

JAPANESE THE GAME

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OBJECTIVE

Build Japanese sentences to score points. The first player with at least 20 points wins.

THE CARDS

Each card in Japanese: The Game represents a word in Japanese. The cards are grouped into colors representing their parts of speech (such as nouns and verbs). The following table shows what each color represents:

Blue	Nouns	People, places, & things. Some are physical; some aren't.	garden: 庭 (<i>niwa</i>) heart: 心 (<i>kokoro</i>)
Indigo	Adjectival Nouns	Non-physical nouns that can act like adjectives, usually by adding "na".	ease: 楽 (<i>raku</i>) easy: 楽な (<i>raku na</i>)
Purple	Adjectives	They describe nouns & states of being. They end in "i".	small: 小さい (<i>chiisai</i>) big: 大きい (<i>ookii</i>)
Red	Verbs	Action words. A subject performs the verb. Transitive verbs have an object.	eat: 食べる (<i>taberu</i>) run: 走る (<i>hashiru</i>)
Vermilion	Copulas	Copula is just a fancy word for "words that mean is," like am and were.	です: (<i>desu</i>) だ: (<i>da</i>)
Orange	Adverbs	These describe how or when an event plays out.	now: 今 (<i>ima</i>) always: 何時も (<i>itsumo</i>)
Yellow	Interjections	Words that give clues about the speaker's emotions.	Oh!: あら! (<i>ara</i>) Look!: ほら! (<i>hora</i>)
Green	Particles	Some particles tell you what role a noun plays in a sentence.	が (<i>ga</i>) marks a word as the subject.
Teal	Counters	These help you count, like "three sheets of paper."	Liters: リトル (<i>ritoru</i>) Sheet of Paper: 枚 (<i>mai</i>)

ANATOMY OF A CARD

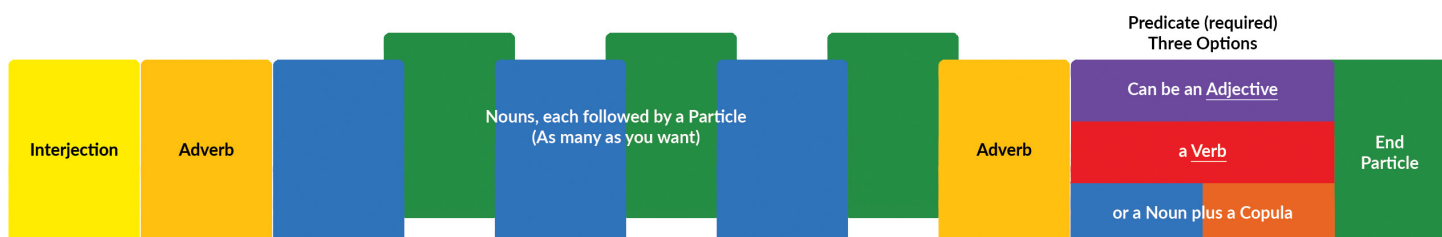
Cards are designed to quickly reveal information that is important to their function in both the game and the Japanese language. This diagram shows a verb card from the game and the function of each part:



Color Bar & Part of Speech	The card's part of speech: noun, verb, etc. with color visual aid.
Card Name	The card name outlined in the color of its part of speech.
Japanese	The word written in normal Japanese.
Meaning	Basic translation(s) into English; alternate meanings may be given in the explanation.
Explanation	Card explanation with any special rules.
Example	The word used in a sentence or two. (Some words are conjugated.)
Pronunciation	Pronunciation help for English speakers.
Points	The point value of the card.
Furigana	Pronunciation help for Japanese speakers.
Sentence Cloud	This white cloud behind the text will line up the words in your sentence to make them easier to read and use.
Badge	Badges help you use words that have special rules.
Bar Code	Scan with the App to hear Japanese Pronunciation.
Card Number	If you can't scan with the app, enter this number.

SENTENCE COLOR PATTERN

In Japanese: The Game you build sentences by playing cards out of your hand. Any sentence that you form must follow a specific color pattern to ensure that it remains a complete Japanese sentence. Please use the following diagram (also included on your Easy Reference Card) when building your sentences:



SETUP AND TURN ORDER

1. Decide whether each player will have their own deck or whether all players will be sharing a single deck.
2. If each player is using their own deck, make sure each deck has at least 25 cards.
3. If all players are sharing a deck, ensure there are at least 25 cards per player.
Example: 4 players need 100 cards.
4. Shuffle the deck(s) then have each player draw 7 cards.
5. Figure out who the oldest player is; that player goes first.
6. Each player takes turns performing the actions described in "The Turn".
7. Play continues until a player has 20 points on the table or until a player's deck runs out of cards. If a player's deck runs out of cards, each player takes one last turn (without drawing new cards), after which the player with the most points on the table wins.

THE TURN

1. Perform one or more of the following actions:
 - Start one or more sentences. (See "Starting a Sentence" at the bottom of this page)
 - Improve one or more existing sentences. (See "Improving Sentences" on page 4)
 - Discard a card and draw another. This ends your turn.
2. Your turn is over; play continues counter-clockwise.
3. Draw cards until you have 7 cards in your hand. (A full example turn is shown starting on page 4)

GAME MODES

Single Player

Mode 1: Build sentences trying to use as many cards of the deck as you can.

Mode 2: Build and improve your sentences to get to 20 points in as few rounds as possible.

Cooperative Play

Build and improve sentences together or separately. Take turns or don't. Have fun. Learn Japanese!

Versus

At the end of each turn, total the points of cards you played on that turn, then subtract 1. This result is your "discard points" for this turn. You may remove cards from your opponents' sentences worth a total up to your discard points as long as only grammatically correct sentences remain. (Their remaining cards must still fit the color pattern and any rules on the cards.) Removed cards go into a discard pile. For example, if you play 5 points worth of cards on your turn, you may remove up to 4 points worth of cards from your opponents' sentences, perhaps 4 points from one opponent or perhaps 3 from one opponent and 1 from another.

STARTING A SENTENCE

The Japanese language is very flexible, allowing you to omit things such as subjects and objects (blue cards in Japanese: The Game). This means that starting a new sentence is very easy. To start a sentence in Japanese: The Game, you simply need to play a **Predicate**. A **Predicate** is one of the following:

- An Adjective (purple cards)
- A Verb (red cards)
- Noun (blue cards) + Copula (vermillion cards)

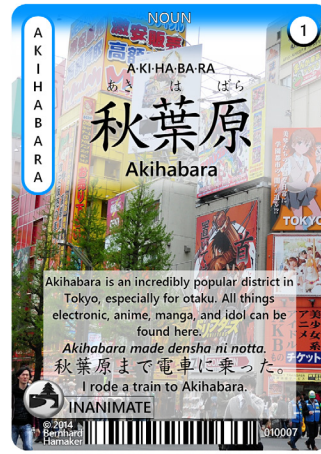
Each of the cards that can form a predicate has the following badge in the bottom-right corner:



Verb

Adjective

Noun + Copula



Each of the examples above (止める, *tomeru*; 忙しい, *isogashii*; and 秋葉原です, *akihabara desu*) is a complete Japanese sentence and can be played to earn points when starting a sentence. Let's see what the above examples might mean when played (words in italics are implied):

Tomeru: to stop - "I'll stop" or "Stop the car"

Isogashii: busy - "I am busy" or "We are busy"

Akihabara: Akihabara District; **Desu:** is - "This is Akihabara" or "Here is Akihabara"

When building a new sentence or improving an existing one, you can play any cards as long as they match the color pattern shown on page 2 under "Sentence Color Pattern". For example, the cards below are played as a sentence that means, "Pictures are expensive." If we didn't place a subject in this sentence, playing just Takai, it would mean "Something is expensive" or "It is expensive." Any, so omitting a subject is okay. You do not have to play all the colors of cards in the pattern, but when you do play them you will lay them down in the order shown. For example, you may play a blue noun and a green particle without an orange adverb after them, and then finish your sentence with any predicate. (Note: There are no interjections in this deck, but there are in some of the Expansions.)



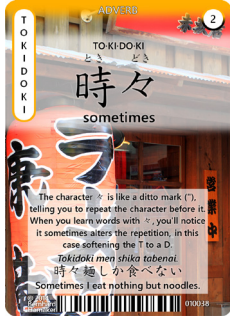
All verb cards have the "Transitive/Intransitive" badge. Only sentences with a transitive verb for the predicate can have a direct object in them. A direct object is a noun that is followed by the object marker particle を (O). This is the transitive badge: (を). A sentence with an intransitive verb for the predicate cannot have a direct object, so nouns within that sentence cannot be marked with を (O). The intransitive badge (を) reminds us not to use を (O) in that sentence. (Sentences with an adjective or noun+copula predicate also cannot have direct objects.)

The Animate (picture of a dog) / Inanimate (picture of scenery) badge on nouns is for verbs that require the subject of the sentence to be animate or inanimate. None of those are in the Core Deck, but they can be found other decks of Japanese: The Game.

All nouns in a sentence must be followed by (1) a copula if they're in a predicate or (2) a particle if they're not in a predicate. The raised position of the particles is a reminder that they're required for nouns. Every noun not in the predicate of a sentence will be followed by a particle.

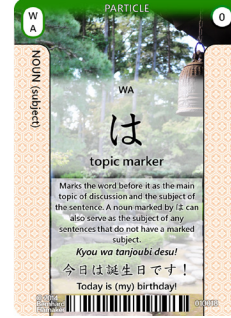
IMPROVING A SENTENCE

You can improve any sentences that you previously played in the game. When improving a sentence, you may add any cards from your hand to your sentences as long as the new sentence still follows the pattern shown on page 1 under "Sentence Color Pattern". Two common ways to improve a sentence are by adding an adverb or by adding a noun followed by a particle. These are discussed below.



ADVERBS

Adverbs (pictured above) allow you to elaborate on your previous sentences by describing the way or frequency with which they were done, such as "sometimes" or "unfortunately." There are no special requirements for playing these cards outside of following the color pattern shown on page 1 under "Sentence Color Pattern".



Particles (pictured above) are the glue of a Japanese sentence. They do things like mark the subject of the sentence or tell you what the victim of the verb is. In the above example, は (wa) marks the card to the left of it as the subject of the sentence. Particle cards in Japanese: The Game look slightly different from the others. The peach-colored notches represent where the other cards in the sentence will sit (as shown below). If the notches have words (such as NOUN in the card above), then only that type of card may be placed there. If they are blank then there are no restrictions.

By using adverbs, nouns, and particles we have improved the sentence introduced in page 3. Here is our new and improved sentence:



あいにく プリクラの写真是高い
ainiku purikura no shashin wa takai

The sentence above roughly translates to "Unfortunately, the photo sticker booth's photographs are expensive" and demonstrates how particles and adverbs interact with sentences in Japanese: The Game.

EXAMPLE TURN

Satoru is playing Japanese: The Game against Kikumaro and is on his second turn. On his first turn, he played five cards but two have been eliminated by Kikumaro since then. The sentence on the right remains (*Geinoujin o miru*):



Satoru only had four cards left after his turn, so he drew three more in preparation for his next turn. His current hand can be seen on the right (*chikatetsu, sugu, to, yo, shakaijin, matsuri, no*):



Satoru sees that he can use some of these cards to improve his original sentence: *すぐ (sugu), の (no), 祭 (matsuri), and よ (yo)* which would score him 5 points and allow him to remove 4 points worth of cards from his opponent's sentence. So on his next turn, he plays those cards onto his original sentence, which makes it look like the sentence on the right (*sugu matsuri no geinoujin wo miru ka*). His sentence now says, "I'm going to watch the celebrities at the festival!" Since he played 5 points worth of new cards, Satoru can now remove 4 points worth of cards from Kikumaro's sentences. If he were playing against more opponents, he could distribute that damage any way he likes among one or more opponents. His turn is over and play continues counter-clockwise.



まつり げいのうじん み
すぐ祭の芸能人を見るよ
sugu matsuri no geinoujin o miru yo

ADVANCED RULES

Japanese: The Game can be played simply according to the rules above, but if you'd like to broaden your knowledge and practice of Japanese, the following rules introduce a slightly more complex grammar structure. We expect that you've played this game a few times and/or have a working knowledge of Japanese grammar if you're going to add these rules. Please be patient if you're playing with less experienced players. The goal here is to teach and learn while having fun. Because you're familiar with Japanese: The Game we invite you to use cards from this deck to form the example sentences below.

ADJECTIVES

Japanese can use adjectives in the predicate of a sentence as we've already seen, but the language also uses them before nouns just as we do in English. "I will go to an unusual festival" is spoken "*mezurashii matsuri ni iku*" with the adjective *mezurashii* directly preceding the noun *matsuri*. In this case the adjective does not count as a predicate for the whole sentence—that role is played by the verb *iku*. The adjective only describes the noun. It is perfectly acceptable Japanese to use an adjective in this way.

VERBS

Japanese also uses verbs in the same way. If you place a verb before a noun, that verb modifies the noun. We have funny ways of doing this in English, such as using question words as in "the officer who visits." "Who" isn't a question in that English phrase. The Japanese language avoids this quirk by just placing the verb before the noun like an adjective: "*tazuneru keisatsukan wa tomaru*" means "The officer who visits will stay (overnight)." Another way we say that in English is by using "ing" on the verb: "The visiting officer will stay (overnight)."

LONGER MODIFIERS

You're not limited to one-word modifiers with this construct. You could even play a whole sentence that modifies a noun. "*Hanami o suru matsuri ga takai*" means "The festival where we view blossoms is expensive." "*Hanami o suru*" is a complete sentence that means "(We/I/You) view blossoms." All you have to do to make that sentence modify *matsuri* (festival) is place it before that noun. Then you use that noun to make sentence because once "*hanami o suru*" modifies a noun, that noun still needs a predicate to form a complete sentence and we get "*Hanami o suru matsuri ga takai*."

COPULAS

There are no copulas in this deck that can be used to modify nouns, but the copulas *De Aru* and *De Gozaru* from some Expansion decks can. *Desu* and *da* are sentence-final copulas. You may, however, use them after modified nouns in the NOUN + COPULA predicate formation, for example "*isogashii kousaten da*": That's a busy intersection.

To see a gameplay video as well as more advanced rules, please go to the link below or scan the QR code:
<https://www.japanesethegame.com/QR>



POLITENESS MINI-EXPANSION

The politeness mini-expansion consists of two Polite Verb Conjugation Cards and two Godan Conjugation Table cards. You can either shuffle the Polite Verb Conjugation cards into your deck to practice polite conjugation or set them aside to focus on sentence building. Usage of the mini-expansion's Verb Conjugation cards depends on the type of verb you are conjugating. To see each usage, please look below:

GODAN VERBS

To conjugate Godan Verbs, we have to make sure the end of the verb is in the appropriate "base". The black circle in the FOR GODAN VERBS section of the Polite Verb Conjugation card (see right) indicates that "BASE I" is the appropriate base for the Polite Conjugation. We form bases by using the Godan Conjugation Table card. In this example we are going to use the card 叩く (*tataku*) which means "hit." First, we line up the last character of the verb (in this case, the ending character is く, *ku*) with the same character on the left of the Godan Conjugation Table card, like so:

GODAN VERB
TATAKU
たたく
hit
Strike, hit, bash, tap, knock... there are so many ways to tataku.
Taiko o tataku.
太鼓を叩く。
(I) beat a drum.
を TRANSITIVE PREDICATE 述

GODAN CONJUGATION TABLE
Last Character of Conjugated Verb
BASE A BASE I BASE U BASE E BASE O BASE TE BASE TA
う WA わ I い U う E え O おウ TTE って TTA った
く KA か KI き KU く KE け KOU こう ITE いて ITA いた
ぐ GA が GI ぎ GU ぐ GE げ GOU ごう IDE いで IDA いだ
す SA さ SHI し SU す SE せ SOU そう SHITE して SHITA した
つ TA た CHI ち TSU つ TE て TOU どう TTE った
ぬ NA な NI に NU ぬ NE ね NOU のう NDE んで NDA んだ
ぶ BA ば BI び BU ぶ BE べ BOU ぼう NDE んだ
む MA ま MI み MU む ME め MOU もう NDE んだ
る RA ら RI り RU る RE れ ROU ろう TTE った

When the card is lined up, we see this row of possible endings for our verb: KA, KI, KU, KE, KOU, ITE, ITA. Place the Verb Conjugation card so that all of the syllables to the right of the "BASE I" column are covered (as shown below). Now the last syllable on the lined-up row is KI. This becomes the verb's new ending. So "BASE I" for this verb, "TATAKU", is "TATAKI."

GODAN VERB
TATAKU
たたく
hit
Strike, hit, bash, tap, knock... there are so many ways to tataku.
Taiko o tataku.
太鼓を叩く。
(I) beat a drum.
を TRANSITIVE PREDICATE 述

GODAN CONJUGATION TABLE
Last Character of Conjugated Verb
BASE A BASE I BASE U BASE E BASE O BASE TE BASE TA
う WA わ I い U う E え O おウ TTE って TTA った
く KA か KI き KU く KE け KOU こう ITE いて ITA いた
ぐ GA が GI ぎ GU ぐ GE げ GOU ごう IDE いで IDA いだ
す SA さ SHI し SU す SE せ SOU そう SHITE して SHITA した
つ TA た CHI ち TSU つ TE て TOU どう TTE った
ぬ NA な NI に NU ぬ NE ね NOU のう NDE んで NDA んだ
ぶ BA ば BI び BU ぶ BE べ BOU ぼう NDE んだ
む MA ま MI み MU む ME め MOU もう NDE んだ
る RA ら RI り RU る RE れ ROU ろう TTE った

POLITE
FOR ICHIDAN VERBS:
RU MA-SU
る → ます
FOR GODAN VERBS:
BASE I MA-SU
+ ます
FOR IRREGULAR VERBS:
SU-RU する I-KU 行く KU-RU 来る
SHI-MA-SU します I-KI-MA-SU 行きます KI-MA-SU 来ます
This conjugation makes a sentence polite. It doesn't change the meaning of the sentence at all, but it sounds more pleasant to the Japanese ear.
Shichimenchou o yakimasu.
七面鳥を焼きます。
I will roast a turkey.
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Once that's accomplished, we follow the rest of the instructions on the Verb Conjugation card to follow our "TATAKI" with "MASU." Our transformation has turned the verb 叩く (*tataku*) into 叩きます (*tatakimasu*). ます (*masu*) is pronounced as MOSS.

POLITE
FOR ICHIDAN VERBS:
RU MA-SU
る → ます
FOR GODAN VERBS:
BASE I MA-SU
+ ます
FOR IRREGULAR VERBS:
SU-RU する I-KU 行く KU-RU 来る
SHI-MA-SU します I-KI-MA-SU 行きます KI-MA-SU 来ます
This conjugation makes a sentence polite. It doesn't change the meaning of the sentence at all, but it sounds more pleasant to the Japanese ear.
Shichimenchou o yakimasu.
七面鳥を焼きます。
I will roast a turkey.
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ICHIDAN VERBS

Conjugating Ichidan verbs is much simpler. They all end in "ru" and the conjugation rule is written at the top of the Verb Conjugation card. Just place the Verb Conjugation card to the right of the verb and follow the rule. For the Polite Conjugation, you simply change the last syllable る (*ru*) to ます (*masu*). For example, the verb meaning "eat", 食べる (*taberu*), becomes 食べます (*tabemasu*). Now you're polite and we're proud of you.

SPECIAL VERBS

Rules for the special verbs *SURU*, *IKU*, and *KURU* are printed individually on the Verb Conjugation card. Just place your Verb Conjugation card to the right of the verb you're conjugating and follow the rule. For example, the verb 来る (*kuru*), for the Polite Conjugation, becomes 来ます (*kimasu*).