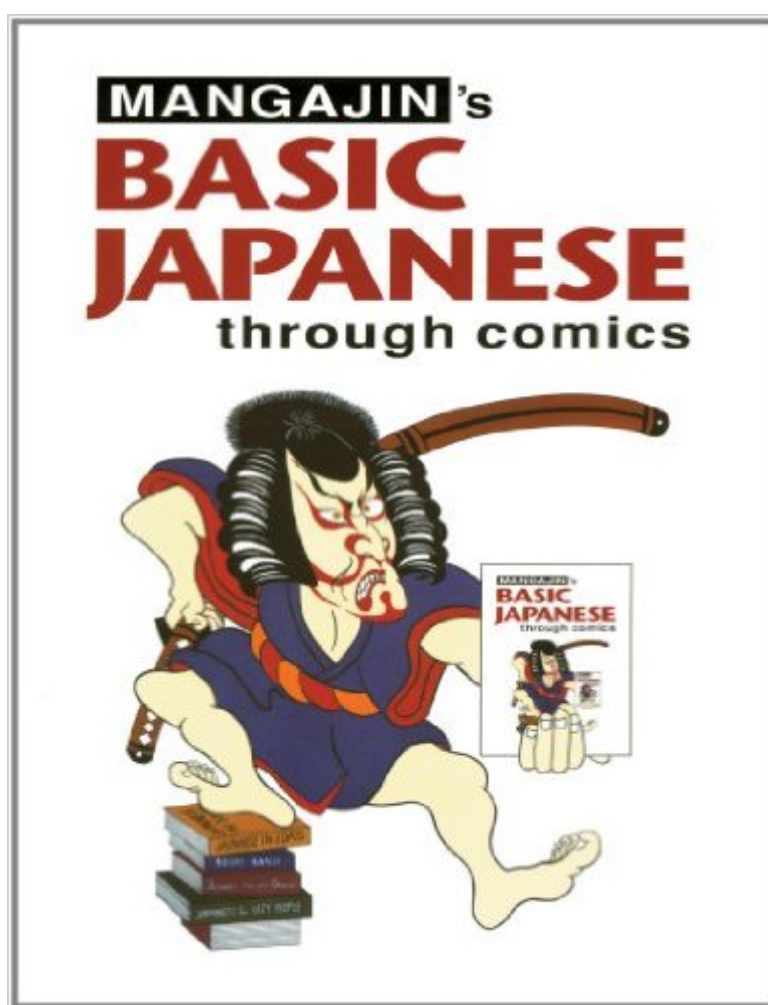


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# Basic Japanese Through Comics Part 1: Compilation Of The First 24 Basic Japanese Columns From Mangajin Magazine (English And Japanese Edition)



## Synopsis

What is "Basic Japanese"? This book presents some very basic words and phrases along with some that are not usually considered "basic" at all. In fact, some of the material in this book is not typically presented until the student is well into his or her study of the Japanese language—and even then, it can be confusing without a skilled explanation. The Mangajin method, however, makes even this advanced material "basic" and accessible to students at all levels. Frames from Japanese manga ("comics") are used to illustrate every point, and English translations and notes allow even the basic beginner to understand material that might otherwise stump advanced students. Basic Japanese through Comics is not intended as a textbook, but rather as an entertaining supplement to a more formal study of Japanese. The 24 "lessons" in this book do not build on each other—they can be read or studied in any order.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars— See all reviews— (15 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

This is a great supplement for those studying Japanese language and culture. Don't expect to pick this up as a first Japanese book, however! In the introduction, the author admits that "Basic Japanese Through Comics" may be a little misleading. It is basic Japanese, but the book assumes that you have studied a year or more in a classroom environment. With that aside, this is the best resource I have seen for transforming "classroom" Japanese into "natural" Japanese. The book uses popular Japanese manga to smooth out some common errors for Japanese learners. For

example, there are two chapters discussing the many uses of "Hai" and one chapter on how to naturally say "anno..." The manga used is very fun and gives a good cultural insight into daily Japan. No giant robots or magical girls, it is mainly office humor in the same line as "Dilbert." The office humor demonstrates varying levels of polite language, and Mangajin is kind enough to offer a "politeness scale" to show how polite anyone is being in a given setting. This is very useful, as politeness levels is where many English speakers find themselves in trouble in Japan!

Two barriers separate the English world from the Japanese world. The first is language. Yet differences of culture really present the greater barrier. This book uses authentic Japanese comics for adults to explain the cultural significance of the many words which are routinely mistranslated in all beginning Japanese text books. Mangajin's guide to Japanese does not replace, but rather supplements the traditional Japanese spoken course in an invaluable way. This book is a must for all students of Japanese. A truly fun book with lasting importance.

This is a great book to get if you have already learned 6 months of Japanese or so (at least). It is a series of chapters illustrating a few interesting words or topics of Japanese language, all illustrated with bits of real, commercially available manga. But be warned, they use a "magnifying glass" approach which I loved: they focus on ONE word for several pages. For example, the chapter on "hon", one of the counters, goes on and on for four pages of comic book panels. I will never forget what that word means and how to use it and I was fascinated with the examples from the comics. But then again, it is just ONE word. It is a book for people that are not in a hurry and are having fun with Japanese, as opposed to people that need to learn Japanese quickly for a particular objective.

Indispensable if you are learning how to read Japanese books and manga and how to write Japanese sentences in kanji and kana. It shows how common Japanese expressions and sentences are constructed, breaks them down for you, and translates each concept of each sentence (using the building block approach). Each Japanese line spoken by a manga character is presented first in kanji/kana script, then translated into the English meaning of each word/phrase, then further translated and rationalized into idiomatic English. These 3 steps show clearly how Japanese sentences are constructed. Often instructional books skip the 2nd step. Mangajin is fun to read and groups common Japanese expressions you hear every day into chapters and explains them. For example, there are chapters dedicated to "the meaning of Hai" alone. "Hai" doesn't just mean yes, it can mean different things depending on context, and the book uses manga to show

each context. It is amply illustrated with manga panels from popular books from the 1990s. I own both Vol 1 and 2. My only regret is that they did not continue this magazine or series, because there should be enough to fill at least 2 more volumes.

Once upon a time there was a wonderful magazine called "Mangajin" which helped you learn Japanese through Manga -- Japanese comics. In the process it also taught about Japanese life and culture as well as serving as an introduction to Manga themselves. The magazine, alas, is no more. But this book is a collection of excerpts aimed specifically at learning Japanese. Starting very simply, it walks you through Japanese using panels from manga to illustrate the concepts. It also uses a unique representation system where each sentence is shown first in Japanese characters, then in phonetic English, then in a literal translation, and usually a colloquial English translation. This is coupled with explanatory notes in English. The book won't teach you Japanese by itself, but it will help you get started in an easy, fun manner.

This book is not for people who know nothing about Japanese language. It's not for people who want to just pick up an introductory book to start learning Japanese language, neither. If you're currently studying Japanese and in between beginner and intermediate levels, this book is a treasure for you to benefit your proficiency in Japanese. As the name of the book suggested, the author used different manga pictures to depict some common Japanese phrases (e.g. ano-, su-mi-ma-sen, shi-tsu-rei, baka, etc.) in different meanings with different contexts. The author also indicated the politeness level (i.e. Lv 1,2,3,4) for each usage to help the readers use the phrases properly in various situations. Overall this book is definitely a great helper. (Reviewed by Otto Yuen, 19-June-2007)

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