

ぶんぽう Grammar

1 これ それ あれ どれ

What do we do when we want to talk about things that we do not know the names of? We say “this thing,” “that one,” and so forth. In Japanese, we use *kore*, *sore*, and *are*.

これは いくらですか。
Kore wa ikura desu ka.

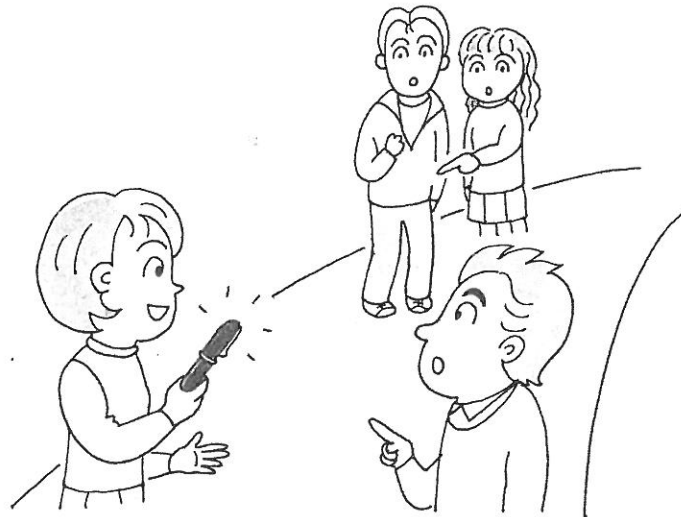
How much is this?

それは さんぜんえんです。
Sore wa sanzen en desu.

That is 3,000 yen.

Kore refers to a thing that is close to you, the speaker (“this thing here”). *Sore* is something that is close to the person you are talking to (“that thing in front of you”), and *are* refers to a thing that is neither close to the speaker nor the listener (“that one over there”).

あれは わたしの ペンです。
Are wa watashi no pen desu.



これは わたしの ペンです。
Kore wa watashi no pen desu.

それは わたしの ペンです。
Sore wa watashi no pen desu.

There is also an expression *dore* for “which.” Here we will learn to use *dore* in sentences like:

どれですか。
Dore desu ka.

Which one is it (that you are talking about)?

In this lesson, we will not explore the full extent to which the word *dore* can be put to use, because there is a slight complication with question words like *dore*. Question words like *dore* and *nani* cannot be followed by the particle *wa*. Instead, you must use the particle *ga* and say:

どれが あなたの ペンですか。
Dore ga anata no pen desu ka.

Which one is your pen?

2 この/その/あの/どの + noun

If you want to be slightly more specific than *kore*, *sore*, and *are*, you can use *kono*, *sono*, and *ano* together with a noun. (Note here that the *re* series must always stand alone, while the *no* series must always be followed by a noun.) Thus, if you know that the item in your hand is a watch (*tokee*), instead of:

これは いくらですか。
Kore wa ikura desu ka.

How much is this?

you can say:

このとけいは いくらですか。
Kono tokee wa ikura desu ka.

How much is this watch?

Similarly, if you are talking about a watch that is held by the person you are talking to, you can say:

そのとけいは さんぜんえんです。
Sono tokee wa sanzen en desu.

That watch is 3,000 yen.

And if the watch is far from both the speaker and the listener, you can say:

あのとけいは さんぜんごひゃくえんです。
Ano tokee wa sanzengohyaku en desu.

That watch over there is 3,500 yen.

If you already know that one of several watches is 3,500 yen but do not know which, you can say:

どのとけいが さんぜんごひゃくえんですか。
Dono tokee ga sanzengohyaku en desu ka.

Which watch is 3,500 yen?

Since *dono* is a question word, just like *dore* discussed above, we cannot use the particle *wa* with it; we must use *ga*.

To summarize:

これ (は～)	この noun (は～)	close to the person speaking
それ (は～)	その noun (は～)	close to the person listening
あれ (は～)	あの noun (は～)	far from both people
どれ (が～)	どの noun (が～)	unknown

3 だれの noun

In Lesson 1, we learned how to say things like *Mearii san no denwa bangoo* (Mary's phone number) and *Takeshi san no okaasan* (Takeshi's mother). We now learn how to ask who something belongs to. The question word for "who" is *dare*, and for "whose," we simply add the particle *no*.

これは だれの かばんですか。
Kore wa dare no kaban desu ka.
Whose bag is this?

それは スーさんの かばんです。
Sore wa Suu san no kaban desu.
That is Sue's bag.

4 ここ そこ あそこ どこ

We will learn just one more *ko-so-a-do* set in this lesson: *koko*, *soko*, *asoko*, and *doko* are words for places.

ここ	<i>here, near me</i>
そこ	<i>there, near you</i>
あそこ	<i>over there</i>
どこ	<i>where</i>

You can ask for directions by saying:

すみません、ゆうびんきょくは どこですか。 *Excuse me, where is the post office?*
Sumimasen, yuubinkyoku wa doko desu ka.

If you are close by, you can point toward the post office and say:

(ゆうびんきょくは) あそこです。 *(The post office is) right over there.*
(Yuubinkyoku wa) asoko desu.

We will learn how to give more specific directions in Lesson 4.