

■ Comprehensive guide to Japanese particles

Particles in Japanese are one of the central topics in the study of the language.

I decided to create **a comprehensive E book** that would bring together all those elements that in the Japanese grammatical concept are considered “particles” with different functions and uses.

I started from the common postpositions **は, が, を, で, に** to also develop elements such as **やら, こそ, ほど, つつ, だけ** etc.

I have collected more than **50 particles developed in their functions and with many examples** explaining their use. For each particle I have also listed the variants used in the language: for example for the particle **だけ** you will also find elements and expressions derived from it such as **だけに, だけあって, だけではなく, たいだけ** etc.

You will find the basic structure consisting of **の + noun + に** such as **の^{うえ}に**, **の^{まえ}に** to translate those elements considered **prepositions** in many languages as: above, below, behind, etc.

This E-book is the result of my detailed research through original Japanese material and also exceptional grammars carefully studied and preserved over the years in my library.

■ What are particles?

Particles in Japanese language are called **joshi** じょし 助詞:

助 means help, aid

詞 represents the particle

They are **non-autonomous elements and can follow nouns, adjectives, verbs or auxiliaries**. Some particles can be considered prepositions and conjunctions as in many non-Japanese languages, but Japanese particles also have other functions.

My suggestion is to study and practice particles in the context of Japanese sentences. I mean starting from Japanese and then translating into our own language, not the other way around.

Examples of translation of the preposition at:

at home じたく 自宅で

at weekends しゅうまつ 週末は or simply しゅうまつ 週末

at 5 o'clock ごじ 五時に

As you can see, the preposition at **is translated in different ways in Japanese**. On the contrary, I would suggest analysing the functions of the individual particles from Japanese, and that is precisely the aim of this E book.

Particles Groups

Japanese grammars have various subdivisions for particles, let's say we can generally divide them into 4 groups.

□ かくじょし 格助詞 **Case particles**

These are the best known particles and the first ones that are analyzed when one begins to study Japanese grammar.

Case particles express the semantic relationship between the noun and its predicate such **が**, **を**, **に**, **へ**, **と**, **から**, **より**, **で**, **まで** etc.

にほんご べんきょう
日本語**を**勉強しています。

nihongoobenkyoushiteimasu.

I'm studying Japanese.

ちか うち にほん りょこう
近い**内**に日本**を**旅行したい。

chikaiuchininihonoryokoushitai.

I would like to travel to Japan soon.

□ ^{ふくじょし}副助詞: Adverbial particles

"Adverbial particles" are generally used to convey meanings such as emphasis, topic, limitation, degree, and exemplification.

Adverbial particles are used when you want to **add additional meaning** to an existing word or phrase.

Some examples of adverbial particles are *こそ, ほど, など, だけ*.

^{しごと}仕事を^{しゅうかん}1週間^{やす}ほど休みたい。

shigotoo1shuukanhodoyasumitai.

I want to take a break from work for about a week.

The sentence would still make sense even without the particle **ほど**, on the other hand, the meaning changes if you omit the adverbial particle.

□ ^{しゅうじょし}終助詞: Final particles

The **final particles** or **sentence-ending particles** are used at the end of a sentence to express the speaker's **feelings, intentions**, or mood, such as **surprise, confirmation, doubt**, or **politeness**.

They can also be used to **clarify a statement, soften the tone, or seek confirmation from the listener**.

As for adverbial particles, **they don't change the fundamental grammatical structure** of the sentence but rather **add additional meaning, tone or context**.

They are widely used in informal and colloquial language and include: か, か
しら, かな, よ, ぞ, ぜ, さ, わ, ね, なあ. よね.

ことし ^{なつ} 夏は ^{あつ} 暑くなる **かしら**。

kotoshinonatsuwaatsukunarukashira.

I wonder if this summer will be hot.

And now let's start!

■ 「は」 and the main topic

は is the first particle we study in Japanese and generally indicates the **main topic of the sentence**. Let's remember that its transcription in kana is は, the character for **ha**, but the reading is **wa**.

は is an emphasising particle and indicates that the noun placed before it is the **theme of the sentence or speech** .

オスカーさんはドイツ語ごの先生せんせいです。

osukaasanwadoitsugonosenseidesu.

Oskar is a German language teacher.

あに せ たか
兄は背が高い。

aniwasegatakai.

My brother is tall.

□ ～ は ～ copula だ

The first simple use of the particle は is in the **sentence with the copula だ** (plain form) or **です** (polite form) as in the following sentences.

お名前^{なまえ}は何^{なん}ですか。

onamaewanandesuka.

What is your name?

デュボワさん^ごはフランス語^{せんせい}の先生^{せんせい}です。

deyubowasanwafuransugonosenseidesu.

Mrs Dubois is a French teacher.

Let's remember that **the topic of the sentence often coincides with the subject** of the predicate, but can also represent the **object**, the **time** or the **place**; it is therefore a very **versatile particle**.

お茶^{ちや}は^の飲みましたか。

ochawanomimashitaka.

Did you drink tea?

The particle は is often linked to が; I will therefore shortly report on the **structures in which the two particles are used together** and we will also see **the differences in use and meaning between は and が**.

■ 「が」 and the subject

The particle **が** is connected to the **subject**, indicates the subject's actions, situations and state.

ワンちゃん^{わたし ちかづ}が私に近付いてきた。

wanchangawatashinichikazuitekita.

The dog came up to me.

お母さん^{かあ りょうり つく}が料理を作っています。

okaasangaryouriotsukutteimasu.

My mother is cooking.

In the 2 sentences we see how the elements preceding が (the dog in the first and the mother in the second) represent the **subject performing the action** in the sentence.

□ Structures using は and が

In Japanese there are structures, commonly used phrases that use the particle は and が, respectively.

Expressions referring to the **ability** or **inability** to perform an activity; forms expressing **preference** or **rejection** with respect to a thing, situation or activity use the following structure.

Noun + は + Noun + が + copula だ

わたし にほんぢゃ す
私 は日本茶 が好きだ。

watashiwanihonchagasukida.

I like Japanese tea.

いもうと すうがく にがて
妹 は数学 が苦手だ。

imoutowasuugakuganigateda.

My sister is not good at math.

Here is a short list of this type of expression.

～は～が^す好きだ like

～は～が^{きら}嫌いだ hate

～は～が^{とくい}得意だ being good at

～は～が^{じょうず}上手だ being good at (preferable not to use it for oneself and one's family, out of a sense of humility; let's use ^{とくい}得意 in this case)