

# UNDERSTANDING JAPANESE VERBS & ADJECTIVES (U.J.V.A.)

A COMPREHENSIVE AND SYSTEMATIC PROGRAMME  
DESIGNED TO HELP STUDENTS TO RECOGNIZE,  
CLASSIFY AND USE THE INFLECTION PATTERNS  
OF JAPANESE VERBS AND ADJECTIVES

**U.J.V.A.** is an interactive computer programme  
(Macintosh) for learners of Japanese. This  
text is a manual accompanying the CD and is not primarily  
designed as a standalone text book. It contains material from the  
CD which is appropriate for presentation on paper.

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# Understanding Japanese Verbs & Adjectives

## Installing & Using the CD

1 “U.J.V.A.” runs on Macintosh Computers and needs HyperCard Player (included on the CD) and the Japanese Language Kit, or, the Japanese language functions that come with O/S 9 or later.

The programme will run from the CD. It is set to open automatically, if you have set QuickTime Settings to “Enable CD ROM autoplay.” To do this, go to Control Panels and open the QuickTime Settings control panel and select that option.

If Auto Start does not work, double click on the CD icon and then double click on “Start UJVA.” This should activate the full HyperCard programme if you have it on your Hard Disk, or if not, it should activate the HyperCard Player on the CD.

If this fails, double click on the “HyperCard Player” stack in the CD. This will open the Player version of HyperCard. When this is open, go to File > Open Stack and then select “Start UJVA” and click “OK.”

Note that when you open UJVA this way, the “Start-Up” may look a horrible mess. However after you click on the “Start” button, behaviour becomes normal.

### Strange Behaviour:

Exercises C 1-4 give you the option of working from English to Japanese or from Japanese to English. If you choose to work from Japanese to English, you may find that if you attempt to type in the English translation, you are unable to do so and the screen shows the message that “This stack is Read Only.” This will not prevent you from showing the answer by pressing the [Return] key in the normal way when the cursor is in the Answer Field. I have not found a real solution to this problem yet, though I am trying. It is not so critical in that typing in the English is not crucial to the learning process.

When working from English to Japanese the problem does not occur. Strange. Neither does it occur if you copy the whole CD onto your desktop or HD, though you may lose some of the paths or links if you do this and navigation becomes difficult.

### 2 Card size on the screen:

The dimensions of the UJVA window were set to 640 x 480 pixels. If your monitor is set to a very high resolution (e.g. above 1024 x 768) then the UJVA window may be too small to read the Japanese script. To make the card size larger select a lower resolution on your monitor. If you set the resolution to 640 x 480 pixels, the card will fill or nearly fill the screen. To change the screen resolution, go to the “Monitor” control panel.

### 3 Help

If you turn on the “Help” balloons from the Menu and put the cursor over the buttons, in many or most cases the balloon will tell you how they function. Each stack also has its own “Help” card. To return back to where you were before going to the “Help” card, press the “bent arrow.”

### 4 Kanji:

In exercises A, B, C and the verb chart, you can choose to operate with or without kanji using the button for that purpose. On the Verb Chart you make this choice by going to the Title Card of the stack. To do this from some place inside the stack, use the “Re-configure” button.

### 5 Revise:

If you get an answer wrong, or want to return to a card later for revision, mark it with the button provided. You can then revise marked cards by holding down the “Shift” key as you press the forward or back buttons, or by pressing the “Revise” Button instead.

### 6 Random:

If you select this button, then the forward and back buttons will take you other cards in the stack in random order. We hope to incorporate a level of randomization which will allow randomization across stacks as well.

7 Dictionary: This function is not reliable yet. It is intended to provide meanings for words in Exercises A, B, or C if you click on them. More development is required before it is useful. If you happen to click on a word by mistake and get the message that “ ‘xxx’ is not found in the dictionary,” close the box by clicking on the “Sorry” button.

In all of the exercises of D and E stacks, kanji and vocabulary you need for that card is supplied on the card.

## PREFACE: A NOTE ABOUT LEARNING JAPANESE

Japanese is partly an inflected language, like Latin, French, German, Spanish, and many others, but only the verbs and adjectives inflect. Japanese nouns, instead of using inflections, are accompanied by “joshi” or particles to show what their connection is to the rest of the sentence. The problem the learner, and especially a native English speaker, faces in learning an inflected language, is that unless you know how to go from any inflected form to the form that is found in a dictionary, you are at the mercy of the author of your text or of your teacher, as to when and what vocabulary you are taught. Furthermore, even if you know the base form or dictionary form of an inflected word, you will not know how to use the inflections to say what you want with that word, unless the text or the teacher has seen fit to introduce it already.

With UJVA, you learn the patterns of the inflections as a systematic whole. This precisely, is the goal. You will then be able to use dictionaries to find any word you want to use, you will be able to convert it to the inflection you need to say what you want and be able to do these things without waiting for your teacher or text to cover that particular point. (There is a video to teach you how to find words in a Kanji dictionary, see “supporting materials” on the opening card.) As you learn to do this you will come to appreciate how much a systematic approach to the mastery of the inflections helps you to communicate in Japanese beyond the often childlike or artificial sentences of many textbooks and courses. You learn more quickly to link ideas in a normal adult way and to use the vocabulary you need in order to say what what is of interest to you.

UJVA is different from many Japanese courses in that it does not need you to learn lots and lots of words. Rather, it shows you how to find any word in a dictionary, even from an inflected form which you do not know, and how to use those words when you have found them. We believe that if you can do this, you will soon learn the words you often want to use and you will not waste time learning words which are not useful.

Ignoring if one can, both the undeniable beauty and also the frustrations of the Japanese writing system, there are two other high hurdles for native English speakers to clear. They are:

- i) the particles and particularly the distinction between the case particle or kakujoshi (ga, wo, ni ,de etc) and the kakarijoshi such as wa, mo, sae, koso.
- ii) the system of inflections (katsuyo) which govern how verbs and adjectives are incorporated into sentence structures.

It is this author’s opinion that these two aspects of Japanese are difficult for English speaking students of Japanese because English has neither of them but that the difficulty has been compounded by the methods of language teaching and aspects of presentation of Japanese adopted by textbooks which have been fashionable for the last several decades in our education systems.

This programme is concerned primarily with the second, that is with the system of inflections, though a student will find that the distinction between and significance of substituting a case particle for a kakarijoshi or vice versa in a sentence is regularly noted.

It is the author’s opinion that in the longer run many students benefit greatly by learning some at least of the descriptive rules about the way Japanese sentences are put together. I hesitate to admit that I am really advocating the early teaching and learning of grammar and syntax as aids to learning, but in fact I am. This text and the computer programme which preceded it are both unashamed testimony to that philosophy.

Even if they are difficult to grasp at first, a good knowledge of these systems has many practical advantages for the learner. The learner will no longer be so dependant on teachers, texts, or any particular syllabus. He or she can learn to find the dictionary form of inflected words in dictionaries, can then adapt that form to the needs of new sentence structures beyond the confines of an institution’s syllabus and can begin with confidence to be creative.

I am not pretending that it is necessarily easy for the student to gain these advantages but more than three decades of teaching Japanese prove to my satisfaction that the effort soon has practical rewards for serious students,

Over the page is a chart showing how Japanese differs basically from English and other European languages

**EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNING WILL BE IMPROVED  
BY RECOGNIZING THAT:**

- 1 our brains absorb and hold information more efficiently if the information is presented as parts of a recognisable systematic whole rather than as random bits in obscure surroundings.
- 2 the presentation of a new language should take into account the conscious and unconscious linguistic and cultural baggage of the learner.
- 3 what is taught, the order of what is taught, and the weight given to what is taught must bear a close positive relationship to the reality of usage in the target language.

Therefore it follows that:

An effective Japanese course should be designed with the linguistic and cultural starting point of the learner in mind.

If that starting point is English or certain other Western European Languages, then certain critical aspects of Japanese should be given prominence at the beginning of the learning process.

On page (viii) is a chart comparing basic characteristics of Japanese with those of English and some other Western European languages.

## About ICHIDAN & GODAN Verbs

Almost all Japanese verbs belong to one of just two main types, either ICHIDAN (1-row) or GODAN (5-row) verbs. There are very few irregular verbs in Japanese.

If you understand these two systems, then you will more easily master a large part of Japanese grammar, free yourself of reliance on textbooks and gain the freedom to be more creative and independent in expressing yourself in Japanese

ICHIDAN (1-row) verbs are so called because all the inflections are added to a single stem or base. ICHIDAN verbs are like a bamboo with the tip (“-ru”) cut off.

GODAN (5-row) verbs are so called because they have a trunk and 5 branches to which the inflections are added. If you learn which inflections belong on which branch, you will give yourself the freedom to be much more independent and creative in using Japanese.

*The GODAN TREE chart  
which belongs here is available as a separate  
downloadable file on this web page.*

## About ICHIDAN & GODAN Verbs

*The ICHIDAN chart  
which belongs here is available as a separate  
downloadable file on this web page.*

**COMPARISON OF BASIC ELEMENTS OF JAPANESE  
WITH THE RELEVANT ELEMENTS OF ENGLISH**

<b>English French, German.</b>	<b>Japanese</b>
<p>Linguistic Preconceptions which the English learner will probably take for granted.</p> <p>英語のネイティブスピーカーの学習者が当然と思っているはずの先入観</p>	<p>Basic characteristics of Japanese which need early introduction to counteract these preconceptions.</p> <p>それにたいして早期に学習者に紹介すべき日本語の基本的特徴</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NOUNS</b></p> <p>Subject, object cannot be omitted but pronouns can be substituted. 主語・目的語などを省かないが代名詞を使う</p> <p>nouns may have number, case, and gender which may influence use of verbs and adjectives. 名詞の性・格・数によって、動詞や形容詞の活用が変わる</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>名詞</b></p> <p>Nouns and especially pronouns not used unless comprehension absolutely requires it 文章のいみを通じるなら名詞・代名詞を省くのが普通</p> <p>Japanese nouns do not have case gender or number and do not influence verbs and adjectives 名詞が怠慢で、せい・格・数がなくて動詞や形容詞に影響しない</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SHUDAI</b></p> <p>English has no real equivalent. Each part of a sentence has a grammatical or syntactical connection to some other part</p> <p>主題のようなものはない。有る一つの文章の中のかく品詞はほかの品詞と一定の文法的な関係がある。</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SHUDAI 主題</b></p> <p>The shudai has critical role in Japanese, and the "keijoshi" (wa etc.) must be distinguished from case particles, (Kakujoshi) 形助詞『は』などが重大な役割を果たす。形助詞の果たす役割と格助詞が果たすのとはっきり区別をつけるべきである。</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ARTICLES</b></p> <p>Articles indefinite or definite precede nouns and they do not in English indicate a grammatical connection to rest of sentence. 名詞のあとに定冠詞・不定冠詞が着く。英語では冠詞というのは文章の文法的な構造に影響しない。</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>JOSHI 助詞</b></p> <p>Particles follow nouns and in addition to the role of the English article play a vital role in Japanese sentence structure. 助詞が名詞のあとに着くが英語の冠詞が果たす役割のほかに重大な文法的な役割を果たす。</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LINKING IDEAS</b></p> <p>To link ideas/clauses, special duty words, (conjunctions, relative pronouns) are used. 考え・説などをつなぐため、関係代名詞・接続詞などを使う。</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>考え・説のつなぎ方</b></p> <p>Inflected forms of verbs / adjectives are used. Some linking words exist but tend to be stylistic rather than logical. 動詞や形容詞の活用を使うのが普通。接続詞はあるが比較的いいかげんで使われている。</p>
<b>SUMMARY</b>	
<p>Nouns, articles, prepositions and conjunctions are important. No shudai. 名詞・冠詞・前置詞・接続詞が重要。主題というようなものが無い。</p>	<p>Verbs, adjectives, and joshi are important. Nouns frequently omitted Shudai used often, even several in one sentence. 動詞・形容詞・助詞が重要。名詞を省くことが多い。主題というのを使うことが多い。</p>



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