



**Mirai Japanese: "Changing the Way People Learn Japanese"**

## **iStart Japanese - Step 1 - Lesson 2**

**Tom:**

Welcome to Mirai Language Systems' "iStart Japanese", a beginner-level course in Japanese.

This is Lesson 2 of the course.

Let's start this lesson with another commonly used loan word. In Japanese, the word for "hamburger" is...

**Takako:**

*hanbāgā*

**Tom:**

Let's hear that again...

**Takako:**

*hanbāgā*

**Tom:**

Now, let's introduce our first verb.

Verbs are words that denote some type of action.

Examples of verbs in English are "go", "run", "eat", "drink", "play", "do", "read", and so on.

Another way of defining a verb is to say that verbs are words in front of which you can put personal pronouns, like "I", "you", "he", "she", "it", and so on.

For instance: "I go", "you play", "he reads", and so on.

Our first verb will be "eat".

In Japanese the verb for "eat" is...

**Takako:**

*tabemasu*

**Tom:**

Let's hear the word for "eat" again...

**Takako:**

*tabemasu*

**Tom:**

Let's break the word 「tabemasu」 into two parts: 「tabe」 and 「masu」.

**Takako:**

*tabe-masu*

**Tom:**

All verbs, in their "polite form", end in 「masu」, with only one exception, which we will see in a later lesson.

You may have noticed that the 「masu」 ending sounds a like the final 「u」 sound is



missing. It is often pronounced this way. We say the 「u」 is "devoiced". The final 「u」 sound is devoiced for many words in Japanese.

In Japanese, there are various forms of politeness, which are very important to know about.

When speaking to strangers, or to people at work, the "polite form" is most frequently used.

If you don't use the "polite form", then there are likely going to be occasions when you will cause offense to Japanese people when speaking with them.

So, to play on the safe side, we are starting with the "polite form", rather than the more colloquial "plain form", in this Japanese language course.

Beyond the "polite form", there are even more polite forms that we will look at later on in the course.

As mentioned before, all verbs in their "polite form" end in 「masu」.

In fact, "polite form" verbs are therefore also called "masu" verbs.

Going one step further, the verb 「tabemasu」 consists of the verb-stem 「tabe」 and the ending 「masu」.

Now the very simple thing about Japanese is that the verb doesn't change when we put personal pronouns in front of them.

In fact, in Japanese, we don't even need to explicitly say the personal pronouns.

So, "I eat", "you eat", "he eats", "she eats", "it eats", are all simply 「tabemasu」 in Japanese!

The Japanese can guess from the context who is doing the eating, so they usually omit the personal pronouns like "I", "you", "she", etc.

So, in Japanese, "I eat" would be...

**Takako:**

*tabemasu*

**Tom:**

And "you eat" would be...

**Takako:**

*tabemasu*

**Tom:**

And "he eats" would be...

**Takako:**

*tabemasu*

**Tom:**

Let's go back to our hamburgers.

What was the word for "hamburger" in Japanese?

**Takako:**

*hanbāgā*

**Tom:**

In Japanese, words for items usually don't need to change form, whether there is just one item or many of them.

So in Japanese, "a hamburger", "hamburgers", and "some hamburgers", are all just...

**Takako:**

*hanbāgā*



**Tom:**

So to say something like "I eat a hamburger." in Japanese, you need to change the order around and say "A hamburger, I eat."

In Japanese, the verb always comes at the end of the sentence.

And the item the action is done to comes at or close to the beginning of the sentence. So the sequence is: "Item, then Action."

However, the Japanese add small words, called "particles", to mark the function of the words in a sentence.

In the "Item, then Action" case, the Japanese add the marker 「o」 after the Item the Action is done to.

So, it is "Item, plus the marker 「o」, then Action."

Listen to Takako pronounce the marker 「o」 ...

**Takako:**

o

**Tom:**

This marker signals the item that the action is doing something to - it is the object of the action of the verb.

That's why it is called the "object marker", or "object particle".

**Takako:**

o

**Tom:**

In our example, "I eat a hamburger" thus becomes...  
"A hamburger + marker, I eat."

**Takako:**

*Hanbāgā-o tabemasu.*

**Tom:**

Again: "Hamburger (with its marker), I eat."

**Takako:**

*Hanbāgā-o tabemasu.*

**Tom:**

Note that in this course, to clarify that the 「o」 marks the item it follows, we have attached it the item with a hyphen, to emphasize that they can be viewed together as a meaningful unit.

Also, Japanese people tend to pause slightly after markers when speaking...

**Takako:**

*Hanbāgā-o [PAUSE] tabemasu.*

**Tom:**

How would you say, "He eats a hamburger."?...

**Takako:**

*Hanbāgā-o tabemasu.*

**Tom:**

How would you say, "She eats some hamburgers."?...



**Takako:**

*Hanbāgā-o tabemasu.*

**Tom:**

Let's introduce a Japanese food.

There is a very well-known Japanese delicacy made with vinegared rice, which usually includes some raw fish, but can include vegetables or meat...

**Takako:**

*sushi*

**Tom:**

So, how do you say "I eat sushi." in Japanese?...

Remember, the form is: "Item+o, Action."...

**Takako:**

*Sushi-o tabemasu.*

**Tom:**

How do you say "She eats sushi."?...

**Takako:**

*Sushi-o tabemasu.*

**Tom:**

And, "He eats some sushi."?...

**Takako:**

*Sushi-o tabemasu.*

**Tom:**

Okay, let's introduce another verb now.

The polite form of the verb "drink" is...

**Takako:**

*nomimasu*

**Tom:**

Similar to our verb 「tabemasu」 before, the verb "drink", 「nomimasu」, consists of the verb-stem 「nomi」 and the ending 「masu」 ...

**Takako:**

*nomi-masu*

**Tom:**

So, "I drink" is...

**Takako:**

*nomimasu*

**Tom:**

"You drink" is...

**Takako:**

*nomimasu*

**Tom:**

"She drinks" is...



**Takako:**  
*nomimasu*

**Tom:**  
Can you remember the Japanese word for "coffee"?...

**Takako:**  
*kōhī*

**Tom:**  
So, using our familiar sentence pattern, how do you say "I drink coffee."?...

**Takako:**  
*Kōhī-o nomimasu.*

**Tom:**  
How do you say, "He drinks coffee."?...

**Takako:**  
*Kōhī-o nomimasu.*

**Tom:**  
Good. Can you remember the Japanese for "orange juice"?...

**Takako:**  
*orenji-jūsū*

**Tom:**  
So how do you say "You drink orange juice."?...

**Takako:**  
*orenji-jūsū-o nomimasu.*

**Tom:**  
And "She drinks orange juice."?...

**Takako:**  
*orenji-jūsū-o nomimasu.*

**Tom:**  
So to summarize this lesson, we have covered the sentence structures: "I eat [item of food]." and "I drink [item of drink]."...  
And the following vocabulary items: "hamburger"...

**Takako:**  
*hanbāgā*

**Tom:**  
and "Japanese delicacy made with vinegared rice"...

**Takako:**  
*sushi*

**Tom:**  
We also looked at the Japanese object marker...

**Takako:**



o

**Tom:**

and the verbs "(to) eat"...

**Takako:**

*tabemasu*

**Tom:**

and "(to) drink"...

**Takako:**

*nomimasu*

**Tom:**

Now, please continue by looking at our website at [www.MiraiJapanese.com](http://www.MiraiJapanese.com) for some more information on the vocabulary introduced in this lesson, as well as some details on writing in Japanese.

Please also check out our iPhone Application for this course, from which this Podcast material was taken. The iPhone App contains these Podcast dialogs, with additional functionality for learning how to write Japanese, and also an interactive quiz to test and reinforce your learning.

**This great iPhone Application is available from the iTunes App Store, under the name "*iStart Japanese*".**

*The music provided in this podcast was taken from "Woody's Way Today", by ALBaMass, courtesy of Mevio's Music Alley at their website "music.mevio.com".*

We hope you enjoyed this Podcast and we look forward to your comments at **MiraiJapanese.com**! Goodbye for now!