

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S1 #17

Asking Somebody's Age in Japanese

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KANJI

1. かおり: ねえ、テイラーさん、サラちゃんはどこですか？
2. テイラー: こっちです。
3. かおり: (in a soft voice) あ、かわいい～。
4. まさと: ちいさいですね。なんさいですか？
5. テイラー: 1さいです。
6. (Sarah starts to cry)
7. かおり: ごめんごめん！うるさい？ごめんね～。

KANA

1. かおり: ねえ、テイラーさん、サラちゃんはどこですか？
2. テイラー: こっちです。
3. かおり: (in a soft voice) あ、かわいい。
4. まさと: ちいさいですね。なんさいですか？
5. テイラー: いっさいです。
6. (Sarah starts to cry)
7. かおり: ごめんごめん！うるさい？ごめんね。

ROMANIZATION

CONT'D OVER

1. KAORI: Nē, Teirā-san, Sara-chan wa doko desu ka?
2. TEIRĀ: Kocchi desu.
3. KAORI: (in a soft voice) A, kawaii.
4. MASATO: Chiisai desu ne. Nansai desu ka?
5. TEIRĀ: Issai desu.
6. (Sarah starts to cry)
7. KAORI: Gomen gomen! Urusai? Gomen ne.

ENGLISH

1. KAORI: Hey, Taylor, where's Sarah?
2. TAYLOR: She's over here.
3. KAORI: (in a soft voice) Ah, how cute!
4. MASATO: She's so small. How old is she?
5. TAYLOR: One year old.
6. (Sarah starts to cry)
7. KAORI: Oh, I'm sorry! Are we loud? I'm sorry!

VOCABULARY

Kanji	Kana	Romaji	English
どこ	どこ	doko	where
こっち	こっち	kocchi	over here
才	さい	sai	counter for years of age
ごめん	ごめん	gomen	Sorry
何才	なんさい	nansai	how old
うるさい	うるさい	urusai	noisy, loud, annoying; Adj(i)

SAMPLE SENTENCES

<p>改札はどこですか。 <i>Kaisatsu wa doko desu ka.</i></p> <p>Where is the ticket gate?</p>	<p>こっち？ そっち？ どっち？ <i>Kocchi? Socchi? Docchi?</i></p> <p>Here? There? Where?</p>
<p>健くんは1才です。 <i>Ken-kun wa issai desu.</i></p> <p>Ken is 1 year old.</p>	<p>本当にごめん。 <i>Hontō ni gomen.</i></p> <p>I'm really sorry.</p>
<p>お嬢ちゃん、何才？ <i>O-jō-chan, nan-sai?</i></p> <p>How old are you, young lady?</p>	<p>うるさい音楽は嫌いです。 <i>Urusai ongaku wa kirai desu.</i></p> <p>I hate loud music.</p>

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

Kocchi(こっち)

Kocchi means "this way" or "over here." The full version of the word is *kochira*, which sounds more polite and formal, but this shortened version, *kocchi*, is very common.

Chiisai(ちいさい)

Chiisai is an adjective that means "small." In the dialogue, Masato uses it to describe Sarah, Taylor's baby daughter.

Urusai (うるさい)

Urusai is an adjective that means "noisy" or "loud."

Gomen (ごめん)

Gomen is a phrase that we use to apologize, and it means "sorry." This is a casual form of the phrase, which is why Kaori uses it with Sarah. The more formal version of the phrase is *gomen nasai* (ごめんなさい).

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is Numbers and Asking or Saying One's Age

Nansai desu ka?

なんさいですか?

"How old is she?"

In this lesson, you will learn how to tell someone your age if asked or how to ask someone's age.

Numbers in Japanese

Let's take a look at the numbers one through twenty and multiples of ten up to one hundred in Japanese.

Numbers from zero through ten:

Number	Japanese
0	<i>zero/rei</i>
1	<i>ichi</i>
2	<i>ni</i>
3	<i>san</i>
4	<i>shi/yon</i>
5	<i>go</i>
6	<i>roku</i>
7	<i>shichi/nana</i>

8	<i>hachi</i>
9	<i>kyū</i>
10	<i>jū</i>

Numbers from eleven through twenty:

Number	Japanese
11	<i>jū-ichi</i>
12	<i>jū-ni</i>
13	<i>jū-san</i>
14	<i>jū-yon</i>
15	<i>jū-go</i>
16	<i>jū-roku</i>
17	<i>jū-nana</i>
18	<i>jū-hachi</i>
19	<i>jū-kyū</i>
20	<i>ni-jū</i>

Multiples of ten up to one hundred:

Number	Japanese
10	<i>jū</i>
20	<i>ni-jū</i>
30	<i>san-jū</i>
40	<i>yon-jū</i>
50	<i>go-jū</i>

60	<i>roku-jū</i>
70	<i>nana-jū</i>
80	<i>hachi-jū</i>
90	<i>kyū-jū</i>
100	<i>hyaku</i>

Asking or Saying One's Age

Let's take a look at how to ask one's age or say your own age.

Sentence Pattern (Asking one's age):

<i>Japanese</i>	"English"
<i>Nansai desu ka?</i>	"How old are you?"
[Person A] <i>wa nansai desu ka?</i>	"How old is [person A]?"

Sentence Pattern (Saying one's age):

<i>Japanese</i>	"English"
[Person A] <i>wa</i> [number + <i>sai</i>] <i>desu.</i>	"[Person A] is [number] years old."

In this pattern,

Person A = the person being talked about ("me," "you," "he," "she," etc.)

[Number + *sai*] = the person's age plus the word *sai*

Examples from This Dialogue

- Masato: (Sara wa) nansai desu ka?*
Teirā: (Sara wa) Issai desu.
 まさと：(サラは) なんさいですか？
 テイラー：(サラは) 1さいです。
 Masato: "How old is she (Sarah)?"
 Taylor: "(She's) One year old."

Sample Sentences

1. *Watashi wa jūgo-sai desu.*
わたしは15さいです。
"I'm fifteen years old."
2. *Merissa wa san-sai desu.*
メリッサは3さいです。
"Melissa is three years old."

Important! While saying one's age is as simple as saying a number plus *sai*, there are some numbers that go through a transformation when we use them to talk about age.

Let's look at those numbers:

Age	Japanese
1	<i>ichi + sai = issai</i>
8	<i>hachi + sai = hassai</i>
10	<i>jū + sai = jussai</i>
11	<i>jūichi + sai = jūissai</i>
20	<i>nijū + sai = hatachi**</i>
21	<i>nijūichi + sai = nijūissai</i>

**Note: The word for "twenty years old" is *hatachi* (instead of, *nijūssai*, which you might expect it to be).