

English Grammar for Students of Japanese

*The Study Guide
For Those Learning Japanese*

Mutsuko Endo Hudson

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English Grammar for Students of Spanish
English Grammar for Students of French
English Grammar for Students of German
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English Grammar for Students of Latin
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English Grammar for Students of Japanese
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Gramática española para estudiantes de inglés

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TO THE STUDENT

English Grammar for Students of Japanese explains basic terminology and concepts of English grammar, focusing on material which will most benefit students of Japanese.

This handbook is designed to supplement any beginning Japanese language textbook. It is not meant to be comprehensive, nor is it intended to replace a language textbook. It is written to help you get the most out of your Japanese textbook as well as to answer some of the questions you will have as you learn Japanese.

How to Use the English Grammar Handbook

Each short chapter is a self-contained discussion of a particular grammar topic.

- Consult the table of contents and index to find where the grammatical terms and concepts you want explained are covered in this handbook.
- Read the relevant pages carefully, making sure that you understand the explanations and the examples.
- Do the Review, if provided, at the end of the chapter you have read. Compare your answers with the Answer Key at the end of the handbook. If they don't match, review the section.

Tips for Studying a Foreign Language

1. **RULES**—Make sure you understand each rule before you move on to the next one. Language learning is like building a house; each brick is only as secure as its foundation.

After you have read the explanation of a new grammatical rule, memorize one good example. It will help you remember the rules in a concrete way. Also, to test your understanding, try to make up simple examples of your own.

2. **MEMORIZATION**—Memorization plays an important part in language learning. You will have to memorize vocabulary (see Vocabulary below), special phrases, verb conjugations, grammar rules, and so forth. Here are some steps to follow when you memorize new material:
 - Divide the material to be memorized into sections you can easily remember (for instance, two sentences).

- Read the first section aloud several times.
- Write down the first section as you repeat it aloud to yourself.
- Compare what you wrote with the original.
- Repeat the last two steps until there is no difference between what you have written and the original.
- Repeat the steps above to memorize the second section.
- Continue memorizing each section in the same way, reciting from the beginning each time.

Work at memorizing for only short periods of time. If you find you are not concentrating on the material, take a break or do a different part of your assignment.

3. **VOCABULARY**—Use any trick or gimmick that helps you remember. Here are some that students have found useful:

- Write each word on a separate index card: Japanese on one side, the English equivalent on the other. You can draw or paste pictures for some of the objects or actions.
- Use cards or pens of different colors to help you remember useful information. To remember parts of speech, for example, you might use red for nouns, green for verbs, blue for adjectives, and so on.
- There is rarely a perfect one-to-one correspondence between words in English and Japanese. Make a note of important differences in meaning or usage on the cards; ex., **aru** “*to exist* (used with objects only)”.
- When learning new words, look at the Japanese side first, then the English equivalent (or picture) on the back. Turn over to the Japanese side again and say the word aloud several times, trying to remember the meaning. It will help if you visualize the objects, actions, events, etc. that you are saying.
- When testing yourself, look at the English (or picture) side of the card and try to remember the Japanese equivalent. Say it aloud and make up short sentences with it. For example, when you see the word *apple*, say **ringo**, **Ringo o tabemasu** (*I eat apples*), **Ringo ga kirai desu** (*I hate apples*), or **Ringo wa akai desu** (*The apple is red*).
- Limit the number of words to be memorized to three or four at a time. When you are confident that you have memorized the first

group, add new words until you have learned all the vocabulary required. As you progress, mix up the cards you have learned and test yourself.

- When you come across words that you don't remember, check the meaning and set them aside in the "trouble pile". After going through the entire deck, review this group, again setting aside the words giving you trouble. The "trouble pile" will go down each time and eventually there will be none left.
 - Shuffle the deck often so that you see the words "cold" (i.e., without remembering their order).
4. **LANGUAGE TAPES**—It is better to listen to tapes for short periods several times during the week rather than doing everything in one long sitting. Before memorizing a dialogue, for example, be sure that you first listen to the correct pronunciation on tape. Listen first to the whole dialogue in order to get the general idea of the content. Then divide the dialogue into sections and memorize them using the tape.
 5. **WRITTEN EXERCISES**—Read the Japanese words and sentences out loud as you write them. That way you are practicing seeing, saying and hearing the words. It will help you remember them.
 6. **DAILY PRACTICE**—Set aside a block of time each day for studying Japanese. Try not get behind. It's almost impossible to catch up because it takes time to absorb the material and to develop the skills.
 7. **SEIZE THE MOMENT**—The goal in learning Japanese is to communicate in the language. Practice speaking with your classmates, teachers and Japanese friends, whenever you can. Keep a journal in Japanese (however simple) and write down what you did and thought that day. Not only will it be fun to express yourself in Japanese, but you will also remember words, phrases and patterns more easily because they will have become truly meaningful.

Ganbatte kudasai ne.

Mutsuko Endo Hudson

31. WHAT ARE INDEFINITE AND NEGATIVE ADVERBS?

An **indefinite adverb** is a word used to refer to the place, time, or purpose of an action when the speaker cannot or does not wish to be specific (ex. *anywhere, sometime*). A **negative adverb** is the negative equivalent of an indefinite adverb; it negates or denies the place, time, or purpose of an action (ex. *nowhere, never*). See **What is an Adverb?**, p. 40.

IN ENGLISH

Because each indefinite adverb has a corresponding negative adverb, it is helpful to study them in pairs.¹ The most common pairs are:

Affirmative	Negative
referring to location	
somewhere	nowhere
anywhere	
referring to time	
sometime	never
anytime	
ever	

Use of Indefinite Adverbs in Questions and Answers

There are two ways to ask questions with indefinite adverbs, either with *somewhere* and *sometime* or with *anywhere* and *anytime*, depending on the speaker's belief at the time.

Are you going *somewhere*?

The speaker has reason to believe that the listener may be going somewhere.

Are you going *anywhere*?

The speaker has reason to believe that the listener may not be going anywhere.

AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSE—You can respond affirmatively to questions containing an indefinite adverb with the same indefinite adverb (ex. *somewhere*) or with the actual name of a place or a specific time.

¹What we have said about the use of indefinite and negative pronouns in English also applies to indefinite and negative adverbs (see p. 117).

INDEFINITE ADVERBS—Indefinite adverbs are formed by attaching the particle **ka** to interrogative adverbs (see **What is an Interrogative Word?**, p. 102).¹ Here are some common indefinite adverbs.

Interrogative adverb	→	Indefinite adverb	
itsu <i>when</i>		itsuka	<i>some day, sometime, anytime</i>
dooshite <i>why</i>		dooshiteka	<i>for some reason</i>
ikura <i>how much</i>		ikuraka	<i>some, some amount</i>

Itsuka ikimasu.

*I'll go **sometime**.*

Mise wa **dooshiteka** shimatte imasu.

*The store is closed **for some reason**.*

Okane wa **ikuraka** motte imasu.

*I have **some** money.*

NEGATIVE ADVERBS—Japanese does not have negative adverbs corresponding to *nowhere* or *never*. Instead, adverbs such as **zenzen** (*at all*) and **zettai (ni)** (*absolutely*) can be used in negative sentences for emphasis.

Zenzen wakarimasen.

verb negated

*I **don't** understand **at all**.*

Sonna koto wa **zettai ni** yarimasen.

verb negated

*I'll **never** do such a thing.*

Use of Indefinite Adverbs in Questions and Answers

AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSE—As in English, you can respond affirmatively to questions containing an indefinite adverb with the same indefinite adverb (ex. **itsuka**, *sometime*) or with an actual time (ex. **rainen**, *next year*).

question **Itsuka** Nihon e ikimasu ka.

indefinite adverb

*Will you go to Japan **sometime**?*

¹For the most part, what we have said about the indefinite and negative pronouns in Japanese also applies to indefinite and negative adverbs (see p. 119).

answer 1 Hai, **itsuka** ikimasu.

|
indefinite adverb

*Yes, I'll go **sometime**.*

answer 2 Hai, **rainen** ikimasu.

|
actual time

*Yes, I'm going **next year**.*

NEGATIVE RESPONSE—To respond negatively to questions which contain an indefinite adverb, it is sufficient to use a negative sentence without an adverb. However, for emphasis you can add an adverb such as **zenzen** (*at all*).

question Okane wa **ikuraka** arimasu ka.

|
indefinite adverb

*Is there **some** (or **any**) money?*

answer 1 Iie, arimasen.

|
verb negated "there isn't"

*No, there **isn't**.*

answer 2 Iie, **zenzen** arimasen.

| |
adverb verb negated "there isn't"

*No, there **isn't at all**.*

"Anywhere, Anytime" Meaning "No matter where, No matter when"

IN ENGLISH

In addition to their use in questions and negative sentences, the indefinite adverbs *anywhere* and *anytime* can be used in affirmative sentences expressing the meaning "no matter where it is, wherever" and "no matter when it is, whenever," respectively.

They would go *anywhere*.

No matter where it is, they would go.

Come and visit us *anytime*.

No matter when it is, come and visit us.

IN JAPANESE

Corresponding to the English indefinite adverbs *anytime* and *any amount* in the sense of "no matter when it is, whenever" and "no matter how much it is, however much," Japanese uses interrogative adverbs + **demo** in affirmative sentences.

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