

ADDRESSING AND TALKING ABOUT PEOPLE

You have already learned that Japanese people omit parts of a sentence that may be understood from the context or situation. The most noticeable “omitted parts” are personal pronouns. In a one-to-one conversation, you will almost never hear **anata wa**: you will hear **hon o yomimasu ka** rather than **anata wa hon o yomimasu ka**.

Note that **Tom-kun wa (o)sushi o tabemasu ka** may be translated in two ways depending on the situation. When it is spoken to a third party, it means *Does Tom eat sushi?* When it is spoken to Tom himself, it means *Do you eat sushi, Tom?* If you leave out the **wa** after **Tom-kun**, and the **o** after **(o)sushi** and pause a moment after **Tom-kun**, it becomes more colloquial speech: **Tom-kun, (o)sushi tabemasu ka**, *Do you eat sushi, Tom?*

Although people do not usually address a listener by name, the speaker will often address the listener by title if the listener is of a higher status than the speaker. For example, when you talk to a teacher, you should say **sensei (wa) (o)sushi o tabemasu ka** meaning *do you eat sushi?* In this situation, **sensei (wa)** implies *you*. By addressing the other person by title, you are honoring the listener and showing your respect for his or her position. A person of superior status will not address or refer to a person of inferior status using that person’s title: a “superior” person addresses or refers to an “inferior” person by his surname without **san**.

Japanese people will even address someone who is not a teacher as **sensei**, to show respect if they can learn even a most trivial thing from him. They also address total strangers, as well as acquaintances, as **ojisan**, **obasan**, **ojisan** and **obasan**, (but not **otōto** or **omōto**), according to their ages, to show friendliness.

If you spend much time in Japan, you’ll need to know how to address people by their titles. First, a word of caution: suppose you work in a company and you address your boss or talk about your boss to your colleague; you must put **san** after your boss’s title, otherwise it would be rude. So, you must address or talk about your boss as **shachō-san**, for example, to your colleague. But, if you are talking to a person who does not work for your company, you do not use **san**: you refer to your boss as **shachō**. The reason for this is that your boss has a status superior to yours within your company, and hence he will be referred to as **shachō-san** within the company. However, you and your boss belong to the same company that it is regarded as “a family” by the outside world. So, when you talk to a person outside of your company, you talk about your boss without **san** and you talk about the listener’s boss with **san**. Of course, the listener will do the reverse: he will talk about his boss without **san** and your boss with **san**. This is exactly the same as referring your sister as **imōto** and your friend’s sister as **imōto-san**.

In Japanese, the speech style you use depends on the relationship between you and the listener. In *Japanese in 30 Days*, you learn the speech style that is acceptable at any time to anybody: the polite speech style.

Now, let's learn some titles in companies, universities and schools and some useful pronouns. By the way, when you talk to or refer to a university professor, **sensei** is used rather than an individual title.

Nouns	
<i>kaisha</i> company	<i>daigaku</i> university
<i>kaichō</i> chairman	<i>gakuchō</i> president
<i>shachō</i> president	<i>gaku-buchō</i> dean
<i>fuku-shachō</i> vice-president	<i>kyōju</i> professor
<i>senmu</i> senior managing director	<i>jō-kyōju</i> assistant professor
<i>jōmu</i> managing director	<i>kōshi</i> lecturer
<i>huchō</i> division manager	<i>joshu</i> assistant
<i>jichō</i> section manager	
<i>kachō</i> manager	<i>gakkō</i> school
<i>shain</i> employee	<i>kōchō-sensei</i> principal
	<i>kyōto-sensei</i> vice-principal
	<i>sensei</i> teacher
Pronouns	
<i>kare</i> he	
<i>kanojo</i> she	

Summary of Particles

de	indicates “with what instrument something is done” or “how something is done,” and translated as <i>in/with/by</i>
	indicates a place where action/event occurs, and translated as <i>in/at/on</i>
	<i>in</i> for Nihongo de
e	indicates a motion <i>to/toward</i> a place
ga	indicates a grammatical subject (a subject in the Japanese grammar, but translated as a direct object or other part of speech in English)
	indicates a subject when the action is presented as a natural occurrence
	indicates a direct object for V•tai (taku nai, etc.) desu
ka	placed at the end of a sentence to indicate that it is a question
	___ <i>or</i> ___
kara	<i>from</i>
made	<i>to</i> in the sense of <i>until</i>
mo	<i>also/too</i>
ne	is placed at the end of a sentence to solicit an agreement from a listener, and translated as <i>isn't it?, don't you?</i>

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ni	is placed after a time expression, and translated as <i>at/in/on</i>
	is placed after a relative time
	indicates an indirect object to show the direction of attention or interest, and translated as <i>to/for</i>
	__ ni shimasu , <i>decide on</i> __
	__ ni aimasu , <i>meet</i> __
	byxōin ni nyūin shimasu
	furo ni hairimasu
	is placed after a complement, and a na -adjective, for the verb narimasu , <i>to become</i> . Note that ni does not follow i -adjective, but i -adjective becomes __ ku for the verb narimasu
	indicates motion <i>to</i> an event
	indicates motion <i>to/toward</i> a place (same function as e)
	indicates a location <i>at/in</i> which something exists
no	A no B implies <i>A's B</i> ; <i>B off/for/in/on A</i> ; A is the origin of B; <i>B in/at A</i> ; <i>B of A</i>
	A no mae/ato , <i>before/after A</i> to express time
o	follows a direct object
	indicates a point at which a turn is to be made, or proceed further;
to	__ <i>and</i> __,
	indicates <i>together/along with</i>
wa	indicates a subject
	indicates a topic (indirect subject) and translated as <i>as for</i>
yo	placed at the end of a sentence to alert a listener to what the speaker is saying, equivalent to English exclamation, <i>!</i>
yori	<i>more than</i>