

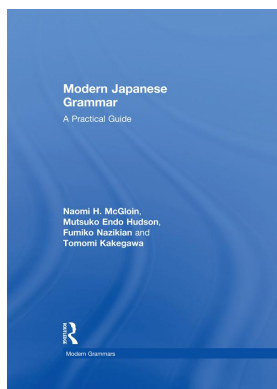
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Modern Japanese Grammar A Practical Guide

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Particles

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10

Particles

10.1 Case particles

A case particle immediately follows a noun phrase indicating its grammatical function in relation to the verb. There are four such particles; **ga** (nominative case), **o** (accusative case), **ni** (dative case), and **no** (genitive case).

10.1.1 *ga*

Ga marks the subject of the sentence. In a sentence that describes someone's action, 'subject' refers to the *performer* of the action and, when a sentence describes a state, it refers to the person or thing being described.

今日友達が来ます。

Kyoo tomodachi ga kimasu.

A friend of mine is coming today.

秋になると、紅葉がきれいです。

Aki ni naru to, kooyoo ga kiree desu.

When fall comes, the colors of the leaves are beautiful.

Ga expressing subject is used in two types of situations. In one, the speaker assumes that the *subject* part represents a 'new' (unexpected) piece of information to the hearer. In another, the information contained in the *whole sentence* is new to the hearer or something that the speaker has just discovered (e.g. 'Oh, the bus is coming!').

レディーガガさんがその歌を作りました。

Redii Gaga-san ga sono uta o tsukurimashita.

- (1) [In response to 'Who wrote that song?']

Lady Gaga wrote that song / It's Lady Gaga who wrote that song.

(That someone wrote that song is already known to the speaker and the hearer.

What is new is that Lady Gaga did it.)

- (2) [In response to 'What happened?' or 'Nice song, isn't it!']

You know what? Lady Gaga wrote that song.

(The whole sentence is presented as new information.)

桜がとてもきれいです。

Sakura ga totemo kiree desu.

- (1) [In response to ‘What is pretty?’]

Cherry blossoms are very pretty / It's cherry blossoms that are very pretty. (That something is pretty is already known. What is new is the cherry blossoms part.)

- (2) [In response to ‘What is the park like?’ or to express the speaker’s surprise]

The cherry blossoms are very pretty / Oh, the cherry blossoms are very pretty!

► 11.5 for more on the differences between **wa** and **ga**

With certain predicates that express states (e.g. liking, desire, ability), the direct object is marked by **ga**, somewhat akin to the object of adjectives in English such as ‘to be fond of’ and ‘to be tired of.’ The verbs and adjectives that usually mark the direct object by **ga** include the following.

(1) Likes and dislikes: *suki da* ‘like,’ *kirai da* ‘dislike’

私は甘いものが好きです。

Watashi wa amai mono ga suki desu.

I like sweet things.

(2) Desire: *V-tai* ‘want to,’ *hoshii* ‘want (something)’

ビールが飲みたいなあ！

Biiru ga nomi-tai naa!

I want to drink beer!

新しい車がほしいです。

Atarashii kuruma ga hoshii desu.

I want a new car.

(3) Ability: *V-rareru/-eru* ‘can,’ *dekiru* ‘can do,’ *joozu da* ‘good at,’ *heta da* ‘poor at’

何かスポーツができますか。

Nani ka supootsu ga dekimasu ka.

Can you do any sports?

漢字が書けます。

Kanji ga kakemasu.

I can write kanji.

(4) Understanding: *wakaru* ‘understand’

「フェミニスト」という言葉の意味がわかりません。

‘Feminisuto’ to yuu kotoba no imi ga wakarimasen.

I don’t understand the meaning of the word ‘feminisuto.’

(5) Need: *iru* ‘need’

日本に行くには、お金がいます。

Nihon ni iku ni wa, okane ga irimasu.

To go to Japan, one needs money.

10.1.2 ○

The particle **o** marks the direct object of the verb.

もっと野菜を食べなさい。

Motto yasai o tabenasai.

Eat more vegetables.

母に毎日メールを書いています。

Haha ni mainichi meeru o kaite imasu.

I write an e-mail to my mother every day.

The particle **o** also marks other functions, such as space that one passes through or crosses.

この道をまっすぐ行ってください。

Kono michi o massugu itte kudasai.

Please go straight along this street.

3つ目の角を右にまがってください。

Mittsume no kado o migi ni magatte kudasai.

Turn right at the third corner.

それから、橋を渡ってください。

Sorekara, hashi o watatte kudasai.

After that, cross the bridge.

公園を通っていきましょうか。

Kooen o tootte ikimashoo ka.

Shall we go through the park?

7時頃会社を出ました。

Shichiji-goro kaisha o demashita.

I left the office around seven o'clock.

電車を降りて、バスに乗り換えた。

Densha o orite basu ni norikaeta.

I got off the train and transferred to the bus.

Some verbs that express emotion (e.g. grieve, rejoice) are intransitive. In such cases, the particle **o** marks cause (of the grief, joy, etc.).

父は母の死を悲しんだ。

Chichi wa haha no shi o kanashinda.

My father grieved at the death of my mother.

There is a constraint that only one use of **o** is allowed in the same clause. To say **benkyoo o suru** 'study' with an object, for example, **X o benkyoo o suru** is not possible. Instead, it is expressed in one of two ways.

大学で英語を勉強した。

Daigaku de [Ego] o benkyoo shita.

I studied [English] in college.

大学で英語の勉強をした。

Daigaku de [Ego] ni benkyoo o shita.

I studied English in college. (Lit. I did the [study of English] in college.)

10.1.3 *ni*

The particle **ni** marks indirect object, meaning 'to' or 'for.'

私は日本にいる友達にワインを送った。

Watashi wa Nihon ni iru tomodachi ni wain o okutta.

I sent a bottle of wine to my friend in Japan.

(私は) 友達に電話をかけた。

(Watashi wa) tomodachi ni denwa o kaketa.

I made a telephone call to my friend.

10.1.4 *no*

The particle **no** links two nouns into a noun phrase, in which the preceding noun modifies the following noun. The meaning varies depending on the relationship between the two nouns, such as the possessor, content, location, or source.

これは私のコンピュータです。

Kore wa watashi no konpyuuta desu.

This is my computer.

これはコンピュータの本です。

Kore wa konpyuuta no hon desu.

This is a book on computers.

あの人は日本語の先生です。

Ano hito wa Nihongo no sensee desu.

He/She is a Japanese teacher (a teacher of Japanese).

日本のデパートはおもしろいと思う。

Nihon no depaato wa omoshiroi to omou.

I think the department stores in Japan are interesting.

私のオフィスの窓からの眺めは素晴らしいです。

Watashi no ofisu no mado kara no nagame wa subarashii desu.

The view from my office window is wonderful.

10.2

Postpositions

Postpositions are particles that follow nouns and indicate various meanings such as location (**ni**, **de**), direction (**ni**, **e**), point in time (**ni**), partner (**to**), means (**de**), starting point (**kara**), ending point (**made**), target (**ni**), and source (**ni**).

10.2.1

ni

Two of the most common uses of **ni** are to indicate the location where someone or something exists and the specific point in time (e.g. at two o'clock) when something happens. **Ni** is not used for a time span (e.g. two hours) or non-specific time (e.g. every day). Some typical uses of **ni** are illustrated below.

(1) Location where someone or something exists: 'at, in, on'

めがねはここにありますよ。

Megane wa koko ni arimasu yo.

Here are (your) glasses.

(2) Time when something happens: 'at, in, on'

私は毎朝7時に家を出ます。

Watashi wa maiasa shichi-ji ni ie o demasu.

I leave my house at seven o'clock every morning.

土曜日にやりましょう。

Doyoobi ni yarimashoo.

Let's do it on Saturday.

(3) Direction: 'to'

きのう横浜に行きました。

Kinoo Yokohama ni ikimashita.

I went to Yokohama yesterday.

(4) Place where the result of an action remains: 'on(to),' 'in(to)'

いすに座ってください。

Isu ni suwatte kudasai.

Please sit on the chair.

壁に絵をかけた。

Kabe ni e o kaketa.

I hung a picture on the wall.

駅の前でタクシーに乗りました。

Eki no mae de takushii ni norimashita.

I caught a taxi in front of the (train) station.

どこの大学に入りましたか。

Doko no daigaku ni hairimashita ka.

Which university did you get into?

(5) Source: 'from,' 'by'

それは田中さんに聞いたんですけど...

Sore wa Tanaka-san ni kiita n desu kedo...

I heard that from Mr/Ms Tanaka.

10.2.2

de

The most common use of **de** is to indicate the location where an action or event takes place.

どこで会いましょうか。

Doko de aimashoo ka.

Where shall we meet?

レセプションは東京のホテルでありました。

Resepushon wa Tookyoo no hoteru de arimashita.

The reception was held at a hotel in Tokyo.

Another use of **de** is to indicate the means by which one carries out an action.

時間がないから、タクシーで行きましょう。

Jikan ga nai kara, takushii de ikimashoo.

Since we don't have much time, let's go by taxi.

フォークではなく箸で食べてください。

Fooku dewa naku hashi de tabete kudasai.

Please eat with chopsticks, not a fork.

De also indicates 'scope,' or the time or amount required for the verb (or other predicate) to be realized.

後1時間で映画が始まります。

Ato ichijikan de eega ga hajimarimasu.

The movie starts in one hour.

このリンゴは5つで600円でした。

Kono ringo wa itsutsu de roppyakuen deshita.

These apples were five for 600 yen. (Lit. 600 yen with five).

二人でどこかに行きませんか。

Futari de doko ka ni ikimasen ka.

Shall we go somewhere, the two of us (Lit. in a group of two)?

世界で一番長い川はアマゾン川でしょう？

Sekai de ichiban nagai kawa wa Amazon-gawa deshoo?

Isn't the Amazon the longest river in the world?

10.2.3 *de vs. ni*

De marks the location of an action while **ni** marks the location of an existing person, animal or thing. Generally, the verb **aru** ‘be, to exist’ takes **ni** when the subject is an object (thing). When the subject represents an event such as a party, lecture and movie, however, the particle **de** is used.

林先生の家でパーティーがあるそうです。

Hayashi-sensee no ie de paatii ga aru soo desu.

I hear there will be a party at Professor Hayashi’s house.

Sometimes there is a choice between **de** and **ni** with a location phrase, but the meanings will be different. In (1) below, **shigoto beya** ‘the workroom’ refers to the place where the shelf making took place. The shelf may have been built for any room, while in (2), it is specifically for the workroom, where the shelf remains.

- (1) 仕事部屋でたなを作った。
Shigoto-beya de tana o tsukutta.
I made a shelf in the workroom.
- (2) 仕事部屋にたなを作った。
Shigoto-beya ni tana o tsukutta.
I made a shelf for the workroom.

Likewise, the location **koko** ‘here’ in (3) indicates where the action (of writing) takes place, whereas it indicates the location where the result of the action remains in (4).

- (3) ここで書いてください。
Koko de kaite kudasai.
Please write here (in this room).
- (4) ここに書いてください。
Koko ni kaite kudasai.
Please write here (on this paper).

10.2.4 *to*

The basic meaning of **to** is ‘with,’ to indicate the partner with whom someone does something.

週末は友達と勉強します。

Shuumatsu wa tomodachi to benkyoo shimasu.

I am going to study with my friends on the weekend.

山田さんと結婚することにしました。

Yamada-san to kekkon suru koto ni shimashita.

I have decided to marry Mr/Ms Yamada.

友達と別れてから、一人で喫茶店へ行きました。

Tomodochi to wakarete kara, hitori de kissaten e ikimashita.

After parting from my friends, I went to a coffee shop alone.

The particle **to** is also used with the object of comparison; e.g. (same) as, (similar) to, and (different) from.

韓国語は日本語と似ていると言われています。

Kankokugo wa Nihongo to nite iru to iwarete imasu.

It is said that the Korean language is similar to the Japanese language.

日本語は英語と随分違います。

Nihongo wa Ego to zuibun chigaimasu.

The Japanese language is quite different from English.

Certain verbs can take either **to** or **ni** to indicate the person with whom one carries out an action. In the following sentences, **to** indicates that the speaker and the friend were equal partners of the action; i.e. the meeting took place with mutual agreement, while **ni** indicates that the meeting was not mutually agreed upon and that the speaker ‘ran into’ the teacher.

図書館で友達と会いました。

Toshokan de tomodachi to aimashita.

I met with my friend at the library.

図書館で先生に会いました。

Toshokan de sensee ni aimashita.

I saw (or ran into) my teacher at the library.

In the examples below, too, when **to** is used, the friend was an equal partner in the discussion, whereas **ni** indicates that the speaker went to the friend to consult.

友達に相談した。

Tomodachi ni soodan shita.

I consulted my friend.

友達と相談した。

Tomodachi to soodan shita.

I discussed (the matter) with my friend.

10.2.5

e

The particle **e** indicates the direction toward which something or someone moves. In speech, the particle **ni** is frequently used instead of **e**.

明日大阪へ行きます。

Ashita Oosaka e ikimasu.

I am going to Osaka tomorrow.

田中さんはもう家へ帰りましたよ。

Tanaka-san wa moo uchi e kaerimashita yo.

Mr/Ms Tanaka has already gone home.

10.2.6

kara, made

kara ‘from, since’ expresses a starting point, both in terms of time and space, and **made** ‘until, to’ expresses an ending point.

3時まで待ちましょう。

Sanji made machimashoo.

Let’s wait until three o’clock.

日本の大学では二月から三月の終わりまで休みのところが多い。

Nihon no daigaku de wa nigatsu kara sangatsu no owari made yasumi no tokoro ga ooi.

Many universities in Japan don’t have classes from February through (until) the end of March.

九州から北海道まで日本全国を旅行した。

Kyuushuu kara Hokkaidoo made Nihon zenkoku o ryokoo shita.

I traveled throughout Japan, from Kyushu to Hokkaido.

ここから富士山がきれいに見えます。

Koko kara Fujisan ga kiree ni miemasu.

You can see Mt. Fuji clearly from here.

To indicate a deadline or the point by which something is done, **made ni** ‘by’ is used.

明日の1時までには連絡してください。

Ashita no ichiji made ni renraku shite kudasai.

Please contact me by one o’clock tomorrow.

10.3 Adverbial (semantic) particles

Among the adverbial (or semantic) particles, **wa** (for topic and contrast), **mo** ‘also (for similarity),’ **shika** ‘only,’ and **dake** ‘just, only’ are frequently used. When these particles are added to a noun (or noun + particle), the original function of the noun, such as subject, direct object, location, and partner, does not change, but additional meanings are expressed. In **Ken ga sushi o tabeta** ‘Ken ate sushi,’ for example, **Ken** functions as the subject, and **sushi** as the direct object. With the particle **mo** ‘also, too’ attached to it, **sushi** is still the direct object; **Ken ga sushi mo tabeta** ‘Ken ate sushi, too.’ Likewise, **Ken** remains the subject in **Ken mo sushi o tabeta** ‘Ken, too, ate sushi.’

► See 11 for detailed discussion of the particle **wa**

- (a) **Ken dake sushi o tabeta.**
Only Ken (subject) ate sushi (direct object).
- (b) **Ken wa sushi dake tabeta.**
Ken (subject and topic) ate only sushi (direct object).
- (c) **Ken wa gakkoo de benkyoo suru.**
Ken (subject and topic) studies at school (location).
- (d) **Ken wa gakkoo de shika benkyoo shinai.**
Ken (subject and topic) studies only at school (location).

When these particles are added to **ga** (subject) and **o** (direct object), they replace **ga** and **o**. Otherwise, they follow other particles. The following are examples with **mo** ‘also.’

ga + mo → mo

o + mo → mo

ni / de / to / e / made / kara + mo

→ **ni mo / de mo / to mo / e mo / made mo / kara mo**

ジョンが来た。メリーも来た。

Jon ga kita. Merii mo kita.

John came. Mary also came.

ジョンは日本語を話す。そして中国語も話す。

John wa Nihongo o hanasu. Soshite Chuugokugo mo hanasu.

John speaks Japanese. And he also speaks Chinese.

マクドナルドはアメリカにある。日本にもある。

Makudonarudo wa Amerika ni aru. Nihon ni mo aru.

McDonald's is in America. It is also in Japan.

Shika and **dake** meaning ‘only,’ are very different. First, **shika** can only be used in a negative sentence or with a predicate with negative meaning (e.g. **dame** ‘no good, bad’), while **dake** can be used in both affirmative and negative sentences. Second, **shika** implies that the speaker views the amount or action expressed in the sentence to be less than expected, while **dake** has no such implication. As such, **dake** sounds objective, meaning ‘no more, no less, just that much,’ but **shika** sounds subjective, often expressing the speaker’s regret (though not always).

五千円しかありません。

Gosen en shika arimasen.

I only have 5,000 yen (and that’s too bad).

(ちょうど) 五千円だけあります。

(Choodo) gosen en dake arimasu.

I have exactly 5,000 yen.

昨日は田中さんしか来ませんでした。

Kinoo wa Tanaka-san shika kimasen deshita.

Only Mr/Ms Tanaka came yesterday (I expected more people to show up.)

時間がなかったから、コーヒーだけ飲みました。

Jikan ga nakatta kara, koohii dake nomimashita.

Since I did not have time, I just (only) had coffee.

In response to a question with **takusan** ‘many,’ for example, **shika** is appropriate, but not **dake**.

Q: ビールはたくさん飲みましたか。

Biiru wa takusan nomimashita ka.

Did you drink lots of beer?

A: いいえ、1本しか飲んでいません。

(not *いいえ、1本だけ飲みました。)

Iie, ippon shika nonde imasen.

(not *Iie, ippon dake nomimashita.)

No, I only drank one bottle of beer.

10.4

Sentence-final (or interactive) particles

Among the sentence-final (or interactive) particles, **ka**, **ne(e)**, **yo**, and **yo ne** are the most frequently used.

10.4.1

ka

ka is attached to the end of a sentence to form a question.

▶ 32

いつ日本に行きますか。

Itsu Nihon ni ikimasu ka.

When are you going to Japan?

10.4.2

ne, nee

ne and **nee** are attached to the end of a sentence to form a tag question and ask for agreement; ‘right?’ ‘eh?’. They are also frequently used to express rapport. In the example below, speaker A comments on the weather and asks for agreement with **ne**. Speaker B answers ‘yes, it is,’ with another **ne**. The two instances of **ne** are obligatory. Without them, the sentences would be declarative, with the speaker announcing something the other party does not know about, which would be odd in this situation. Such an exchange about weather is often used in place of sentences like ‘How are you?’ in English, and functions as part of the greetings.

A: いい天気ですね。

Ii tenki desu ne.

Nice weather, isn’t it.

B: そうですね。

Soo desu ne.

Yes, it is.

ne is also used to ask for confirmation.

映画は7時からですね。

Eega wa shichiji kara desu ne.

The movie starts at seven, right?

Sentence-final (or interactive) particles

- A: あのう、山田花子ですけど。
Anoo, Yamada Hanako desu kedo.
 Um, my name is Hanako Yamada.
- B: 山田花子さんですね？
Yamada Hanako-san desu ne?
 Ms Hanako Yamada?

Ne, usually elongated as **nee**, often expresses exclamation.

きれいですねえ。
Kiree desu nee.
 (Wow!) It's beautiful, isn't it.

それは大変だったねえ。
Sore wa taihen datta nee.
 That must have been tough.

Another function of **ne** is to soften the tone of a request (e.g. **V-te kudasai** 'please do...') made by someone higher in rank to his/her social subordinates. When a social subordinate makes a request, it is more appropriately expressed as a question (e.g. **V-te kudasaimasen ka** 'will you please do...?').

この書類、見ておいて下さいね？
Kono shorui, mite oite kudasai ne?
 Please have a look at this document, OK?

Some instances of **ne(e)** are optional. In such cases, the sentence sounds as though the speaker is consulting his/her memory. The second instance of **ne** in speaker B's sentence below is such an example.

- A: このみかん、いくらですか。
Kono mikan, ikura desu ka.
 How much are these tangerines?
- B: そうですねえ...、500円ですね。
Soo desu nee... , gohyaku en desu ne.
 Let's see... , they're 500 yen, I'd say.

The particles **ne** and **nee** (as well as **ka**, **yo**, etc.) are highly interactive and are mainly used in spoken language. In written language such as e-mail messages and personal letters, they may appear when the speaker is writing as if he/she were speaking to the addressee directly.

Ne(e) is used not only after sentences, but also after phrases. With each instance of **ne(e)**, the speaker makes sure that the hearer understands him/her up to that point. The hearer is expected to respond with **hai** or **ee** (in formal conversation) or **un** (in informal conversation) to each to assure the speaker that he/she is following. This kind of **ne** is especially common in telephone conversations.

あのですね、昨日ですね、お宅にうかがったんですけど。
Ano desu ne, kinoo desu ne, o-taku ni ukagatta n desu kedo.
 Um, yesterday, I visited your place.

10.4.3 **yo**

Yo is used when the speaker provides a piece of new information and asserts it. Not only is it emphatic, but it can also carry such meanings as 'I'm telling you' and 'I bet you didn't know that.' It can therefore sound rude if used to someone higher in rank, such as a student to his/her teacher (e.g. **Wakarimasu yo** 'Of course I understand!').

来月で会社を辞めることにしたよ。

Raigetsu de kaisha o yameru koto ni shita yo.

I have decided to leave the company next month, (I tell you).

それは違いますよ。

Sore wa chigaimasu yo.

I'm telling you, that is wrong.

10.4.4 yo ne

Yo ne expresses the combined meaning of asserting and confirming. Three types of usage can be identified.

(1) Confirming that the addressee shares the information:

あそこに青い建物が見えますよね。

Asoko ni aoi tatemono ga miemasu yo ne.

You see a blue building there, right?

(2) Confirming information of which the speaker is not completely certain

私、きのう、寝る時、薬飲んだよね。

Watashi, kinoo, neru toki, kusuri nonda yo ne.

I took medicine when I went to bed yesterday, didn't I?

(3) Asserting + expressing rapport:

あの時は死ぬかと思ったよねえ。

Ano toki wa shinu ka to omotta yo nee.

I thought I was going to die, you know.

▶ 77.2

10.5 Complex particles

Ni totte means 'as for' 'for' or 'to' and expresses that some evaluation holds true for someone or from someone's viewpoint.

私にとって外国語の勉強はそんなに難しくない。

Watashi ni totte gaikokugo no benkyoo wa sonna ni muzukashiku nai.

Studying a foreign language is not so difficult for me.

あなたにとって幸せとは何ですか。

Anata ni totte shiawase to wa nan desu ka.

What does happiness mean to you?

Both **ni tsuite** and **ni kanshite** 'about, regarding, concerning' follow a noun phrase and modify the verb, which usually relates to communication; e.g. talk, write, read, think. To modify another noun phrase, the particle **no** is added after the complex particle.

地球温暖化に関して (or について) 書きました。

Chikyuu ondanka ni kanshite (or ni tsuite) kakimashita.

I wrote about global warming.

[地球温暖化に関しての (or についての) レポート] を書きました。

[Chikyuu ondanka ni kanshite no (or ni tsuite no) reporto] o kakimashita.

I wrote [a report on global warming].

この問題に関して (or について) どう考えますか。

Kono mondai ni kanshite (or ni tsuite) doo kangaemasu ka.

What do you think about this issue?