
Time & Dates

Once you learn how to count in Japanese, telling time is no harder than in English. All you have to do is say the word for the numeral and add a simple suffix. For example, to say 5 o'clock, you say the word for 5, *go*, add the suffix meaning 'o'clock', *ji*, and you've got *go-ji*.

To express a fraction of an hour, combine the word for the hour with the word for the minutes. For example, 5.15 would be 5 o'clock, *goji*, + 15 minutes, *jūgofun*, or *goji jūgofun*.

The half-hour is expressed by *han*; 5.30 would therefore be *gojihan*.

Learn the military or 24-hour time system before arriving in Japan, because this system is used for train and bus schedules - 1300 is 1 o'clock, 1800 is 6 o'clock, etc.

Telling Time

What time is it?

nanji desu ka?

何時ですか

It is o'clock.

..... *ji desu*

...時です

1

ichi

一

2

ni

二

3

san

三

4		
yon		四
5		五
go		
6		六
roku		
7		七
shichi		
8		八
hachi		
9		九
ku		
10		十
jū		
11		十一
jūichi		
12		十二
jūni		

Minutes

1 minute		一分
ippun		
5 minutes		五分
gofun		
10 minutes		十分
jūppun		
15 minutes		十五分
jūgofun		
30 minutes		三十分
sanjūppun		
45 minutes		四十五分
yonjūgofun		

Now it's 2.15.
ima wa ni jūgofun desu 今は二時十五分です
 It's half past one.
ichiji han desu 一時半です

Some Useful Words

afternoon		午後
gogo		
day		日
nichi		
day after tomorrow		明後日
asatte		
day before yesterday		おととい
ototoi		
evening		晩
ban		
half past		半
han		
hour		時間
jikan		
midnight		午前零時
gozen reiji		
minute		分
fun		
morning		朝
asa		
night		夜
yoru		
noon		正午
shōgo		
now		今
ima		

today		今日
kyō		
tomorrow		明日
ashita		
tonight		今晚
konban		
yesterday		昨日
kinō		

Weeks

last week		先週
senshū		
next week		来週
raishū		
this week		今週
konshū		
one week		一週間
isshūkan		
two weeks		二週間
nishūkan		

Dates

Although traditional holidays still fall according to the lunar calendar they originated with, the Japanese today use the Gregorian (solar) calendar. Sometimes you may hear of a year referred to as the '63rd (or other) year of Showa'. The Japanese also date years according to the beginning of eras which start when a new emperor takes over. Thus, with accession of Emperor Akihito to the Chrysanthemum Throne, 1989 became the first year of Heisei.

In Japanese, dates are written with the year first, followed by the month and lastly the day.

Months

Months in Japanese are simply referred to as the '1-month' (January), the '2-month' (February), etc.

January		一月
ichigatsu		
February		二月
nigatsu		
March		三月
sangatsu		
April		四月
shigatsu		
May		五月
gogatsu		
June		六月
rokugatsu		
July		七月
shichigatsu		
August		八月
hachigatsu		
September		九月
kugatsu		
October		十月
jūgatsu		
November		十一月
jūichigatsu		
December		十二月
jūnigatsu		



Days

Today is

kyō wa desu 今日は...です

Sunday 日曜日

nichiyōbi 日曜日

Monday 月曜日

getsuyōbi 月曜日

Tuesday 火曜日

kayōbi 火曜日

Wednesday 水曜日

suiyōbi 水曜日

Thursday 木曜日

mokuyōbi 木曜日

Friday 金曜日

kinyōbi 金曜日

Saturday 土曜日

doiyōbi 土曜日

holiday 休日

kyūjitsu 休日

Some Useful Phrases

What day is today?

kyō wa nanyōbi desu ka? 今日は何曜日ですか

What's today's date?

kyō wa nannichi desu ka? 今日は何日ですか

What time is it?

nanji desu ka? 何時ですか

When will you come back?

itsu kaerimasu ka? いつ帰りますか

Festivals

Most of Japan's festivals began as local celebrations by farmers wanting to express their awe of nature or their joy over completed harvests. Because of the lack of communication in pre-modern Japan most festivals retained their local nature and never became nation-wide celebrations. Around the second week in August the *bon* festival features traditional dancing and celebrants welcome and send off the souls of their ancestors.

festival day	祭日
<i>saijitsu</i>	
eve of festival	宵祭
<i>yoimatsuri</i>	
festival parade	しんこ
<i>shinko</i>	
palanquins	神輿
<i>mikoshi</i>	
paper lanterns	提燈
<i>chōchin</i>	

Seasons

spring	春
<i>haru</i>	
summer	夏
<i>natsu</i>	
autumn	秋
<i>aki</i>	
winter	冬
<i>fuyu</i>	

