# Lesson 12: More verbs, “wo,” “wa,” and “ga”

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| **Verbs** | | | |
| **#** | **English meaning** | **Japanese (rough pronunciation)** | **Japanese (written in Japanese)** |
| **1** | Make | Tsukurimasu | つくります |
| **2** | Use | Tsukaimasu | つかいます |
| **3** | Drink | Nomimasu | のみます |
| **4** |  |  |  |
| **5** |  |  |  |

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| **Nouns** | | | |
| **#** | **English meaning** | **Japanese (rough pronunciation)** | **Japanese (written in Japanese)** |
| **1** | Dog | Inu | いぬ |
| **2** | Cat | Neko | ねこ |
| **3** | Crane | Tsuru | つる |
| **4** | Paper | Kami | かみ |
| **5** | Origami | Origami | おりがみ |
| **6** | Paper crane | Oridzuru | おりづる |
| **7** | Water | Mizu | みず |
| **8** | A drink | Nomimono | のみもの |
| **9** | Food | Tabemono | たべもの |
| **10** | Teacher (or any older or more experienced person) | Sensei | せんせい |
| **11** | Student | Gakusei | がくせい |
| **12** | Adult | Otona | おとな |
| **13** | Pencil | Empitsu | えんぴつ |
| **14** | Chopsticks | Hashi | はし |
| **15** | Computer | Compyuuta | コンピュータ |
| **16** |  |  |  |
| **17** |  |  |  |
| **18** |  |  |  |

### Particles, prepositions, and post-positions

English uses “prepositions.” These are short words that give key information about a sentence. Nouns, adjectives, and verbs are like the big chunks of a sentence that create most of its meaning, and prepositions are words that fill in the gaps. Here are some examples (the prepositions are bolded): “the man **on** the platform,” “she arrived **after** dinner.”

They’re called “pre-positions” because they come before the word they describe.

Japanese doesn’t have prepositions. Instead, it uses particles like we’ve studied already – like “wa” and “no”: “Watashi **wa** neko desu” (“I am a cat”), “Kanojo **no** inu desu” (“It’s her dog”). These particles come after the words they describe, so technically they’re “post-positions” instead of “pre-positions.” Isn’t that neat?

### Wo

Let’s practice using “wo.” “Wo” marks the “direct object” of a sentence, which means that it shows the thing that directly receives the action. It does this by, like all particles, coming immediately after the word it marks (it’s a post-position!). Below are some examples:

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| **#** | **English sentence** | **Japanese sentence** |
| **1** | I eat food. | Watashi wa tabemono wo tabemasu. |
| **2** | She doesn’t drink drinks. | Kanojo wa nomimono wo nomimasen. |
| **3** | They did origami. They made paper cranes. | Karera wa origami wo shimashita. Karera wa origamidzuru wo tsukurimashita. |
| **4** | Godzilla didn’t use chopsticks. | Gojira wa hashi wo tsukaimasendeshita. |
| **5** |  |  |
| **6** |  |  |

### How to say “I like ~”: “~ ga suki”

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| **#** | **English sentence** | **Japanese sentence** |
| **1** | I like cats. | Neko ga suki desu. |
| **2** | I like dogs. | Inu ga suki desu. |
| **3** | I don’t like cranes. | Tsuru ga suki ja nai desu. |
| **4** | I don’t like my teacher. | Watashi no sensei ga suki ja nai desu. |
| **5** |  |  |
| **6** |  |  |

Let’s look at what this literally means.

1. “Ga” is a particle like “wa,” and for now you can think of them as doing much the same thing: “ga” marks the thing we’re talking about in the sentence.
2. “Suki” is an adjective that literally means “likeable” or “pleasant.” In English we use a verb to say “I like cats,” so the liking is done by the person talking. In Japanese we use this adjective “suki,” so the liking is actually a property of the cats we’re talking about.
3. The word order here is very similar to every other Japanese sentence we’ve looked at. First we say the thing we’re talking about, then we describe it, then we end with a verb (desu).

### Articles and particles, and the difference between “wa” and “ga”

English uses “articles.” These are the words “a,” “an,” and “the.”

“Wa” is somewhat vague and general. It names a topic for us to talk about, but doesn’t get more specific than that. It’s sort of like saying “regarding” or “about,” or doing a hand-waving gesture toward whatever you’re talking about. Here are some example sentences.

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| **Japanese sentence** | **English literal meaning** |
| Watashi wa Adrian desu | About me, am Adrian.  Regarding me, am Adrian. |
| Tenki wa ii desu. | As for the weather, it’s good. |
| Kare wa genki desu. | Talking about him, is healthy. |

“Ga” is more specific. It’s like saying “the,” or “the one.” We often use it in sentences with “wa” to create more complicated sentences. Let’s practice saying “I like,” but use other people than ourselves. We say the more general particle “wa” first, then say “ga” to make our sentence more specific.

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| **#** | **English sentence** | **Japanese sentence** | **English literal meaning** |
| **1** | I like computers. | (Watashi wa) compyuuta ga suki desu. | About me, computers are pleasant. |
| **2** | We like origami | Watashi tachi wa origami ga suki desu. | As for us, origami is likeable. |
| **3** | They don’t like that. | Karera wa sore ga suki ja nai desu. | Regarding them, that is not likeable. |
| **4** | Alice likes her students’ food. | Alice wa kanojo no gakusei no tabemono ga suki desu. | As for Alice, her students’ food is not pleasant. |
| **5** |  |  |  |
| **6** |  |  |  |

## Verbs for “there is/there are,” and “to have”

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| **#** | **English meaning** | **Japanese (rough pronunciation)** | **Japanese (written in Japanese)** |
| **1** | There is / to exist (inanimate objects) | Arimasu | あります |
| **2** | There is / to exist (living things) | Imasu | います |

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| **#** | **English sentence** | **Japanese sentence** |
| **1** | There is a pencil. | Empitsu arimasu. |
| **2** | There is food. | Tabemono arimasu. |
| **3** | There is an adult. | Otona imasu. |
| **4** | There is a cat. | Neko imasu. |
| **5** |  |  |
| **6** |  |  |

We can use “wa” and “ga” with the verbs “arimasu” and “imasu” to make sentences that mean “to have.” We start more general at the beginning of the sentence with “wa” and narrow to being more specific at the end with “ga.”

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| **#** | **English sentence** | **Japanese sentence** | **English literal meaning** |
| **1** | I have a pen. | Watashi wa pen ga arimasu. | As for me, there is a pen. |
| **2** | Alice has a cat. | Alice wa neko ga imasu. | Regarding Alice, there is a cat. |
| **3** | We have water. | Watashi tachi wa mizu ga arimasu. | Talking about us, there is water. |
| **4** | They have friends. | Karera wa, tomodachi ga imasu. | About them, there are friends. |
| **5** |  |  |  |
| **6** |  |  |  |

**Lesson 12: More verbs, “wo,” “wa,” and “ga”   
Homework**

1. Download Anki and get it set up on your computer. If you have a smartphone, get it set up on that, too.

[apps.ankiweb.net/](https://apps.ankiweb.net/)

1. Go to Anki’s “shared decks” page and search for “Japanese.”

[ankiweb.net/shared/decks/](https://ankiweb.net/shared/decks/)

1. Download a deck for Hiragana.

[ankiweb.net/shared/info/2183294427](https://ankiweb.net/shared/info/2183294427)

1. Practice the deck. Try to do all of the new cards within a week – that’s 7 cards every day. You can do it!
2. Go to Tae Kim’s Guide to Japanese Grammar and read the introduction at [guidetojapanese.org/learn/grammar](http://www.guidetojapanese.org/learn/grammar)
3. Do one of the following:
4. Order the paperback textbook
5. Download the PDF version
6. Download the iOS app
7. Download the Android app