

まんがで学ぶ にほんご会話

LEARN JAPANESE WITH MANGA

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Japanese Conversation for Beginners



UNICOM Inc.

Preface

These days, people come to Japan from any number of countries for a wide variety of reasons. There are people who come for business, for learning Japanese culture or technologies, for studying at universities or vocational schools, for vacation, for living with family, the list goes on... We wrote this book for any of these people who wish to try to speak Japanese, even just a little, whatever their reason for being in Japan.

There may be some who argue that as long as one can speak English, one would not have much trouble managing a trip to Japan, or even life at their work or school. There may be many who think it's not necessary to learn Japanese at all if their stay in Japan is only for a short time. But now that you have come all this way to Japan, even if it is only a short time, wouldn't you like to try speaking some Japanese for communicating with the Japanese people and people from other countries? Even just a little effort in speaking Japanese will enhance your Japan experience, and result in you making new acquaintances. It will make your time in Japan that little bit more memorable and special.

There may be many who think the Japanese language is difficult to learn because of its complicated writing system, with multiple alphabets of hiragana, katakana and kanji. But rest assured that you can speak Japanese without knowing how to write it. This textbook intends to allow the reader to learn to speak Japanese while enjoying manga (cartoons). So don't worry about the Japanese writing, and just keep talking!

With this book, we trust your stay in Japan will be a more fruitful and memorable one.

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Welcome to Learn Japanese with Manga

Key features of *Learn Japanese with Manga*

● Learning to communicate in Japanese by reading manga (cartoons)



This textbook is in the style of a story. The main character is Mr. John Smith. John is an engineer who is transferred to the Japan branch of his company for an assignment. The story begins with his arrival at Narita Airport and follows his journey of living in Japan for one year and a half until his departure. By communicating in Japanese, he builds relationships with people from his office and his neighborhood. Please join John in the world of this manga and enjoy the experiences he has. If you imagine yourself in John's shoes, by following along the conversations, you yourself should learn to speak Japanese as John does.

● You can speak Japanese without understanding how to read it

Many people think that the first step to learn a language is to study the written aspect and technicalities of pronunciation. But this unlikely to be the main objective of your learning Japanese. The primary purpose is to have the ability to communicate in Japanese at work, at school, or in everyday life. If so, wouldn't it be best to start with speaking Japanese? You can speak without reading Japanese or understanding the linguistic mechanics of pronunciation. We made this book for those who just want to start trying to speak a little Japanese. Of course there is always the option of studying the writing, the vocabulary, the grammar, the phonetics, etc. before moving on to practicing conversation. However, the study option requires much effort and patience. This book offers a more flexible approach of "using the language first" and "the more you speak, the more fluent you become."

● English translation to assist

The scenes in this book are familiar scenes you observe in any country or society. Just by looking at the cartoon, you will understand the setting of the scene and the conversation taking place. Once you imagine the scene, say the lines John is saying, pretending to be John. Easy, isn't it? When you think you've got it, check the English translation. You can confirm the meaning. "Yes, that's what I thought it meant. I was able to say what I was thinking in Japanese!" While you are at it, try a paraphrasing ex-

5. Useful Words Searchable in English

When you have a word or phrase you would like to know in Japanese, you can look it up in English. It's like a mini-English-Japanese dictionary. It lists about 600 basic Japanese words. There are cases where an English word has several Japanese equivalent words. When there are multiple Japanese words with similar meanings, the most frequently used Japanese word is listed. When there are Japanese equivalents with different connotations, or the meanings are the same but all are used with equal frequency, it lists multiple Japanese words.

On English translation

We chose the literal translation into English. You may sometimes find the English translation unnatural. However we decided to leave the translation direct and literal in order to have the reader better understand the meaning of the Japanese word or the grammar explanation.

How to use this book effectively

There are two ways to use this book: one is to practice speaking Japanese while you enjoy the world of cartoon, and another is to search for words and expressions you want to say in Japanese.

<Practicing Japanese while enjoying cartoon >

Steps:

1. First, take a look at the three-frame cartoons on the left page in Part 2
2. Imagine what the scene is about and what the characters are saying by just looking at the cartoon.
3. Say it either in your native language or English.
4. Read the lines written to the left of the cartoon out loud.
5. Check the English translation to confirm the meaning of the lines.
6. Repeat the lines out loud looking at the cartoons.
7. When you feel you can say the lines with ease, stand up and repeat the lines while imitating the actions of the cartoon character

You can practice this by yourself, but it would be fun to do with friends.

<Searching words and expressions you want to say in Japanese>

● **Saying greetings and simple phrases:**

Look in Part 1, and find the phrase you want to say from the cartoon captions. The illustration will help you understand what the scene is. Once you find the scene you want, check the English translation to confirm the meaning is the one you are after.

● **Searching from the cartoon scenes:**

Look in Part 2. The text is made up of cartoons but the caption of each cartoon explains the situation in which the cartoon characters are conversing with each other. For example, when you want to get on the train, look up Unit 2-2 of “Riding on the Train.” When you want to invite someone out for meal, look up Unit 5 of “Inviting Someone.” You will know what to say right away. Start with whatever you are interested in saying in Japanese, and move on to the next conversation or topic you find interesting. You need not to start from Unit 1 and “study” all units in order.

● **Checking words:**

Look in Part 3, in which the words frequently used in everyday life are listed by category. You can find related words and phrases as well. We have included as many photos and illustrations as possible, so you don’t need to look for the English translation.

● **Looking up Japanese words from English:**

When you have some English words you want to say in Japanese, look it up in the Useful Words Searchable in English. Japanese words or phrases are given to the English words or phrases you are looking for. Read the Romanized Japanese and say it. It’s as easy as that!