

§1 **watashi wa gakusei desu.** (I am a student.)

'wa' right after '**watashi**' is a particle that is used to show a topic and a subject of the sentence.

What is a particle?

A particle shows the grammatical relationships between the words used before it and some other word in the sentence. It looks like an English preposition ("at", "in", "of", etc.). However, Japanese particles come after the words.

What is a topic and a subject?

In Japanese, a topic means that what the sentence is about. And a subject means that the thing or the person that performs the action of the verb, or about which something is stated. In most of the Japanese sentences, a topic and a subject are the same. So, we simply put '**wa**' right after a topic and a subject of the sentence. In § 1, '**watashi**' is a topic and a subject. Therefore, '**wa**' follows '**watashi**'.

'**desu**' corresponds with an English be-verb ("is", "are" and "am") and is put at the end of the sentence. The conception of '(A) **wa** (B) **desu**' is that "(A) equals (B)." It is not necessary to change '**desu**' into another form no matter what the subject is. ((A) and (B) must be a noun.)

Example:

ex.1 **watashi wa sensei desu.** (I am a teacher.)

ex.2 **anata wa gakusei desu.** (You are a student.)

ex.3 **anata wa sensei desu.** (You are a teacher.)

ex.4 **anata wa kaishain desu.** (You are an employee.)

ex.5 **kare wa kaishain desu.** (He is an employee.)

ex.6 **kare wa mushoku desu.** (He is jobless.)

ex.7 **kanojo wa Nihon-jin 1 desu.** (She is a Japanese.)

ex.8 **kanojo wa Shingapouru-jin desu.** (She is Singaporean.)

ex.9 **Kimura-san 2 wa jieigyō desu.** (Mr Kimura is a self-employed person.)

1. We can describe one's nationality by adding '**-jin**' to the name of the country.
2. '**-san**' is used for addressing people. It is added after the name. It can be used for all people regardless of gender, marriage status, but never used when we mention our own name.



§2 **watashi wa gakusei dewa arimasen.** (I am not a student.)

'**-dewa arimasen**' is the negative of '**desu**'. It means "is not/ are not/ am not". In daily conversation, '**-ja arimasen**' is used commonly.

Example:

- ex.1 **watashi wa sensei dewa arimasen.** (I am not a teacher.)
- ex.2 **anata wa gakusei dewa arimasen.** (You are not a student.)
- ex.3 **anata wa sensei dewa arimasen.** (You are not a teacher.)
- ex.4 **anata wa kaishain dewa arimasen.** (You are not an employee.)
- ex.5 **kare wa kaishain dewa arimasen.** (He is not an employee.)
- ex.6 **kare wa mushoku ja arimasen.** (He is not jobless.)
- ex.7 **kanojo wa Nihon-jin ja arimasen.** (She is not Japanese.)
- ex.8 **kanojo wa Shingapouru-jin ja arimasen.** (She is not Singaporean.)
- ex.9 **Tanaka-san wa jieigyō ja arimasen.** (Mr Tanaka is not a self-employed person.)



§3 **anata wa gakusei desu ka?** (Are you a student?)

To make a Japanese question sentence, we simply put '**ka**', which is a particle used to make a question, at the end of the sentence.

Example:

- ex.1 **anata wa sensei desu ka?** (Are you a teacher?)
- ex.2 **kare wa dokushin desu ka?** (Is he single?)
- ex.3 **kare wa Kankoku-jin desu ka?** (Is he a Korean?)
- ex.4 **kanojo wa mushoku desu ka?** (Is she jobless?)
- ex.5 **kanojo wa meido desu ka?** (Is she a maid?)
- ex.6 **Tanaka-san wa shufu desu ka?** (Is Mrs Tanaka a housewife?)
- ex.7 Q: **anata wa Nihon-jin desu ka?** (Are you a Japanese?)
 - A1: **hai, 1 [watashi wa] Nihon-jin desu.** (Yes, I am Japanese.) / **hai, sou desu.** 3 (Yes, I am.)
 - A2: **iee, [watashi wa Nihon-jin dewa arimasen.]** (No, I am not.) / **[watashi wa] Shingapouru-jin desu.** (I am a Singaporean.)You are free to leave out the words in [].

1. Basically, '**hai**' means "Yes" and '**iee**' means "No." However, the exact meaning of '**hai**' is "what you have said is right" and that of '**iee**' is "what you have said is wrong." Thus, you have to be careful to answer the negative question in Japanese. For example, to answer '**anata wa Tanaka-san dewa arimasen ka?** (Aren't you Mr Tanaka?)', '**hai, Tanaka dewa arimasen** (No, I am not Tanaka.)' should be used if you are not Mr Tanaka, and '**iee, Tanaka desu** (Yes, I am Tanaka.)' should be used if you are Mr Tanaka.

2. We can leave out a topic or a subject of the sentence when both the speaker and the listener already know it.

3. '**hai, sou desu**' means "Yes, I am / you are / he is / she is / it is, etc." It is used so as to avoid repeating the noun in the answer. Thus, it cannot be replaced by the verb and the adjective.

- ex.8 Q: **anata wa gakusei desu ka?** (Are you a student?)
 - A1: **hai, [watashi wa] gakusei desu.** (Yes, I am a student.) / **hai, sou desu.** (Yes, I am.)

A2: **ie**, [**watashi wa gakusei ja arimasen.**] (No, I am not.)
[**watashi wa**] **kaishain desu.** (I am an employee.)

ex.9 Q: **kare wa kaishain desu ka?** (Is he an employee?)

A1: **hai**, [**kare wa**] **kaishain desu.** (Yes, he is an employee.) /
hai, sou desu. (Yes, he is.)

A2: **ie**, [**kare wa gakusei ja arimasen.**] (No, he is not.)
[**kare wa**] **mushoku desu.** (He is jobless.)

New Question-Word:

ex.10 Q: **anata wa donata * (dare) desu ka?** (Who are you?)

A: [**watashi wa**] **Tanaka desu.** (I am Tanaka.)

ex.11 Q: **kanojo wa donata * (dare) desu ka?** (Who is she?)

A: [**kanojo wa**] **Satou-san desu.** (She is Mrs Satou.)

*'donata' and 'dare' are question-words for asking who the person is. Both mean "who." However, 'donata' is more polite expression than 'dare'. In Japanese, it is not necessary to change the word order by using the question-word.



§4 **watashi mo gakusei desu.** (I am a student, too.)

'mo' is a particle that means "also", "too" or "as well". It replaces a particle, 'wa'.

Example:

ex.1 **anata mo Chuugoku-jin desu.** (You are also a Chinese.)

ex.2 **anata mo gakusei desu ka?** (Are you also a student?)

ex.3 **kare mo shachou desu ka?** (Is he a company president as well?)

ex.4 **Suzuki san mo Shingapouru-jin dewa arimasen.** (Mr. Suzuki is not a Singaporean too.)

Note: Japanese Name

Here are typical Japanese names (written in **Kanji**).

田中 太郎 It reads **Tanaka Tarou**. **Tanaka** is a family name.

木村 春子 It reads **Kimura Haruko**. **Kimura** is a family name.

When we tell our name to non-Japanese people, we normally say a given name first like **Tarou Tanaka**, **Haruko Kimura**.

A: konnichi wa. hajime mashite. 1
watashi wa Tanaka to moushimasu. 2
douzo yoroshiku onegai shimasu. 3
B: watashi wa Tan to moushimasu.
kochira koso 4 douzo yoroshiku onegai shimasu.
A: shitsurei desu ga, 5 Tan-san wa 6 gakusei desu ka?
B: hai, sou desu. gakusei desu. Tanaka-san wa? 7
A: watashi wa kaishain desu.

1. '**hajime mashite**' means "How do you do?" In Japan, this greeting is used when we meet someone for the first time. After this greeting, we shake hands with each other.
2. '**...to moushimasu**' is used when you are introducing your name. In this case, '**desu**' is seldom used.
3. '**douzo yoroshiku onegai shimasu**' means "Nice to meet you."
4. '**kochira koso**' means "me, too" or "It is I who should say so".
5. '**shitsurei desu ga**' means "Excuse me, but ..." It is used when asking personal questions such as one's age, marriage status and name we have forgotten and so on.
6. In Japan, the name is usually used rather than '**anata**' when addressing to a person or asking a question about a person whom you talk with.
7. '**...wa?**' is pronounced with a rising intonation. This is a kind of question and means "How about ...?"

A: Good afternoon. How do you do? My name is Tanaka. Nice to meet you.

B: I'm Tan. Nice to meet you.

A: Excuse me, but are you a student?

B: Yes, I am. How about you?

A: I'm a company employee.