

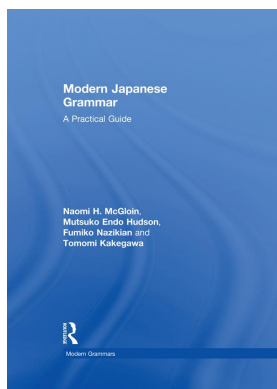
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Requests

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73

Requests

Which expression you use in making a request depends on many factors, including the social status of the person of whom you are asking a favor, the formality of the situation, the gender of the speaker and of the addressee, and the type of relationship. In a work situation, for example, colleagues (equals in status) might use very formal or polite request forms, and a superior might also use polite requests in talking to his/her younger colleagues. On the other hand, family members or close friends will make a request in informal ways. One also uses more polite requests in asking for a more difficult favor. In general, requests are made with the verbs of giving and receiving in Japanese. The following are some typical expressions in making requests.

73.1 Making requests in more formal situations

73.1.1 V-te itadakemasen ka, V-te itadakemasu ka

Using the verb **itadaku** (the humble form of **morau** ‘receive’) in its potential question form is the most polite way of asking a favor. It is used as in **V-te itadakenai deshoo ka** ‘Is it not possible for me to receive the favor of your doing . . . ?,’ **V-te itadakemasen ka** ‘May I not receive the favor of your doing . . . ?,’ or **V-te itadakemasu ka** ‘May I receive the favor of your doing . . . ?’ **V-te itadakenai deshoo ka** form is the most polite, and thus, is normally used in making a request of social superiors. It is also common to make some introductory remark, such as **chotto onegai ga aru n desu ga** ‘I have a favor to ask you,’ or **sumimasen ga** ‘I am sorry to bother you.’

▶ 19.2.8

ちよっとお願いがあるんですが。推薦状を書いていただけませんか。

Chotto o-negai ga aru n desu ga. Suisenjoo o kaite itadakenai deshoo ka.

I have a request. Would you be able to write a recommendation letter for me?

すみません、ちよっとこの書類に目を通していただけませんか。

Sumimasen, chotto kono shorui ni me o tooshite itadakenai deshoo ka.

I am sorry, but would you be able to look through this document?

すみません、この仕事ちよっと手伝っていただけませんか。

Sumimasen, kono shigoto chotto tetsudatte itadakemasen ka.

I am sorry, but would you be able to help me with this work?

あしたまで待っていただけますか。

Ashita made matte itadakemasu ka.

Will you please wait until tomorrow?

One can also make a request by simply saying that one would like the addressee to do something.

▶ 63.1.2

Making requests in more formal situations

すみません。あしたまで待っていただきたいんですが。

Sumimasen. Ashita made matte itadakitai n desu ga.

Sorry, but I would like you to wait until tomorrow.

Instead of V-te form, o-V(stem) **itadaku** can also be used, although this expression sounds rather business-like.

すみませんが、今日中にお送りいただけますか。

Sumimasen ga, kyoo-juu ni o-okuri itadakemasu ka.

I am sorry, but will you send (it) out some time today?

お調べいただけますか。

O-shirabe itadakemasu ka.

Will you check (this)?

If you are asking a very difficult favor, use the expression V-te **itadaku wake ni wa ikanai deshoo ka** 'Is it at all possible for you to do me the favor of V-ing?.'

今日中に送っていただくわけにはいかないでしょうか。

Kyoo-juu ni okutte itadaku wake ni wa ikanai deshoo ka.

Is it at all possible for you to send it out some time today?

会議の時間を変えていただくわけにはいかないでしょうか。

Kaigi no jikan o kaete itadaku wake ni wa ikanai deshoo ka.

Is it at all possible for you to change the meeting time?

▶ 18.6

73.1.2

V-te moraemasen ka, V-te moraemasu ka

V-te **morau** (neutral form meaning 'receive') can be used in making requests in similar forms as V-te **itadaku**. It is, however, not as polite as V-te **itadaku**. V-te **moraemasen ka** can be said, for example, to workplace colleagues or by superiors to subordinates.

▶ 19.2.8

手伝ってもらえませんか。

Tetsudatte moraemasen ka.

Can I ask you to help me?

これ、直してもらえますか。

Kore naoshite moraemasu ka.

Can I ask you to correct (it)?

73.1.3

V-te kuremasen ka

Requests can be made by using the verb **kureru**. However, it is not as polite as requests made by **-itadaku** and **-morau**, and hence it is not used in making requests to superiors.

▶ 19.2.8

あとでオフィスに来てくれませんか。

Ato de ofisu ni kite kuremasen ka.

Will you come to my office later?

飲み物を買ってきてくれませんか。

Nomimono o katte kite kuremasen ka.

Will you buy me something to drink?

73.1.4 ***o-negai* 'request'**

The noun **negai** meaning 'wish, desire, hope' with an honorific prefix **o-** is often used in making requests.

▶ 63.1.2; 18.2.2

推薦状をお願いしたいんですが。

Suisenjoo o onegai shitai n desu ga.

I would like to ask for (your) recommendation letter.

予約をお願いしたいんですが。

Yoyaku o onegai shitai n desu ga.

I would like to make a reservation.

一つお願いがあるんですが。

Hitotsu onegai ga aru n desu ga.

I have a favor to ask you.

すみません。もう一度お願いできますか。

Sumimasen. Moo ichido onegai dekimasu ka.

Sorry, but can you (do it, repeat it) one more time?

73.2 **Making requests in informal situations**

In making requests among family members and close friends, plain forms of the verbs **kureru** and **morau** are used. It can be preceded by a phrase such as **warui kedo** 'I feel bad, but. . .'

▶ 19.2.8

ペン貸してくれない？

Pen kashite kurenai?

Will you lend me a pen?

悪いけど、パソコン貸してもらえない？

Warui kedo, pasokon kashite moraenai?

Sorry, but can I borrow your computer?

あとで電話してくれる？

Ato de denwa shite kureru?

Will you call me later?

あとで電話してもらえる？

Ato de denwa shite moraeru?

Can you call me later?

In very informal situations, such as among close friends, **V-te** would be sufficient.

ペン貸して！

Pen kashite!

Lend me a pen!

ちょっと待って！

Chotto matte!

Wait!

73.3 ***V-te kudasai* 'please V'**

V-te kudasai can be used to make a request. However, it has the connotation of ordering someone to do something rather than asking someone to do something, and thus it is more appropriate when a superior uses it toward his/her subordinates. This form is also used in giving instructions.

じゃ、あとで電話してください。
Ja, ato de denwa shite kudasai.
 Please call me later.

ここにサインをしてください。
Koko ni sain o shite kudasai.
 Please sign here.

73.4 Responding to a request

73.4.1 Giving an affirmative response

In responding to a request, an affirmative response can be given by saying:

はい/ああ、いいですよ。(higher status → lower status)
Hai/aa, ii desu yo.
 Yes, sure.

はい。(lower status → higher status; between equals) (F)
Hai.

はい、わかりました。(lower status → higher status; between equals) (F)
Hai, wakarimashita.
 Yes, I understand.

はい、承知しました。(lower status → higher status) (F)
Hai, shoochi shimashita.
 Yes, certainly.

うん、いいよ。(between equals) (I)
Un, ii yo.
 Sure, OK.

73.4.2 Giving a negative response

If the request has to be refused, it is important to be tactful in doing so and not hurt the other person's feeling or face. Normally, there is some hesitation when one is going to give a negative response. This could be a short pause or an expression such as **soo desu nee** 'well' or **uun** 'well.' A reason for noncompliance is usually given, such as not having time, not having enough knowledge, etc. The following are some typical negative responses.

うーん、今ちょっと忙しいんですが。
Uun, ima chotto isogashii n desu ga.
 Well, I am a little busy right now.

すみませんが、今ちょっと暇がなくて。
Sumimasen ga, ima chotto hima ga nakute.
 I am sorry, but I don't have time right now, and . . .

そう言われても、ちょっと困るんですが。
Soo iwarete mo, chotto komaru n desu ga.
 Well, you say that, but I am in a difficult spot.

今ちょっと都合がわるいんですが。
Ima chotto tsugoo ga warui n desu ga.
 It is a little inconvenient for me right now.

Pleading for time to think about it can often be a polite refusal.

じゃ、ちょっと考えておきます。
Ja, chotto kangaete okimasu.
 Well, I will think about it.

じゃ、ちょっと考えさせてください。

Ja, chotto kangaesasete kudasai.

Then, let me think about it.

A more direct refusal can be given among intimate friends or family members.

ペン貸してくれない？

Pen kashite kurenai?

Will you lend me a pen?

だめだよ。今使ってるから。

Dame da yo. Ima tsukatte ru kara.

No. I am using it now.

それ見せて？

Sore misete?

Let me see it.

いやだよ。まだ読んでるんだから。

Iya da yo. Mada yonde ru n da kara.

No. I am still reading it.

▶ 18.2.2; 22.4