

## Japanese Small Talk Skills for Better Social Relationships

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## 【Course Description】

Are you eager to engage in enjoyable conversations in Japanese with Japanese friends? Whether you lack confidence in participating in such conversations, are already actively engaging in them, or believe you have sufficient proficiency in Japanese to do so, this course is designed for you. In casual situations where there is no specific purpose (e.g., asking a stranger for directions or making a request to a friend), these conversations are referred to as *zatsudan* (雑談) in Japanese. In English, they are commonly known as 'small talk' or 'chatting.' Zatsudan is not just a waste of words; it plays a crucial role in building positive social relationships with friends and people around you. Throughout this course, you will study approximately 300 commonly used words (expressions, phrases, and idioms) in Japanese *zatsudan*, along with techniques to sustain engaging conversations. These skills will help you cultivate meaningful social connections and interactions.

**Attention:** This course places a strong emphasis on speaking practice, making it an ideal choice for students seeking active participation in class.

## 【Course Objectives】

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Comprehend approximately 300 commonly used words in casual conversations.
- Use these approximately 300 commonly used words effectively in your daily interactions.
- Grasp *zatsudan* techniques to sustain engaging conversations in casual settings.
- Apply these techniques with confidence to maintain engaging conversations in casual settings.

## 【Class Schedule】

	Class Content	After-class Homework
1	Orientation	• Information Sheet
2	Words 1: Words with いい/意味 Techniques 1: Sound Change	• Review Words 1 & Techniques 1 • Prepare for Words 1 Quiz
3	★Words 1 Quiz Words 2: Words Related to the Human Body (1) Techniques 2: Particle Omission	• Review Words 2 & Techniques 2 • Prepare for Words 2 Quiz

## 2024 Spring Semester

	Class Content	After-class Homework
4	★Words 2 Quiz Words 3: Words with 気 (1) Techniques 3: Using ね	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 3 &amp; Techniques 3.</li> <li>• Prepare for Words 3 Quiz.</li> </ul>
5	★Words 3 Quiz Words 4: Slang Meanings of <i>I</i> -adjectives Techniques 4: Using よ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 4 &amp; Techniques 4.</li> <li>• Prepare for Words 4 Quiz.</li> </ul>
6	★Words 4 Quiz Words 5: Words with する Techniques 5: Using よね	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 5 &amp; Techniques 5.</li> <li>• Prepare for Words 5 Quiz.</li> </ul>
7	★Words 5 Quiz Words 6: <i>Katakana</i> Words (1) Techniques 6: Using ~の?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 6 &amp; Techniques 6.</li> <li>• Prepare for Test 1.</li> </ul>
8	Review, ★Test 1 (Words 1-6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 1-6 &amp; Techniques 1-6.</li> </ul>
9	Class Activity (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 1-6 &amp; Techniques 1-6.</li> </ul>
10	Video Project Information Words 7: Words Related to Time Techniques 7: Establishing Shared Assumptions (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 7 &amp; Techniques 7.</li> <li>• Prepare for Words 7 Quiz.</li> </ul>
11	★Words 7 Quiz Words 8: Words with 気 (2) Techniques 8: Establishing Shared Assumptions (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 8 &amp; Techniques 8</li> <li>• Prepare for Words 8 Quiz</li> </ul>
12	★Words 8 Quiz Words 9: Words related to living beings Techniques 9: Establishing Shared Assumptions (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 9 &amp; Techniques 9.</li> <li>• Prepare for Words 9 Quiz.</li> </ul>
13	★Words 9 Quiz Words 10: Words with なる Techniques 10: Asking Someone to Repeat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 10 &amp; Techniques 10.</li> <li>• Prepare for Words 10 Quiz.</li> </ul>
14	★Words 10 Quiz Words 11: Words Related to Colors, Words with うえ/した/す/きらい Techniques 11: Becoming a Good Listener (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 11 &amp; Techniques 11.</li> <li>• Prepare for Words 11 Quiz.</li> </ul>
15	★Words 11 Quiz Words 12: Words Related to the Human Body (2) Techniques 12: Becoming a Good Listener (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 12 &amp; Techniques 12.</li> <li>• Prepare for Test 2.</li> </ul>
16	Review, ★Test 2 (Words 7-12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 7-12 &amp; Techniques 7-12.</li> </ul>
17	Class Activity (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 7-12 &amp; Techniques 7-12.</li> </ul>
18	Words 13: Words with たらば/なら Techniques 13: Interrupting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 13 &amp; Techniques 13.</li> <li>• Prepare for Words 13 Quiz.</li> </ul>

## 2024 Spring Semester

	Class Content	After-class Homework
19	★Words 13 Quiz Words 14: Words with 気 (3) Techniques 14: Buying Time with Fillers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 14 &amp; Techniques 14.</li> <li>• Prepare for Words 14 Quiz.</li> </ul>
20	★Words 14 Quiz Words 15: Words with はなし話 Techniques 15: Reaction Phrases (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 15 &amp; Techniques 15.</li> <li>• Prepare for Words 15 Quiz.</li> </ul>
21	★Words 15 Quiz Words 16: Techniques 16: Reaction Phrases (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 16 &amp; Techniques 16.</li> <li>• Prepare for Words 16 Quiz.</li> </ul>
22	★Words 16 Quiz Words 17: Repetitive Phrases, Words with やる/ちから力 Techniques 17: Starting Zatsudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 17 &amp; Techniques 17.</li> <li>• Prepare for Words 17 Quiz.</li> </ul>
23	★Words 17 Quiz Words 18: Words Related to Romantic Relationships Techniques 18: Ending Zatsudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 18 &amp; Techniques 18.</li> <li>• Prepare for Words 18 Quiz.</li> </ul>
24	★Words 18 Quiz Words 19: Words with Question Words Techniques 19: Changing the Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Words 19 &amp; Techniques 19.</li> <li>• Prepare for Test 3.</li> </ul>
25	Review, ★Test 3 (Words 13-19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for the video project.</li> </ul>
26	Class Activity (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the video project.</li> </ul>
27	★Video Project (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for the final oral exam.</li> </ul>
28	★Video Project (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for the final oral exam.</li> </ul>
29	Review, ★Final oral exam (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for the final written exam.</li> </ul>
30	Review, ★Final oral exam (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for the final written exam.</li> </ul>

### 【Materials】

Course materials prepared by the faculty members of Kansai Gaidai University  
(to be distributed in class)

### 【Learning Assessments】

Quizzes (16 times): 15%  
Tests (three times): 20%  
Small Talk Task: 25%  
Video Project: 10%  
Final Oral Exam: 15%  
Final Written Exam: 10%  
Class Performance: 5%

## 2024 Spring Semester

**Quizzes:** Quizzes are designed to assess your understanding of the words covered in the previous class. There will be a total of 16 quizzes throughout the course. Please note that there will be no make-up quizzes for missed assessments under any circumstances, except when you provide an email attachment with a photo of a diagnosis certificate or receipt confirming your hospital visit on the same day. However, to accommodate unforeseen circumstances, the three lowest quiz scores will be dropped when calculating the final grade.

**Tests:** Each test will cover the material from the previous six or seven classes, evaluating your understanding.

**Small Talk Tasks:** In the latter part of each class, students will apply the vocabulary and techniques they have learned on that day, as well as in previous classes, to craft brief conversational skits in pairs. These skits will then be presented during class.

**Video Project:** You will have the opportunity to showcase your knowledge through a video project, applying what you've learned during the semester (Words 1-19 & Techniques 1-19). Further details about the project will be provided in class.

**Final Exam:** A comprehensive final exam covering the entire course content will be scheduled for the last week of the semester. Specific details about the final exam will be shared in class.

**Class Performance:** Active and informed participation in class is essential to create a productive learning environment. Please refrain from activities that may hinder your engagement, such as using smartphones, chatting in English with classmates during class, or frequently leaving the classroom. Failure to actively participate may result in a deduction from your final grade.

### Grading Scales

A+: 100-97	A: 96-93	A-: 92-90
B+: 89-87	B: 86-83	B-: 82-80
C+: 79-77	C: 76-73	C-: 72-70
D+: 69-67	D: 66-63	D-: 62-60
F: 59-0		