

LESSON NOTES

Survival Phrases S2 #8

Can You Speak English?

CONTENTS

- 2 Kanji
- 2 Kana
- 2 Romanization
- 2 English
- 3 Vocabulary
- 3 Sample Sentences
- 3 Grammar
- 4 Cultural Insight

8

KANJI

1. 英語を話せますか？
2. スペイン語を話せますか？
3. フランス語を話せますか？

KANA

1. えいごをはなせますか？
2. すぺいんごをはなせますか？
3. ふらんすごをはなせますか？

ROMANIZATION

1. Eigo o hanasemasu ka?
2. Supein-go o hanasemasu ka?
3. Furansu-go o hanasemasu ka?

ENGLISH

1. Can you speak English?
2. Can you speak Spanish?

CONT'D OVER

3. Can you speak French?

VOCABULARY

Kanji	Kana	Romaji	English
英語	えいご	Eigo	English
話せます	はなせます	hanasemasu	can speak (polite form)
スペイン語	すぺいんご	Supein-go	Spanish
フランス語	ふらんすご	Furansu-go	French

SAMPLE SENTENCES

英語がわかりますか。 <i>Eigo ga wakarimasu ka.</i> Do you understand English?	英語を話せますか。 <i>Eigo o hanasemasu ka.</i> Can you speak English?
スペイン語のガイドありますか。 <i>Supein-go no gaido arimasu ka.</i> Do you have a Spanish information guide?	彼はフランス語を話す。 <i>Kare wa Furansu-go o hanasu.</i> He speaks French.

GRAMMAR

Language Tip

In Japanese, "Can you speak English?" is *Eigo o hanasemasu ka?* The first word *eigo* means, "English." Following that, is the object-marking particle *o*. *Hanasemasu* is the polite way of saying "can speak." And the last syllable, the particle *ka*, turns the sentence into an interrogative. Japanese requires no subject in some sentences, so *hanasemasu* only means, "can speak," not "can you speak." We translate it as "can you speak," because the person you're talking to is the implied subject.

Now let's try a different language. How about Spanish? The Japanese word for Spanish is *Supein-go*. *Supein* is the Japanese pronunciation of the word "Spain." Usually, the name of the language is the country name (in this case Spain) followed by the word *go* which means, "language." So "Can you speak Spanish?" is *Supein-go o hanasemasu ka?* Let's try another language. How about French? The country name is France. So, start with *Furansu* (the Japanese pronunciation of the word "France") plus *go*, for "language." So, "Can you speak French?" would be *Furansu-go o hanasemasu ka?* Easy, right?

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Sachiko's Secret: American and British English

Tip #1

Sachiko's Secret. Today's secret is the origin of the word *eigo*, which means, "English." As I said earlier, typically a country name precedes *go* to name the language spoken in that country. But in the case of *eigo*, there is no country named, *ei*. Then how did the word come about? Well, *eigo* is short for *eikokugo*. *Eikoku* means the "United Kingdom." A long time ago, Japanese people learned two types of English - British English and American English. British English was called *eigo*, an abbreviation of the word *eikokugo*. American English was called *beigo*, because *Beikoku* in Japanese refers to the United States. My parent's generation learned different dialects of *eigo* and *beigo*. In *eigo* class, they learned to say, "Have you a pen?" while in *beigo* class, they learned to say, "Do you have a pen?"

Tip

A very informal way of saying, "Can you speak English?" is *Eigo okay?* or "English okay?" Most people in Japan will understand the word "English," and they'll see that you're a foreigner so this should be no problem. But it would be much more polite and impressive if you said *Eigo o hanasemasu ka?* So give it a try.