



UNIT  
1

## MEETING PEOPLE

In Japan, people bow rather than shake hands, hug, or kiss, when they meet for the first time. A typical bow is performed with both feet together, the hands flat on the thighs (for men) or crossed in front (for women), and the torso inclined at a 15- to 45-degree angle. The eyes remain open during the bow, and the bowing person's line of sight moves with his or her torso rather than staying fixed on the other person. Generally, the deeper and slower the bow, the politer it is. Bowing properly is essential to making a good first impression, so we recommend practicing it until you become comfortable with it.

# UNIT 1 GRAMMAR

## Identifying People and Things

noun 1 **wa** noun 2 **desu**

ex. **Gurei-san wa bengoshi desu.** "Mr. Grey is an attorney."

### ■ The particle **wa**—the topic marker

**Wa** ("as for . . .") follows noun 1, singling it out as the "topic" of the sentence. Noun 2 is then identified, and the phrase is concluded with **desu**. The topic is the person or thing that the sentence is about. The topic is often the same as the subject but not necessarily.

noun 1 **wa** noun 2 **desu ka**  
**Hai**, (noun 1 **wa**) noun 2 **desu**  
**lie**, (noun 1 **wa**) noun 2 **dewa/ja arimasen**

ex. **Gurei-san wa bengoshi desu ka.** "Is Mr. Grey an attorney?"

**Hai, bengoshi desu.** "Yes, (he) is an attorney."

**lie, bengoshi dewa arimasen.** "No, (he) isn't an attorney."

### ■ The particle **ka**—the question marker

It is easy to make questions in Japanese. Simply place the particle **ka** at the end of the sentence. No change in word order is required even when the question contains interrogatives like "who," "what," "when," etc.

**NOTE:** Intonation normally rises on **ka**, i.e., . . . **desu ka**. ↗

### ■ Hai/lie

**Hai** is virtually the same as "yes," and **lie** is virtually the same as "no."

### ■ Omission of the topic (noun 1)

When it is obvious to the other person what the topic is, it is generally omitted.

ex. **(Watashi wa) Gurei desu.** "(As for me) I'm Grey."

But when it is necessary to make clear what the topic is, it is not omitted.

ex. **Kochira wa Gurei-san desu.** "This is Mr. Grey."

Often the topic is omitted in answers to questions.

ex. **Gurei-san wa bengoshi desu ka.** "Is Mr. Grey an attorney?"

**Hai, bengoshi desu.** "Yes, (he) is an attorney."

**lie, bengoshi dewa arimasen.** "No, (he) isn't an attorney."

### ■ Dewa/Ja arimasen

**Dewa arimasen** or **ja arimasen** is the negative form of **desu**. **Ja** is more informal than **dewa**; otherwise they are the same. The chart below summarizes the forms of **desu**.

PRESENT FORM		PAST FORM	
<i>aff.</i>	<i>neg.</i>	<i>aff.</i>	<i>neg.</i>
<b>desu</b>	<b>dewa arimasen</b>	<b>deshita</b>	<b>dewa arimasendeshita</b>
is	is not	was	was not