



# Genki I: An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese

*Eri Banno , Yoko Ikeda , Yutaka Ohno , Chikako Shinagawa , Kyoko Tokashiki*

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**Genki I: An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese** Eri Banno , Yoko Ikeda , Yutaka Ohno , Chikako Shinagawa , Kyoko Tokashiki

Second edition of the most highly regarded teaching text book on the Japanese language, covering speaking, listening, reading, and writing to cultivate overall language ability. Each lesson in the revised edition features a new section dubbed "Culture Notes," and now includes the audio CD companion which is in mp3 format ready to install on any music player. In Japanese/English. Distributed by Tsai Fong Books, Inc.

## Genki I: An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese Details

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## From Reader Review Genki I: An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese for online ebook

### Alexander says

I have seen your pages so many times in the last 10 years. Sweet, sweet, Genki 1.

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### Taro says

An exciting tale of exchange student Mary Hart from Arizona who goes to Sakura University in Tokyo. She meets up with the handsome Takeshi Kimura and they hit off the most epic romance in the history of textbook romances. She also meets new best friend Sue Kim from Korea, and Robert Smith from England, Michiko Yamakawa, Ken, Mr. Yamashita, a whole host of friends.

Share your panic with Mary as she thinks Takeshi abandons her on their first date... {spoiler} he thought she said Mo's Burger, when Mary really said Makkudonarudo! Mary waited for Takeshi there for an hour.

Still, there are some unanswered questions. Why does Taro keep his sandwich in the freezer? Why did Hitler want to buy a wallet from that hippie? Is Mr Nomura going to be ok? Did that old lady ever accept her bags to be carried for her?

It ends in a horrifying cliffhanger where Mary is sick. She had a stomachache yesterday. Will she ever get to her tennis tournament?!?!?

Only Genki II will tell us.

Included is an audio recording of their adventures where Mary sounds mysteriously very native Japanese.  
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(As a textbook, this was fun. I have to admit that my school was pretty awesome and anyone in Vancouver learning Japanese should check out the Vancouver Japanese Language School (VJLS/?????????). The book is great for 20-somethings, intending on taking a longer (college-style?) course in Japanese. If you want to cram an education into a few weeks, it might not be as beneficial.

Tons of examples and exercises, and has a workbook companion. The CD includes audio by native Japanese speakers for almost all the Japanese in the text and in the workbook.

If you got the workbook and are a well disciplined self-learner (unlike me), this would be great to learn alone. Though nothing compares to additional live talking experience.

NB - there are currently 2 editions of this book and they have changed significantly... both of the last two years we had a student who used to old edition only to have troubles most classes in linking in, usually with exercises. So, check which edition your class is using. They both have just as good Japanese learning potential, just some of the examples and exercises are vastly different.)

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### Angelica says

This book is ok (I read the second edition). So far it is one of the better ones I have read when it comes to learning Japanese. One of the main problems I have with this book is the vocabulary they have you learn. Some of the words in the book you will not use that much. The audio cd is really helpful when it comes to how to pronounce the vocabulary in the book. This is a good book if you want to teach your self Japanese. But if your using this book for a class be really careful because depending on the teacher the book can be

useful or even more confusing. And also you should pick up the workbook for this book. The second edition of this book is out now and from what I know some of the problems the first one had was fixed.

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## **Brendan says**

Not exactly sure how you rate a book you've basically lived with for over a year.

The first textbook I was working with did a better job getting you reading upfront - but was light on everything else. This one was much more comprehensive but a slower burn in terms of 'feeling' successful. It really wasn't until the end until I kind of realized I could read entire letters and stories.

Granting I could take as much time at any point as I wanted - I probably did better with this textbook than any I had in HS/College.

My lovely wife brought me #2 for Father's day and I've already jumped into it. It starts right where #1 left off - starting on chapter 13 so the two are clearly 1 large volume split in half.

I'm also encountering that thing where you have to know a certain amount to really know more... or, the further along I go the easier it gets. The Genki series seems to be more academic than most of the other materials I've come across -- where most every other source I've picked up just wants you copying and mimicking right away -- the Genki series is definitely going to teach you what, why, and how before anything else and then at every point it gets you to produce answers yourself, rather than listen and repeat. I think this just works better for me, it might not really be the most efficient way to pick up another language, but it's clearly working.

My only complaint about the book is that the English offered is all in clean translation - that is how we would say something. 1) when noting what a sentence means in English, I keep it as rough as possible -- basically notes because translating it kills what a lot of it is actually saying. 2) I would have liked more lesson specific untranslated materials - I kind of think that would have been more useful than anything else. The back of the book review sections have some and I feel I got as much from the last 30 pages as the previous 270 in terms of practice/advancement.

IDK, the point of the thing is to not think in English, so my biggest complaint is that I think the book is trying to make new translators as opposed to people able to read in another language. If that makes sense. 'Tis a small complaint, ultimately - I've found other sources and this one book doesn't have to do everything - so it keeps a full 5 star rating.

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## **Angelina says**

I am currently self-learning Japanese. However, I have a regular 9-6 job so finding time to squeeze studying in can be difficult. I am using a good variety of books & tools for study - including Japanese From Zero! 1, GENKI: An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese Workbook I, and two online resources that I absolutely love: Japanese-lesson.com & NHK World | Easy Japanese. In addition to these, I also listen to some Japanese music & watch anime in Japanese.

Genki is a formal textbook meant for the classroom. That being said, I find it easy to follow & use. The only caveat is that book does not start with introducing the hiragana or katakana alphabets. IT DOES INCLUDE

THESE SECTIONS, so don't worry. However, they are located at the back of the book. The book comes with a listening CD (the workbook also comes with an audio CD) - so it does provide some listening ability which is essential when learning a new language. However, I didn't realize at first that the book included the hiragana, katakana, & kanji sections - so I started learning those through the Japanese-lesson.com site. Which, even though I now know that the Genki book includes these, I am still using the japanese-lesson.com to learn & study the alphabets. I HIGHLY recommend japanese-lesson.com. They have practice writing sheets, audio videos to teach you how to pronounce letters, provide grammar points, and reading quizzes.

Overall, I really recommend the Genki series. There is also an online Genki site with more resources to help you study.

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### **Mat Davies says**

This is a really solid book for learning Japanese. Every chapter kicks off with a dialogue, followed by vocabulary, grammar, listening and practice activities. The back of the book contain Hiragana, Katakana and Kanji practice and on the whole, I found this book more visually appealing and practical than some other books I have looked at.

My issue is that the answer book doesn't come with it and therefore I had to order that online. That was annoying. I am working my way through the workbook now and also purchased the Kanji book that is part of the series. I would recommend this as a good starter to Japanese. But get speaking as soon as you can - I left it too long.

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### **Brett says**

I used this text when I taught Japanese in the University of Minnesota's Japanese department. I thought it was an okay book/system. Here are some thoughts:

There was a bit much focus on handwriting.

There was little focus on showing how grammar principles relate to one another. Rather, each principle was a standalone concept.

Many examples related to drinking and partying. I know the intended audience is university students, but do we have to assume that they are studying Japanese in order to enrich their debauchery?

There is no roadmap/review structure to the system. It's kind of a we-hope-you-absorb-some-stuff kind of a system.

My favorite thing about this system, however, was the tolerance for making mistakes. Other systems rely on rote memorization and performance, and that isn't really that helpful in the grand scheme. Learners need to try things out.

All of this said, if I were still teaching Japanese, I would develop my own system. I haven't seen a system out there that is that great.

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### **mekkaouii\_ says**

I'm being discouraged very easily, but I'll just wait until I'm in a better place & can collect my thoughts properly.

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### **StrangeMechanism says**

This is the textbook used in a majority of college courses, and is generally considered to be the gold standard for Japanese at this level. After finishing it, I can see why that would be. The structure of the lessons is well put together, giving you sufficient practice on each grammar point before moving onto the next. It's not just a one trick pony grammar book either, you'll also be working on your listening, reading and writing. As well as walk away with a (small) handful of useful vocab and Kanji to boot.

Despite being focused on classroom study, I found it to be well suited to self study as well. Though, you may find it to be a bit too slow for your tastes compared to some other options out there.

My biggest problem with this book (and a number of others) though, is that it uses romanji entirely too much, and for way too long. It's nothing but a distracting crutch that should be done away with immediately after you learn kana, which should be the very first thing you do in this language anyways.

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### **Azri says**

Good but the translations are occasionally unclear/poorly worded. Would be easy for an independent studier to use (as opposed to, say, minna no nihongo)

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### **Diana Ashkanani says**

Highly recommend this book for learning Japanese! Very clear and easy to understand. This is the book used in Genki JACS school in Shinjuku, Japan.

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### **Bine says**

Endlich komplett durch mit dem ersten Textbuch!

Japanisch lernen macht mit diesem Buch wirklich Spaß, nicht zuletzt, weil die Charaktere der Dialoge und Aufgaben eine nette Geschichte erzählen, was einen gerne weiter lernen lässt. Das Buch ist sehr logisch aufgebaut mit einem Dialog, den neuen Vokabeln, einer Grammatiksektion, Übungen und hilfreichen Ausdrücken. Sicherlich auch für das Selbststudium gut geeignet, zumal man die Dialoge mit der beigelegten CD auch hören kann.

Selten stößt man aber auf Probleme, die man schlecht lösen kann, wenn man nur das Buch zurate ziehen kann. Außerdem werden manche Grammatiken nicht in einem Abwasch vermittelt, sondern es liegen mehrere Lektionen dazwischen. Es wäre z.B. sinnvoller alle Short Forms auf einmal zu lernen und nicht nach Tempus getrennt.

Ein gutes Lehrbuch auf jeden Fall, wenn auch nicht perfekt. Aber zusammen mit dem dazugehörigen Workbook und den CDs wird einem japanisch lernen recht leicht gemacht.

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### **Jessica says**

It taught me Japanese. Also the bane of my existence, at times.

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### **sorina says**

The *Genki 1* textbook was a wonderful introduction to the Japanese language. The material is presented in a clear and succinct manner, and I find the explanations generally easy to understand. The textbook presents to you all the necessary information to learn a particular grammar point, but it also includes extra information for those seeking it. I felt that the vocabulary words introduced in each chapter were appropriate and generally useful.

The only part of the textbook I thought was lacking was an overall map of how it is going to present the Japanese language to the reader. *Genki* comes in three parts, and as this is part one, I was expecting something similar to a general overview of how the books are going to try to teach Japanese to the reader. I felt this was especially important because Japanese is so different from English, that it was confusing at times to learn certain grammar points, but not others, at certain times, without knowing where the textbook was headed. Other than that, I believe *Genki 1* to be a solid introduction to the Japanese language.

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### **yh says**

Sorry! It's been a while. After reading at a decent clip the first half of the year, I haven't read a book in about six months. Given that I famously do not have much going on in my life, it may be a mystery as to what the hell I've been doing with myself. I haven't gotten a life, nor have I started exercising or eating better or anything else people might do. I've instead started learning Japanese, and this textbook, which came highly recommended across the internet, was part of how I did that.

After not writing anything at all (in English) for five months, I've decided that I'm going to go on and on in this review about all sorts of things (half blog post, half review!), even though I've only learned Japanese for five and a half months and thus don't know anything about anything. Sorry about that. If you just want to see a book review, scroll down past the next few paragraphs.

I'm not sure I had any practical reasons for learning Japanese when I started. I had no plans to visit Japan, I wasn't extremely interested in Japanese culture, and no other circumstance in my life was pushing me toward learning a language. It just so happened that I had a lot of time, and I gravitated toward this particular way of spending my time because I enjoy learning languages and this was something that I could do and get a real, meaningful, concrete skill out of. In terms of why Japanese in particular, I chose this language because I had heard it was very similar to Korean (which I already know), so I figured it would be the least effort to learn. It also doesn't hurt to have more media options, given that most of my non-Japanese media diet is Korean, and the two cultures have more in common with each other than with American culture.

In spite of all that, for the past six months, I've spent at least three hours on 95% of days reading, writing,

and consuming various forms of the Japanese language, whether music, television, comics, news articles, or this textbook. Learning Japanese has become enough of a part of my life that it's certainly my main hobby, and in many cases, it has taken the place of actual human interaction in my life. Sorry for the potential humblebrag, though I don't think studying Japanese is any more an impressive thing to do with your free time than any other hobby one might have.

Just like anything else, language learning just takes lots of time, I think. Thus, it doesn't really matter what you use to study, as long as it's not completely, blatantly wrong (and even then, you'll realize it if you do enough consumption outside of the textbook), and as long as the materials aren't so dull that you actually don't want to use them. Language learning is basically checkpoint after checkpoint after checkpoint, and at every step, you can say that you've learned something concrete and new that you can use immediately. Because each piece (grammar point, vocabulary word, Kanji) is so small, I think if you focus on all the things you're learning or reinforcing every day, the process can be really rewarding.

(The real review starts here)

Which I guess brings us to Genki. Genki, as mentioned above, is the most popular Japanese textbook recommendation for English speakers. It's made up of two volumes (twelve chapters each), and you can also purchase workbooks for each volume. Each chapter has a dialogue, a vocabulary list, a handful of grammar points, practice exercises, and some smaller sections that may talk about Japanese culture or give you some extra, more situational vocabulary. At the back of the book, there's also a corresponding Kanji section. This is all pretty standard stuff for a textbook, and while I can't speak to whether this particular one is better or worse than others (that may also not be very useful, given my thoughts in the last paragraph), I can speak to what I liked or didn't like about it.

The grammar lessons are fantastic. They're filled with detail, explained thoroughly, and are a good mix of basic concepts (verb conjugation, particles) and set phrases that are useful to know ("Please do [X]", "It is forbidden to do [X]", "Whose [X] is this", etc.). The authors, in the introduction, say that the grammar lessons were written so that students could review them before class on their own, and then class time could be used mainly for practice. I'm not sure how other textbooks' grammar lessons are, but I thought this was a very smart choice, and the best thing about this book, especially for someone who's self-studying.

I don't have much to say about the vocabulary lists and dialogues. They were pretty standard, and very useful, as they should be. If you're self-studying, the practice section may not be ideal, as a lot of the exercises involve working in pairs, but that problem's mitigated somewhat if you get the workbook. And I'm very sorry, but I didn't really use the Kanji section to study Kanji. I used a different tool, so I don't have much to say there. However, I will say that the reading passages in these sections were very useful. Finally, the book (and workbook) comes with a CD which contains recordings for the dialogues, some exercises, and the readings in the Kanji section. Again, very helpful for self-studiers.

I think the most important thing about any textbook is that it has to make you want to keep going. It has to earn your trust that what it is teaching you is useful and relevant; that it is teaching you this particular thing for a reason, and that the book will lead you to a good place by the end. Crucially, Genki did that. I never got the sense that a given grammar point was filler, or that a vocabulary list was filled with words I would never use. Thus, I was always excited to keep going and keep learning.

Like I said, I can't say for sure whether I would've had this much fun or this much motivation to learn Japanese if I was using a different textbook, since I didn't use a different textbook. But in my experience, it definitely provides enough to be a solid foundation. I've started reading native language material, and I can now understand bits and pieces of Japanese dialogue or song lyrics. It's not much (less than a preschooler in Japan, probably), but it's progress, and I think that's all language learning is about: tiny bits of progress spread out over years and years, which eventually leads to you being able to understand and communicate

