

NOUN

TACHI

TA-CHI
たち

太刀

Tachi (sword)

An older sword than the katana that was longer, more curved, and worn with the blade side facing down. A particularly useful sword for battles on horseback.

Hei ga teki no tachi no mae ni taorete itta.
兵が敵の太刀の前に倒れていった。
The soldiers were hewn down by the tachi swords of their enemy.

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NOUN

KATANA

KA-TA-NA
かたな

刀

Katana (sword)

A typical samurai sword that was shorter and more useful for close combat. Unlike the tachi, it was worn with the blade side facing up.

Shinsengumi wa teki to katana o majiete tatakatta.
新撰組は敵と刀を交えて戦った。
The shinsengumi (a famous samurai police force) clashed swords with their enemies.

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NOUN

SHOUGUN

SHO-U-GU-N
しょうぐん

将軍

Shogun (Military Dictator)

The Shoguns were military dictators in medieval Japan.

Toyotomi Hideyoshi wa yuumei na shogun no hitori da.
豊臣秀吉は有名な将軍の一人だ。
Toyotomi Hideyoshi is one of the more famous shoguns.

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NOUN

ROUNIN

RO-U-NI-N
ろうにん

浪人

Wandering samurai

In medieval Japan, a samurai became a rounin if their master was killed.

Akoujiken no rounin wa mina seppuku shita.
赤穂事件の浪人は皆切腹した。
Each of the 47 Ronin committed hara-kiri.

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NOUN

SOURYO

SO-U-RYO
そうりょう

僧侶

Monk

This is the official Japanese term for a monk, but in conversation, people usually refer to them by the title of "obousan" (お坊さん).

Otera no haka o mamoru no wa souryo no shigoto da.
お寺の墓を守るのは僧侶の仕事だ。
Monks are in charge of maintaining the graves at Japanese Buddhist temples.

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NOUN

DAIMYO

DA-I-MYO-U
だいまょう

大名

Daimyo (feudal lords)

The position of a daimyo was lower than that of a shogun, but higher than that of samurai. The daimyo ruled large stretches of private land that they had guarded by samurai.

Daimyou ga myouden o mamoru tame ni samurai o yatotta.
大名が名田を守るために侍を雇った。
Daimyos hired samurai to protect their private lands.

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SHIRO

NOUN

SHI-RO
しろ

城
Castle

This is the noun for a Japanese castle, but if it's a specific castle, the suffix "jou" (a different reading of the kanji for "shiro") is affixed to the name of the castle. Ex. Oosakajou (Osaka Castle)

Yakiharawareta shiro no ooku ga saiken sareta.
焼き払われた城の多くが再建された。
Many of the castles that had been burned down were rebuilt.

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MEIYO

NOUN

ME-I-YO
めい よ

名誉
Honor

The samurai highly valued the sense of honor that comes from their devotion and sacrifice.

Shouri o osameta guntai wa meiyō o kanjita.
勝利を収めた軍隊は名誉を感じた。
The army felt honored at the victory they'd achieved.

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SAMURAI

NOUN

SA-MU-RA-I
さむらい

侍
Samurai

This word comes from the ancient word SAMURAU: to serve a person of nobility. The base i of the verb makes it a noun and indicates "one who serves a person of nobility".

Samurai ga takai chii o shimeru you ni natta.
侍が高い地位を占めるようになった。
The samurai began to occupy a more prominent position in society.

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HAIJI

NOUN

HA-JI
はじ

恥
Shame/disgrace

This is just what you wanted to avoid in samurai times. According to the code samurai lived by, death by seppuku was more preferable than bringing shame to one's master.

Samurai wa haji o ukeru yori shinu hou o erabu.
侍は恥を受けるより死ぬほうを選ぶ。
Samurai would rather die than have to bear feelings of shame.

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TEKI

NOUN

TE-KI
てき

敵
Enemy

Watch out! Mention of this word may mean that a swordfight's about to break out!

Bushi ga teki no shiro wo osotta.
武士が敵の城を襲った。
The samurai attacked the castle of their enemy.

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TSUKAERU

ICHIDAN VERB

TSU-KA-E-RU
つか

仕える
To serve, work for

The person being served is marked by particle に.
Ex. "Shukun ni tsukaeru"-To serve one's master.

Bushi no yakuwari wa daimyou ni tsukaeru koto da.
武士の役割は大名に仕えることだ。
A samurai's role is to serve the daimyou

PREDICATE 述

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ICHIDAN VERB

OSAMERU

O-SA-ME-RU

おさめる

Rule/govern

The place being ruled is marked by particle を.
Example: "kuni o osameru"-Rule a country.

Daimyou wa han to iu tokoro o osameta.
大名は「藩」という所を治めた。
The daimyo ruled a place known as a "han".

PREDICATE 述

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ICHIDAN VERB

KANJIRU

KA-N-JI-RU

かんじる

To feel

When the object is a type of feeling (e.g. peace, worry, doubt, etc.), use particle を. Example: *Meiyo o kanjiru* (feel a sense of honor).
Manten o totta kare wa tasseikan o kanjita.
満点を獲った彼は達成感を感じた。
He felt a sense of achievement at his perfect score.

PREDICATE 述

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ICHIDAN VERB

MEIJIRU

ME-I-JI-RU

めいじる

To command

When using a suru verb, take the noun part of the verb and attach "を命じる". The person being commanded is marked by particle に. (Example: *Guntai ni taikyaku o mejiru*-Command an army to retreat).

Daimyou wa teki no shiro no shinryaku o mejitta.
大名は敵の城の侵略を命じた。
The daimyo commanded them to invade the enemy's castle.

PREDICATE 述

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GODAN VERB

KATAKI UTSU

KA-TA-KI- WO- U-TSU

かたき う

敵を討つ

To avenge

The person being avenged is marked by particle の. Ex. "Shukun no kataki o utsu" means to avenge one's master (literally, "slay the enemy of one's master").
Shukun no kataki o utsu tame ni minna ga tatakatta.
主君の敵を討つために皆が戦った。
Everyone fought to avenge their master.

PREDICATE 述

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NOUN

SEPPUKU

SE-P-PU-KU

せっぽく

切腹

To commit ritual suicide

A ritual form of suicide in which one cuts out their own stomach with a sword (sounds gruesome, doesn't it?). In samurai times, this was often commanded of an individual as a punishment in certain circumstances. Attach する to make it a verb.

Daimyou ni sakarau hito ni wa seppuku ga mejirareru.
大名は逆らう人に切腹するように命じる。
The Daimyo command the disobedient to commit seppuku.

PREDICATE 述

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GODAN VERB

YAKIHARAU

YA-KI-HA-RA-U

や はら

焼き払う

Set on fire

The two verbs used for this compound verb imply "getting rid of/clearing away something by burning".
Yabanjin wa nouka no sakumotsu wo yakiharatta.
野蛮人は農家の作物を焼き払った。
The barbarians burned the farmer's crops.

PREDICATE 述

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SASU

GODAN VERB

SA-SU
さ

差す

Carry

This means "carry/wear at one's side" when used for swords, but is also used for holding out an umbrella when using it to protect oneself from the rain.

Bushi dake ga ken o sasu kenri ga atta.
武士だけが剣を差す権利があった。
Only samurai had the right to carry swords.

述

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ZANNIN

ADJECTIVAL NOUN

ZA-N-NI-N
ざん にん

残忍

Cruel, brutal, merciless

This word brings to mind people who are particularly ruthless and merciless in their fighting and killing methods.

Sono chiiki no senjuumin wa zannin na tami datta.
その地域の先住民は残忍な民だった。
The inhabitants of that region were a very cold-blooded people.

述

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OSOROSHII

ADJECTIVE

O-SO-RO-SHI-I
おそ

恐ろしい

Terrifying

This is similar in meaning to "kowai" (scary), but "osoroshii" has a much stronger meaning.

Kaji ga moeagaru fuukei wa osoroshii.
火事が燃え上がる風景は恐ろしい。
Seeing a raging fire is quite terrifying.

述

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CHIKARAZUYOI

ADJECTIVE

CHI-KA-RA-ZU-YO-I
ちから づよ

力強い

Powerful

This word is a compound of the word for "power" and "strong".

"Shougun" to kiku to, chikarazuyoi hito o omoiegaku.
「將軍」と聞くと、力強い人を思い描く。
When I hear the word "shougun", a powerful figure comes to mind.

述

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SHINBOUZUYOI

ADJECTIVE

SHI-N-BO-U-ZU-YO-I
しん ぼう づ

辛抱強い

Patient/Persevering

"Shinbou" by itself is a noun for "patience" or "endurance". When "tsuyoi" is added to this, it literally means "good at being patient".

Minna wa haha no kaeri o shinbouzuyoku matteita.
皆は母の帰りを辛抱強く待っていた。
They had all been waiting patiently for their mother's return.

述

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DA

COPULA

DA

だ

Is/am

This is a copula. It assigns attributes, definitions, or identities to a noun just like is/am/are in English. Da is not polite, so only use it in informal situations.

Ooki na oto da.
大きな音だ。
It is a loud noise.

述

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COPULA

D
A
T
T
A

DA-T-TA

だった

Was

This copula is the past tense of "da." It assigns attributes, definitions, or identities to a noun just like was/were in English. Datta is not polite, so use it in informal situations.

Inshouteki na shiai datta.
印象的な試合だった。
It was an impressive contest.

PREDICATE 述

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ADJECTIVAL NOUN

Y
U
U
K
A
N

YU-U-KA-N
ゆう かん

勇敢

Brave, courageous

With all the warring going on in medieval Japan, surely courage was an absolutely essential attribute for warriors of the time.

Yuukan na hei wa isamashiku tatakatta.
勇敢な兵は勇ましく戦った。
The courageous soldiers fought valiantly.

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PARTICLE

N
A

ADJECTIVAL NOUN (now acting as an adjective)

NA

な

copular particle

This particle turns most adjectival nouns into adjectives. (Some use the particle の instead; it'll say so on the card). Place the adjectival noun to the left of this card and the noun you want to modify on the right. That's all.

Kanketsu na kotae deshita.
簡潔な答えでした。
That was a concise answer.

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COPULA

D
E
S
H
I
T
A

DE-SHI-TA

でした

was/were

This is the polite, past tense copula. It means "was" or "were" as in "it was Miyagi-san" or "we were stubborn."

Tomoe Gozen wa isamashii onna bugeisha deshita.
巴御前は勇ましい女武者でした
Tomoe Gozen was a brave female martial artist.

PREDICATE 述

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PARTICLE

E

NOUN (general direction)

E

direction marker

When you go (send/throw something, etc.) to a general area instead of a specific place, you use this directional particle as opposed to the more specific direction particle に. It's pronounced "eh."

Gakkou e itte asobu.
学校へ行って遊ぶ。
I'll go over by the school and play.

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PARTICLE

E

NOUN (general direction)

E

direction marker

When you go (send/throw something, etc.) to a general area instead of a specific place, you use this directional particle as opposed to the more specific direction particle に. It's pronounced "eh."

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学校へ行って遊ぶ。
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WA

PARTICLE

0

NOUN (subject)

WA

は

topic marker

Marks the word before it as the main topic of discussion as well as the subject of the sentence. The noun marked by は can also serve as the subject of any sentences with no marked subject.

Yoroi wa rippa desu ne.
鎧は立派ですね。
Isn't that armor magnificent?

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WA

PARTICLE

0

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は

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鎧は立派ですね。
Isn't that armor magnificent?

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NI

PARTICLE

1

NOUN (destination or recipient)

NI

に

destination marker

Marks the noun before it as a destination, like "at" or "in." Also marks times of events, recipients, and metaphorical places. Can only be used in sentences with a verb for the predicate unless noted otherwise.

Oi, kochira ni kite kudasai.
おい、こちらに来て下さい。
Hey, please come over here.

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NI

PARTICLE

1

NOUN (destination or recipient)

NI

に

destination marker

Marks the noun before it as a destination, like "at" or "in." Also marks times of events, recipients, and metaphorical places. Can only be used in sentences with a verb for the predicate unless noted otherwise.

Oi, kochira ni kite kudasai.
おい、こちらに来て下さい。
Hey, please come over here.

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O

PARTICLE

1

NOUN (direct object)

O

を

object marker

Marks a direct object in a sentence. A direct object is a thing that is having an action done to it, the "victim" of the verb. を can ONLY be used in sentences that have a transitive verb.

Buki o hanbai shite imasu.
武器を販売しています。
I'm selling weapons.

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O

PARTICLE

1

NOUN (direct object)

O

を

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