

Introduction

① Japanese Sentence structure

Usually, the basic structure of Japanese sentences is considered to be SOV.

English : (Subject) (Verb) (Object)

Japanese : (Subject) (Object) (Verb)

I eat ramen.

English : (Subject) (Verb) (Object)

Watashi wa ramen o tabemasu.

Japanese : (Subject) (Object) (Verb)

② What are Japanese particles?

Japanese sentences are structured around grammatical markers called “particles”.

They are used to indicate the topic conversation, the direction of an action the doer of an action, and more.

Watashi wa ramen o tabemasu.

Topic marker

Direct Object marker

★ In English, it is the word order that tells us who did what. But it is the particles in Japanese.

If you switch the order of “nihon de” and “ramen o”, your sentence will still mean “I eat ramen in Japan”. ↓

Watashi wa nihon de ramen o tabemasu.

Watashi wa ramen o nihon de tabemasu.

③ Kutoten (punctuation marks)

Kuten : Sentences end in a period.

Toten : The Japanese comma is similar to the English comma, but the rules surrounding its use are much more lax.

Ashita, Watashi wa ramen o tabemasu.

Toten (comma)

Kuten (period)

④ Japanese writing system

There are 4 kinds of Japanese characters.

Hiragana, Katakana, Kanji, Roma-ji

Lena wa JAL de nihon e kimashita.

レナは JALで 日本へ 来ました。
Katakana Roma-ji Kanji Hiragana

Hiragana and Katakana are both used to represent the sound syllables that make up the Japanese language.

Each of these syllabaries has 46 basic characters (sounds).

【Hiragana】

It is usually used to represent Japanese words and grammatical elements.

【Katakana】

It is usually used for words of foreign origin.

【Kanji】

It represent meaning and sound. Japanese people use approximately 2,000 kanji characters in their daily lives. Kanji serve to distinguish words with the same pronunciation and make sentences easier to read. A single kanji can have multiple readings.

【Roma-ji】

Romaji refers to the Romanization of Japanese words, using Latin (Roman) alphabet characters to represent Japanese sounds.

⑤ Pronunciation of Japanese

【Long vowels】

A long vowel is pronounced twice as long as the ordinary vowels a, i, u, e and o. If you count the length of the vowel “a” as one, the length of the long vowel “aa” is counted as two.

In roma-ji, long vowels are shown as adding a bar(-) on top of the letter.

Ā ā · Ī ī · Ū ū · Ē ē · Ō ō

★Whether a vowel is long or not can change the meaning of the word.

Ie House	Iie No
chizu Map	chiizu Cheese
Yuki Snow	Yūki Courage
Koko Here	Kōkō High school