

JAPANESE VERBS

SAYING WHAT YOU MEAN

Tim R. Matheson

Table of Contents

Japanese Verbs

1. The Plain Form	1
2. <i>Yodan</i> Verbs with Base 2 + <i>masu</i>	4
3. <i>Ichidan</i> Verbs with Base 2 + <i>masu</i>	5
4. Base 2 + <i>masen</i>	6
5. Base 2 + <i>mashita</i>	8
6. Base 2 + <i>masen deshita</i>	9
7. <i>desu</i> , <i>iru</i> and <i>aru</i>	10
8. Base 2 + <i>tai</i>	15
9. Base 2 + <i>mashou</i>	18
10. Base 2 + <i>nasai</i>	19
11. Irregular Verbs <i>kuru</i> and <i>suru</i>	21
12. Forming Questions with <i>ka</i>	23
13. Base 2 + <i>ni iku</i> / <i>ni kuru</i>	24
14. Base 2 + <i>nikui</i> / <i>yasui</i>	26
15. Base 2 + <i>sugiru</i>	28
16. Base 2 + <i>nagara</i>	29
17. Base 1 + <i>nai</i> — The Plain Negative Form	30
18. Base 1 + <i>nai deshou</i>	34
19. Base 1 + <i>nakatta</i>	35
20. Base 1 + <i>nakereba</i>	36
21. Base 1 + <i>nakereba narimasen</i>	37
22. Base 1 + <i>seru</i> / <i>saseru</i>	39
23. Base 1 + <i>zu ni</i>	43
24. Base 3 + <i>deshou</i>	44
25. Base 3 + <i>hazu</i>	47
26. Base 3 + <i>hou ga ii</i>	48
27. Base 3 + <i>ka dou ka</i>	50
28. Base 3 + <i>kamo shiremasen</i>	51
29. Base 3 + <i>kara</i>	54
30. Base 3 + <i>keredomo</i>	56
31. Base 3 + <i>koto ga dekimasu</i>	58

32. Base 3 + <i>koto ni shimasu</i>	62
33. Base 3 + <i>made</i>	63
34. Base 3 + <i>na</i>	64
35. Base 3 + <i>nara</i>	67
36. Base 3 + (any noun)	69
37. Base 3 + <i>no desu</i>	73
38. Base 3 + <i>no ni</i>	76
39. Base 3 + <i>no wa</i>	78
40. Base 3 + <i>node</i>	80
41. Base 3 + <i>noni</i>	82
42. Base 3 + <i>sou desu</i>	83
43. Base 3 + <i>tame ni</i>	85
44. Base 3 + <i>to</i>	87
45. Base 3 + <i>to omoimasu</i>	89
46. Base 3 + <i>tsumori</i>	91
47. Base 3 + <i>you desu</i>	93
48. Base 4 + <i>ba</i>	95
49. Base 4 + <i>ba ii</i>	98
50. Base 4 by itself: the Plain Imperative	101
51. Base 4 + <i>ru</i>	103
52. Base 4 + <i>nai</i>	105
53. Base 4 + <i>reba</i>	107
54. Base 5	109
55. <i>Te</i> Form + <i>kudasai</i>	113
56. <i>Te</i> Form + <i>ageru</i>	119
57. <i>Te</i> Form + <i>goran / goran nasai</i>	122
58. <i>Te</i> Form + <i>iru</i>	124
59. <i>Te</i> Form + <i>inai</i>	128
60. <i>Te</i> Form + <i>ita</i>	132
61. <i>Te</i> Form + <i>itadaku / morau</i>	134
62. <i>Te</i> Form + <i>kara</i>	140
63. <i>Te</i> Form + <i>kureru</i>	141
64. <i>Te</i> Form + <i>kuru / iku</i>	144
65. <i>Te</i> Form + <i>miru</i>	146
66. <i>Te</i> Form + <i>mo ii</i>	148

67. <i>Te</i> Form + <i>oku</i>	151
68. <i>Te</i> Form + <i>shimau</i>	153
69. <i>Te</i> Form + <i>wa ikaga / dou desu ka</i>	157
70. <i>Te</i> Form + <i>wa ikemasen</i>	158
71. <i>Te</i> Form for Continuing Statements	161
72. <i>Ta</i> Form: The Plain Past	162
73. <i>Ta</i> Form + Combinations Shared With Base 3	168
74. <i>Ta</i> Form + <i>bakari</i>	173
75. <i>Ta</i> Form + <i>koto ga aru</i>	175
76. <i>Ta</i> Form + <i>ra</i>	177
77. <i>Ta</i> Form + <i>rashii</i>	179
78. <i>Ta</i> Form + <i>ri</i>	181
79. <i>Ta</i> Form + <i>to shitara</i>	183
80. <i>Ta</i> Form + <i>to shite mo</i>	184
81. <i>Ta</i> Form + <i>toki</i>	187
82. <i>Ta</i> Form + <i>tokoro</i>	188
Verb Index	190
Notes on Japanese Verbs	195

Supplement

Pronunciation and Writing Systems	202
Japanese Particles	211
About <i>You</i> and Name Suffixes	224

Lesson 1

The Plain Form

Please remember that all Japanese verbs end in *u*, but to be more precise, it's the last *syllable* of the plain form that ends in *u*. Let's take the verb *aruku*, which means "to walk," for example: it ends in *ku*, not *u*. Keeping this in mind will make further study much easier.

There are 3 types of verbs in Japanese: *yodan*, *ichidan*, and irregular. ¹ First we will look at only some simple *yodan* verbs, which can end in *u*, *ku*, *gu*, *su*, *tsu*, *nu*, *bu*, *mu*, or *ru*:

<i>kau</i>	(to buy)
<i>aruku</i>	(to walk)
<i>isogu</i>	(to hurry)
<i>kasu</i>	(to lend)
<i>matsu</i>	(to wait)
<i>shinu</i>	(to die)
<i>asobu</i>	(to play)
<i>yomu</i>	(to read)
<i>kaeru</i>	(to return)

Now let's try some in sentences:

ママは店でバナナを買う。
(*Mama wa mise de banana o kau.*)
Mom buys/will buy bananas at the store.

ジムは漫画を読む。
(*Jim wa manga o yomu.*)
Jim will read a comic book.

おじいさんはすぐ帰る。

(*Ojii-san wa sugu **kaeru.***)
Grandpa will return soon.

Ichidan verbs all end in either *eru* or *iru*. Some frequently used ones are:

taberu (to eat)
kimeru (to decide)
miru (to look, watch)
kariru (to borrow)

Here are a couple of example sentences:

私はりんごを食べる。
(*Watashi wa ringo o **taberu.***)
I'll eat an apple.

尚美はテレビを見る。
(*Naomi wa terebi o **miru.***)
Naomi will watch TV.

This is very simple Japanese, and also very juvenile or “familiar.” Only kids or people speaking with family or friends would use this plain form. Before actually trying out the language you need to learn the Base 2 forms and the polite endings that go with them. We will start learning about those in Lesson 2.

Another good thing to keep in mind is that this plain verb form is the Base 3 form. It is sometimes called the “dictionary form” because this is the form that you will see when you look up verbs in a Japanese-English dictionary.

Word Check

Verbs:

買う	(<i>kau</i>)	to buy
歩く	(<i>aruku</i>)	to walk
急ぐ	(<i>isogu</i>)	to hurry
貸す	(<i>kasu</i>)	to lend
待つ	(<i>matsu</i>)	to wait
死ぬ	(<i>shinu</i>)	to die
遊ぶ	(<i>asobu</i>)	to play
読む	(<i>yomu</i>)	to read
帰る	(<i>kaeru</i>)	to return
食べる	(<i>taberu</i>)	to eat
決める	(<i>kimeru</i>)	to decide
見る	(<i>miru</i>)	to look, watch
借りる	(<i>kariru</i>)	to borrow

Others:

店	(<i>mise</i>)	a store
漫画	(<i>manga</i>)	comic book
おじいさん	(<i>ojii-san</i>)	grandfather
すぐ	(<i>sugu</i>)	soon
私	(<i>watashi</i>)	I
りんご	(<i>ringo</i>)	apple
テレビ	(<i>terebi</i>)	TV ²

Notes

1. *Yodan* verbs are also called *godan* or “type 1” verbs, depending on the source.

2. *Terebi* is *wasei eigo*, or “Japanized English,” and comes from *television*.

Lesson 2
Yodan Verbs with Base 2 + masu

The first ending you'll want to master is the polite form **masu**. Since **masu** requires the Base 2 form, *yodan* verbs are changed so they end in *i* – their “Base 2” form – before the **masu** ending is added. Notice how the following *yodan* verbs, which were introduced in Lesson 1, change in order to add **masu**, the present polite ending. Especially notice how verbs ending in *su* and *tsu* change:

Plain Verb	Base 2 Form	Polite Verb Form
<i>kau</i> (to buy)	<i>kai</i>	<i>kaimasu</i>
<i>aruku</i> (to walk)	<i>aruki</i>	<i>arukimasu</i>
<i>isogu</i> (to hurry)	<i>isogi</i>	<i>isogimasu</i>
<i>kasu</i> (to lend)	<i>kashi</i>	<i>kashimasu</i>
<i>matsu</i> (to wait)	<i>machi</i>	<i>machimasu</i>
<i>shinu</i> (to die)	<i>shini</i>	<i>shinimasu</i>
<i>asobu</i> (to play)	<i>asobi</i>	<i>asobimasu</i>
<i>yomu</i> (to read)	<i>yomi</i>	<i>yomimasu</i>
<i>kaeru</i> (to return)	<i>kaeri</i>	<i>kaerimasu</i>

Now we are ready to speak polite, “adult” Japanese. Let's convert the plain *yodan* verb example sentences used in Lesson 1 to polite sentences by converting them to Base 2 and adding **masu**:

ママは店でバナナを買います。
 (Mama wa mise de banana o **kaimasu**.)
 Mom buys/will buy bananas at the store.

ジムは漫画を読みます。
 (Jim wa manga o **yomimasu**.)

Jim will read a comic book.

おじいさんはすぐ帰ります。
(*Ojii-san wa sugu **kaerimasu.***)
Grandpa will return soon.

Lesson 3

Ichidan Verbs with Base 2 + masu

Ichidan verbs are a snap, because you change them to Base 2 by just dropping the *ru* at the end. Look carefully at these *ichidan* verbs and how they conjugate, and notice how they differ from the *yodan* group covered in Lesson 2:

Plain Verb	Base 2 Form	Polite Verb Form
<i>taberu</i> (to eat)	<i>tabe</i>	<i>tabemasu</i>
<i>oboeru</i> (to remember)	<i>obo</i>	<i>oboemasu</i>
<i>kimeru</i> (to decide)	<i>kime</i>	<i>kimemasu</i>
<i>deru</i> (to leave, come out)	<i>de</i>	<i>demasu</i>
<i>kariru</i> (to borrow)	<i>kari</i>	<i>karimasu</i>
<i>miru</i> (to look, watch)	<i>mi</i>	<i>mimasu</i>

Here are some examples:

私は明日決めます。
(*Watashi wa ashita **kimemasu.***)
I'll decide tomorrow.

ジェリーはすぐ部屋から出ます。
(*Jerry wa sugu heya kara **demasu.***)
Jerry will come out of the room soon.

綾子は毎日テレビを見ます。
(*Ayako wa mainichi terebi o **mimasu.***)
Ayako watches the TV every day.

Now, you are probably thinking: *How can I tell ichidan verbs from yodan?* True, there are also *yodan* verbs that end in *eru* or *iru*, but with practice and experience they will gradually be mastered. A mistake made from not knowing whether a verb is *yodan* or *ichidan* is a very minor one, and should not be worried about at this stage.

Word Check

明日	(<i>ashita</i>)	tomorrow
すぐ	(<i>sugu</i>)	soon
部屋	(<i>heya</i>)	a room
から	(<i>kara</i>)	from
毎日	(<i>mainichi</i>)	every day
テレビ	(<i>terebi</i>)	TV

Lesson 4

Base 2 + *masen*

Now that you are a little familiar with Base 2, let's try ***masen***, which is the negative form of ***masu***. Look at these *yodan* examples:

私は傘を買いません。
(*Watashi wa kasa o **kaimasen.***)
I'm not going to buy an umbrella.

彼は待ちません。
(*Kare wa machimasen.*)
He won't wait.

紀美子は大阪に行きません。
(*Kimiko wa Osaka ni ikimasen.*)
Kimiko isn't going to Osaka.

And here are some *ichidan*:

私は今食べません。
(*Watashi wa ima tabemasen.*)
I'm not going to eat now.

彼女は傘を借りません。
(*Kanojo wa kasa o karimasen.*)
She isn't going to borrow an umbrella.

Easy enough, right?

Word Check

傘	(<i>kasa</i>)	umbrella
買う	(<i>kau</i>)	to buy
彼	(<i>kare</i>)	he, him
待つ	(<i>matsu</i>)	to wait
行く	(<i>iku</i>)	to go
今	(<i>ima</i>)	now
食べる	(<i>taberu</i>)	to eat
彼女	(<i>kanojo</i>)	she, her
借りる	(<i>kariru</i>)	to borrow

Lesson 5
Base 2 + *mashita*

Mashita is used to change verbs to their past polite form. Let's make some examples:

ジョンは仙台に行きました。
(*John wa Sendai ni **ikimashita.***)
John went to Sendai.

子供たちは公園で遊びました。
(*Kodomotachi wa kouen de **asobimashita.***)
The children played at the park.

芳はりんごを食べました。
(*Yoshi wa ringo o **tabemashita.***)
Yoshi ate an apple.

しずは漫画を買いました。
(*Shizu wa manga o **kaimashita.***)
Shizu bought a comic book.

ボブはその映画を見ました。
(*Bob wa sono eiga o **mimashita.***)
Bob saw that movie.

There are both *yodan* and *ichidan* verbs in the examples above. Can you tell them apart?

Word Check

行く	(<i>iku</i>)	to go
子供たち	(<i>kodomotachi</i>)	children
公園	(<i>kouen</i>)	a park

遊ぶ	(<i>asobu</i>)	to play
りんご	(<i>ringo</i>)	apple
食べる	(<i>taberu</i>)	to eat
漫画	(<i>manga</i>)	a comic book
買う	(<i>kau</i>)	to buy
その	(<i>sono</i>)	that
映画	(<i>eiga</i>)	movie
見る	(<i>miru</i>)	to see

Lesson 6

Base 2 + *masen deshita*

In Lesson 4 we learned that ***masen*** is used to show polite negative. To make that past tense we just add ***deshita***. To illustrate this we will take a few of the examples shown in Lesson 5 and change them from positive past to negative past:

ジョンは仙台に行きませんでした。
 (John wa Sendai ni ***ikimasen deshita***.)
 John didn't go to Sendai.

子供たちは公園で遊びませんでした。
 (Kodomotachi wa kouen de ***asobimasen deshita***.)
 The children didn't play at the park.

芳はりんごを食べませんでした。
 (Yoshi wa ringo o ***tabemasen deshita***.)
 Yoshi didn't eat an apple.

Please note that ***deshita*** is the past tense form of ***desu***, which will be covered next.