

**What is honorific language (keigo)?**

I don’t really feel comfortable the way one of my colleague talks to me. One day at work, I suggested her for lunch, saying, “lunch ni ikki?” (Let’s go for lunch together!) But she said, “moshiwake-gozaimasen mada shigoto ga arimasu” (I’m afraid I haven’t finished my work yet). Then, she casually asked another colleague, “coffee nomu?” (How about some coffee?). I am not her boss, but for some reason, she always uses polite Japanese every time she talks to me. Is it because I’m a foreigner? Or is it because I don’t speak good Japanese?

The usage of keigo must be adapted according to a hierarchical relationship based on the status and rank of the speaker and listener. Therefore, many Japanese are unwilling to use keigo as they feel it is extremely troublesome to use in conversation. But modern keigo has become a mere facade. The reality is that it does not always function in a time-honored conservative way.

1. Present-day keigo is used for the speaker’s benefit!
2. Present-day is used to imply one’s thoughts and feelings!
3. It is used for the speaker’s benefit!
4. To use in conversation. But modern speaker and listener. Therefore, many Japanese are unwilling to use.
5. The usage of desu, masu, your Japanese starts to sound more polite, and your reputation improves.

With this type of speech, you might be better placed to read the thoughts and feelings of others. (It will be explained in Vol. 66)

**Level 1. keigo with [desu, masu, and o/go] noun, i-adj, na-adj**

- **With this type of keigo, your Japanese starts to sound more polite, and your reputation improves.**
- **Even if you are not familiar with the polite form of speech, you may find it easy to use. Using desu, masu, and o/go in your Japanese is enough to start speaking politely, polite enough to talk with the prime minister.**

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**Level 2. keigo with [Vocabulary]**

If you use this type of keigo in business, your way of talking starts to sound more “intellectual.”

Written language is frequently used in TV news, speeches and conferences. It sounds very polite when written Japanese is added to spoken Japanese. That is why literary expressions are commonly used in polite Japanese.

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**Let’s try!**


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**Some frequently used words are listed below. Try to determine the keigo**

1. Butler...demo → 2. a little while ago...sakki → 3. the other day...konoaida → 4. today...kyō → 5. yesterday...kino → 6. tomorrow...gurai → 7. this morning...kyō → 8. the day before...mae → 9. I’m surprised...hikikurita → 10. who...dare → 11. I’m sorry...sumimasen → 12. there...yoko → 13. this person...hito → 14. as I expected...yappari → 15. every...minna → 16. above...asoko → 17. over there...yoko → 18. where...doko → 19. not at all...sukoku → 20. quite...sugoku → 21. somewhat...ironna → 22. really...chittomo → 23. a lot...ippai → 24. Why...deshita → 25. so...dakara → 26. you...ato de → 27. because...kara → 28. a number of lessons. After this, you will feel like a psychologist!

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**Use keigo in the following sentences.**

1. There was an earthquake last night. 2. I knew I was right! 3. I canceled because I was busy. 4. Thanks for the other day.

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**Answers**


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**Basic facts about keigo**

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**In public areas... e.g. at work, or talking with customers, etc.**

**Level 1 – Level 5**

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**2. Present-day keigo is used to imply one’s thoughts and feelings!**

Using keigo in this way is advantageous to the speaker. If you learn to recognize this usage, you will be better placed to read the thoughts and feelings of others. (It will be explained in Vol. 66)

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**B. Obtaining an advantage when you are in a disadvantageous position. ... e.g. Having others accept an apology or grant permission or an “unreasonable” request, etc.**

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**C. Establishing a distance in human relations... e.g. Ending a relationship with a listener.**

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**Level 1. keigo with [desu, masu, and o/go] noun, i-adj, na-adj**

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**Level 2. keigo with [Vocabulary]**

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**Answers**


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I thought it was easy to understand the usage of Level 1 (desu, masu and ogo) and Level 2 (vocabulary) in Vol. 62, and I tried to use it as often as I could. The Japanese I talked with said, “Pole-san no Nihongo kiru desu ne” (Your Japanese sounds very beautiful), and they began to treat me very politely. It made me feel good. I can’t wait to learn other honorific forms—I’m so excited!

Make your speech much more polite by changing the underlined parts.

5. What do you want to drink?

6. What time did you come here?

8. How long did you wait?

1. Did you prepare yourself for the trip?

2. Did you write down your name and address?

3. Did you take a day off yesterday?

4. Are you over your cold?

5. What do you want to drink?

6. If you took a day off yesterday, did you go somewhere?

7. What does the weather like?

8. What time did you come home?

This is commonly used in daily life, but is not as formal as Level 4 or Level 5. It is commonly used in daily conversation, you will find it worthwhile to memorize them.

Conjugation of passive form

Classifications of verbs may vary according to textbooks and schools. In this lesson, verbs are categorized into three groups: 1. "i-masu" group, 2. "e-masu" group (and Ninja form), 3. "o shimasu" group and "irregular." If you know the "masu form," you can categorize verbs. In order to classify verbs, note the syllable before the "masu form." Check whether the syllable before "masu" is "i" or "e."
I'm still unsure about using the passive form of keigo that we learned in the previous lesson. I'm OK if I use it slowly, but I still have trouble conjugating the verbs.

Keigo: You're welcome to talk to friends.

1. Client: Until what time are you going to stay in the office tomorrow?

You: I'm here as representative of the president. I'm here as representative of the president.

2. Client: I'd like to come over there on 7 o'clock Monday morning.

You: We're sorry, no one will be in the office at 7 in the morning.

3. Client: Do you play golf?

You: No, I don't.

4. (Station announcement) A train is arriving at Track 1.

You: I'm sorry, but I will be out all day.

5. Client: Please do the things we talked about the other day.

You: Yes, I may.

6. Client: May I see it?

You: Yes, you may.

7. I hope it won't disturb you, but...

You: I'm not.