

HOW TO RECOGNIZE, CLASSIFY AND USE THE INFLECTION PATTERNS OF JAPANESE VERBS AND ADJECTIVES

IF YOU WANT TO FIND A VERB OR ADJECTIVE IN A DICTIONARY OR IF
YOU WANT TO INFLECT IT CORRECTLY,

YOUR FIRST TASK IS:

Identify Verb Types:

Ichidan?

Godan?

Irregular?

Adjective?

FINDING THE DICTIONARY FORM OF JAPANESE VERBS & ADJECTIVES

STEP ONE: Identify the verb's inflection

To do this you need to be able to recognise all possible inflections even if you have not yet learned what they mean. We have them listed on the chart called MAKING VERBS WORK and on the other two charts, THE GODAN DOSHI TREE and ICHIDAN VERBS ARE LIKE A BAMBOO. They are found on the computer programme by selecting VERB CHART, and in the stack UJVA INTRODUCTION. They will also be listed following this explanation. (Pp123-124)

EXAMPLE: inflected ending
い+なかつた (居+なかつた) +なかつた
か+かなかつた (書+かなかつた) +なかつた

STEP TWO: Examine the preceding syllable.

Each possible inflection is added to a verb according to one of two sets of rules depending on whether the verb is an ICHIDAN (one row) verb or a GODAN (5 row) verb. If the verb is ICHIDAN, the vowel sound in the syllable before the inflection will ALWAYS be either an 'e' or an 'i'

So, if that is what you find, simply replace the inflection with the '-ru' syllable, because that is the inflection the verb uses to be listed in a dictionary.

Look again at the first example above:

い+なかつた
居+なかつた

The preceding syllable is "i" so replace the inflection with "-ru" and you have:

the dictionary form of an ICHIDAN verb.

いる
居る

The next step is to look for it in a dictionary. If it is there, you know you got it right. If not, well, keep reading and we will look at other possibilities.

Using the same rule in reverse, you can now form all the inflected forms of this verb, merely by cutting off the -ru and replacing it with the chosen inflection. This is shown graphically on the bamboo chart.

The second example:

かか+なかつた・書か+なかつた

STEP TWO: Examine the preceding syllable.

The syllable before the inflection is **-ka-**, so we know that this is a GODAN verb. How do we know?

GODAN verbs are so called because each possible inflection is added to one of the 5 ROWS of the Japanese sound table. That is, **if the syllable before the inflection contains or is the -a, -i, -u, -e, or -o vowel, then the verb should be a GODAN verb.** To explain this again, each GODAN verb uses every one of the 5 syllables between its base form and the inflected endings. Your job is to learn which of the five syllables to use before each possible inflected ending. The chart THE GODAN DOSHI TREE shows which of the five syllables are used with which inflected endings. (P123, or Cards 9-16 of UJVA Intro.)

Now look again at the second example, **書かなかつた** :

Preceding the **-nakatta** is the syllable **-ka-** which you know is the **a-row** of the five syllable set **か・き・く・け・こ**. (a-i-u-e-o) Therefore we know that this verb is constructed like this:

base		5-row link		inflected ending
か or 書	+	か	+	なかつた
ka	+	ka	+	nakatta

From this we know that this is a GODAN verb. Why? Because if the inflected ending is preceded by the syllable containing the 'a' vowel, in this case, **-ka-** then we know it has to be a GODAN verb.

In this case the linking syllable is the first row of **か・き・く・け・こ**.

To find the "dictionary form" (jishokei/genkei) of a GODAN verb, simply convert the 5th row syllable to the 3rd row form, that is, to the one containing the **-u** vowel.

So, to return to the example,

From **書かなかつた**

Remove the inflection **—なかつた**

Of **kaka-** convert the remaining last syllable **-ka**
to the 3rd row **-ku**
the result is:

the dictionary form:

かく・書く

A SLIGHT COMPLICATION

There are a few GODAN verbs using the the 5 rows,

ら・り・る・れ・ろ (ra-ri-ru-re-ro)

but which happen to have the vowel sound ‘e’ or ‘i’ in the preceding syllable. Think back to the rule for identifying a GODAN verb.

If the verb is ICHIDAN, the vowel sound in the syllable before the inflection will ALWAYS be either an ‘e’ or an ‘i.’

Unfortunately, it is also the case that some GODAN verbs using the syllables ra-ri-ru-re-ro have the ‘e’ or ‘i’ vowel in front of the 5 rows and can therefore **in some inflected forms** look just like an ICHIDAN verb. So how do you tell the difference?

Let’s add the inflected ending **-tai** (which needs to be added to the ‘i’ row of GODAN verbs) to one of these verbs and see what happens. e.g.

From **はしりたい** remove the **-tai**. This leaves **hashiri-** of which the last syllable contains the ‘i’ vowel. So according to the rule it might be an ICHIDAN verb, in which case we would make the dictionary form by simply substituting **-ru** for the original inflection **-tai**.

Do this, and we have a dictionary form **はしりる**.

Treat it as GODAN, the dictionary form is **はしる**.

hashiriru or hashiru?

How to tell which is right?

Answer: Look up both possibilities in the dictionary.

If you did this in the above case, you would find that there is no verb **はしりる**. But there is **はしる** which follows the GODAN rule. So, problem solved.

SOMETIMES TWO VERBS CAN THROW UP THE SAME INFLECTED FORM EVEN THOUGH ONE IS ICHIDAN AND THE OTHER IS GODAN.

おります

Remove the inflection **-masu** and the last syllable now contains the vowel **-i-** so it could be ICHIDAN or it could be a GODAN verb using **ra-ri-ru-re-ro**. The only way to find out is to make the dictionary forms by both rules, and look them up to see if they both exist.

For a possible ICHIDAN dictionary form of **おります** replace the inflection **-masu** with **-ru**.

Result: おりる

For a possible GODAN dictionary form:

from **orimasu** remove **-masu**
convert the preceding syllable **-ri**
to the third row **-ru**.

Result: おる

If you look in a dictionary you find:
both **おりる** & **おる** exist.

So, the ICHIDAN verb **おりる** and the GODAN verb **おる** both produce the same **desu/masu** form **おります**. Which one is intended?

Well as they will mean different things you will know from the context which is meant. Then of course in written Japanese, kanji will mostly be used and you will know from the kanji which verb is used. e.g.

おります (ICHIDAN) will be written **降ります** or **下ります** and,
おります (GODAN) will be written **折ります**, **居ります** or **織ります**

Yes, there are indeed three **おる**'s! But their meanings are quite different so in practice, no confusion will occur.

On the next 3 pages, there are charts which line up the dictionary form of GODAN verbs using the **-i-** and **-e-** vowels with potentially confuseable ICHIDAN verbs. You can see that if verb has **more than 2 syllables**, then the dictionary form shows reliably whether or not a verb is GODAN or ICHIDAN because,

after the kanji or stem of the verb,
GODAN verbs add **only -ru** to the kanji,
ICHIDAN verbs add **2 syllables including -ru**.

ICHIDAN	GODAN
換える (かえる)	返る (かえる)
ka + eru	kae + ru

OKURIGANA WITH VERBS OF 3 OR MORE SYLLABLES

ICHIDAN (adds 2 syllables)

信じる (しん+じる)

代える (か +える)

替える (か +える)

換える (か +える)

GODAN (adds one syllable)

弄る (いじ+る)

帰る (かえ+る)

返る (かえ+る)

VERBS OF ONLY 2 SYLLABLES

As you can see from the chart, this handy rule does not help to distinguish verbs of either kind if they have only 2 syllables including the final **-ru**, to start with. With two syllable verbs, you have to look in the dictionary for a clue as to whether it is ICHIDAN or GODAN.

What clues might you find?

Look at the examples of usage. (If your dictionary gives no examples, throw it away and get one that does.) The easiest clues will be given by the negative form or the **-te** or **-ta** forms.

1. Look for an example of the negative form:

There should be an example using the plain negative. Suppose the verb is **いる** (say, either **居る** or **要る**) if the vowel in the syllable before the negative ending **-nai** is **-a-** as in **-ra**, then you know it is a GODAN verb of the **ra-ri-ru-re-ro** type.

The problem is solved BUT, if the syllable before the **-nai** ending is the base of the verb itself, as in

居る . 居+ない

then you know it is an ICHIDAN verb.

2. Look for an example of the **-te** form or the plain past, **-ta** form.

These inflections of GODAN verbs always look like, **ーって、(-tte)** or **ーった (-tta)** therefore if you see **いって いった** you know the verb is GODAN. If you see **いて OR いた (-ite or ita, -ete or -eta)** you know the verb is ICHIDAN.

GODAN VERBS EASY TO CONFUSE WITH ICHIDAN VERBS

Verbs ending -iru

GODAN verbs ending
in -i +る

弄る (いじる)	弄らない 弄って
参る (まいる)	参らない 参って
過る (よぎる)	過らない 過って
遮る (さえぎる)	遮らない 遮って
入る (はいる)	入らない 入って
走る (はしる)	走らない 走って

Similar ICHIDAN
verbs for comparison

信じる (しんじる)	信じない 信じて
強いる (しいる)	強くない 強いて
過ぎる (すぎる)	過ぎない 過ぎて
起きる (おきる)	起きない 起きて
降りる (おりる)	降りない 降りて
生きる (いきる)	生きない 生きて

2 syllable verbs or, verbs
with a one syllable base.

切る (きる)	切らない 切って
入る (いる)	入らない 入って
要る (いる)	要らない 要って
散る (ちる)	散らない 散って
知る (しる)	知らない 知って

着る (きる)	着ない 着て
居る (いる)	居ない 居て
見る (みる)	見ない 見て
診る (みる)	診ない 診て
煮る (にる)	煮ない 煮て

GODAN VERBS EASY TO CONFUSE WITH ICHIDAN VERBS

Verbs ending -eru

GODAN verbs ending
in -e + る

湿る (しめる) 湿らない
湿って

帰る (かえる) 帰らない
帰って

返る (かえる) 返らない
返って

滑る (すべる) 滑らない
滑って

Similar ICHIDAN verbs
for comparison.

占める (しめる) 占めない
占めて

締める (しめる) 締めない
締めて

換える (かえる) 換えない
換えて

替える (かえる) 替えない
替えて

代える (かえる) 代えない
代えて

変える (かえる) 変えない
変えて

2 syllable verbs or, verbs with a one syllable base.

練る (ねる) 練らない
練って

減る (へる) 減らない
減って

蹴る (ける) 蹴らない
蹴って

照る (てる) 照らない
照って

競る (せる) 競らない
競って

寝る (ねる) 寝ない
寝て

出る (でる) 出ない
出て

得る (える) 得ない
得て

LIST OF INFLECTIONS WITH LINKING SYLLABLES ACCORDING TO VERB TYPE.

(See following 3 pages)

GODAN VERBS

On page 123, the tree shows how the inflections are attached to a GODAN verb. Each inflection can only be attached to a specific syllable. You have to learn this pattern in order to find the Dictionary Form or go from the form you find in the dictionary to other forms.

The lopped-off top of the main trunk represents the "**sentence-end form**" or "**Shuushi**" (終止形) It is also referred to the "**plain form**" or "**dearu-cho.**" It is the most common form of the verb for ending sentences and clauses in written Japanese, and is normal too in spoken Japanese except for the the final verb of a sentence when the "desu/masu-cho" will often but not necessarily be used.

ICHIDAN VERBS

Page 124 shows the same inflections and how they are attached to ICHIDAN verbs. Note that instead of the five options of GODAN verbs, they all attach to the same syllable, except those in the top boxes which follow the "**dearu-cho,**" (plain form) or, either the "**dearu-cho**" or the "**desu/masu-cho**" (formal form.)

You can use these charts (which are also available as wall charts)to help you find the Dictionary Forms in the practice exercises which follow, and then we suggest you go to the stack, "First Practice" before doing Exercises A and B of UJVA, the computer programme.

ICHIDAN
NOTES

THE INFLECTIONS YOU NEED TO KNOW

GODAN
NOTES

**-saseru/
-sasu,
-rareru**

-nai,-naku,-nakute,-naide,-nakatta,-nakattara,
-nakereba,-nu,-zu,-zaru(o enai)

-seru, -su, -reru

USE
"a-row"
(mizen)

-masu,-masen,-mashita,-mashite;-tai,-takunai, -
takatta(ra),-takute,-takunakute-takunaide,
-takunakatta(ra),-takereba,-takunakereba;
-ta(ra)*,-te*,-de*; -nagara,-tsutsu,-yasui,
-nikui,-zurai; compound verbs, e.g.

tabe-owaru, hashiri-dasu, fuki-komu;

USE
"i-row"
(renyo)

connective form at end of clause, no inflection,
e.g, machi ni iki, kaimono shimashita

* It is not always obvious that these forms are added to the "i-row" of
GODAN verbs. Apparent contradiction occurs with verbs based on the
a-, ka-, ra-, na-, and ma-rows because of the gradual dropping of a sound
between the stem and the ending.

**See
Bamboo
chart**

nouns, pronouns; rashii, sooda, mai, to, noni, ga,
kara, node, keredomo, shi, shika, made, bakari,
dake, hodo, gurai, yooda.

*These words are added to finite forms of Japanese verbs, and can be
added to either the present or past tense , "desu/masu-cho" or "de/aru-
cho" depending on specific rules of usage for each word. Refer to
Bamboo chart and grammar texts also.*

USE
"rentai"
or noun-
linking
form
according
to rules
for each
word.

**-reba,
-rareru**

use base
form, no
inflection.

←(e)ba "if" (conditional)

←-(e)ru add to GODAN verbs to mean "can"

← imperative form, no added inflection.

USE e-row
Add -ru to
-e- and
GODAN vb
becomes
ICHIDAN

-u

**-o-
becomes
-yo-**

*auxilliary (jodoshi) of supposition or intention added to "o-row" of
verb. Romanisation obscures its presence but the kana for "u" is used
in Japanese.*

USE
"o-row"