

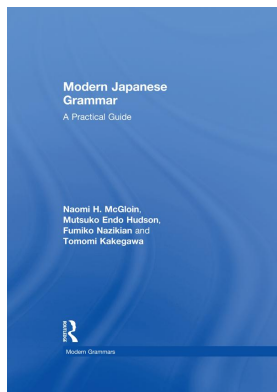
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## **Modern Japanese Grammar A Practical Guide**

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### **Telling the time, dates, etc.**

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# 36

## Telling the time, dates, etc.

Here are counters which are used to tell or ask the time:

### Time/duration

Hours: 時間	<b>jikan</b>
Minutes: 分	<b>fun</b>
Seconds: 秒	<b>byoo</b>
Frequency: 回/度	<b>kai/do</b>

### 36.1 Telling and asking the time

The question word for asking the time is 何時 **nan-ji** ‘what time’.

今何時ですか。(F)

**Ima nanji desu ka.**

What time is it now?

今何時？(I)

**Ima nanji?**

What time is it now?

明日の会議は何時ですか。(F)

**Ashita no kaigi wa nanji desu ka.**

What time is tomorrow’s meeting?

If you want to ask more specifically ‘how many minutes,’ then you may ask:

今9時何分ですか。(F)

**Ima kuji nanpun desu ka.**

How many minutes past nine is it now?

今9時何分？(I)

**Ima kuji nanpun?**

How many minutes past nine is it now?

The current time is expressed by the combination of time and the copula **desu**. The copula **desu** is used when telling the time in formal situations, while it is omitted in informal situations.

今4時50分です。(F)

**Ima yoji gojuppun desu.**

It is 4.50 now.

今4時50分。(I)

**Ima yoji gojuppun.**

It is 4.50 now.

今6時10分前です。(F)

**Ima, rokuji juppun mae desu.**

It is ten to six.

今6時10分前。(I)

**Ima, rokuji juppun mae.**

It is ten to six.

今6時10分すぎです。(F)

**Ima rokuji juppun sugi desu.**

It is ten minutes past six.

今6時10分すぎ。(I)

**Ima rokuji juppun sugi.**

It is ten minutes past six.

## 36.2 Telling and asking dates

The question words for asking dates are **itsu** ‘when’ or **nan-gatsu** ‘what month,’ **nan-nichi** ‘what day of the month,’ **nan-yoobi** ‘what day of the week.’ The following are useful temporal expressions.

### Months

For the months, **-gatsu** follows the numbers from **ichi** up to **juuni**.

**ichi-gatsu** ‘January,’ **ni-gatsu** ‘February,’ **san-gatsu** ‘March,’ **shi-gatsu** ‘April,’ **go-gatsu** ‘May,’ **roku-gatsu** ‘June,’ **shichi-gatsu** ‘July,’ **hachi-gatsu** ‘August,’ **ku-gatsu** ‘September,’ **juu-gatsu** ‘October,’ **juuichi-gatsu** ‘November,’ and **juuni-gatsu** ‘December’.

Note that **ichigatsu** and **ikkagetsu** are different in that the former refers to the month of January whereas the latter indicates duration of ‘one month’.

### Date of the month

1st	一日	<b>tsuitachi</b>
2nd	二日	<b>futsuka</b>
3rd	三日	<b>mikka</b>
4th	四日	<b>yokka</b>
5th	五日	<b>itsuka</b>
6th	六日	<b>muika</b>
7th	七日	<b>nanoka</b>
8th	八日	<b>yooka</b>
9th	九日	<b>kokonoka</b>
10th	十日	<b>tooka</b>
What day	何日	<b>nannichi</b>

Beyond 10th: add the number and **nichi**

11th (**juuichi-nichi**)

12th (**juuni-nichi**)

\*Exceptional cases are: 14th (**juuyokka**), 20th (**hatsuka**) and 24th (**nijuuyokka**).

### Duration of days

For duration of days, except for one day **ichinichi**, the forms for the dates of the month can be used. For the duration of more than one day, **-kan** ‘duration’ may follow.

1 day	一日	<b>ichinichi</b>
2 days	二日	<b>futsuka(kan)</b>
3 days	三日	<b>mikka(kan)</b>
4 days	四日	<b>yokka(kan)</b>
5 days	五日	<b>itsuka(kan)</b>
6 days	六日	<b>muika(kan)</b>
7 days	七日	<b>nanoka(kan)</b>
8 days	八日	<b>yooka(kan)</b>
9 days	九日	<b>kokonoka(kan)</b>
10 days	十日	<b>tooka(kan)</b>
How many days	何日	<b>nannichi (kan)</b>

### Years

There are two ways of counting years. For the western way of counting years, add **nen** to numbers. For example 1965 is **sen-kyuuhyaku-rokujuu-go-nen**. The traditional system of counting years, which is based on the reigns of emperors, is also commonly used. The current era is **Heisee** (平成), and the year 2012, for example, is **Heisee 24-nen**. The names for eras since 1868 are: **Meeji** (1868–1912), **Taishoo** (1912–late 1926), **Shoowa** (late 1926–early 1989), **Heisee** (1989–).

### Duration of years

For duration of years add **nen(kan)** to numbers. For example, ten years is **juu-nen (kan)**. ‘How many years’ is **nan-nen-(kan)**.

- (1) A: 田中さんの誕生日はいつ？ or 田中さんの誕生日は何月何日？ (I)  
**Tanaka-san no tanjoobi wa itsu** or **Tanaka san no tanjoobi wa nan-gatsu nan-nichi?**  
 When is Mr/Ms Tanaka’s birthday?
- B: (田中さんの誕生日は) 6月3日 (だよ)。(I)  
**(Tanaka san no tanjoobi wa) rokugatsu mikka (da yo).**  
 It is June 3rd.
- A: 6月3日は何曜日？ (I)  
**Rokugatsu mikka wa nan-yoobi?**  
 What day (of the week) is June 3rd?
- A: 水曜日。
- (2) A: 日本はもうお長いですか。(F)  
**Nihon wa moo o-nagai desu ka.**  
 Have you been (lived) in Japan for a long time?
- B: 私が日本に来たのは1980年ですから、もう三十年以上になります。(F)  
**Watashi ga Nihon ni kita no wa 1980 nen desu kara, moo sanjuunen ijoo ni narimasu.**  
 I came to Japan in 1980, so it has been more than 30 years.

## Telling and asking when something will happen or happened

The question word for ‘when’ is **itsu**. **Itsu** can be used in reference to day, week, month or year. **Arimasu** ‘to be (there), to take place’ or **desu** are often used to mean ‘something takes place.’ **Arimasu** is only used to mean that some event (such as a concert, a party, etc.) takes place. So, it is not possible to say **\*tanjoobi wa itsu arimasu ka** ‘when does your birthday take place?’.

- A: コンサートはいつありますか。      コンサートはいつですか。  
**Konsaato wa itsu arimasu ka.**      **Konsaato wa itsu desu ka.**  
 When does the concert take place?      When is the concert?

In responding to these questions, either **arimasu** ‘to take place’ or **desu** can be used.

- B1: 土曜日にあります。  
**Doyoobi ni arimasu.**  
 It takes place on Saturday.
- B2: 土曜日です。  
**Doyoobi desu.**  
 It’s Saturday.

Other verbs such as **okiru** ‘to happen, occur’ and **okoru** ‘to happen’, can also be used to mean ‘some historical event, natural phenomenon (e.g. typhoon, earthquake, etc.), or something beyond one’s control will occur or has occurred.

昨日東北地方で地震が起きました。  
**Kinoo Toohoku-chihoo de jishin ga okimashita.**  
 There was an earthquake in the Tohoku region yesterday.

- A: 明治維新はいつ起きたんですか。  
**Meeji-Ishin wa itsu okita n desu ka?**  
 When did the Meiji Restoration occur?

B1: 1868年に起きました。  
**1868 nen ni okimashita.**  
 It happened in 1868.

B2: 1868年です。  
**1868 nen desu.**  
 It’s 1868.

何だか今日はいいことが起きそうな気がする。  
**Nan da ka kyoo wa ii koto ga okisoo na ki ga suru.**  
 Somehow I feel something good will happen today.

将来またこのような大規模な噴火が起こるかもしれません。  
**Shoorai mata kono yoona daikibo na funka ga okoru kamo shiremasen.**  
 A large scale eruption like this may happen again in the future.

Both **okoru** ‘to happen’ and **okiru** ‘to get up, arise’ can be used in the context where some natural disaster occurs or something out of control happens. However, **okiru** may not replace **okoru** in compound verbs such as **maki-okoru** ‘to break out’, **waki-okoru** ‘to arise’.

In written texts such as newspaper articles or formal contexts such as TV news programs, the Chinese compound **hassee suru** is often used to refer to the occurrence of natural disasters, accidents, or diseases.

この辺では夏になるとよく山火事が発生する。  
**Kono hen de wa natsu ni naru to yoku yamakaji ga hassee suru.**  
 Forest fires often happen around here in the summer.

## 36.4 Telling and asking how long something takes

To say how long something takes, the verb **kakaru/kakarimasu** ‘to take’ or the copula verb **da/desu** is used. In asking how long, the question expression **dono gurai** is used. **Gurai**, or **kurai**, means ‘about’ and is used to express an approximate number, size, length of time, etc.

## Telling and asking how long something takes

- Q: ここから駅までどのぐらいかかりますか。  
**Koko kara eki made dono gurai kakarimasu ka.**  
How long does it take from here to the station?
- Q: ここから駅までどのぐらいですか。  
**Koko kara eki made dono gurai desu ka.**  
How long does it take from here to the station?
- A: 車で15分ぐらいかかります。  
**Kuruma de juugofun gurai kakarimasu.**  
It takes about 15 minutes by car.
- A: 車で15分くらいです。  
**Kuruma de juugofun kurai desu.**  
It's about 15 minutes by car.
- Q: 映画はどのぐらいですか。  
**Eega wa dono gurai desu ka.**  
How long is the movie?
- A: 1時間半くらいです。  
**Ichijikan han kurai desu.**  
It is about an hour and a half.
- Q: このプロジェクトはどのくらいかかりますか。  
**Kono purojekuto wa dono kurai kakarimasu ka.**  
How long does this project take to complete it?
- A: だいたい、1ヶ月くらいでしょう。  
**Daitai ikkagetsu kurai deshoo.**  
It will probably be about one month.