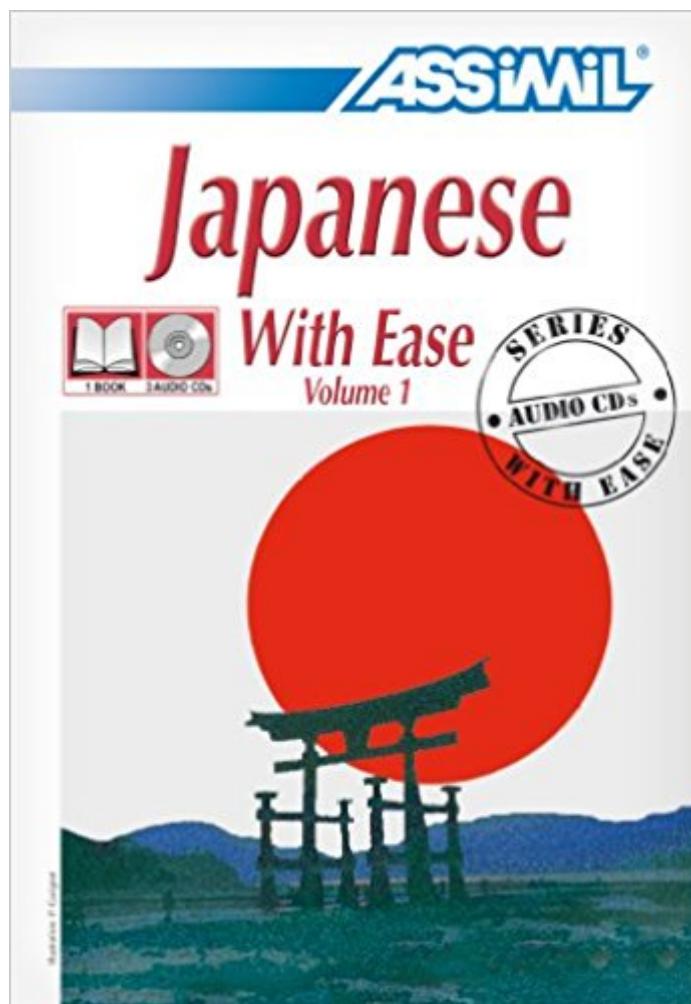


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Japanese With Ease, Volume 1 (Assimil With Ease) (v. 1)



Synopsis

Aims to take users through the basic structures needed for communication and become familiar with the basic words and grammar. This book employs a method which comprises two phases - passive phase, in which users repeat what they hear and read, and active phase, in which users create sentences and imagine themselves in everyday situations.

Book Information

Series: Assimil with Ease

Audio CD: 384 pages

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Customer Reviews

This course has been fantastic for my 10 year old daughter and myself learning Japanese. I can't recommend this course enough. I would definitely combine it with another Japanese course that focuses more on grammar, but this really helps you get comfortable with it.

I bought this for my son who's college Japanese instructor left and he didn't want to go stale until another was found. According to my son it is good for refreshing the basics and keeping the ear in tune to the language. He plays the CDs in his truck on the way to classes. I thought the price was good. Delivery was very quick. I also bought Volume II.

I purchased the Assimil Japanese with Ease program for my daughter for a Christmas gift. She was very excited with it as her sister now speaks fluent French after having used the Assimil French program. It is a good program and easy to use. The key is to use it at least 3 times a week if

possible (every day is optimal). My daughter already has basic Japanese skills learned in High School and she also suggests listening to movies in Japanese with NO subtitles. She is ripping it to her mp3 player so she can study between classes at college.

LOVED IT

After completing Vol. 1 of this course (the "passive phase") I have a few reactions. This volume does not enable you to understand whatever spoken or written Japanese you may encounter, but that can't reasonably be expected. (I doubt that Vol. 2 does that either.) You do get a good start in understanding sentence structure and grammatical forms. The Japanese is written both in Latin letters and in Japanese characters. You can study the Japanese characters or you can ignore them. (Vol. 2 emphasizes them more, and the last lessons are only in Japanese characters.) This course is much different from a textbook. Each lesson consists of a conversation written in Japanese on the left-hand page and in English on the right. (Except that every seventh lesson is a review, in English, of grammar and vocabulary.) The English page provides a word-for-word translation of the Japanese page and also a more idiomatic English translation. At the end of each lesson there are exercises in which one translates Japanese sentences into English and English sentences into Japanese. Teaching is done very much by example. You are expected to learn by familiarization more than by explanation. Very often new grammatical forms are introduced in the conversations without any explanation or even a notification that there is something new. Grammar is discussed in the review lessons, but it can be far behind the conversations. For example, the lessons contain many different verb forms, but only in the last lesson do you begin to learn explicitly how to get from the dictionary form of a verb to the root from which other forms are developed. You learn new grammar and vocabulary by comparing the word-for-word translation on the English page with the Japanese original. This works well enough in other Assimil courses, but the strangeness of Japanese grammar and word order makes it a real headache here. (For example, a Japanese text translates as (graduate-do / since / quite / blow / opportunity / [subject] / not exist), which means "Since I graduated, I haven't had many chances to play.") If you fall behind, it's hard to find the lesson where something was introduced. There's no grammatical dictionary and no combined tabulation of grammatical forms. There is a too-brief Japanese-to-English dictionary at the end of the volume, but an English-to-Japanese dictionary is sorely lacking. If you're doing an exercise and have forgotten the word for "factory", you're on your own. The course comes with CD recordings of all the Japanese conversations. These are certainly helpful, but they would have been even more

helpful with a little explanation. The speakers differ in their pronunciations of some words, and it's hard for the student to know which variations in pitch and rhythm are important and why. I give this course three stars because I did learn something from it and sometimes enjoyed it. I had to combine it with outside grammars and dictionaries in order to meet my need for explanation and my lack of a photographic memory. The back cover of the volume claims that you can complete the course in a half hour a day. That makes no sense, unless you want to stretch each lesson over several days. Vol. 2 is the "active phase", where in addition to each of the regular lessons you translate an earlier lesson from English back into Japanese. That will definitely get you past 30 minutes a day.

Assimil's "Japanese With Ease" is a wonderful book for anyone serious about learning Japanese. You don't have to be able to read Japanese, but if you can or are learning to, it has Japanese text accompanied with the romaji. The book is always interesting and gives helpful side notes. The CD is good too, but it probably won't be needed for many lessons as Japanese pronunciation becomes easy very quickly. I recommend this book to anyone wanting to start their learning of Japanese on the right foot.

I switched to Assimil Japanese with Ease after having gone through Pimsleur Comprehensive Japanese I. I found the Assimil format much more natural match for my brain, since I didn't have to keep switching between Japanese and English. In Assimil, you'll first listen to a dialogue in Japanese while reading it in Japanese, then compare it with word-by-word (i.e. interlinear) and fluent English translations to unlock the meaning, read it aloud in Japanese to practice speaking, and finally review it, again completely in Japanese. Much later you'll review it by translating it from English to Japanese. (Contrast this with Pimsleur, where most of your time goes to speaking Japanese sentences as prompted in English. Boring.) In terms of numbers, Japanese with Ease volumes I & II teach you about 1800 words, and how to read and write the hiragana and katakana syllabaries. That isn't really more than solid start, and Assimil hasn't produced an intermediate course for Japanese, but it's more than what some self-described "advanced" courses teach you. There is also a third volume that teaches you how to write kanji, but I didn't get that myself. I'd recommend Assimil Japanese with Ease I & II (this product is volume I) to those wishing to jump-start a longer, serious study of Japanese. For this purpose, I believe it's the best product on market both in terms of content and value. Those wishing to acquire some minimal "survival Japanese" for their upcoming trip are better served with Pimsleur Comprehensive Japanese I, II & III.

Pros: This book is really amazing. using the first and the second book you probably obtain over 1000 or more words of vocabulary. There are a lot of notes on particles throughout some chapters that are very easy to understand. The sentences get stuck in your head so easily and you can probably recite the whole book by memory. Cons: You won't be able to start up a conversation because it doesn't go into much conversational material. It's mostly phrase book style learning making it hard to construct your own sentences at times. It teaches you very random sentence's also which at times had me very confused. Very good book, if you get "teach yourself Japanese, with audio cds" along with both of the Assimil Japanese books you should be able to speak at a B2 level if not a C1

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