

Icebreaker (Heart Opener)

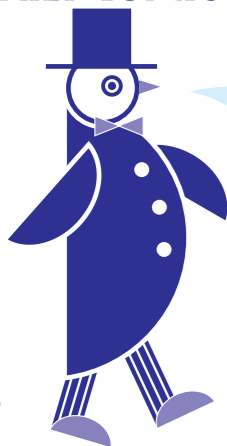


Pera Pera Penguin's

5-minute Japanese Class by Hitomi Hirayama

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I have studied Japanese for 2½ years, but my Japanese is still awful. I want to speak fluent Japanese by using the grammar that I have studied, but for some reason my phrases in Japanese are not as smooth as those of native speakers. Furthermore, I can't make good use of transitional expressions and it sounds so awkward! I have studied some phrases in certain situations at school, but I have not had the opportunity to use them in daily life! When I started to learn Japanese, I enjoyed saying, "ohayō" (Good morning!), "arigatō" (Thank you), and so on. But lately, studying Japanese is getting harder and harder for me, and I don't see any progress. I am stressed out because of that, and I am depressed. Oh, boy.

■■■ I have never seen you so sad, Mr. Pole! But have courage! You are not the only one having trouble like this. Anybody who is studying Japanese experiences this type of frustration. Some are downhearted because they can't communicate with Japanese people however hard they study the language. Others are depressed because Japanese people respond to them in English even though they speak fluent Japanese. It's the same for most students. "Don't worry! (daijōbu)," Mr. Pole! I have a good idea to cheer you up. "You can count on me! (makasete-kudasai!)."

These icebreakers are helpful and useful even for beginners, although the grammar of these expressions is at an advanced level. Since beginners still have a hard time expressing their thoughts in Japanese, it is better for them to memorize shorter sentences. Memorizing these icebreakers and using them here and there will make your conversations much smoother, and you will be able to have heart-to-heart communication with Japanese people.

On a platform.

Mr. Koga: Our train is leaving in five minutes. I hope Miss Yamada doesn't miss it!

Mr. Pole: sō da to ī desu ne. (I hope so too.)

Icebreaker (Heart Opener)

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| 1. I see. | そうですか。
sō desu ka | 11. What's going to happen? | どうなりますか。
dō narimasu ka
how will become |
| 2. Is that so? | そうですか。
sō desu ka | 12. What's going on? | どうなっているんですか。
dō natteirun desu ka
how is doing |
| 3. That sounds interesting. | 面白そうです。
omoshiro-sō desu
interesting(omoshiroi) seem | 13. It's too bad. | 残念です。
zannen desu
too bad |
| 4. What do you think? | どう思いますか。
dō omoimasu ka
how do you think ~? | 14. I can't remember. | 思い出せません。
omoidasemasen
to remember...omoidasu |
| 5. I hope so. | そうだといいです。
sō da to ī desu
so good for me | 15. I think so. | そう思います。
sō omoimasu
so think |
| 6. I hope not. I hope it's not true. | そうじゃないといいです。
sō janai to ī desu
so not good for me | 16. It's up to Mr. Koga | 古賀さん次第です。
Koga-san shidai desu
up to ~ |
| 7. Yes, so I heard. | そうらしいです。
sō rashī desu
so I heard | 17. It's a problem. | 問題です。
mondai desu
problem |
| 8. No problem. It's no problem. | 問題ないです。
mondai nai desu
problem no | 18. Do you have a minute? / May I talk to you for a minute? | ちょっとよろしいですか。
chotto yoroshī desu ka
a little May I ~? |
| 9. What's wrong? / What's the matter? | どうしましたか。
dō shimashita ka
what did | 19. Sorry to be late. | 遅くなってすみません。
osokunatte sumimasen
being late I'm sorry |
| 10. Long time no see. It's been a long time. | お久しぶりです。
ohisashiburi desu | 20. Sorry to keep you waiting. | お待たせしてすみません。
omataseshite sumimasen
keep you waiting |

Sentence + final particle

If final particles are added after the icebreaker, they can change the nuance of the sentence.

question
word + か ka

e.g., Is it delicious?
おいしいですか。
oishī desu ka

giving (new) information
word + よ yo

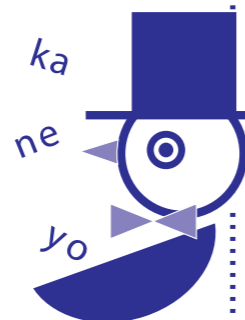
e.g., It is delicious.
おいしいですよ。
oishī desu yo

confirmation / agreement softens the statement
word + ね ne

e.g., Delicious, isn't it?
おいしいですね。
oishī desu ne

I think so.
そうですね。
sō desu ne

confirmation agreement



Conversation
会 話
kai wa

- A) Friend: Oh, gee...I didn't know that it's closed on Wednesdays.
Pole-san: That's too bad, isn't it?
- B) Koga-san: Do you want to go for a drink sometime soon?
Pole-san: It is up to Mr. Koga, as far as I'm concerned.
- C) Friend: How are you?
Pole-san: It's been a long time, hasn't it? お元気ですか。 ogenki desu ka
How are you?
- D) Friend: I heard that Miss Yamada is getting married.
Pole-san: Yes, I heard so, too?
- E) Friend: Well...I guess this is the new uniform, isn't it?
Pole-san: So, what do you think ?
- F) Friend: I guess Mr. Pole is late, isn't he? (20 minutes after the appointed time)
Pole-san: I'm sorry to be late.
- G) Friend: I heard that a new president is short-tempered.
Pole-san: I hope it's not true, don't you?
- H) Friend: We are having a Halloween party at the embassy next week.
Pole-san: That sounds interesting, doesn't it?
- I) Friend: The company is slow at paying salaries into employees' accounts, isn't it?
Pole-san: It's a problem, isn't it?
- J) Friend: Hello, may I speak to Mr. Pole? (1 minute later)
Pole-san: Sorry to keep you waiting. ポールです。 desu
This is Mr. Pole.

Answers A) 13. ne B) 16. yo C) 10. ne D) 7. ne E) 4. ka
F) 19. G) 6. ne H) 3. ne I) 17. ne J) 20.

With cooperation from Yasuhiro Koga

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