Japanese Unfiltered: Conversational and Practical Language through *Manga*

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

By

Pedro Bassoë
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Abstract

Formal language training aims to impart students with the necessary linguistic and cultural knowledge to function socially and professionally in a foreign environment. In this capacity, it should provide students with enough essential vocabulary, grammar, and cultural context to perform daily tasks and express basic thoughts and desires in the target language. What formal training generally does not entail is a devoted study of idiomatic expression, colloquial language, or slang terminology. Though learning the standard forms is reasonably the primary task of language instruction, learning colloquial language will have the benefit of giving the student additional tools with which to interact with native speakers. In the case of Japanese, specifically, colloquial language is dissimilar enough from the standard form that it merits a level of separate study. I propose that manga, or Japanese graphic novels, be integrated into a standard curriculum in order to give students additional tools in deciphering language at various levels of formality. Such materials would feature native, unadulterated Japanese and would potentially fit in with the interests and hobbies of many of the students. In attempting to demonstrate the benefits of teaching manga in the classroom, I have assembled a collection of popular examples and created language lessons which highlight grammar and conversational points in a simple, accessible manner. Using manga in the classroom would also help boost kanji, vocabulary, reading, inference, and reference skills and would also provide succinct cultural lessons from native Japanese.

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# Table of Contents

PART I Paper Portion: Inspirations, Research, and Explanations

Introductory Paper ................................................................. 5

PART II Project Portion: Japanese Unfiltered Workbook

Japanese Unfiltered ................................................................. 14

Introduction ............................................................................. 16

*Vagabond* .................................................................................. 20

   Part I: なんか ................................................................. 24

   Sentence Inversion ............................................................. 25

   Part II: どうでもいい，それより ........................................ 32

   Pronouns (I, You) ............................................................... 33

   Part III: おらぬ！Archaic and Literary Language ................. 38

*Hotaluna You* ........................................................................... 41

   Part I: 核弾頭対大気圏外 Expressing Direction and Relation .... 44

   Part II: とか ..................................................................... 50

   Part III: まる-でみたい，まだまだ .................................... 55

*Welcome to the NHK* ............................................................. 58

   Part I: Adverbs and Adverbial Phrases .............................. 63

   Mimetic Words and Sound Symbolism ............................ 64

   Part II: Slang ................................................................. 70

   わけ ............................................................................. 71

   Part III: 先輩・後輩 ..................................................... 78

*Vagabond* Translation ............................................................ 82
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotaluna You Translation</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome to the NHK Translation</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography, resources, and copyright</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Japanese Unfiltered

I conceived of Japanese Unfiltered, the short textbook created in this project, following months of perusing a small collection of untranslated Japanese *manga*, or graphic novels. I began reading manga during my third year of Japanese language study and discovered that my knowledge base was insufficient for understanding the odd language and ambiguous dialogue that I encountered. Previous study in Japan had exposed me to some of the slang I came across, but I had yet to grasp its function and structure. I also found much of the narrative and dialogue to be vague and highly contextual. However, after voraciously absorbing volumes of manga with ever-increasing pleasure, I felt a shift in my understanding of the language. There were some aspects of Japanese I had originally found perplexing, such as the degree of ambiguity often employed in dialogue and frequent subject omission, but I slowly came to understand that these were essential and intriguing features of the language. All the while I was blissfully absorbed in captivating art and gripping storytelling. From this experience I realized that manga could potentially be used as a highly beneficial tool in the Japanese language classroom.

I decided to compile manga and use them as examples in a short textbook. First, I extracted short sections from three Japanese manga, *Vagabond*, *Hotaluna You*, and *Welcome to the NHK*, and created grammar, conversation, and reading lessons based on the content found therein (see bibliography for copyright information). To make the material more approachable, I compiled difficult and less-common words and defined them in vocabulary lists. Similarly, I compiled important *kanji*, or Chinese-origin pictographs, and listed them with pronunciations and common examples in kanji practice sections. Short sections on
culture were included to illustrate the kinds of relevant cultural lessons that can be found in manga. Because the brief excerpts presented here would be difficult to understand without background information on the stories, I have included lists of characters, settings, and short plot summaries to help the reader become acquainted with the material. Translations of the excerpts are included at the end of the workbook and are intended for reference use. This project is intended to be a finished, useable product, though it is in an abbreviated form as the ideal product would be significantly expanded. Even in this short form, I feel that the potential of the medium has been expressed.

Challenges in Language Teaching

In America, traditional foreign language classes can be static and inflexible and standards noticeably low when compared to the rest of the world (Strasheim 3: 1984, Turner 17: 1984). Major problems include a general lack of innovation and progressive thinking, a lack of genuine language sources, limited communication in the target language, and difficulty connecting with the intended audience (Haley 1-4: 2004, Strasheim 1-3: 1984).

The first problem confronted is a lack of innovation in foreign-language teaching. Japanese was originally a language studied for mainly business and political purposes (Fukunaga 206: 2006). As such, courses in the language traditionally focus exclusively on polite and formal language and leave out vast areas of content that would include study of colloquial, natural speaking patterns. Studies of natural and colloquial language in the classroom are not generally encouraged and are inherently difficult to implement, but the student demand is present and the justifiable rewards include greater opportunity for communication and more personal connections with the target language (Roberts 54:1998).
As a highly stratified and hierarchical language, Japanese requires that the speaker master concepts of humbleness and respect embodied in honorific language in order to communicate (Wetzel and Inoue 68: 1999). Japanese classes rightfully spend a good amount of time building on polite language and standard language skills as learners will often need to adapt their language to members of society deserving linguistically-denoted respect. However, communication in Japanese is not always respectful and is based on complex social factors (Wetzel and Inoue 71: 1999). Contempt, excitement, playfulness, shame, and a host of other emotions color language. The expression of such varied emotions is accompanied by changes in grammar, pronunciation, and expression. Learning how to appropriately and naturally maneuver and communicate in a language requires recognizing and being able to make use of language appropriate for the situation.

Traditional language teaching leaves the student with skills appropriate mainly for formal and business situations, leaving out tools essential for building friendships, understanding media, and living in a foreign culture. Some language textbooks do occasionally use alternate or casual speaking forms and mechanisms, but these are not the focus of study and they are not dedicated significant time or explanation (Makino, Hatasa, and Hatasa: 1998; Banno, Yutaka, Yoko, Chikako: 1999). The problem with teaching purely formal language is that American students are more likely to have meaningful interactions with other Japanese students or young Japanese people rather than with businessmen or politicians, and in student-student interactions formal language can be stiff and alienating. Meaningful interaction would be made easier by widening a student’s knowledge of speech patterns and could result in immediate benefits, such as the student feeling a stronger and more tangible connection with the target culture.
As Strasheim puts it, "surveys point out that students have two primary goals in enrolling in foreign languages - learning to communicate in the language, and gaining some real knowledge of the lifestyles and values of the people(s) who speak it." (3: 1984). Students are eager to learn and practice their skills in a new language in a meaningful way (Haley 4: 2004). Students want to learn how to communicate, and learning how to communicate in a foreign language is a more complex task than simply memorizing and reiterating vocabulary and grammar rules. As Westphal points out, "Communication is the most critical aspect of language: we must teach our students to communicate." (1984: iii)

It seems that communication would be the most important aspect of language, as language is a means of communication, but American language classrooms are often lacking in real communication. In fact, the majority of language classes in America are conducted primarily in English, American students consistently perform worse in foreign language and culture comprehension than other students from around the world, and American students are not required to live and learn in foreign countries as are, say, British students (Strasheim 1984: 3, Turner 1984: 17, Roberts 1998: 51). Thus, we are left in a situation where Americans are being underexposed to foreign culture and deprived of chances to communicate or experience valuable and essential interactions with speakers of their target language.

When students do not meet their goals, that is, to learn how to communicate and to gain real knowledge of a different people and culture, then this potentially leads to boredom, stagnation, and a loss of interest in the foreign language (Strasheim 1984: 6). Classes which lack in difficulty and also in reward alienate the learner, keeping them from progress and the realization of their skills. Language learning should be challenging in order to promote
progress and growth, yet it is acknowledged that it must also be sensitive to students’ needs and not overly frustrating. Michèle de Courcy surveyed a group of French and Chinese immersive language courses and found that, “Insistence on the use of the target language, with the use of English being discouraged, was felt by the immersion students to be an aid to language learning in their context,” (2002: 67). He also found that lack of structure in the classroom caused confusion and frustration, leading to the conclusion that immersive courses must be implemented with measured structure and led along by an aware and responsive guiding hand (2002: 57).

More creativity and freedom of expression are also in call for in the American language classroom. Snyder remarks that, “The freedom to create and experiment linguistically is a condition often overlooked in [language] testing, although it is essential to true communication,” (1984: 35). Communicating is an active process which requires the speaker to react to unpredictable and spontaneous events. Creativity and intuition become important in adapting and responding to spontaneity.

Early psycholinguistic theorist Steven Krashen proposed that second language acquisition occurs best in natural, meaningful interaction (Hall 2004: 11). Bringing in more authentic materials to the classroom, conducting more of the class in the target language, and allowing for greater creativity and meaningful cultural explorations are all necessary for a more progressive and effective language learning environment (Strasheim 1984: 3, Hall 2004: 12-13).
Manga in the Classroom

I do not propose to meet all of the challenges in the classroom that I have presented here, as this would clearly be a task well beyond my means. I do, however, propose that an innovative and progressive teaching environment would be beneficial to students and that classroom language learning can be made more attractive by adding new media to the curriculum.

"Animation and other popular culture texts motivate and teach students about language, culture, and society," says Natsuki Fukunaga in an article entitled "Those Anime Students," (2006: 206). The article chronicles several students’ progression from purveyors of Japanese animation, manga, and video games to serious and motivated students of language and culture. These students are engaging in a genuine Japanese pastime and culturally important activity by reading manga, which in 1995 accounted for 40% of all books and magazines sold in Japan (Allen and Ingulsrud 2003:674). Manga also have a long history in Japan, though their date of origin is disputed. Some date manga back to 12th century illustrated scrolls, and others to 1920s newspaper comic strips, though comic books of the 1950s are more commonly pointed to as the direct origin of modern manga (Allen and Ingulsrud 2003: 674, Kinsella 2000: 4). Manga is also immensely popular in the U.S., where $120 million was spent on the Japanese graphic novels in 2004 (Schwartz and Rubinstein-Ávila 2006: 41).

Manga’s popularity and exciting presentation make them an ideal solution to the boredom and disinterest that can occur in language classrooms. Of course, this alone does not demonstrate their value, but it does solve one potential and very real problem and is intended as a pragmatic solution. Japanese language education should most certainly not
begin and end with manga, but rather take into account its ready and interested audience. As Strasheim says, “[Students] dread and reject the prospect of more of the same—the same emphases, the same kinds of drills and exercises, the same class routines, and the same sorts of learning activities and tests,” (1984:1).

Popularity and excitement alone would not make manga a good teaching tool, but fortunately the medium is also rich with possibilities for culture and language learning. First off, manga would bring in authentic Japanese intended for a Japanese audience into the classroom, where the goal is to study a real culture and its language. At first, this may seem difficult due to potential problems with authentic materials such as limited, biased, or incorrect cultural information and limited written language samples (Haley 2004: 159). However, the teacher is always free to screen and assess material beforehand, and even biased or colloquial examples would be valuable as learning resource, even if only for advanced or specialized students. As for the problem of limitations or small sampling, traditional literature and other texts such as newspapers would still be important in the classroom. Haley states, “…teachers should present an environment filled with a variety of books and other printed materials so that students can explore and expand their thinking and use of the language,” (2004: 12). Manga constitute genuine Japanese reading material, and the fact that they contain pictures only makes them more accessible and visually appealing than blocks of text (Schwartz and Rubinstein-Ávila 2006:41).

Fukunaga’s interviews with students who read manga found a long list of benefits and lessons that students derived from their independent readings (Fukunaga 2006: 214). Students learned proper nouns, character and place names, ways of addressing people, male and female speech differences, formal and plain forms of speech, slang, and cultural
information about social settings and rules. They also learned about quality of translation, different speech types and mannerisms in Japanese society, the Japanese academic setting, and how to play Go. Even native Japanese students have expressed that manga helped them learn new vocabulary, kanji, and concepts that helped them in real situations, and also that it expanded their worldviews (Allen and Ingulsrud 2003: 675).

Manga also feature many characteristic elements of Japanese language and dialogue that could be easier grasped with pictures, such as ambiguous language, frequent dropping of the subject, and storytelling that does not always translate easily into Western styles. Schwartz and Rubinstein-Ávila found that, "Manga are reflective of Japanese communication. They rely on highly contextual cues combining visual and auditory modalities: facial expressions, tone of voice, and grunts," (2006: 41). Learning to decipher contextual clues is essential to understanding Japanese, a language where social appropriateness is expected but where information is not always made explicit (Wetzel and Inoue 1999: 71).

Manga also presents many different facets of Japanese society and culture. Themes of manga include school life, dating, sports, politics, finance, economics, leisure, medicine, samurai, outer space, magic, mystery, history, cooking, music, and many others (Kinsella 2000, Schwartz and Rubinstein-Ávila 2006: 42). Through these various special topics, students can learn vocabulary and cultural information that genuinely interests and benefits them. Manga can also help teach students about power relations, social expectations, colloquial speech, and technical, classical, and literary language. As a reading exercise, reading manga requires and develops various sub-skills, including identifying main ideas,
cause and effect relations, and recalling previous knowledge to understand new words and situations (Markham 1984: 52).

Manga would be used primarily for reading and writing practice, as speaking and listening practice would be better executed using other methods, such as conducting the classroom in the target language or by introducing native speakers to the students. However, manga could also be used in a limited capacity for speaking and listening practice by having students construct sentences and dialogues based on manga, by having them discuss the stories in the manga in Japanese, and by having them listen to the stories read aloud. Also, manga would contribute to creating a more culturally and linguistically engaging environment by adding genuine Japanese texts to the classroom.

**Japanese Unfiltered**

This project is an example of the type of textbook or exercises that can be developed using manga. The project focuses on grammar, vocabulary, kanji, culture, and communication skills, and requires reading and writing practice. Manga lessons could be used as supplements to traditional language texts and would not be used daily, but rather once or twice a week. This way, they would maintain their novelty and would function as an incentive for students to spend time practicing the routine, functional aspects of language learning. I believe that manga would make a valuable asset to the classroom due to its capacity to incite interest and present authentic and intuitive lessons on culture and language. With this project, I have aimed to demonstrate this potential in an accessible and visually appealing manner.
UNFILTERED

JAPANESE

Pedro Bassoê
Introduction

Japanese Unfiltered aims to redefine and enrich your classroom language learning experience by breaking away from the standard lesson plan and presenting you with something new, exciting, and challenging. Our goal is to bring you, the savvy patron of language arts, a pure, unadulterated offering of Japanese language media with all of the tools to break down, digest, and absorb the infinite lessons and possibilities inherent in genuine language resources.

Three different volumes from three different manga series have been assembled here and thoroughly translated and broken down to create a path for your knowledge extraction. Manga serves as an excellent primer and source for genuine Japanese language material due to its versatility and intuitive pictorial descriptions. Rather than create new manga aimed at aiding along the bumbling foreign language student with clear cut, meticulously assembled lessons, Japanese Unfiltered jumps into the grime, leaving slang, modernisms, archaic language, and colloquialisms out in the open and treating you like someone who actually wants to learn Japanese.

Using real Japanese manga as a source for teaching brings out benefits and opportunities that simply cannot be found in the classroom textbook. The language contained herein is unfiltered precisely because it was originally intended for an all-Japanese audience, with all language skills and cultural knowledge of the reader assumed. Thus, it avoids the stiffness and awkward phrasing that often plagues classroom language learning. Any dialogue found in these comics will be readily comprehensible and in a natural form for Japanese speakers and listeners.

One of the strongest benefits of using comic books for teaching language and culture is that they have pictures. Pictures can grab your attention, keep a hold on you, and walk you through otherwise convoluted stories. Pictures can also be exciting, frightening, silly, or captivating in any number of ways, arousing emotional connections and pulling you in.

Real Japanese manga is rich in resources. Reading manga will greatly expand your kanji, vocabulary, grammar, reading, and comprehension skills. The language found in manga can help keep you up-to-date with the modern cyberpunk lingo, or it can bring you back in time and show you a romantic, historical Japan. Manga cover a vast array of subjects and can teach you about Shinto, hospitals, lawyers, business, dating games, fairytales, history, and any other imaginable subject. Manga also has imbedded cultural lessons that spring naturally from their native writers and thinkers, making the values of manga impossible to deny.

Before we get carried away, though, it is important to put out some warnings to protect you from the dangers of learning Japanese from manga. While manga can aid tremendously in the acquisition and comprehension of real Japanese, it can also be exaggeratedly informal, leaving the student with a speaking style that evokes images of blue-haired anime characters. The slang and colloquialisms found in manga are real and useful, but they cannot be relied on exclusively and should be generally avoided in formal settings, such as in business or politics. For this reason, manga should be used along with
standard textbooks and teaching methods as a way to enrich, widen, and intensify the language-learning experience, and not as the sole primer for learning Japanese. Fortunately, Japanese Unfiltered points out and explains the slang for you and discusses issues of politeness and familiarity to clear up any of these problems.

Learning conversational, casual Japanese is important for all language students, even those who are aiming to use their skills primarily in a business or political context. Without the ability to create and understand casual, informal Japanese, it becomes infinitely more difficult to make close friends, socialize, and enjoy the foreign-language environment that Japan offers. No man is a machine, and no one can live off of work alone. It would be unfortunate to eschew the comforts, surprises, and joys of friendship and socialization in a foreign country. Learning how to listen to the Japanese and how to respond in context will greatly smooth connections, whether professional or personal, and knowing what the Japanese are reading and thinking about on their own time opens up new windows into their culture.

Now that you have been told of the golden possibilities and given a brief warning about the potential pitfalls, you are probably itching to jump straight into Unfiltered Japanese. This workbook is divided into 3 sections, each one drawing from a separate manga, and these sections are in turn divided into 3 lessons. Generally, the lessons are comprised of a story summary, a list of settings and characters, a short section of raw manga, one or two grammar lessons, a kanji lesson, and a vocabulary list. The manga are left untranslated at the beginning of each lesson and await your inspection and dissection. Unfamiliar or difficult vocabulary is defined later in each lesson and upper level kanji are listed along with readings and examples. Use these and other resources to help translate the manga before referring to the translations in the back.

This book intentionally leaves some material untranslated and without pronunciation guides. This is designed to push you to use reference and inference skills and to gain greater independence when working in a foreign language. It is also designed to push your abilities of comprehension and leave you with a stronger and longer impression on your brain.

It is our hope and dream that you will thoroughly abuse this workbook until it gives up its secrets and pushes you in new directions. Though this book will guide you through some initial examples of manga, it is intended to be a starting point on a much longer journey. For all of you that love music, movies, games, comic books, dramas, plays, and other forms of entertainment, this is designed to get you into that vast, imaginative world and to give you the tools to continue your explorations. For those of you who yearn to talk and make friends with people on the other side of the world, this is also for you. By the end of these lessons, you will be well on your way to understanding unadulterated, unfiltered Japanese.
II.
MANGA WITH WORKBOOK EXERCISES
Vagabond is a popular, award-winning manga by author Takehiko Inoue loosely based on the novel Musashi by Eiji Yoshikawa, which was in turn loosely based on the life of historical swordsman Miyamoto Musashi (Yoshikawa 1995). Liberal adaptations of Miyamoto Musashi’s life are ever-popular in Japanese media, as exemplified by Hiroshi Inagaki’s 1954 cult classic movie Samurai I: Miyamoto Musashi (Inagaki 1954), the manga series Vagabond, which has been running since 1998, and Sega’s Playstation 3 videogame Ryu ga Gotoku: Kenzan! (Sega 2008), released in 2008. Though certain key characters, scenes, and battles are maintained throughout these adaptations, creators often take bold imaginative leaps, portraying Miyamoto Musashi variously as a ferocious wanderer, a brothel bouncer, and a dignified samurai. Takehiko Inoue’s manga initially portrays Musashi as an angry, beastly wanderer with a thirst for blood.

Three scenes are taken from the first volume of Vagabond for this workbook. The first scene sees the clumsy and cowardly samurai Matahachi Honiden debating whether to join his childhood friend Takezou Shinmen in battle (Takezou is later renamed Miyamoto Musashi). The second scene takes place in Miyamoto Mura where we find young Heita Honiden running to his grandmother to tell her of Takezou’s return. In the final scene, a group of samurai come through the village searching for Takezou.

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1 バガボンド 1 by 井上雄彦
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Used in accordance with Section 107, Fair Use, of the Copyright Law,
Title 17 of the United States Code
舞台 Setting

宮本村 Miyamoto Mura - Small, hillside farming village and home of the legendary samurai warrior Miyamoto Musashi.

人物 Characters:

・ 本位田又八 Matahachi Honiden - A cowardly Samurai who wishes to be as strong as his childhood friend Takezou Shinmen (aka Miyamoto Musashi).

・ お甲さん Okousan - Matahachi’s love interest.

・ 本位田丙太 Heita Honiden - A young boy from Miyamoto Mura of the Honiden family.

・ お婆 Obaba - Matron of the Honiden family who eagerly awaits the return of Matahachi. Also an archaic term which generically means old woman.

・ 親戚 Relatives - Workers and members of the Honiden house.

・ 残党狩の侍 Samurai - Samurai party hunting for fleeing soldiers.
何やってる！？
ここでの何をやってるんだ！
俺は！？
早く、突っこむんだ！！
刀なんか奪うんだ！！
あべこのくののおばけだと！
辻風組なんかくわぬ！
この村で育った親友に引け目を感じた！

俺だって昨日は四人も殺った！

行くなっよ！

あの家へ、野武士ともっていったら

お甲さんを助け出すんだ！！

行こう！！
Matahachi Honiden Builds Courage

Grammar

I. なんか

As a filler word, なんか is frequently used in daily conversation and serves to fill in the spaces that take place during natural, informal speech. Its primary function as a conversation smoother differs greatly from that of なにか, which literally means “something.” Though なんか may also be used to mean “something,” in practice it often has no real meaning. なんか may also be used to denote negative feelings or consequences that arise out of uncertainty.

昨日なんかモールに行ったらなんか遅れちまった。
Yesterday, uhhh, I went to the mall but, like, I guess I was late.
その強い酒なんか飲みにくいだろうね。
That’s really strong liquor and, like, it’s probably a bit rough to drink.
なんか、映画見たくない?
Hey, like, wanna see a movie?
なんか、だれでしたっけ？スミスさんでしたっけ？
It was something like, oh who was it? Was it Mr. Smith?

PRACTICE
Imagine you are telling your friend about a date you had last night. Use なんか in four sentences as a filler word. Placement of なんか in a sentence is often arbitrary, but you can use the above examples as guidelines.

1. ________________________

2. ________________________

3. ________________________

4. ________________________
II. Sentence Inversion

Casual Japanese speech often breaks grammar rules that are initially portrayed as the inalterable fundamentals of sentence construction. A common infraction is to place the subject at the end of the sentence after the predicate. This most commonly takes place in casual speech and is often used to emphasize the subject of the sentence. In the manga we see Honiden says ここで何やってるんだ俺は！？ Placing the subject at the end of the statement emphasizes the improbability or strangeness of the subject’s situation, so that in this situation “What am I doing here?” becomes “What the hell am I doing here?” Otherwise, sentence inversion may simply be a result of the action coming to the speaker’s mind before the subject.

何それ！？
What the hell is that?
やっぱり勝った、私たちのチーム！
Victory! For our team!
分かったわ？あたしの説明？
Do you get it? My explanation?

PRACTICE
Try inverting the following sentences to gain a feel for the pattern.

1. あなたはどこに行った？

2. 朝ごはんもう食べたの？

3. あの薬はやっぱり利いたね。

4. 俺の電話にもう答えないの？

5. それはとんでもないよ。
Vocabulary

俺 - I (male use, only with close acquaintances)
突っ込む - to plunge into
奪う - to snatch away, dispossess
がくがく - trembling, teeth clattering
おくれを取る - to fall behind

親友 - close friend
腹をくくる - to be prepared for the worse
引け目 - weakness
助け出す - to help out (of trouble)
ざこ - small fish, small fry

Kanji

俺 1 (male, familiar) おれ 俺等

突 thrust, stab つく、トツ 突然、突破

誰 Who だれ 誰か

組 Group, team くみ、ソ 赤組対白組、組織

腹 Stomach はら、フク お腹空いた、腹減った、切腹
<table>
<thead>
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<th>感</th>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>カン</th>
<th>感じる、感動</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>殺</td>
<td>Kill, murder</td>
<td>ころ・す、サツ</td>
<td>暗殺、殺気</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>倒</td>
<td>Topple, defeat</td>
<td>たお・す・れる、トウ</td>
<td>圧倒、面倒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>数</td>
<td>Count, number</td>
<td>かぞえ・る、かず、スウ</td>
<td>数々、数字</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>助</td>
<td>Help, aid</td>
<td>たす・ける・かる、じょ</td>
<td>救助、助けて！</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
け？ ほんと
セト
セト
又八
ゼヒ
又八つ!!
セヒ
セヒ
帰ってきたかよっ！?
うんにゃ
ウーミャ
おばは
又八のことはもうあきらめなされたが
いまから気持ちはもうじき1年になる
いかがか...
あれから
一緒に戦に出ていった新免家の武蔵が戻ってきるとんじゃ！！

うちはの又八も、違いないが、

さがせ！！

さがせ！！

危ないど、さがして！！

さがせ！！

武蔵、新免の właa！！
Heita Brings News of Takezou’s Return

Grammar

I. どうでもいい、それより

Some expressions and phrases can be tricky to put into practice due to their potential for misuse. In this episode, we see that the old woman replies to Heita Honiden’s response to her question with a quick, powerful slap. Heita’s words were not intended to be rude, but in context they came across as disrespectful. どうでもいい essentially means, “whatever’s fine,” and denotes a lack of caring. It is not the same as どちらでもいい which means “either is ok.” それより can be taken to mean “but more importantly” and is fairly safe when applied to one’s own statements. However, when used after another person’s remark it can come across as belittling or uncaring.

PRACTICE

Use (+) (-) or (o) to fill in the parentheses depending on whether you view the statement as polite, rude, or neutral. There are technically no wrong are right answers as social relationships and personal outlook affect ideals of politeness.

1. ( ) 興味ないさ、どうでもいい。

2. ( ) パーティはどうでもいい。

3. ( ) デートはどこに行った？それより、彼ハンサムだったの？

4. ( ) アンタの携帯盗まれたの？それより、俺の財布だよ！

5. ( ) 気になしないで。どうでもいいよ。
II. Pronouns (I, you)

In English, it would probably sound very strange to ask your friend John, “Does John think it’s a good movie?” but in Japanese it would sound perfectly natural. The most common and safe way to refer to someone when you mean to say “you” is to not say it at all and mention the person’s name instead. This indicates that you care about that person and that you do in fact know their name. In English, when talking about ourselves we start most sentences with “I,” while in Japanese “I” is often unnecessary and can easily be omitted. When you do say “I” or “You” in Japanese, you are confronted with an astounding array of available pronouns, easily in the dozens if you count archaic versions. In this passage, we encounter one strange word for “you,” 汝れ, and two other ones for “I,” わし and うち. The first is actually a combination of 汝（なんじ）and 我（われ）and is used for literary effect. Both are archaic forms of “you” similar to English “thou” and would almost never be used in a modern context. The second gives the impression of being an old male or a country person and the final is used mainly by females and in the Kansai dialect. Following is a list of some more common and some not so common forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>YOU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>私（わたし）</td>
<td>Common, formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>私（わたくし）</td>
<td>Very formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>僕（ぼく）</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>俺（おれ）</td>
<td>male, familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>あなた</td>
<td>Formal or informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>あんた</td>
<td>Familiar, rude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>君（きみ）</td>
<td>Familiar, presumptuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>お前（おまえ）</td>
<td>Rude, male familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>お前（おまえ）</td>
<td>Very rude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>てめえ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>貴様（きさま）</td>
<td>Very rude, villain-like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>まさなさま</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>拙者（せっしゃ）</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>朕（ちん）</td>
<td>The Emperor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vocabulary

ぜいぜい – panting (mim)
済む – to end, complete
おばば – old woman
我 (汝) – I, (archaic) you
代々 – for generations
働き者 – working person

泥 – mud
どうでもいい – whatever’s fine
うんにゃ – grunted dissent (dialect)
びしゃびしゃ – soaking wet (mim)
もうじき – nearly
諦める – to give up, desist

Kanji

済  To finish, complete  すむ、サイ  經済、済みません

代  Generation, replace  かわる、よ、ダイ  電気代、古代

柄  Design, pattern  がら、ヘイ  花柄、横柄

泥  Mud  どろ、デイ  泥棒、泥酔

戦  War  いくさ、たたか・う、せん  戦争
Culture

In this example, Author Takehiko Inoue makes use of archaic terms and formal language which creates a sense of looking into the feudal samurai past. Negative endings such as －ぬ and －まい and pronouns such as 汝 and ワシ may seem foreign at first, but recognizing such archaic and literary terms and forms can aid in understanding literature, proverbs, jokes and various historically based manga, dramas, and anime. As a medium, Manga makes deciphering archaic terms and unfamiliar language easier thanks to pictures which push the story along. In the scene where the samurai are searching for Takezou, they make repeated pronouncements of “おらぬ” which can be inferred to mean “いない” when we realize that they are unable to find their target.
おらぬっ、どこへ隠れおったか！！

この様子だとまだ家には戻っておらぬ。

なんだ、この者か！？

ぶん！

新免家の

は

わしは河内のかいの
郷士の隠居

方は？

まったく

ない！！

とんでもない！！
一人だ。

や。

追っている。

!!

何か、やらかし。

木戸を破って、逃げおった。

二人殺し。

何だ、呉？

加賀、加賀。

勘往い、勘往い。

一人なんで。

奴は。

や。

のめのめと。

!!
A Samurai Patrol Comes for Takezou

Grammar

I. おらぬ！Archaic and Literary Forms

Archaic and literary forms are often used in dramas, manga, and other media for artistic purpose and to convey age or wisdom. It is not necessary to learn them and commit them to memory but familiarity with a few forms and common words can make reading and understanding Japanese stories easier.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRAMMAR</th>
<th>RELATIONAL TERMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>せん</td>
<td>僕</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ーさる</td>
<td>子息</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ーず</td>
<td>陛下</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ーまい</td>
<td>御令嬢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>おる</td>
<td>姫君</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>べし</td>
<td>諸君</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>べからず</td>
<td>旦那様</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>べく</td>
<td>坊や</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Negative volitional (ーない)

While trying to

Son (humble)
Son (honorific)
Your majesty
Your daughter (honor)
Noble daughter
Ladies and gentlemen!
Patron, master (honor)
Boy (familiar, rude)

TRANSLATE

1. 彼のことは口にせんでくれ！

2. 旦那様の御令嬢を守るべく、野武士に襲われました。

3. あの駅から遠いアパートに引っ越すまい。

＊みざる、きかざる、いわざる (Bonus: world-famous proverbial principle)
**Vocabulary**

おる – to be
様子 – state of affairs, appearance
とんでもない – absolutely not, unthinkable
婆 – old woman
郷士 – country samurai
隠居 – retirement
追う – to chase, follow

やらす – to perpetrate, be guilty of
木戸 – wooden door, fence
追い手 – pursuant
加担 – conspiracy
奴 – (vulgar) guy
伴 – (humble) son
やはり – as I thought, of course
のめのめ – shamelessly

**Kanji**

様 Mr., Mrs., Ms., condition さま, ヨウ お姫様, 模様

郷 The country, rural area キョウ, ゴウ 故郷

隠 To hide かく・れる・す, きょ 隠居

居 To be い・る, キョ 居酒屋, 皇居

追 To chase お・う, ツイ 追求, 追っ払う
加 To join, participate くわえ・る、か 参加、追加

担 To bear, shoulder かつ・ぐ、たん 担任、担当

奴 Guy, dude やつ 奴ら、やつめ

Culture

Humility and shame are a major component of Japanese culture and Japanese people may indeed seem to feel guilty and ashamed more often than their Western counterparts, who tend to be more comfortable shifting blame and denying accusations of improper conduct (Lebra 1971). In the first episode of *Vagabond* presented here, Matahachi is too afraid to fight, and he laments that he will never be able to get past the shame of falling behind his childhood friend and letting him handle the fight alone. Later, the old woman Obaba is shocked and enraged to find that Takezou had the gall to show his face without bringing his friend and partner Matahachi back with him. In Japanese culture, shame is a powerful, obligating force that tempers attitudes and wayward desires. Though the shame factor may seem overbearing to Westerners, it results in low crime rates and strong commitment to marriage vows, family, employers, and coworkers.
The Story

*Hotaluna You*, or *Fairy Hotaluna*, is a one-issue spinoff set in the so-called “Leijiverse,” the imaginative fictional world of longtime manga author Leiji Matsumoto. This futuristic universe first came to life in the 1974 debut of the anime *Space Battleship Yamato*, a project in which Matsumoto defined a futuristic universe inhabited by ethereal heroines, space pirates, androids, and an ever-present nuclear threat. Other popular series set in the “Leijiverse” include *Galaxy Express 999*, for which Matsumoto won a prestigious Shogakukan Manga Award, and *Captain Harlock* (Schodt 1986).

*Hotaluna You* is a story about young earthlings who get whisked away on a cosmic adventure, but it also has a serious message, warning readers about the dangers of nuclear development, war, and pollution. *Hotaluna You* is directed towards a younger audience and thus features a straightforward plot that makes it fairly easy to follow. At the same time, technology, military, and science-related terms aid vocabulary-building.

In the first episode presented here, Hotaluna You and her insect spacecraft are passing by earth in a deep space expedition. Upon finding war and violence on earth, they feel saddened and hope that the planet will have matured by their next round. The second scene finds Hotaluna lamenting the presence of a new terrible enemy on her home planet which devours hearts and imagination. The final chapter finds the children on an insect planet learning about their habitats.

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¹ ホタルナ妖 by 松本零士
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Title 17 of the United States Code
まだこの惑星は、コンタクトするには早すぎるようね。

それなら、核弾頭大气圏外でミサイルです。

これは核弾頭では対大気圏外、同種同族が戦っている。
まだ殺し合いをしています……。

来てみましょう。

昆虫生命体の反応も多数あります！！
Hotaluna's Cosmic Ship makes its First Round to Earth

Grammar

I. 核弾頭 対 大気圏 外 Expressing direction and relation

At the beginning of this manga, we immediately come upon a long block of kanji that may initially appear daunting. However, remember that when you come across longer, more difficult segments it is always possible to decipher the meaning with a little time and effort. Begin by breaking down the segment into separate parts. Long sequences of kanji such as these are not single words but are rather groups of words bound together by relational indicators. Here, we can separate the sequence as 核弾頭 対 大気圏 外. Both 核弾頭 and 大気圏 are both nouns and can be confirmed with a quick check of the dictionary.

対 and 外 are both used as suffixes and serve to describe the position of the nuclear warhead in relation to the atmosphere. In the example, 対 is understood as "towards,” as in "heading towards the outer atmosphere.” At times, 対 can also mean “versus,” as in “Brazil versus England.” 外 is a directional word which means outside.

PRACTICE

Fill in the blanks using the following relational words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>外</th>
<th>がい</th>
<th>Outside</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>上</td>
<td>うえ、じょう</td>
<td>Above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>対</td>
<td>たい</td>
<td>Towards, against, versus, to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>内</td>
<td>ない</td>
<td>Inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>沿い</td>
<td>そい</td>
<td>Along</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. フランス(  )オランダのし合いを見たぁ！

2. 校(  )暴力が恐ろしい社会問題になりつつある。

3. 川(  )にそんな派手なビルを建てなんて見慣れない！

4. え？電話切っちゃった？通信圈(  )かな。

5. 屋(  )にスズメのヒナ鳥が見えるよ！
Vocabulary

生命体 – life forms
反応 – response
強烈 – strong, intense
次元 – dimension
レーダー – radar
捕捉 – capture
技術力 – technological power
g惑星 – planet
コンタクト – contact
おそらく – perhaps, likely
核弾頭 – nuclear warhead
対 – versus, towards

大気圏 – atmosphere
同種 – of the same kind
同族 – of the same family
しばらく – one moment, shortly
輪 – ring
接する – to come in contact with, connect
処 – place
一周 – one round, one lap
昆虫 – insect
多数 – many, large number

Kanji

応 answer, reply こたえる、オウ 応じる、応用

烈 violent, strong レツ 強烈、熱烈

捕 to capture とる、とらえる、つかまる・まえる、ホ 逮捕、捕獲

技 technique, skill わざ、ギ 特技、演技
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>術</th>
<th>technique, art</th>
<th>ジュツ</th>
<th>柔術、忍術</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>惑</td>
<td>confuse, perplex</td>
<td>まどう、ワク</td>
<td>迷惑、戸惑う</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>星</td>
<td>star</td>
<td>ほし、セイ</td>
<td>星座、火星</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>対</td>
<td>against, towards</td>
<td>タイ</td>
<td>絶対、反対</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>圏</td>
<td>range, sphere</td>
<td>ケン</td>
<td>気圏、圈外</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>種</td>
<td>type, kind</td>
<td>たね、シュ</td>
<td>種類、多種</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>輪</td>
<td>ring</td>
<td>わ、リン</td>
<td>輪郭、指輪</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>接</td>
<td>touch, contact</td>
<td>つぐ、セツ</td>
<td>面接、直接</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Culture

*Hotaluna You* may initially seem like a simple fairytale and a children’s story, but the tale of two children fighting cosmic evil is also a tale about self-confidence and the power of the individual. Imagination and self-confidence appear as key remedies in battling the ills of the modern world in Japanese contemporary art and manga (Kinsella 2009). Though Japan may be seen as a country of conformity and regulation, it is also a country where surprising and confident means of self-expression are passionately and aesthetically interwoven into the hierarchical and business worlds. Fashion, story-telling, arts, and sports are some of the areas where individuals are free to push themselves and express their unique vision and drive.
摂理 - Divine Providence

これは侵人者たちが食べているのは、命と心の実。
この世に生まれ来る
命のはじめに
生きるために
生まれて来る
命は生きる
ために生まれて
ために生まれて
ために生まれて
A Strange New Enemy of Evil Appetite

Conversation Skills

I. とか

とか is an important and useful word in daily conversation and is used to list examples in a similar manner to the particle や. It is also similar to the English “like,” as in “Well, there’s like, oranges, and like, pears, and like, kiwis…” except for that it comes after the noun instead of before. It can also mean “or something like that.” It is normally placed after a noun unmodified. Take note that it is a colloquial expression and is rarely found in writing outside of dialogue.

A: すしとか好きですか。

B: 大好きですよ。実はよく食べます。うなぎとか、さばとか、かにとか。。。 

A: Do you like things like, eh, sushi?

B: I love it! Truth is I eat it often. Like eel, and like mackerel, and like crab...

PRACTICE

Answer questions using とか

1. 外国とかに行った事ある？

2. どんな食べ物が好き？

3. 面白い映画をみたいけど、何がいいと思う？
## Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>自然界</td>
<td>the natural world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>拝理</td>
<td>divine providence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>法則</td>
<td>laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>侵入者</td>
<td>invader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>生きる</td>
<td>to live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>生まれる</td>
<td>to be born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>宿る</td>
<td>to visit, lodge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>果たす</td>
<td>to end, conclude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>描く</td>
<td>to draw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>義務</td>
<td>responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>存在</td>
<td>existence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Kanji

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kanji</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Stroke Order</th>
<th>Stroke Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>然</td>
<td>as it is, affirm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>拝</td>
<td>take, ingest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>侵</td>
<td>invade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>宿</td>
<td>to lodge, stay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>果</td>
<td>end, conclusion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Culture

*Hotaluna You* revisits one of Japan’s favorite post-WWII themes: avoiding nuclear destruction by realizing the wisdom of nature (Fisch 2000). From *Gojira* to *Akira*, the modern world in Japanese media is often portrayed as being out of control and volatile, ready to burst into mayhem and death at any point (1954, 1988). These stories are not mere entertainment, but serve to remind the Japanese people about their debt to nature and that technology is not the answer to everything. This may seem paradoxical considering Japan’s position as a technological leader in today’s world, but the Japanese people’s relationship with nature runs even deeper and longer than their love of technology. Shinto, the original religion of Japan, recognizes nature as powerful, wild, beautiful, and sublime (Gall 1999). It is a religion where cutting down trees may anger *kami*, or spirits, and where waterfalls and mountains become important deities. In the literary world, there is still much mourning and call to action as Japan’s natural world is increasingly encroached upon.
うわあ～地球の大都市をそのままのままだよ！みたいたっ！
これほど地表の眺めだけの眺めがまだあるよ！
地下都市は地下都市でもあるって事？！
地下都市なくても楽しめるってね！
地下都市とは地下都市子どもトンネルも全部が生きゆく場所だって事が！！
メタルハートさんときの世界
空かったって事、盛翔さん。
ホタルナハンとまちがっちゃうよ！
虫の星だった
ちょっと虫ならCoreApplicationは
ここは虫の世界～！
部っ！！
Grammar

I. まるで～みたい Describing Similarities

Ways by which to draw comparisons and similarities in Japanese are numerous and nuanced. This particular expression is parallel to the English, “It’s exactly like,” or “It’s just as if,” and is used to express surprise at a degree of similarity.

変じゃない？あの子はまるでおれのもとかのみたい。
Isn’t that strange? That girl looks just like my ex.
この部屋汚いね。まるで台風が来たみたい。
This room is a disaster! It like just as though a typhoon has come through!

II. まだまだ Still Some Way to Go

This second expression is used by the beetle to let Hajime-kun know that there is still a bit more to see of the insect city beneath the surface. The adverb is used to show that there is still some way to go before a goal, or that something is still far off in the future.

日本語難しいよ！べらべらになりたけどまだまだまだ。
Japanese is so difficult! I want to get fluent, but I’ve still got a way to go.

TRANSLATION PRACTICE (I and II)

1. I’d like to get married, but not yet.

2. That car looks just like a cardboard box! (cardboard box - 段ボール箱)

3. I want to get better at skiing, but I’m no good yet.

4. This town looks exactly like my hometown!
**Vocabulary**

まるで – quite, entirely, as if  
地球 – the earth  
大都市 – metropolis  
ものすごい – staggering, earthshattering  
林 – forest  
高層ビル – high-rise building  

空中 – the skies  
表面 – surface  
地下 – underground  
水中 – the seas  
姿 – shape, form  
変身– to change shape/form  
眺め – view

**Kanji**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>球</th>
<th>sphere</th>
<th>もとむ・める、キュウ</th>
<th>半球、野球</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>林</td>
<td>forest</td>
<td>はやし、リン</td>
<td>森林</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>層</td>
<td>layer, stratum</td>
<td>ソウ</td>
<td>高層、一層</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>面</td>
<td>face, surface</td>
<td>おもて、つら、メン</td>
<td>画面、面白い</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>姿</td>
<td>shape, form</td>
<td>すがた、シ</td>
<td>姿勢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>身</td>
<td>body</td>
<td>み、シン</td>
<td>自身、刺身</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>眺</td>
<td>to view, a view</td>
<td>ながめ・る、チョウ</td>
<td>眺望</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NHK にようこそ

The Story

Welcome to the NHK began as a novel by author Tatsuhiko Takimoto and was later serialized and illustrated by manga artist Kendi Oiwa (Takimoto 2008). It is a particularly modern novel and deals with many present issues in Japanese society. It is a story about hikikomori, extremely reclusive, non-productive members of society that have become a modern social problem (Newman 2008). It also concerns otaku, or nerds with particularly severe obsessions with anime, manga, etc., and NEETs, or unemployed, unproductive people.

Welcome to the NHK tells the story of hikikomori Satou-kun who is trying to escape the isolated and stifling world of his apartment by getting a job. Along with a similarly distressed neighbor, he creates the idea of starting an erotic video game company, which ironically furthers his descent into the obsessive otaku underworld. Satou-kun comes across many disturbing and dysfunctional subcultures of the modern world, including lolicon, or cartoon pedophilia, prescription drug abuse, and internet-arranged suicide. More important, however, are the common human relationships, emotions, and challenges that face the main character in a frightening modern world.

This segment begins with the opening of the first issue in which Satou-kun contemplates his dismal situation and asks what he has gained from seclusion. The second segment is a psychedelic interlude in which Satou-kun finds the source of otaku-dom in Japan. The final piece finds him begging his neighbor for help in a plot to start a business to impress a girl.

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1 NHK にようこそ! 1 by 渋本竜彦
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Title 17 of the United States Code
NHK にようこそ 1

舞台 Setting

† 佐藤達広のアパート Tatsuhiro Satou’s messy, otaku apartment

人物 Characters

† 佐藤達広 Tatsuhiro Satou - Young, unemployed college dropout trying to escape a solitary, sedentary lifestyle.

† 電気製品 Electrical Appliances - Ordinary household appliances that spring to life during a hallucinatory scene.

† 山崎薰 Kaoru Yamazaki – Satou-kun’s former high school kouhai (social junior) who decides to build a video game company with him.

† 勧誘に来たおばあさん Proselytizing old woman – An old woman who inadvertently forces Satou-kun out of his solitary world.

† 中原岬 Misaki Nakahara – Satou-kun’s love interest who wants to help him escape from the hikikomori lifestyle.
なられば俺も！
今まきに限りなく
最強に近い男！

ビール瓶くらい
手刀で割れる
はず！！

いうちに普通...
Creeping Malaise: A Desire for Change

Grammar

I. Adverbs and Adverbial Phrases

Adverbs and adverbial phrases go a long way in making language sound more natural and coherent. In English, phrases such as “suddenly,” “for sure,” “as expected,” etc. all help make the flow of storytelling more interesting and intuitive and add emphasis to different elements. Many adverbial phrases make up more advanced and nuanced vocabulary, but they become essential when trying to emphasize how people do things or how actions take place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVERBS AND ADVERBIAL PHRASES</th>
<th>こう</th>
<th>For Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ついに</td>
<td>Finally, in the end</td>
<td>こそ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ごとく</td>
<td>Like, as if</td>
<td>もちろん</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>一のように</td>
<td>Like, as if</td>
<td>かぎりなく</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>このえうなく</td>
<td>The utmost, extreme</td>
<td>すでに</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>つまり</td>
<td>That is, in other words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

あの宇宙に浮かんでいるように見える姿はとても不思議だね。
That shape that looks as though it’s floating in space is a very strange sight.
自分の子が生まれたらこの上なくうれしかった。
I was supremely happy when my child was born.

PRACTICE

Fill in the blanks using the above adverbs.

1. 今度( )合格するぜ。

2. ( )あなたと一緒にデートに行きたいよ。

3. またその授業に落ちた。( )また受けるしかない。

4. 自信さえあれば( )突き進めます。

5. 宝箱を開けたら( )空っぽだった。
II. Mimetic Words and Sound Symbolism

The Japanese language contains a vast array of symbolic sounds, often called mimetic words or onomatopoeia but covering a larger area than either of these terms implies. Symbolic sounds in Japanese are used to imitate real, perceived, and imagined sounds. Some words mimic actual sounds and function similarly to English words such as “bang,” “whir,” or “bam,” while others represent non-auditory actions, emotions, perceptions, or psychological reactions. Mimetic words are used with high frequency in standard, formal and informal speech and can be used to great effect when trying to speak naturally or make vivid descriptions. The list of mimetic words is immense, and the following is only a short list of examples.

MIMETIC WORDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ひょこひょこ</td>
<td>Unsteady steps</td>
<td>わざわざ</td>
<td>Purposely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ごんごん</td>
<td>Bang, clang</td>
<td>がたり</td>
<td>With a bang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ぶるぶる</td>
<td>Shaking, trembling</td>
<td>ぽんやり</td>
<td>Absent-minded, vague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ぬるぬる</td>
<td>Slimy, slippery</td>
<td>ぐんと</td>
<td>Remarkably, noticeably</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ぷにぷに</td>
<td>Squishy, flabby</td>
<td>きちんと</td>
<td>Precisely, accurately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>むかむか</td>
<td>Nausea, anger</td>
<td>さっさと</td>
<td>Quickly, promptly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ぶらぶら</td>
<td>Swing, sway, aimlessly</td>
<td>ひとつと</td>
<td>Quickly, hurriedly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ぴかぴか</td>
<td>Glitter, sparkle</td>
<td>しいんと</td>
<td>Quietly, silently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>きらきら</td>
<td>Glisten, twinkle</td>
<td>さっぱり</td>
<td>Clean, refreshed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>うずうず</td>
<td>Tempted, itching to</td>
<td>てっきり</td>
<td>Surely, certainly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>そわそわ</td>
<td>Restless, antsy</td>
<td>すっかり</td>
<td>All, completely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ラブラブ</td>
<td>Lovey-dubby (from English)</td>
<td>すっきり</td>
<td>Refreshed, tidy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vocabulary

仕送り – allowance
幕 – curtain
降ろす – to bring down/ draw down
ごとく – to appear, suddenly occur
隣人 – neighbor
この上なく – the most, nothing greater
すっぴ – sour
現状 – present condition
抱える – to hold in one’s arms, cradle
最低 – the worst, lowest
体感 – experience
一日中 – all day long
パラサイト – someone who lives off of parents
アホ – fool, idiot
復帰 – return, comeback まことに – even more
最先端 – at the forefront 限りなく – without limit
竜る – to hide, seclude oneself 最強 – strongest
歳月 – time, years 瓶 – bottle
空手家 – karate practitioner 割れる – to break, smash
行う – to perform ぶるぶる – shivering
匹敵 – to rival, compare 当然 – of course, it’s given
ゴンゴン – banging sounds (mim) ひきこもり – extremely anti-social
ひよこひよこ – staggering walk person

Kanji

幕 – curtain マク、バク 字幕
越 – pass, cross こ・す・える、エツ 超越
隣 – neighbor, next to となり、リン 隣接
抱 – to hug, carry, cradle だ・く、かか・える、ホウ 抱き合う、抱負
最 – the most もっと・も、サイ 最高、最悪
Culture

*Welcome to the NHK* is the story of a hikikomori trying to break out of his restless malaise and find his way back into society. Hikikomori, literally “those withdrawing into seclusion,” are a recent phenomenon and a major social concern in Japan (Newman 2009). The term refers to individuals who subject themselves to extreme isolation and social withdrawal, eliminating as much human contact as possible. Hours, days, and even years may be given over to playing video games, surfing the internet, watching anime, or any number of other solitary activities. Hikikomori may be male or female, though middle to upper-class males make up the bulk of sufferers. Causes are debated and various suggestions have been made, from acute mental disorders such as schizophrenia and Asperger syndrome to an overwhelming fear of bullying at school or the taking on of adult responsibilities. Whatever the cause, hikikomori are portrayed in the Japanese media as problematic and even dangerous, along with other obsessive, non-social types. While otaku and other “geeks” are to be found throughout the world, hikikomori are differentiated by long periods of extreme isolation and complete lack of participation in any social activities, including school or work.
死ぬわけよ
マジ怖いし…

〜〜

だから彼は…
死ぬ代わりに通販で
買った合法 billions 祭り
買っておきたいんだ…。

〜しかかも、
その日はちょっと
違ったんだ…。

お〜来た〜。

忙しくない。
世容を調べる。

〜あー、そんなことが言えるか。
つまらないな。
お〜はよら、とこっこ〜。
それにしても、見逃した。

〜あ〜〜〜〜
〜休みな〜〜
〜なし〜〜〜

〜〜〜〜〜
〜〜〜〜〜
〜〜〜〜〜

〜〜〜〜〜
〜〜〜〜〜
〜〜〜〜〜
N=日本・H=ひきこもり・K=協会
Conspiracy Revealed: A Hallucination

Grammar

I. Slang

One potential problem with using manga to teach Japanese is the rampant use of slang, comedic language, and exaggerated speech. For one, this language is initially difficult to understand as it is not the standard form taught in classes and it often morphs to imitate slurring and stereotypically colloquial ways of speaking. Also, the slangy speech found in manga could sound rude or presumptuous if used carelessly. However, young people, groups of friends, and even respectable old people will still make plentiful use of slang in everyday speech. As long as you keep in mind to not overdo it, and as long as you stay attentive to how others are reacting to you, learning to use slang can make casual conversation friendlier and more intuitive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>つす</th>
<th>ですね</th>
<th>てか</th>
<th>と言いますか</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>つしょ</td>
<td>でしょう</td>
<td>そりゃ</td>
<td>それは</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>うまい</td>
<td>おいしい</td>
<td>まじ</td>
<td>Serious, damn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>でかい</td>
<td>大きい</td>
<td>さ</td>
<td>Indicates assertion, filler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ちょっといや</td>
<td>小さい</td>
<td>めっちゃ</td>
<td>Very, extremely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TRANSLATE

Translate the following sentences into standard Japanese.

1. このたこ焼きめっちゃうまいっしょ！

2. てかさ、あいつ気持ち悪くて結局あきらめた。

3. 好きいじゃん？すごいジャケットをゲットしたらっしょ！
II. わけ

わけ is a common noun used to denote reasoning, or the absence thereof. It is often found at the end of sentences to either express a reason or show that someone's reasoning is off in the negative. For example, you may see a friend who you know has a boyfriend being unusually friendly with another male. As you express your concern at her cheating your friend exclaims "そういうわけじゃないよ" or "that's not what's going on." When she explains that the other male is her younger brother you reply "ああ、あなたの弟だったんだ？" "oh, so you mean that was your brother." She then replies, "うん、そういうわけですね" or "Yeah, that's what it is." Other important uses ofわけ include expressing that not doing something is unacceptable, as inわけにはいかない, and to say that something is incomprehensible, as inわけがわからない.

わけ Reasoning, conclusion, reason, cause
わけだ For that reason, it's because of that
わけじゃない It's not that, that's not the case
わけにはいかない Can't do without, must do
わけがわからない Incomprehensible

PRACTICE

Choose from the expressions above to fill in the blanks.

1. そういう（ ）で首になっちゃったんだ。

2. 彼の瞳が遠くなって、涙が零れてきて、めっちゃ（ ）話をしてばかりいた。

3. 試験を受けるなら、鉛筆を持っていかない（ ）ですね。

4. マスターが探させたお金は最初からなかったっすよ！俺が盗んだ（ ）。

5. あの選手が入院したから今晩の試合に出ない（ ）ですね。
Vocabulary

わけ - reason
マジ – really, seriously, damn (slang)
代わりに – instead of, in exchange
通販 – mail order
合法 - legal
世俗 - vulgar masses
離脱 - escape
勇気 - courage
見下す - look down on
馬鹿 - idiot, fool
相変わらず - as always
敵 - enemy
攻撃 - attack
陰謀 - conspiracy

運営 - management and operation
秘密 - secret
結社 - organization, association
代表 - representative, model
魂 - spirit, soul
他人 - other person
付き合い - socializing
苦手 - poor at, unskilled
結果 - results
放送 - broadcast, transmit
協会 - association
仮の - temporary, fictitious
目的 - goal, aim

Kanji

販 - selling

俗 - popular, vulgar

離 - separate
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>脱</th>
<th>take off, remove</th>
<th>ぬ・ぐ・げる、だつ</th>
<th>離脱、脱走</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>勇</td>
<td>courage, bravery</td>
<td>いさ・む、ユウ</td>
<td>勇ましい、勇者</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鹿</td>
<td>deer</td>
<td>しか、か</td>
<td>鹿の子</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>敵</td>
<td>enemy</td>
<td>テキ</td>
<td>素敵、無敵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>攻</td>
<td>to attack</td>
<td>せめ・る、コウ</td>
<td>専攻</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>撃</td>
<td>to attack, to shoot</td>
<td>う・つ、ゲキ</td>
<td>襲撃、打撃</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>陰</td>
<td>shadow</td>
<td>かげ、イン</td>
<td>陰陰、木陰</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>謀</td>
<td>plan, scheme</td>
<td>はか・る、ボウ、ム</td>
<td>無謀、謀反</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>魂</td>
<td>spirit, soul</td>
<td>たましい</td>
<td>塊魂 (video game)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>植</td>
<td>to plant</td>
<td>うえ・る、ショク</td>
<td>鉢植え、植物</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>苦</td>
<td>painful</td>
<td>く、くる・しむ、にが・い</td>
<td>苦労、苦しい</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>果</td>
<td>end, conclusion</td>
<td>は・たす・てる、カ</td>
<td>果てしない、果汁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>協</td>
<td>cooperation</td>
<td>キョウ</td>
<td>協会、協力</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>仮</td>
<td>temporary</td>
<td>かり、カ</td>
<td>片仮名、仮面</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
スキル？

それで

佐藤さん、あなた
クリエイターというから

技術を持っている

何が上手いですか？

ええ、例えば

作曲ができるとか

が使えるとか

C thượng

いや特に

嬉しいです。

今、言っています。

これ、いや、です。

あっ、あらライター

とは、？ 一応、芸術部

中止以来、やってねーし

つかメンドイ！

どうでしょうか？

うーん
Covering Up a Lie: Satou-kun Needs to Become a Video Game Creator!

Culture

先輩・後輩 (Senpai and Kouhai)

In classrooms and in many real-life situations, 〜ます and 〜です forms are standard and are used to show respect and humility. In comic books and anime, these forms are dropped more often than not and result in a skewed idea of how the Japanese normally speak. This scene in Welcome to the NHK illustrates a more realistic exchange between a junior (先輩) and a senior (後輩) in which the use of 〜ます and 〜です becomes an automatic sign of respect used by the kouhai. The senpai, on the other hand, continues to use rude and somewhat abusive language even though he is the one begging and making a request. This illustrates a key difference between American and Japanese society. In American society, people often make an attempt to level the playing field by diminishing displays of status, while in Japan, seniors have the right to give orders and take command, even if they are only a grade level or one year ahead in life (Cave 2004; Wetzel 2009). When your seniors speak in a rude or playful manner, it is always safer to stick to your polite forms as this is not necessarily an invitation for you to do so as well. There are many modern Japanese who will break the Senpai-Kouhai relationship patterns and they often let you know when it is permissible to drop formal language.
Vocabulary

つまり - that is, namely
見栄（を張る） - to show off, boast
嘘 - lie
逃げる - to run away
取り繕う - to smooth over
訳 - reason
協力 - cooperation
そもそも - in the first place
むしろ - rather, instead
才能 - talent

物語る - to tell
チャンス - chance
クリエイター - developer
上手い - skilled
作曲 - composition (music)
特に - especially
一応 - tentatively, for the time being
以来 - from then onward
めんどい - annoying, troublesome
(slang)

Kanji

栄
classish

張

嘘

逃
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>繕</th>
<th>fix, repair</th>
<th>つくろ・う、ゼン</th>
<th>修繕</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III.
MANGA
TRANSLATIONS
Matahachi Honiden Builds Courage

Honiden Matahachi: What am I doing!? What the hell am I doing here!? I need to be quick!! I can just take one of their swords!! Don’t you get it? It shouldn’t be a big deal. This Tsujikaze gang are really just small fry. Prepare yourself for the worst Honiden!! If I fall behind Takezou here I’ll always look weak to him!! They’re fighting!! (Sounds of confrontation explode in the background) Come on!! Didn’t I just kill four men yesterday? Takezou... he’s my best friend, we grew up together in the same village, and we’re even the same age, so how can I let myself fail here and look weak to him!? Alright, it’s time to go! That’s it!! I’m rushing in there and beating those scoundrels down! I’m going to help Okousan out of this too! Alright... on the count of 3...
1...
2...

Heita Brings News of Takezou’s Return

Heita: (Gasping for breath as he runs) Grandmother!

Obaba: Oh Heita, it’s you already. Have you finished your work?

Heita: Forget about work grandma, that’s not important. I’ve gotta tell you...
*Smack*

Obaba: I asked you if you’ve finished your work! The Honiden family has been known as a respectable, hard-working family for generations! Don’t you dare sling mud on our name!
Heita: Owwww... But I saw Shinmen Takezou... *sniffle*

Obaba: Matahachi! *panting*

Matahachi has returned!

Relative 1: Ummm...but...

Relative 2: Ehuh... I don't think...

Relative: Grandmother, it's been nearly a year since he parted ways. I understand how you are feeling now, but don't you think that perhaps the time has come to let Matahachi go?

*smack*

What!? What was that for? I was just...

Obaba: Takezou of the house of Shinmen who left to war with Matahachi has returned! So, he must definitely be coming back as well!

Relative 1: What? Shinmen Takezou?

Obaba: Go find him! *swing*

Relative 2: Ah, careful she's crazy!

Obaba: Go bring him to me now!!

A Samurai Patrol Comes for Takezou

Samurai 1: He's not here!?

Samurai 2: By the looks of it he's not even back yet...

Samurai 1: Could they be hiding him somewhere?

Samurai 2: Hm?
Samurai 1: What's your problem old woman!?  
Samurai 2: You don't happen to be a member of the Shinmen family do you!?  
Obaba: Hell no, I am not! I'm a retired old country Samurai wife from across the river. And you gentlemen are...?  
Samurai 1: We're looking for that bastard Takezou!!  
Obaba: Is he guilty of something?  
Samurai 1: He destroyed a wooden gate in the Banshu prefecture and has already killed two members of the pursuing party. We also know he was in conspiracy with someone in the Ukita area.  
Obaba: W...wait. He was alone?  
Samurai 1: Yup, alone.  
Obaba: My son, who is called Honiden Matakachi, did not happen to...?  
Samurai: Nope, alone I said.  
Obaba: (Thinks to self) So he has come back so shamelessly...
Hotaluna's Cosmic Ship Makes its First Round to Earth

Hotaluna: Are life levels detected?

Mushi: They are very strong! It appears there are many life forms here!

Hotaluna: What's the matter?

Mushi: Their dimension radar is attempting to pull in our ship!

Hotaluna: Dimension radar!? How could they have such advanced technology here...

Mushi: Missiles!

Hotaluna: Missiles... perhaps we have made contact with this planet too early on...

Mushi: A nuclear warhead is headed for the outer atmosphere!

Hotaluna: So, on this planet brethren are still at war and killing each other. Let us make another round to the edge of time. After that, we will return and try again.

Mushi: The levels of insect life are high too...

Hotaluna: Is that so...

Mushi: Their dimension radar is attempting to capture our ship!
A Strange New Enemy of Evil Appetite

Hajime-kun: Well in that case... I mean like us... well we eat like meat... and like fish... and like shellfish...

Hotaluna: Well yes. The natural world follows the laws of divine providence. It is the same everywhere. However, the invaders here are eating... well they are eating people's very lives and hearts!

Hajime-kun: P...p... people's lives... and hearts? They eat them?

Hotaluna: Life does not come into this world merely to die! Life comes forth so that it may prosper! We come into this life to fulfill our dreams. We come into this world to take hold of our dreams with all of our hearts!

The Insect Planet

Hajime-kun: Oh wow! It looks just like a big city back on earth!

Kei-chan: It's just like we're back on earth!

Hajime-kun: It's absolutely a forest of tall buildings!

Mushi: This is just a view of the surface! There's still more below!

Hajime-kun: More below? So you mean there is an underground city too?!

Metal Hat: Insects are your hobby so you should know this Hajime-kun! Insects inhabit the skies, the earth, the underground, and the seas. Insects can thrive in all of these places!

Hajime-kun: Metal Hat, when you change your form like that I mistake you for Hotaluna. So then if you were an insect...

Kei-chan: Then this would definitely be the place for you!
Satou-kun: It's the second spring since I dropped out of college, and the measly allowance that finally arrived from my parents has signaled the drop of the curtain...
Just as I was about to break into a despairing laugh, it started. My neighbor, who I have yet to see since he moved in last week, began blasting that damn anime music that blares insanely starting every morning.
I cradled my head as I realized my situation had become absolutely intolerable. I began to feel as if life was a completely worthless, pointless experience.
So my asshole neighbor has decided to blast that "Magic Girl" shit all day long then...
But, however, today it all ends! Today I graduate from being a parasite.
From this very day, I will make my comeback into society! I'm going to get a job! No one will ever be able to call me a "hikikomori" again!

(Mumbles to self) That's right! I'm not lower than a monkey. I can't, can't, can't, can't, can't run away!!! ...right...?

That's right! I'm one of those... "hikikomori" Me...Satou Tatsuhiro, age 22, at the forefront of today's societal problems that everyone has been so noisy about lately.

(Mumbles to self) but damn an interview for employment sounds horrifying...

Moreover, it's already been four years since I withdrew from society! That length of time rivals karate master Ooyama Masutatsushi's period of secluded mountain training he undertook in his younger days.

*bang, clang* (Searches fridge for bottle) *unsteady steps*
So in that case, I too must have become nearly the strongest man alive!

Hiya!!! *smash, shatter*

*ding-dong* (doorbell rings)

Of course, as a hikikomori I have developed various evil habits.

**Proselytizing old woman:** Hello! Sorry to interrupt you!

**Conspiracy Revealed: A Hallucination**

**Satou-kun:** Perhaps I shouldn’t die just yet...it’s seems pretty fucking scary. So instead of dying, perhaps I’ll take these legal (?) drugs I ordered in the mail... Ohhhh that feels good... and now escape the vulgar masses and head towards paradise!

(Aside) but that day was kind of a strange experience

(Mumbles) Soooo...Have you been passing your days in good health? Mr. Television, Mr. Computer, older brother refrigerator, older sister boiling water dispenser...

**Mr. Refrigerator:** Ah! Satou-kun! Welcome! Have you managed to graduate from being a hikikomori yet?

**Satou-kun:** Naaaahhh... I can’t...

**Mr. Television:** You can! Now get some courage and head out into the world!

**Satou-kun:** No, no I can’t. If I go outside people will treat me like an idiot and look down on me.

**Mr. Speaker:** *rising puffs of anger* No use, same as always!

**Ms. Hot Water Dispenser:** Wait Mr. Speaker, don’t you know he is being assaulted by an enemy?
Mr. Speaker: Assaulted by an enemy?

Ms. Hot Water Dispenser: Yes! It's a conspiracy!

Mr. Television: NHK is managed and operated by licensing fees paid by the public!!!

All: Whoa!

Mr. Refrigerator: Wait Mr. Television! Aren't you surprised?

Ms. Hot Water Dispenser: That's not what I'm talking about! I'm talking about an attack by the evil conspiracy association NHK.

Satou-kun: The evil conspiracy association NHK you say...?

Ms. Hot Water Dispenser: That's right! Please, why don't you think it over?

Satou-kun: That's right...if you think NHK, then you think of countless high quality anime, like Nadia for example, and those anime plant the seed of the "otaku" soul in peoples' hearts. Social skills begin to deteriorate, and the result is that a hikikomori is born! So then, the NHK we know, Nihon Housou Kyoukai (Japan Broadcasting Association) is just a dummy company!

(Mumbles) So what is it? Nihon Himawari Kyoukai (Japan Sunflower Association)? Nihon Hanakuso Kyoukai (Japan Nasal Discharge Association)? No...

NHK? What is there true objective? Ah, NHK= Nihon Hikikomori Kyoukai!!

Covering Up a Lie: Satou-kun Needs to Become a Video Game Creator!

Yamizaki-san: So you mean to say that you were showing off for a cute girl and you told that awful lie and then ran away back home? So then you mean
that in order to smooth over that lie you are telling me to cooperate with you? This room is no-smoking by the way.

**Satou-kun:** Dammit, I’m begging you Yamazaki-san! You are the only one I can count on!

**Yamizaki-san:** Whoa, whoa, you don’t have to go bowing for me now...

**Satou-kun:** (thinking) Oh Goddammit! Why am I lowering my head for Yamazaki-san? Why the hell did I even tell that big lie in the first place?!

(Flashback)

**Satou-kun:** ...Actually, people often talk of my amazing talent!

**Misaki-chan:** Ahhh, what a waste of time.

**Satou-kun:** I am *not* a hikikomori!

**Misaki-chan:** Listen, you won’t get this chance again...

(Flashforward)

**Yamizaki-san:** Ok then Satou-kun, if you are going to be a video game designer, then what special skills do you have?

**Satou-kun:** Skills?

**Yamizaki:** For example, like, maybe you are good at drawing, or like, maybe you can compose music, or like, can you use C*?

*Author’s note: C ++ programming software

**Satou-kun:** Well, ehhh, not especially... (Aside) Well if you really pushed me I guess I can say I’m good at withdrawing from society...

**Yamizaki-san:** Yeaaaah... I see...
Oh! What about writing? I think you used to be in the literature club, didn’t you?

Satou-kun: Oh, no, no, no! No way! I haven’t written anything since I quit school; it would be way too hard.
Works Cited


Works Used in Project


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Reference Resources

All lessons were created by the author and are original. However, the following sources were used for referencing vocabulary, grammar, and kanji and for basic inspiration.
