# Lesson 9: Conjugating Verbs

So far, we know how to use verbs in a sentence. We say the person who does the verb, follow their name with “wa”, then say the verb. Like this:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Japanese** | Watashi | wa | tabemasu |
| **English** | I | - | eat |
| **Grammar** | person | subject particle | verb |

This is how we say that we **do**, positively, do something. For example, we can say that we **do** speak by saying “iimasu,” or we do go by saying “ikimasu.” We can also ask a question by adding “ka” to the end of the verb.

But do we say that we **don’t** do something? We **conjugate** the verb, which means that we change some of the syllables at the end of the verb. An example of verb conjugation in English is how we change “eat” to “don’t eat”, “ate”, and “didn’t eat”. We make those changes to indicate something different about the action – it’s negative instead of positive, or it happened in the past instead of in the present.

Today we’ll learn how to conjugate verbs in Japanese.

Just like with “desu”, we never have to change our verbs because of whom they’re referring to. Japanese is easy that way.

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|  | **Positive** | **Negative** |
| **Present (and future)** | (Watashi wa) wakarimasu  *I understand.* | (Watashi wa) wakarimasen  *I don’t understand.* |
| **Past** | (Watashi wa) wakarimashita  *I understood.* | (Watashi wa) wakarimasendeshita  *I didn’t understand.* |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Conjugated verb** | **Positive or negative?** | **Present or past?** | **English meaning** |
| Iimashita | Positive | Past | Said |
| Tabemasu |  |  |  |
| Shimasen |  |  |  |
| Ikimasendeshita |  |  |  |
| Wakarimasu |  |  |  |
| Shimasendeshita |  |  |  |
| Iimasu |  |  |  |
| Kimasendeshita |  |  |  |
| Tabemasen |  |  |  |
| Kimasen |  |  |  |
| Iimasendeshita |  |  |  |
| Ikimasen |  |  |  |
| Shimashita |  |  |  |