

3 Particles

Nouns used in sentences generally must be followed by particles, which indicate the relations that the nouns bear to the verbs.³ In this lesson, we learn four particles: で, に, へ, and を.

で The particle で indicates where the event described by the verb takes place.⁴

図書館で本を読みます。
としよかんほんよ

I will read books in the library.

うちでテレビを見ます。
うちでテレビをみ

I will watch TV at home.

に The particle に has many meanings, but here we will learn two: (1) the goal toward which things move, and (2) the time at which an event takes place.

(1) goal of movement

私は今日学校に行きません。
わたしきょうがっこうい

I will not go to school today.

私はうちに帰ります。
わたしかえ

I will return home.

(2) time

日曜日に京都に行きます。 *I will go to Kyoto on Sunday.*

十一時に寝ます。 *I will go to bed at eleven.*

(Some time words stand alone, without the particle に tagging along, which will be discussed in Section 4 below.)

Approximate time references can be made by substituting ごろ or ごろに for に. Thus,

十一時ごろ(に)寝ます。 *I will go to bed at about eleven.*

へ The particle へ, too, indicates the goal of movement. The sentences in (1) above therefore can be rewritten using へ instead of に. Note that this particle is pronounced “e.”

私は今日学校へ行きません。 *I will not go to school today.*

私はうちへ帰ります。 *I will return home.*

Note that へ may replace the particle に only in the goal-of-movement sense. The particle に for time references and other uses, which we will learn about in later lessons, cannot be so replaced.

を The particle を indicates “direct objects,” the kind of things that are directly involved in, or affected by, the event. Note that this particle is pronounced “o.”

コーヒーを飲みます。 *I drink coffee.*

テープを聞きます。 *I listen to tapes.*

テレビを見ます。 *I watch TV.*

4 Time Reference

You need the particle に with (1) the days of the week like “on Sunday,” and (2) numerical time expressions, like “at 10:42,” and “in September.”

日曜日に行きます。 *I will go on Sunday.*

十時四十二分に起きます。 *I get up at 10:42.*

九月くがつに帰かえります。

I will go back in September.

You do not use the particle に with (1) time expressions defined relative to the present moment, such as “today” and “tomorrow,” (2) expressions describing regular intervals, such as “every day,” and (3) the word for “when.”

あしたあした来きます。

I will come tomorrow.

毎晩まいばんテレビを見みます。

I watch TV every evening.

いついつ行いきますか。

When will you go?

You normally do not use に with (1) the parts of a day, like “in the morning” and “at night,” and (2) the word for “weekend.” Unlike words like あした and 毎晩まいばん above, however, these words are sometimes followed by に, depending on styles, emphases, and personal preferences.

朝あさ(に)新聞しんぶんをよよみます。

I read the newspaper in the morning.

週末しゅうまつ(に)何なにをしますか。

What will you do on weekends?