



UNIT
10

AT THE OFFICE

Walking into a traditional Japanese company, one will notice the absence of high partitions and cubicles: most Japanese offices are open, with desks facing one another so that employees can readily communicate. This arrangement is efficient because it saves on space; and in a country where land prices can be astronomical, such efficiency is important. Another feature of such offices is the conspicuous hierarchy: in one desk with a view of all others sits the office manager, and in front of him the division chief, then the section chief, and so on down to the bottom. Recently, however, Japanese companies have been modifying the traditional layout to make their offices more functional for the people who work in them, or more aesthetically pleasing to visitors.

UNIT 10 GRAMMAR

Present Progressive and Habitual Actions

person **wa** verb **-te imasu**

ex. **Gurei-san wa ima kaigi-shitsu de repōto o yonde imasu.**

“Mr. Grey is reading a report in the meeting room now.”

Gurei-san wa maishū do-yōbi ni tenisu o shite imasu.

“Mr. Grey plays tennis every Saturday.”

A verb in the **-te** form followed by **imasu** expresses a present-progressive action (“is doing”), as in the first example above, or, when accompanied by an adverb like **maishū** (“every week”) or **mainichi** (“every day”), a habitual action, as in the second example.

Current States

person **wa** verb **-te imasu**

ex. **Gurei-san wa Yokohama ni sunde imasu.** “Mr. Grey lives in Yokohama.”

Gurei-san wa Ginkō ni tsutomete imasu. “Mr. Grey is employed at a bank.”

Ano mise de terebi o utte imasu. “At that store, (they) sell TVs.”

Gurei-san wa Yoshida-san no jūsho o shitte imasu. “Mr. Grey knows Mr. Yoshida’s address.”

The **-te imasu** form can also express a current state when the verb is one of those used in the examples above—**sumimasu**, **tsutomemasu**, **urimasu**, or **shirimasu**.

NOTE: The verb **shirimasu** (“know”), from which **shitte imasu** derives, is usually used in the **-te** form followed by **imasu**. But the form this verb takes when used in response to the question **shitte imasu ka** (“do you know?”) varies, and in this way it is unlike other verbs.

ex. Aa: **Hai, shitte imasu.** “Yes, (I) know.”

An: **lie, shirimasen.** “No, (I) don’t know.”