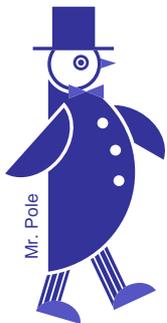




Pera Pera Penguin's

5-minute Japanese Class by Hitomi Hirayama



Mr. Pole

Illustrations by Masako Ban

Vol. 1

好き嫌い

Like Dislike

Mr. Oda invited me to a restaurant last week. After we arrived there, he asked me how a new employee was working out. I answered, "Suki desu." (I like him.) But Mr. Oda sniggered as if I had said something funny or strange. Was my answer inappropriate ?

Most Japanese textbooks and dictionaries translate "like" as "suki." But "suki" is actually an emotional expression that implies "love." "Ii desu" is the common way of saying "nice" or "good." Be careful—you could imply that you love someone in a romantic sense. ("Like" is not treated as verb in Japanese unless the word "desu" is added.)

Like

has two meanings : ① and ②

① When praising or admiring something.

e.g., I like this coffee cup . ▶ いい ii

このコーヒーカップ いいですね。
Kono coffee cup ii desu ne.

② When referring to something you like very much.

e.g., I like classical music . ▶ 好き suki

クラシック が 好き です。
Classic ga suki desu.

love ◀ "I love you = aishite imasu" as in the movies. Japanese people rarely use this phrase in real life.

▶ 大好き dai suki

Dislike

In order to say "dislike," there are two styles:

direct "kirai"

indirect "chotto...", "amari suki-janai desu"

As "kirai" is a direct way of expressing dislike, this style is often avoided. (Being too direct is considered arrogant.) Instead, the indirect expressions below are common.

e.g., Do you like your work ?
"Well... I'm not that crazy about my work ..."

仕事 は ちょっと...
shigoto wa chotto

By leaving a sentence vague and incomplete, "dislike" is expressed very indirectly. This is a thoughtful expression used when trying not to hurt someone's feelings.

e.g., "I don't really care for my work."

仕事 は あまり好きじゃないです。
shigoto wa amari suki-janai desu.

By avoiding the direct expression "kirai," this sentence still shows "dislike," but leaves a softer impression.

..... at a seafood restaurant

Mr. Pole: I like this restaurant. (This restaurant is nice.)

このレストラン ① like です ね。
Kono restaurant (this restaurant) (praising) desu ne. (isn't it ?)

Mr. Oda: What are your "likes and dislikes" ?
(Is there anything in particular you like or don't like ?)

何か好き嫌いありますか。
Nani ka suki/kirai arimasu ka.
(something) (Do you have ~?)
(See kanji at right)

Mr. Pole: I like sashimi,

刺身が ② like です ね。
Sashimi ga (enjoy) desu ne.

and I especially love tuna.

特に鰹が ③ love です。
Toku ni maguro ga (preference) desu.
(especially) (tuna)

But I don't like cuttlefish that much...
(But I'm not crazy about cuttlefish.)

でもイカはちょっと...
Demo ika wa chotto...
(But) (cuttlefish)(don't like) (See "Dislike")

..... while eating

Mr. Pole: Wow ! I like this plate. (This plate is nice.)

わあ！ この器 ④ like です ね。
Waa! Kono utsuwa (this plate, bowl) (praising) desu ne. (isn't it ?)

I recently began collecting Japanese pottery.

今、日本の焼き物を集めています。
Ima, Nihon no yakimono o atsumete imasu.
(now, recently) (pottery) (collecting)

Mr. Oda: Really? Oh, by the way, how is your new employee?

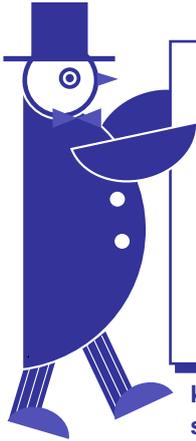
そうですか。ところで、新しいスタッフはどうですか。
Sodesu ka. Tokorode atarashii staff wa dodesu ka.
(by the way)(new)(staff, employee)(how is...?)

Mr. Pole: I like him. (He is a nice person.)

⑤ like 人です。
(praising) hito desu.
(person)

Answers

① いい ② 好き ③ 大好き ④ いい ⑤ いい
ii suki dai suki ii ii



好

kō: favorable, good
su(ki), ...zu(ki), kono(mi): fond of

女子

onna ko(domo)
woman child

Combining “女(woman)” and “子(child),” this kanji originally had a meaning of “young women” or “girls.” As young women were considered beautiful, the combined form was used to mean “to like,” “good” and “beautiful.”

likes and dislikes

好き嫌い

su ki kira i

I have no particular likes or dislikes.

好き嫌い は 特 に あり ませ ん。
Suki/kirai wa toku ni arimasen.

free choice, to each his own

好きずき

su ki zu ki

All people have their own preferences.
(often used negatively)

好き ずき だ っ せ う か ら。
Sukizuki desu kara.

taste, preference

好み

kono mi

My taste and even my preferences differ from my wife's.

妻 と は 趣 味 も 好 み も 違 い ませ ん。
Tsuma to wa shumi mo konomi mo chigaimasu.

good reputation (criticism), acclaim

好評

kō hyō

That new product has a good reputation, doesn't it?

あ の 新 製 品 は 好 評 だ っ せ う ね。
Ano shinseihin wa kōhyō desu ne.

best chance, ideal

絶好の

zekkō no

Today is a perfect (ideal) day for golf, isn't it?

今 日 は 絶 好 の ゴ ル フ 日 だ っ せ う ね。
Kyōwa zekkō no golf-biyori desu ne.

You can change golf to tennis, hiking etc.

Proverb

下手の横好き

heta no yoko-zuki

Crazy about something although not very good at it. Unskillful but enthusiastic.

In Japan, to boast or to brag about something is not appreciated. Therefore, even though one is skillful at a task, and is praised for it, it is best to be humble. This phrase is used to show enthusiasm about a hobby, etc., even though one lacks the skill.

Mr. Tada: You are good (at it).

上 手 だ っ せ う ね。
Jōzu desu ne.

Mr. Pole: Oh, no. I just enjoy it, even though

I'm not good at it.
い い え 下 手 の 横 好 き だ っ せ う よ。
lie, heta no yoko-zuki desu yo.

Mr. Tada: No, really. You are very good.

い い え 上 手 だ っ せ う よ。
lie, jōzu desu yo.