

日本語

JAPANESE FOR SOCIAL LIFE

Making Friends

ともだち・を・つくる

Walking up, introducing yourself, holding a real conversation, and walking away with a **LINE** contact. The social base layer that everything romantic is built on top of.

LESSON 1 OF 6

01 Introducing yourself じこしょうかい

A clean self-introduction (自己紹介, *jiko-shōkai*) is a small ritual in Japan and people genuinely appreciate it. Keep it short, warm, and end with **yoroshiku**.

JAPANESE	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH
はじめまして	<i>ha-ji-me-mashte</i>	Nice to meet you (lit. "for the first time")
〜と申します / 〜です	<i>~to mōshimasu / ~des</i>	"I'm ___" (formal / normal). e.g. マイクです = "I'm Mike."
〜と <i>~to</i> (quote) 申します <i>mōshimasu</i> am called です <i>des</i> am		
イギリスから来ました	<i>igirisu kara kimashta</i>	I came from England. (swap your country)
イギリス <i>igirisu</i> England から <i>kara</i> from 来ました <i>kimashta</i> came		
旅行で来ています	<i>ryokō de kite imas</i>	I'm here travelling.
旅行 <i>ryokō</i> travel で <i>de</i> for/by 来ています <i>kite imas</i> am here		
東京に住んでいます	<i>tōkyō ni sunde imas</i>	I live in Tokyo.
東京 <i>tōkyō</i> Tokyo に <i>ni</i> in 住んでいます <i>sunde imas</i> live		
よろしくお願ひします	<i>yoroshiku onegai shimas</i>	"Let's get along / pleasure to meet you."
よろしく <i>yoroshiku</i> favourably お願ひします <i>onegai shimas</i> please		

Countries & quick facts くに

JAPANESE	SOUNDS	ENGLISH
アメリカ / イギリス	<i>amerika / igirisu</i>	USA / UK
オーストラリア / カナダ	<i>ōsutoraria / kanada</i>	Australia / Canada
ドイツ / フランス	<i>doitsu / furansu</i>	Germany / France

JAPANESE

SOUNDS

ENGLISH

仕事は～です

shigoto wa ~ des

My job is ____.

仕事 *shigoto* job は *wa* (topic) ～です *~ des* is ____

エンジニア / 学生 / 先生

enjinja / gakusei / sensei

engineer / student / teacher

YOU

はじめまして、マイクです。オーストラリアから来ました。

Hajimemashite, Maiku desu. Ōsutoraria kara kimashita.

Nice to meet you, I'm Mike. I'm from Australia.

THEM

わぁ、オーストラリア! よろしくお願ひします。

Wā, Ōsutoraria! Yoroshiku onegai shimasu.

Oh wow, Australia! Pleasure to meet you.

YOU

日本語は少しだけです。よろしくお願ひします!

Nihongo wa sukoshi dake desu. Yoroshiku onegai shimasu!

I only speak a little Japanese. Looking forward to it!

02 Breaking the ice きっかけ

Japanese strangers rarely get cold-approached, so a **warm, low-pressure reason** to talk works far better than a slick line. Asking for help, reacting to the place you're in, or a light compliment all open doors.

Friendly openers that don't feel like a pickup あいさつ

JAPANESE	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	WHERE
すみません、写真お願いできますか？	<i>sumimasen, shashin onegai dekimas ka?</i>	Excuse me, could you take a photo?	Anywhere – easy, natural.
すみません <i>sumimasen</i> excuse me 写真 <i>shashin</i> photo お願いできます <i>onegai dekimas</i> may I ask か <i>ka</i> (question)			
ここ、座ってもいいですか？	<i>koko, suwatte mo ii des ka?</i>	Is it okay if I sit here?	Bar, café, counter.
ここ <i>koko</i> here 座っても <i>suwatte mo</i> even if (I) sit いいです <i>ii des</i> is okay か <i>ka</i> (question)			
おススメは何ですか？	<i>osusume wa nan des ka?</i>	What do you recommend?	To staff or a neighbour at an izakaya.
おススメ <i>osusume</i> recommendation は <i>wa</i> (topic) 何 <i>nan</i> what です <i>des</i> is か <i>ka</i> (question)			
それ、美味しそう!何ですか？	<i>sore, oishisō! nan des ka?</i>	That looks delicious – what is it?	Food spots, bars.
それ <i>sore</i> that 美味しそう <i>oishisō</i> looks delicious 何 <i>nan</i> what です <i>des</i> is か <i>ka</i> (question)			
この辺でいいお店知ってますか？	<i>kono hen de ii omise shitte mas ka?</i>	Do you know a good place around here?	Genuinely useful + opens chat.
この辺 <i>kono hen</i> around here で <i>de</i> in/at いい <i>ii</i> good お店 <i>omise</i> shop/place 知ってます <i>shitte mas</i> know か <i>ka</i> (question)			
日本語、勉強中なんです。	<i>nihongo, benkyō- chū nan des.</i>	I'm in the middle of studying Japanese.	Invites them to help & talk.
日本語 <i>nihongo</i> Japanese 勉強中 <i>benkyō-chū</i> studying なんです <i>nan des</i> (explaining)			

CULTURAL NOTE — WHY THE SOFT APPROACH WINS

Western-style direct cold approaches can read as aggressive or alarming in Japan, especially in daytime/public settings. The move that works is a genuine, useful, low-stakes question that lets the other person feel safe and helpful. Being a polite, slightly curious foreigner is a **huge** advantage — lean into it rather than fighting it with intensity.

03 Keeping it going こ・かいわ

The fear is always "then what?" These question stems keep any conversation alive almost indefinitely.

The W-questions しつもん

JAPANESE	SOUNDS	ENGLISH
お名前は?	<i>o-namae wa?</i>	Your name?
お名前 <i>o-namae</i> name は <i>wa</i> (topic)		
どこから来たの?	<i>doko kara kita no?</i>	Where are you from? (casual)
どこ <i>doko</i> where から <i>kara</i> from 来た <i>kita</i> came の <i>no</i> (question)		
何してる人?/ お仕事は?	<i>nani shiteru hito? / o-shigoto wa?</i>	What do you do?
何 <i>nani</i> what してる <i>shiteru</i> doing 人 <i>hito</i> person お仕事 <i>o-shigoto</i> work は <i>wa</i> (topic)		
休みの日は何してるの?	<i>yasumi no hi wa nani shiteru no?</i>	What do you do on your days off?
休み <i>yasumi</i> day off の <i>no</i> (possessive) 日 <i>hi</i> day は <i>wa</i> (topic) 何 <i>nani</i> what してる <i>shiteru</i> doing の <i>no</i> (question)		
趣味は何ですか?	<i>shumi wa nan des ka?</i>	What are your hobbies?
趣味 <i>shumi</i> hobby は <i>wa</i> (topic) 何 <i>nan</i> what です <i>des</i> is か <i>ka</i> (question)		
今日は誰かと一緒?	<i>kyō wa dareka to issho?</i>	Are you here with someone today?
今日 <i>kyō</i> today は <i>wa</i> (topic) 誰か <i>dareka</i> someone と <i>to</i> with 一緒 <i>issho</i> together		

Reactions that make people open up リアクション

JAPANESE	SOUNDS	ENGLISH
いいね! いい <i>ii</i> good ね <i>ne</i> huh	<i>ii ne!</i>	Nice! / Cool!
すごい!	<i>sugoi!</i>	Amazing! / Wow!
面白い!	<i>omoshiroi!</i>	Interesting / funny!
わかる～	<i>wakaru~</i>	"I totally get that" — bonding.
それ気になる! それ <i>sore</i> that 気になる <i>ki ni naru</i> am curious	<i>sore ki ni naru!</i>	"Ooh, now I'm curious about that!"
もっと聞きたい もっと <i>motto</i> more 聞きたい <i>kikitai</i> want to hear	<i>motto kikitai</i>	I want to hear more.

Common-ground topics that land わだい

TOPIC	OPENER	SOUNDS	ENGLISH
Food	好きな食べ物は?	<i>suki na tabemono wa?</i>	What food do you like?
	好きな <i>suki na</i> favourite 食べ物 <i>tabemono</i> food は <i>wa</i> (topic)		
Travel	旅行は好き?どこ行きたい?	<i>ryokō wa suki? doko ikitai?</i>	Do you like travel? Where do you want to go?
	旅行 <i>ryokō</i> travel は <i>wa</i> (topic) 好き <i>suki</i> like どこ <i>doko</i> where 行きたい <i>ikitai</i> want to go		
Music / artists	どんな音楽聴くの?	<i>donna ongaku kiku no?</i>	What kind of music do you listen to?
	どんな <i>donna</i> what kind of 音楽 <i>ongaku</i> music 聴く <i>kiku</i> listen to の <i>no</i> (question)		
Anime / film	アニメとか観る?	<i>anime toka miru?</i>	Do you watch anime and stuff?
	アニメ <i>anime</i> anime とか <i>toka</i> and such 観る <i>miru</i> watch		

TOPIC	OPENER	SOUNDS	ENGLISH
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The area	この街、長いのか?	<i>kono machi, nagai no?</i>	Have you been in this town long?
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この *kono* this 街 *machi* town 長い *nagai* long の *no* (question)

CONVERSATION ENGINE

Use the loop: **ask** → **react (へえ!)** → **relate ("me too / I love that")** → **ask again**. You barely need vocabulary if you stay curious and warm. When you get stuck: 「日本語、難しい!」 "*Nihongo, muzukashii!*" ("Japanese is hard!") — it always gets a laugh and resets the mood.

04 Getting the contact — LINE れんらくさき

In Japan everyone uses **LINE**, not phone numbers or Instagram (though Insta is a softer ask). Trading 連絡先 (*renrakusaki*, "contact info") is the natural, low-pressure close to a good first chat.

JAPANESE	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
LINE 交換しない?	<i>rain kōkan shinai?</i>	Wanna swap LINE?	The standard, casual ask.
LINE <i>rain</i> LINE 交換 <i>kōkan</i> swap しない <i>shinai</i> won't (we)?			
連絡先、聞いてもいい?	<i>renrakusaki, kiite mo ii?</i>	Can I get your contact?	Slightly softer/politer.
連絡先 <i>renrakusaki</i> contact info 聞いても <i>kiite mo</i> even if (I) ask いい <i>ii</i> is okay			
QR出すね	<i>QR dasu ne</i>	I'll pull up my QR code.	How LINE adds happen.
QR <i>QR</i> QR code 出す <i>dasu</i> put out ね <i>ne</i> okay?			
インスタやってる?	<i>insuta yatteru?</i>	Are you on Instagram?	Lowest-pressure ask; good fallback.
インスタ <i>insuta</i> Instagram やってる <i>yatteru</i> doing/using			
また話したいな	<i>mata hanashitai na</i>	I'd like to talk again.	Warm reason before you ask.
また <i>mata</i> again 話したい <i>hanashitai</i> want to talk な <i>na</i> (softener)			
今日楽しかった!	<i>kyō tanoshikatta!</i>	Today was fun!	Always close on a positive.
今日 <i>kyō</i> today 楽しかった <i>tanoshikatta</i> was fun			

YOU

話してて楽しかった!また話したいな。LINE 交換しない?

Hanashitete tanoshikatta! Mata hanashitai na. Rain kōkan shinai?

I had fun talking! I'd like to chat again — wanna swap LINE?

THEM

いいよ!QR出すね。

Ii yo! QR dasu ne.

Sure! I'll show my QR code.

The first LINE message ファーストメッセージ

JAPANESE	SOUNDS	ENGLISH
さっきはありがとう!マイクです😊	<i>sakki wa arigatō! Maiku desu</i>	Thanks for earlier! It's Mike 😊
さっき <i>sakki</i> earlier は <i>wa</i> (topic) ありがとう <i>arigatō</i> thanks マイク <i>Maiku</i> Mike です <i>desu</i> is		
無事に帰れた?	<i>buji ni kaereta?</i>	Did you get home okay?
無事 <i>buji</i> safe に <i>ni</i> (adverbial) 帰れた <i>kaereta</i> got home		
また近いうちに会えたら嬉しい	<i>mata chikai uchi ni aetara ureshii</i>	I'd be happy to meet again soon.
また <i>mata</i> again 近いうちに <i>chikai uchi ni</i> soon 会えたら <i>aetara</i> if (we) meet 嬉しい <i>ureshii</i> happy		

CULTURAL NOTE — STICKERS & PACE

LINE culture loves **stamps/stickers** and short, frequent messages over long paragraphs. Match their reply length and emoji energy. Don't double- or triple-text if they go quiet — patience reads as confidence; pestering kills it. A single well-timed sticker can restart a dead chat better than "you up?".

IF THEY SAY NO / DRIFT OFF

Accept it instantly and warmly: 「了解!楽しかったよ、ありがとう」 "*Ryōkai! Tanoshikatta yo, arigatō*" ("All good! It was fun, thanks"). Gracious exits protect your reputation — Japan's social scenes are small and word travels.

★ Cutesy disarmers かわいい一言

These are **golden**. Self-aware, humble, a little silly — they melt a stranger's guard, earn a laugh, and quietly invite them to help and teach you. Being an endearing foreigner who tries is far more attractive than being slick. Deploy them when you fumble, when there's an awkward pause, or just to be charming.

JAPANESE	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	WHEN TO DROP IT
ごめんね、日本語まだ勉強中なんだ～	<i>gomen ne, nihongo mada benkyō-chū nanda~</i>	"Sorry, my Japanese is still a work in progress~"	The all-purpose opener.
ごめんね <i>gomen ne</i> sorry 日本語 <i>nihongo</i> Japanese まだ <i>mada</i> still 勉強中 <i>benkyō-chū</i> studying なんだ～ <i>nanda~</i> (explaining)			
日本語、下手でごめん!笑	<i>nihongo, heta de gomen! (wara)</i>	"Sorry my Japanese is so bad, haha!"	After you stumble.
日本語 <i>nihongo</i> Japanese 下手 <i>heta</i> bad at で <i>de</i> (being) ごめん <i>gomen</i> sorry 笑 <i>wara</i> lol			
優しくして～まだ下手だから	<i>yasashiku shite~ mada heta dakara</i>	"Be gentle with me~ I'm still bad at it."	Flirty, playful.
優しくして <i>yasashiku shite</i> be gentle まだ <i>mada</i> still 下手 <i>heta</i> bad at だから <i>dakara</i> because			
今の、発音合ってた?	<i>ima no, hatsuon atteta?</i>	"Did I say that right just now?"	Invites her to correct you = engagement.
今の <i>ima no</i> that just now 発音 <i>hatsuon</i> pronunciation 合ってた <i>atteta</i> was right			
一個、日本語教えて?	<i>ikko, nihongo oshiete?</i>	"Teach me one Japanese word?"	Turns her into your teacher — instant bond.
一個 <i>ikko</i> one 日本語 <i>nihongo</i> Japanese 教えて <i>oshiete</i> teach me			
ゆっくり話してくれる?	<i>yukkuri hanashite kureru?</i>	"Could you speak slowly for me?"	Endearing, lowers the pace.
ゆっくり <i>yukkuri</i> slowly 話して <i>hanashite</i> speak くれる <i>kureru</i> will you for me?			

JAPANESE	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	WHEN TO DROP IT
ビール飲んだら上手くなるんだ(笑)	<i>bīru nondara umaku narun da (wara)</i>	"My Japanese gets better after a beer, lol."	Bar / izakaya gold.
<p>ビール <i>bīru</i> beer 飲んだら <i>nondara</i> if (I) drink 上手くなる <i>umaku naru</i> get better なんだ <i>n da</i> (explaining) 笑 <i>wara</i> lol</p>			
この一言、今日ずっと練習してた!	<i>kono hitokoto, kyō zutto renshū shiteta!</i>	"I practised this one line all day!"	Cute honesty, very charming.
<p>この <i>kono</i> this 一言 <i>hitokoto</i> one line 今日 <i>kyō</i> today ずっと <i>zutto</i> the whole time 練習してた <i>renshū shiteta</i> was practising</p>			
ネイティブしか言わない言葉、教えて!	<i>neitibu shika iwanai kotoba, oshiete!</i>	"Teach me something only locals say!"	Fun, opens a playful exchange.
<p>ネイティブ <i>neitibu</i> natives しか <i>shika</i> only 言わない <i>iwanai</i> don't say 言葉 <i>kotoba</i> words 教えて <i>oshiete</i> teach me</p>			
これ、日本語で何て言うの?	<i>kore, nihongo de nante iu no?</i>	"What's this called in Japanese?"	Point at anything – endless opener.
<p>これ <i>kore</i> this 日本語 <i>nihongo</i> Japanese で <i>de</i> in 何て <i>nante</i> what 言う <i>iu</i> say の <i>no</i> (question)</p>			
変な日本語だったら言ってね(笑)	<i>hen na nihongo dattara itte ne (wara)</i>	"Tell me if my Japanese sounds weird, haha."	Humble, keeps it light.
<p>変な <i>hen na</i> weird 日本語 <i>nihongo</i> Japanese だったら <i>dattara</i> if it is 言ってね <i>itte ne</i> tell me 笑 <i>wara</i> lol</p>			
君と話したくて勉強してるんだ	<i>kimi to hanashitakute benkyō shiteru nda</i>	"I'm learning Japanese just to talk to people like you."	★ Smooth – use once, sincerely.
<p>君 <i>kimi</i> you と <i>to</i> with 話したくて <i>hanashitakute</i> wanting to talk 勉強してる <i>benkyō shiteru</i> am studying なんだ <i>n da</i> (explaining)</p>			

DELIVERY IS EVERYTHING

Say these with a **smile and a shrug**, never as a real apology. The charm is in the lightness — a little laugh (笑 / "ehh"), relaxed eyes, zero neediness. The goal isn't sympathy; it's a shared giggle that turns a stranger into a teammate.

· Japanese for Social Life · Lesson 1 — Making Friends · Continue to Lesson 2: Flirting & Asking Out