

LESSON NOTES

Learn Japanese Grammar Video - Absolute Beginner S1 #17 Introduction to Informal Japanese Verbs

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KANJI

1. 「何食べる？」 「じゃ、トースト食べる。」

KANA

1. 「なに食べる？」 「じゃ、トースト食べる。」

ROMANIZATION

1. "Nani taberu?" "Ja, tōsuto taberu."

ENGLISH

1. "What do you want to eat?" "OK, I'll have toast."

VOCABULARY

Kanji	Kana	Romaji	English
寝る	ねる	neru	to go to bed, to sleep; V2
ある	ある	aru	to exist (for inanimate objects); to have
行く	いく	iku	to go; V1
待つ	まつ	matsu	to wait; V1

SAMPLE SENTENCES

毎日十時間寝る。 <i>Mainichi, jū-jikan neru.</i> I sleep for ten hours every night.	にきびがたくさんある。 <i>Nikibi ga takusan aru.</i> I have many pimples.
あとでコンビニに行きます。 <i>Ato de konbini ni ikimasu.</i> I'll go to the convenience store later.	ちょっと待ってください。 <i>Chotto matte kudasai.</i> Please wait a minute.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is Informal Japanese Verbs

Informal Japanese Verb Formation

● -masu form vs plain form ●

So far the verbs we have introduced have been in the *-masu* form: *ikimasu, wakarimasu, mimasu, tabemasu, shimasu, kimasu*. They have a corresponding form called the plain form or the dictionary form. In order to look up the verbs in a dictionary, you need to know the dictionary form (ie the plain form) of the verb.

● Three verb inflection patterns ●

There are three classes of Japanese verbs.

- i) When *masu* is preceded by *-i* ⇒ Class 1 verb
- ii) When *masu* is preceded by *-e* or a one syllable sound ⇒ Class 2 verb
- iii) "*kimasu*/to come", "*shimasu*/to do" ⇒ Class 3 verb or irregular verb

See the following chart.

Class 1 verbs

- (1) Drop *-i masu*
- (2) Add *u*

English	masu form	Dictionary form
to meet	あいます/ai masu	あう/au
to go	行きます/iki masu	行く/iku
to speak	はなします/hanashi masu	話す/hanasu

to drink	飲みます/ nomi masu	飲む/ nomu
to wait	待ちます/ machi masu	待つ/ matsu
to exist	あります/ ari masu	ある/ aru

Class 2 verbs

(1) Drop *masu*

(2) Add *ru*

English	masu form	Dictionary form
to eat	食べます/ tabe masu	食べる/ taberu
to see	みます/ mi masu	みる/ miru
to sleep	寝ます/ ne masu	寝る/ neru

Class 3 verbs

Irregular

English	masu form	Dictionary form
to do	します/ shi masu	する/ suru
to come	来ます/ ki masu	来る/ kuru

* Notice that the dictionary form of class one verbs ends in an *-u* sound, whereas the dictionary form of class 2 verbs ends in *e-ru* or *i-ru*. That is why class one verbs are also called "*u* verbs" and class two verbs are also known as "*ru* verbs."

Casual style speech and polite style speech

There are two speech styles in Japanese, casual and polite. The speaker makes a choice according to the relationship between themselves and the listener. The plain dictionary form is used in informal situations, while the *masu* form is used in formal situations.

Compare:

"What are you going to have?"

Mother → Guest

- 何を食 **べ**ますか。 / *Nani o tabemasu ka?*

Mother → Daughter

- 何(を)食 **べ**る。 / *Nani (o) taberu?*

The mother uses the *-masu* form when speaking to a guest. She uses plain form to ask her own daughter the same question. When the sentence ending particle *か/ka* is added to a polite sentence, the sentence becomes a question. In a casual sentence, instead of adding the particle *か/ka*, the speaker's intonation rises at the end of the sentence.