でも、ご飯ぐらい炊けるだろう。(いくらおまえでも、ごはんぐらいたけるだろう。)  
Even you can make rice, can't you?

5. 子どもでもそれくらいのことはできるぜ。(こどもでもそれくらいのことはできるぜ。)  
Even a child can do such a thing.

6. どんな危険な状況でも、俺がお前を守ってみせる。(どんなきけんなじょうきょうでも、おれがおまえをまもってみせる。)  
I will protect you even in such a dangerous situation.

7. 温厚な飼い犬でも、噛むことはある。(おんこうなかいいぬでも、かむことはある。)  
Even a calm pet dog sometimes bites.

8. 医者でも、病気になることはある。(いしゃでも、びょうきになることはある。)  
Even a doctor becomes sick.

This particle is also often combined with WH-words.  
When this happens, it changes that WH-word into the  
“any” version of it.

何 → 何でも → Anything  
誰 → 誰でも → Anyone  
どこ → どこでも → Anywhere  
Etcetera.

So you’ll see things like:

9. だれでもできるよ！  
Anyone can do it!

10. なんでもいいですよ。  
Anything is fine.

11. どこでもドア！  
Anywhere door!

That last one is the door that Doraemon makes that can  
take them anywhere. Too imba if you ask me.

# { な }

## a. Negative marker

This essentially means “don’t do.” It’s a piece of masculine speech that’s put after a verb to negate it. You’re also giving an order / asking someone not to do that thing.

It’s all in the examples:

1. 飲んだら乗るな！ (のんだらのるな！)

Don't drive if you drink!

2. あいつの言うことを信じるな！ (あいつのいうことをしんじるな！)

Don't trust what he says!

3. 授業中に居眠りするな！ (じゅぎょうちゅうにいねむりするな！)

Don't fell asleep in the class!

4. 人の物を勝手に触るな！ (ひとのものをかってにさわるな！)

Don't touch people's things as you please.

5. 過ぎたことは気にするな！ (すぎたことはきにするな！)

Don't worry about the past!

It is fairly casual though. You wouldn't want to use this with someone fancy / equal to or above you in social rank, so save it for when you're a little angry or wanting to look down on someone a little bit. Or with family or friends.

6. 自分を安売りするな！ (じぶんをやすうりするな！)

Don't sell yourself short.

7. ギャンブルはするな！

Don't gamble!

8. 馬鹿にするな！ (ばかにするな！)

Don't look down on me.

9. 油断するな！（ゆだんするな！）

Don't let your guard down.

10. 言い訳するな！（いいわけするな！）

Don't excuse!

# { なあ }

Don't get this confused with な (though sometimes なあ can be written as な, or なあ). な is like some kind of order (don't smoke!), なあ is on the other side of the spectrum.

## a. Exclamatory. Wonder.

This one is really hard to explain and translate. It gives a sentence an exclamatory tone. Sometimes it is searching for agreement from the person you're talking to. Other times it is expressing a sense of wonder. It's a lot like ね in a lot of ways, but ね is a little too far on the "searching for agreement" side of things. I think it's best to just look through a lot of sentences. You'll see what I mean. The translations are more like "the feeling of the sentence" instead of a literal translation, because なあ is kind of untranslatable.

1. 今日は本当にあったかいなあ！（きょうはほんとうにあったかいなあ！）

It's really warm today, isn't it!

2. お前ってマジでいいやつだよなあ！（おまえってマジでいいやつだよなあ！）

You are such a nice person, aren't you!

3. トーフグってほんと役に立つよなあ！（トーフグってほんとやくにたつよなあ！）

Tofugu is super useful!

These first three lean towards "searching for agreement." It's really warm today, isn't it? I guess, if you say so.

Number 3 could also have been an exclamation though. It just depends on the context.

4. 瞳さんって可愛いなあ！（ひとみさんってかわいいなあ！）

Hitomi is so pretty!

This one leans toward "a sense of wonderment." Wow, that Hitomi, so pretty.

5. 毎日暇だよなあ！（まいにちひまだよなあ！）

I'm bored every day!

6. あー、海に行きてえなあ！（あー、うみにいきてえなあ！）

Aww, I want to go to the sea!

7. このゲームはおもしろいなあ！

This game is so fun!

8. 日本語って難しいなあ！（にほんごってむずかしいなあ！）

Japanese is very difficult!

Did you catch that? We used って, that particle you just learned.

9. 料理って楽しいなあ！（りょうりってたのしいなあ！）

Cooking is very fun!

10. 人生って不公平だよなあ！（じんせいってふこうへいだよなあ！）

Life is unfair!

These last six examples are more exclamatory. You're making an exclamation. That being said, they could lean this way or that depending on the context.

なあ is supposedly masculine speech, though I think more and more girls are using it nowadays. Soon I it won't be masculine speech anymore. Just plain neutral. But, female speech does have a similar particle: かな. It shares that feeling of wonderment, but it also has that "searching for agreement" thing going for it.

# { など }

## a. Etcetera and so on

If you put this onto the end of a list (even a list of one thing), it's like you're saying "etcetera" or "and so on" or just plain saying that there are other things on that list but you're not going to list them. The listener will have to guess what those things are via context.

1. サッカーやラグビーなどのスポーツが好きです。(サッカーやラグビーなどのスポーツがすきです。)  
I like sports like soccer and rugby (among other things).

I like soccer, I like rugby... but, I don't like only those things, there are other things that I like too.

2. ニュースは新聞やテレビなどで確認します。(ニュースはしんぶんやテレビなどでかくにんします。)  
I check the news on newspapers and TV (among other things).

You get your news from other sources as well, but these are probably the main ones. These are the ones worth mentioning. Everything else is just など.

3. イタリアでは、ローマやフィレンツェなどに行ったことがあります。(イタリアでは、ローマやフィレンツェなどにいったことがあります。)  
In Italy, I've been Rome and Firenze (among other places).

You went to other cities besides Rome and Firenze, but they're not worth listing. You get the picture.

4. 彼女の部屋には、服や雑誌などが散らかっていました。(かのじょのへやには、ふくやざっしなどがちらかっていました。)  
Her room was scattered with clothes and magazines (among other things).

5. このカレーには、玉葱や人参などの野菜が入っています。(このカレーには、たまねぎやにんじんなどのやさいがはいっています。)  
In this curry, there are vegetables such as onions and carrots (among other things).

6. ペンやノートなどを買うつもりです。(ペンやノートなどをかうつもりです。)

I'll buy pens and notes (among other things).

7. この水族館には、鯨や鯨などがいます。(この水族館には、さめやくじらなどがいます。)

In this aquariums, there are sharks and whales (among other things).

You may have noticed, all of these lists use や instead of と. Why is that? Because a や list doesn't list everything (there are other things not being listed). A と list lists everything. Because we're using など, all the sentences have lists that are incomplete, so you have to use や.

8. 休みの日は、読書や映画鑑賞などをしています。(やすみのひは、どくしょやえいがかんしょうなどをしています。)

On my days off, I read and watch movies (among other things).

9. フローチャートやUMLなど様々な図を作成することができます。(フローチャートやUMLなどさまざまな図をさくせいすることができます。)

You can make flowcharts and UML and various other charts.

10. このノートパソコンは、家や会社などで使います。(このノートパソコンは、いえやかいしゃなどでつかいます。)

I use this laptop at home and work (among other places).

# { ばかり }

## a. The only thing or action that exists

Whatever ばかり comes after, it is suggesting that that's the only thing or action that exists. But, it's not as simple as that, and actually somewhat flexible in its variety. There are multiple ways to use ばかり. Let's break them down.

With nouns and adjectives, you know that thing is only that thing. べんりばかり means "only convenient" (and nothing else).

1. ここにいるのはオタクばかりだよ。  
People here are all otakus.

オタクばかり = only otaku. So that means there are only otaku here.

2. 毎日ラーメンばかり食べています。(まいにちラーメンばかり食べています。)

I only eat ramen every day.

ラーメンばかり = only ramen. That's all you eat every day. You should probably go get a colonoscopy.

3. いつもあなたのことばかり考えています。(いつもあなたのことばかりかんがえています。)

I always think about you.

あなたのことばかり = only things about you

4. 愚痴ばかり言うのはよくないよ。(ぐちばかりいうのはよくないよ。)

It's not good to complain all the time.

ぐちばかり = only complaints.

Let's look at some adjectives too. Same sort of deal.

5. 彼は背が高いばかりだ。(かれはせがたかいばかりだ。)  
(The only good thing about him) is that he's tall.

When ばかり is used with a past tense verb, it means that that thing just happened, but there wasn't much time that has passed between when that thing happened and now (when you're saying the words).

6. 私は三十歳になったばかりです。(わたしはさんじゅっさいになったばかりです。)  
I just turned 30 years old.

7. 僕は髭を剃ったばかりです。(ぼくはひげをそったばかりです。)  
I just cut my facial hair.

8. そのペンキは塗ったばかりです。(そのペンキはぬったばかりです。)  
That paint was just applied.

Then, when you add ばかり to て-form, you're saying that's all that's happening. 食べてばかり means "only eating."

9. あの子は仕事してばかりいる。(あのこはしごととしてばかりいる。)

The only thing she is doing is working.

10. 麗華は鏡を見てばかりいる。(れいかはかがみをみてばかりいる。)

All Reika does is look in the mirror.

Note that there is something different about this pattern compared to the others. You have to follow ばかり with いる or います to make it work.

11. Facebookを見てばかりいるのは時間の無駄です。(Facebookをみてばかりいるのはじかんのむだです。)  
Looking at Facebook all the time is a waste of time.

Finally, if you add ばかり to a present tense verb, you could be saying that that's all there is to something:

12. いい仕事につくばかりが人生ではありません。(いいしごとにつくばかりがじんせいではありません。)  
Obtaining a good job is not the only thing in life.

Or, you're saying that something is in a ready state. The only action that exists is to do what is described in that verb. 食べるばかり (ready to eat).

13. あとはデザートを食べるばかりです。(あとはデザートを食べるばかりです。)

All that's left is to eat dessert.

When ばかり is placed after an amount, it becomes "about \_\_\_\_." If this seems weird then good, I'm not the only one thinking that.

14. 車を三台ばかり用意してくれないか。(くるまをさんだいばかりよういしてくれないか。)

Could you please make arrangements for around three cars?

15. アルバイトが二人ばかり足りないんだ。(アルバイトがふたりばかりたりないんだ。)

We're short by about two people for the part time job.

16. 俺に二時間ばかりくれないか？(おれににじかんばかりくれないか？)

Could you give me around two hours?

As you can see, there's a lot of ways to use ばかり. So, make sure you get familiar with them all. In general, though, it's going to be mostly the definition that involves only one action or thing existing, with a couple exceptions.

# { ほど }

## a. to the extent of / as much as

This particle shows the extent to which something happens or exists. For example “I ate so much that I threw up” or “I ran so much that I fell over.” You have the extent of something, and you have what happens because you’ve reached that state.

これほど面白い映画は観たことがない。(これほどおもしろいえいがはみたことがない。)

I've never seen such an interesting movie.

これほど = “as much as this.” Or “to this extent.” When you add 面白い映画を観たことがない to it, you are saying that you haven't seen this interesting of a movie.

Another way to say it: To “this extent” (これほど), you haven't seen a movie this interesting.

2. ベーコンほど美味しいものはない。(ベーコンほどおいしいものはない。)

There is nothing that tastes better than bacon.

To the extent of bacon \_\_\_\_\_. There is nothing that tastes good to the extent that bacon tastes good.

Try to break up the next few sentences. One part is the extent, and the other part is the information about that extent.

3. あのモデルは言うほど可愛くない。(あのモデルはいうほどかわいくない。)

That model is not as cute as people say.

As much as people say, that model is not (that) cute.

4. 死ぬほど嬉しかった。(しぬほどうれしかった。)

I was so happy that I could die.

To the extent that I would die, I was happy. Not literally, of course. This is just something people might say when they're really happy. Actually, I hear it quite a bit, so it might be worth depositing into your little memory bank.

5. このカレーは、賞をとるほど素晴らしい。(このカレーは、しょうをとるほどすばらしい。)  
The curry of this restaurant is so wonderful it could get an award.

賞をとるほど = to the extent that it could get an award  
素晴らしい = it is wonderful.

6. ブラピほどかっこいい人はいない。(ブラピほどかっこいいひとはいない。)  
Nobody is cooler than Brad Pitt.

7. このパソコンは驚くほど安い。(このパソコンはおどろくほどやすい。)  
This computer is astonishingly cheap.

8. 私は妹ほど細くない。(わたしはいもうとほどほそくない。)  
I'm not as skinny as my younger sister.

9. 弟はまだ父ほどハゲていない。(おとうとはまだちちほどハゲていない。)  
My younger brother isn't as bald as our dad yet.

10. 文章を書くことは思ったほど簡単ではない。(ぶんしょうをかくことはおもったほどかんたんではない。)  
Writing is not as easy as I thought it would be.

The pattern is really quite simple. If these sentences are too complicated you can shorten it up for practice.

\_\_\_\_\_ほど\_\_\_\_\_

馬を食べられるほど腹が減った → So hungry I could eat a horse.

早いほどいい → Faster is good / faster is better

泥が飲めるほど喉が渴いた → I'm so thirsty I could drink mud.

Play around with \_\_\_\_\_ほど\_\_\_\_\_ and see what you can come up with on your own.

# { わ }

## **a. A sentence ender particle that softens a statement**

Usually used by female speakers, this sentence ender asserts something... but not very assertively. In fact, the わ serves to soften any assertiveness to make it feel kinder and nicer. So, think of it as a *very weak* assertion.

1. 彼と別れるわ。(かれとわかれるわ。)  
I'll break up with him.

You're making the assertion that you will break up with him. With that わ there it sounds a little less scary, though still assertive.

2. 大阪に引っ越すわ。(おおさかにひっこすわ。)  
I'll move to Osaka.

3. 宇宙人の仕業に違いないわ。(うちゅうじんのしわざにちがいないわ。)  
This must be done by an alien.

4. この曲は人気が出ると思うわ。(このきょくはにんきが出るとおもわわ。)

I think this song will be popular.

5. この面接は結構うまくいったと思うわ。(このめんせつはけっこううまくいったとおもわわ。)

I think this interview went well.

6. 私は反対だわ。(わたしははんたいだわ。)

I disagree.

7. そろそろ洗い物をする時間だわ。(そろそろあらいものをするじかんだわ。)

It's about time to do the dishes.

8. 犯人はまだこの辺りに潜んでいると思うわ。(はんにはまだこのあたりにひそんでいるとおもわわ。)

I think that the suspect is still around here.

9. 油っこいものは食べたくないわ。(あぶらっこいものは食べたくないわ。)

I don't want to eat something oily.

10. あなたの言うことは信じられないわ。(あなたのいうことは信じられないわ。)  
I can't believe the things you say.

All of these are assertions of some kind. It's hard to tell because it's text and we don't have the context or tone of voice, but you can assume that they are weak-to-medium level assertions. In person the feeling of these sentences becomes more clear. For now, just imagine it.

# {こそ}

## a. Emphasizes a word or phrase

That's not much of a description, huh? You'll see what I mean in the examples, but it's kind of like saying "\_\_\_ in particular," as in "this book, in particular (こそ), is good." The thing that *こそ* comes after is being emphasized as being almost special or unique in some way.

1. こんな時こそ、この本を読むべきだ。(こんなときこそ、この本をよむべきだ。)

It is time when you should read this book.

こんな時こそ = this time in particular. It emphasizes this phrase. Really if you add "in particular" to whatever *こそ* is attached to it usually works out pretty well, though sometimes gets a little awkward.

2. 寒い日こそ、鍋がおいしい。(さむいひこそ、なべがおいしい。)

Especially on a cold day, hot pot tastes good.

寒い日こそ = "especially on cold days." Or, "on cold days in particular." The emphasis is on that part that the *こそ* is attached to.

3. 彼がいたからこそ、私達はここまでこれたのだ。(かれがいたからこそ、わたしたちはここまでこれたのだ。)

Because he was with us, we were able to come this far.

The important part was him being here. If he wasn't, the second part of the sentence wouldn't be possible. That's why the emphasis is placed on that first part.

4. 次こそは絶対に成功してみせる。(つぎこそはぜったいにせいこうしてみせる。)

I'll definitely succeed next time.

Next time. Especially next time. I am going to succeed.

5. 難しいからこそ、やる気が出るのだ。(むずかしいからこそ、やるきがでるのだ。)

Since it's difficult, I get motivated.

Because it's difficult. That part in particular is why I get motivated.

6. あなたの方こそ、謝ったらどうなの？（あなたのほうこそ、あやまったらどうなの？）

Instead of me, you should apologize me.

The emphasis is being put back on you. You in particular should be the one apologizing.

7. こちらこそ、本当に有難うございます。（こちらこそ、ほんとうにありがとうございます。）

I am the one who should be thanking you.

This is a good set phrase (こちらこそ). It's like saying "no, it's me (who should \_\_\_\_)." It comes up a lot, but mostly comes up with saying you should be the one doing the thanking.

こそ is one of those Japanese words that is difficult to translate in a way that doesn't come out sounding weird. But, as long as you understand the *feeling* behind こそ, that's what's important.

# { さ }

## **a. A sentence ender that turns a phrase into an assertion.**

This is typically used in male speech. It makes the phrase into an assertion, though how much assertion depends on context and how you say it. The amount of assertion really ranges from very not assertive to quite assertive, which can't be shown very well in text format.

1. きっと大丈夫さ。(きっとだいじょうぶさ。)  
You'll be just fine.

Not much to explain here. It's just an assertion.

2. 問題ないさ。(もんだいがないさ。)  
No problem.

Same with this one.

3. 心配ないさ。(しんぱいがないさ。)  
Don't worry about it.

And this one.

4. 彼ならうまくやれるさ。(かれならうまくやれるさ。)  
He'll do well.

Okay, I'm going to stop writing things between the examples. You get the picture, these are assertions. It's just something you use at the end of a sentence, and it sounds good because you sound more assertive.

5. このプロジェクトはきっと成功するさ。(このプロジェクトはきっとせいこうするさ。)  
This project will surely succeed.

6. こんなこと、できっこないに決まっているさ。(こんなこと、できっこないにきまっているさ。)  
I'm pretty sure I can't do such a thing.

7. どうして母さんにあんなこと言ったのさ?(どうしてかあさんにあんなこといったのさ?)  
Why did you tell mom such a thing?

8. あいつも大人になったのさ。(あいつもおとなになったのさ。)

That kiddo became an adult too.

9. 車の影に隠れて見えなかったのさ。(くるまのかげにかくれて見えなかったのさ。)

I couldn't see it because it hiding in the car's shadow.

10. その時間は風呂に入ってたから電話に出れなかったのさ。(そのじかんはふろにはいったからでんわにでれなかったのさ。)

I couldn't answer the phone because I was taking a bath.

flexibility in assertiveness is what makes this particle difficult to put your finger on. For now just know that this range exists.

Note that さ is going to be used in informal speech, so don't use it around anyone you don't really know / around people who are higher on the pecking order than you are.

The range on the amount of assertion being asserted is hard to calculate as well. But, if someone's being really angry voiced and loud, you can probably guess they are trying to be extra assertive. That being said, if they have a really soft voice and are looking off into the distance, maybe they're not being that assertive at all. The

# { ぞ }

## **a. A sentence ender particle that emphasizes the emotion in the phrase.**

Typically used by males, the emotion that is being emphasized depends on the emotion that's being placed into the phrase.

1. あっちの方に逃げたぞ！（あっちのほうににげたぞ！）  
He ran away to over there!

Perhaps this is the emotion of "let's get that fool!"

2. 全部お前の責任だぞ！（ぜんぶおまえのせきにんだぞ！）  
Everything is your responsibility!

3. だから俺はやめとけと言ったはずだぞ！（だからおれはやめとけと言ったはずだぞ！）  
That's why I told you to stop!

Last couple emphasize the anger in the phrase.

4. 旅に出るぞ！（たびにでるぞ！）  
We're going on a trip!

Hope, joy, excitement!

5. タクシーが来たぞ！（タクシーがきたぞ！）  
The taxi came over!

Excitement! Relief! (Depends on the context!)

6. ここの寿司はうまいぞ！（ここのすしはうまいぞ！）  
The sushi of this restaurant is delicious!

So good! So tasty! So happy!

7. 先生に見られたらやばいぞ！（せんせいにみられたらやばいぞ！）  
It would be troublesome if a teacher saw us!

Worry.

8. この荷物は結構重いぞ！（このにもつはけっこうおもいぞ！）

This package is quite heavy!

Distress.

9. 誰か来たぞ！（だれかきたぞ！）

Someone is coming!

Uh oh.

10. 今回で、絶対に絶対に最後だぞ！（こんかいで、ぜったいにぜったいにさいごだぞ！）

This is definitely the last time!

Hrmm.

It's going to be used in informal speech, so be careful not to use it in the wrong places and with the wrong people.

If you're a dude, and you want to emphasize the emotion you're trying to project, throw a ぞ onto the end of your sentence. Everyone will think you're super cool.

## Thanks for reading!

I hope this was helpful. If you can go through all the example sentences, break them down, and understand them, you'll definitely come out with a lot more knowledge of Japanese particles. The first step is understanding how they work. From there you can get to a point where you can actually use them.

### More Resources:

If you are interested in grammar and particles, and want some more, there are some neat books and resources out there. Here's a few that I used as a reference for this ebook.

- [助詞・助動詞の辞典 \(in Japanese\)](#)
- [A Dictionary of Basic Japanese Grammar](#)
- [Making Sense Of Japanese](#)
- [Japanese Sentence Patterns for Effective Communication](#)
- [A Dictionary of Japanese Particles](#)
- [日本人のための日本語文法入門 \(in Japanese\)](#)
- [基礎日本語文法 \(in Japanese\)](#)
- [東京外国語大学言語モジュール \(in Japanese\)](#)
- [Wikipedia: Japanese Particles](#)

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**TextFugu:** An online Japanese textbook for self-learners.

**Recommended Japanese Resources:** A list of our favorite Japanese resources, all in one place.

**4500 Japanese Sentences:** Translate these sentences, level up your Japanese.