

Reading and Writing Practice: Questions, Requests and Responses

Cover the two columns on the right, and practice reading the Japanese words. Then, cover the hiragana words on the left. Using the downloadable gridded paper from this site, see if you can write the words correctly.

1. ～ですか	X desu ka	Is it X?
2. なん (なに)	nan (nani)	what
3. だれ	dare	who
4. いつ	itsu	when
5. どこ	doko	where
6. どうしてですか	dōshite desu ka	why is (it)?
7. なぜ	naze	why (formal)
8. なんで	nan de	why (casual)
9. どちら	dochira	which (one of the two)
10. どちらですか	dochira desu ka	which one of the two is (it)?
11. どれ	dore	which (one of them)
12. いくら	ikura	how much (money)
13. どのぐらい	dono gurai	how much; how long
14. どのぐらいですか	dono gurai desu ka	how much/long is (it)?
15. どの～	dono X	which X
16. どの～ですか	dono X desu ka	which X is (it)?
17. はい	hai	that's right; here I am; here you are
18. はあ	hā	that's right (polite; formal)
19. ええ	ē	that's right (less formal)
20. うん	un	that's right (casual)

Hai means “that's right,” “present” (in roll call), or “here you are” (handing something over). Other three expressions above only mean “that's right” and do not have the other two usages that *hai* has.

21. いいえ	ie	that's wrong; no
22. いえ	ie	that's wrong
23. いや	iya	that's wrong; well
24. はい、そうです。	Hai, sō desu.	Yes, that's right.
25. ちがいます (ちがう)	chigaimasu (chigau)	that's wrong; that's different
26. ええ、まあ	ē, mā	well, kind of . . .

Requesting something

There are many ways to make a request in Japanese, with different politeness levels and shades of formality. It is challenging for foreign learners to select the right one for different contexts. Some of the most commonly used forms are listed below. The top two are the most common, and the rest are ordered in order of formality, from most formal to least formal.

1. ください	kudasai	please give (it) to me
2. おねがいします	onagai shimasu	I humbly request (it)
3. くださいませんか	kudasaimasen ka	could you please give (it) to me?
4. いただけませんか	itadakemasen ka	could I have (it) please?
5. いただいでいいですか	itadaite ī desu ka	would it be okay if I have (it)?
6. いただきたいんですけど	itadakitai n desu kedo . . .	I'd like to have (it) but . . .

7. もらえませんか	moraemasen ka	can I have (it)?
8. もらっていいですか	moratte ī desu ka	would it be okay if I have (it)?
9. もらいたいんですけど	moritai n desu kedo	I'd like to have (it), if it's ok...
10. くれませんか	kuremasen ka	would you give (it) to me?
11. くれる?	kureru	will you give (it) to me? (casual)
12. ちょうだい	chōdai	give (it) to me (casual)
13. くれ。	kure	give it to me (casual, rough)