

Welcome to Crystal Hunters!

We are the world's first epic manga created for the express purpose of learning Japanese from zero.

However, Japanese is a hard language to learn. In fact, according to the Foreign Service Institute, it is the #1 hardest language for native English speakers to learn. But even if you are learning from zero, we believe you can learn to read the first 100+ pages of Crystal Hunters in about two weeks if you study at a brisk pace, or maybe within a weekend if you blitz it. So, settle in and join us for a fantastical adventure that will give you a sense of accomplishment for life.



Japanese Writing Systems

Let's jump in! Japan is unique in that it has three different alphabets/writing systems. Of these three writing systems, there are two alphabets and one large list of symbols adapted from Chinese, called "kanji", and about 2,000 kanji are commonly used.

Because Japanese mixes all these writing systems together, it can be daunting to learn how to read in Japanese, even for people who have been studying for many years. But for this manga, basic knowledge of the two alphabets is all you need to be able to read everything, and we will teach them to you if you don't know them yet!

Alphabets

The two alphabets are called “Hiragana” and “Katakana”. Hiragana is the primary alphabet, and Katakana is used very similarly to how we use italics in English, to show words with extra stress and to write foreign words.

Pronunciation:

Luckily, many of the sounds in Japanese are sounds that are found in English, so the basic pronunciation is not that difficult to learn. There are some differences though, and those will be listed in this section.

Vowels

First though, let us cover the basics. Nearly all “letters” in Japanese have one of 5 vowels in them. In Hiragana, those vowels are:

あ (a), い (i), う (u), え (e), and お (o).

The way to pronounce these vowels is:

あ (ah), い (ee), う (ooh), え (eh), and お (oh).

However, these Japanese vowels are only half the length of how the English pronunciation is read. To make a full-length vowel sound, you repeat the same vowel. ああ、いい、うう、ええ、おお.

Or, in Katakana, you can also make a full-length vowel sound by adding a dash after the letter. An extended ア (a) in katakana is アー .

It is also possible to extend the お (o) sound by adding a う (u) after it: おう. This is actually more common than the double おお writing.

In addition, it is possible to make different vowel sounds by mixing two of the vowels together. The two possible vowel combinations are:

あ + い = あい = “eye”, or the name of the letter “I”

え + い = えい = the “ay” in hay, or the name of the letter “A”

Consonants

Japanese uses the following consonants in its language: b, d, f, g, h, j, k, m, n, p, r, s, t, w, y, z.

Most of these are the same or fairly similar to the consonants in English, however the Japanese “f” and “r” are not sounds that have a direct counterpart in English, and will be described below.

Nearly all consonants in Japanese are followed by one of the 5 vowels, with the sole exception of “n”, which is the only consonant that can come at the end of a word. Because of this, most “letters” in Japanese are a combination of a consonant and a vowel. For example: か is the combination of “k” and “a” to make the sound “ka”.

Like vowels, it is also possible to double the strength of a consonant. However, when this is done, a special character is used. っ is usually “tsu”, but when it is used in its smaller form っ, it doubles the consonant that follows it. For example: かか is pronounced “kaka”, but っか is pronounced “kakka”.



Different Sounds

As mentioned above, there are only two sounds in Japanese that do not have a similar sound in English.

Those are the Japanese “r” and “f”.

The Japanese “r” is actually closer to an “L” sound. To correctly make this sound, put your tongue just above the gums above your top teeth. This is called your “hard palate”. To make a Japanese “r”, very softly flick your tongue from this location and add the appropriate vowel. Remember there are no solo consonants besides “n” in Japanese, so a vowel must be added after “r”.

The Japanese “f” is a mix of the English “h” and “f”. When making the “f” sound in English, your top teeth slightly bite down on your bottom lips. However, for a Japanese “f” your top teeth do not touch your bottom lips. Instead, bring your top teeth slightly near your bottom lips, and make the “f” sound with the air hitting your top teeth. This will produce a soft “f” sound, and this is the Japanese “f”.



Hiragana & Katakana

There are 46 original characters in each alphabet. However, some “rows” of the alphabet can be modified with a ` or ° to change the consonant. As well, “ya, yu, yo” can be added to many characters ending with an “i” sound to change the vowel.

If you’re just beginning to learn hiragana, we’ve made a book for you!

[Hiragana Hunters](#)



Hiragana Hunters introduces one hiragana character and one word for each page (with accompanying manga art!), and it only uses the hiragana you’ve already learned for later pages. You’ll learn all 46 basic hiragana and half of the words in the first book of Crystal Hunters.

Hiragana	English Equivalent	Katakana
あ い う え お	a i u e o	アイウエオ
か き く け こ	ka ki ku ke ko	カキクケコ
さ し す せ そ	sa shi su se so	サシスセソ
た ち つ て と	ta chi tsu te to	タチツテト
な に ぬ ね の	na ni nu ne no	ナニヌネノ
は ひ ふ へ ほ	ha hi fu he ho	ハヒフヘホ
ま み む め も	ma mi mu me mo	マミムメモ
や ゆ よ	ya yu yo	ヤ ュ ヨ
ら り る れ ろ	ra ri ru re ro	ラリルレロ
わ を	wa wo	ワ ヲ
ん	n	ン

Hiragana	English Equivalent	Katakana
がぎぐげご	ga gi gu ge go	ガギグゲゴ
ざじずぜぞ	za ji zu ze zo	ザジズゼゾ
だぢづでど	da ji zu de do	ダヂヅデド
ばびぶべぼ	ba bi bu be bo	バビブベボ
ぱぴぷぺぽ	pa pi pu pe po	パピプペポ
きゃきゅきょ	kya kyu kyo	キャキュキョ
ぎゃぎゅぎょ	gya gyu gyo	ギャギュギョ
しゃしゅしょ	sha shu sho	シャシュショ
じゃじゅじょ	ja ju jo	ジャジュジョ
ちゃちゅちょ	cha chu cho	チャチュチョ
にゃにゅにょ	nya nyu nyo	ニャニュニョ
ひゃひゅひょ	hya hyu hyo	ヒャヒュヒョ
びゃびゅびょ	bya byu byo	ビャビュビョ
ぴゃぴゅぴょ	pya pyu pyo	ピャピュピョ
みゃみゅみょ	mya myu myo	ミャミュミョ
りゃりゅりょ	rya ryu ryo	リャリュリョ



Kanji in Crystal Hunters

While knowing kanji is not necessary to read Crystal Hunters, we do add some in so that people who wish to study them are able to. For people who do not know how to read the kanji, hiragana is placed above the kanji so that it can still be read phonetically. When hiragana is used this way, it is called “furigana”.



Crystal Hunters Vocabulary List:

(listed alphabetically by chapter)

Note: if the word you are looking for ends in -nai, -te, -ou, or -eru, it is likely to be in the grammar section or in the conjugations list on the last page of this guide.

Chapter 1			
Japanese Word	English Spelling	Kanji	Meaning in English
ああ!	a-a		AHH!
あなた	a-na-ta		you
あの	a-no		that over there*
あれ	a-re		that over there*
ありがとう	a-ri-ga-to-u		thank you
ある	a-ru		to have*, to be in a place (inanimate objects)
あそこ	a-so-ko		over there
バンソム	ba-n-so-mu		Bansom (name)
だ	da		to be*
ダフニー	da-fu-ni-i		Daphne (name)
だいじょうぶ	da-i-jo-u-bu	大丈夫	all right, problem free
だめ	da-me	駄目	not good, not allowed
だれ	da-re	誰	who
でも	de-mo		but
どこ	do-ko		where
どうぞ	do-u-zo		here you are
が	ga		subject/object particle*
は	ha (pronounced "wa")		subject particle*
はい	ha-i		yes
ひと	hi-to	人	person
ほしい	ho-shi-i		want
いい	i-i		good, yes
いいえ	i-i-e		no
いく	i-ku	行く	to go
いる	i-ru		to exist, to be in a place (for people, animals)
か	ka		question particle*
かいぶつ	ka-i-bu-tsu	怪物	monster
かなしい	ka-na-shi-i	悲しい	sad
かんがえる	ka-n-ga-e-ru	考える	to think
かれ	ka-re	彼	he
カル	ka-ru		Kal (name)
けん	ke-n	剣	sword
き	ki	木	tree

Chapter 1			
Japanese Word	English Spelling	Kanji	Meaning in English
きかい	ki-ka-i	機械	machine
こんにちは	ko-n-ni-chi-ha "konnichiwa"		hello
ここ	ko-ko		here
この	ko-no		this*
これ	ko-re		this*
クリスタル	ku-ri-su-ta-ru		crystal
みえる	mi-e-ru	見える	can see*
みる	mi-ru	見る	to see
も	mo		too, also
もつ	mo-tsu	持つ	to hold*
なか	na-ka	中	in, inside
なかま	na-ka-ma	仲間	partner, colleague, group friend
なに	na-ni	何	what
なる	na-ru	成る	to become
なぜ	na-ze	なぜ	why
に	ni		position particle*
にげる	ni-ge-ru	逃げる	run away
の	no		possessive particle*
おかね	o-ka-ne	お金	money
おとこ	o-to-ko	男	man
パンチ	pa-n-chi		punch
～ら (suffix)	ra		plural suffix*
しる	shi-ru	知る	to know*
そこ	so-ko		there
その	so-no		that*
すき	su-ki	好き	like
たおれる	ta-o-re-ru	倒れる	to fall down, to be defeated
～たち (suffix)	ta-chi	達	plural suffix*
と	to	と	and
ところ	to-ko-ro	所	place
とめる	to-me-ru	止める	to stop someone or something
トラック	to-ra-kku		truck
つかう	tsu-ka-u	使う	to use
わ	wa	話	chapter, story
わかる	wa-ka-ru	分かる	to understand*
わたし	wa-ta-shi	私	I, me
を	wo (pronounced "oh")		object particle*
うれしい	u-re-shi-i	嬉しい	happy

Chapter 2			
Japanese Word	English Spelling	Kanji	Meaning in English
あたらしい	a-ta-ra-shi-i	新しい	new
ちから	chi-ka-ra	力	power
ハンター	ha-n-ta-a		hunter
いま	i-ma	今	now
かのじょ	ka-no-jo	彼女	her
こ	ko	子	child, adolescent
のる	no-ru	乗る	to ride
おんな	o-n-na	女	woman
さようなら	sa-yo-u-na-ra		goodbye
スバサ	su-ba-sa		Subasa (name)
よ	yo		emphasis particle*
ゆみ	yumi	弓	bow (the one used with arrows)

Chapter 3			
Japanese Word	English Spelling	Kanji	Meaning in English
あう	a-u	会う	to meet
デバン	de-ba-n		Devan (name)
いえ	i-e	家	house, home
ナイツ	na-i-tsu		Knites (name)
なまえ	na-ma-e	名前	name
しっぽ	shi-ppo		tail
それ	so-re		that*
つの	tsu-no	角	horn
や	ya	矢	arrow
やめる	ya-me-ru		to quit, to stop doing something

* means there will be further clarification in the sections below.



Particles

Japanese grammar is very different from English grammar, but in a way it can be easier than English once you get used to it. Japanese grammar is *particle-based*, which means the *particles* are what guide the meaning of a sentence.

We use seven different particles in Crystal Hunters, but the two most basic particles are:

は (ha – but pronounced “wa”) – This determines the subject/topic.

を (wo – but pronounced “oh”) – This determines the object.

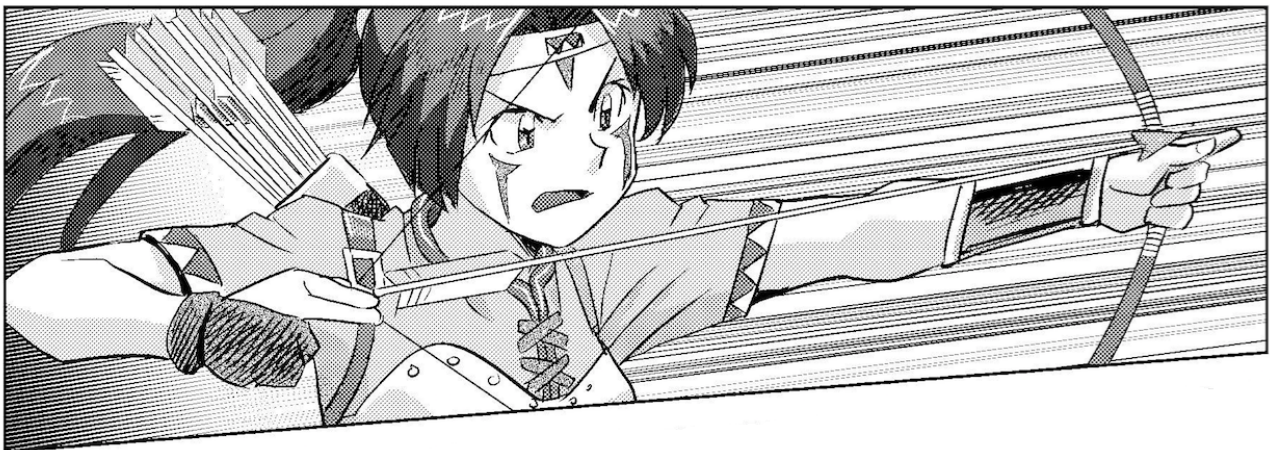
は

To begin, we can make very simple sentences with は only.

For example:

わたし は みる = I see.

Particles describe the word before them, and in this sentence we can see that は is describing わたし. わたし and は are now a “word-particle set”, and this makes わたし the subject of the sentence. As well, verbs do not need particles, so this simple sentence only has one particle.



を

Now, let's add an を to the previous sentence. The normal word order for Japanese is Subject – Object – Verb.

わたし は クリスタル を みる = I see a crystal.

There is a わたし は word-particle set, and a クリスタル を word-particle set. Because Japanese is a particle-based language, we can actually move around the word-particle sets and the meaning stays the same. We can even change the order to be the same as English.

わたし は みる、クリスタル を。

Or, we can change the order to be like Yoda.

クリスタル を、わたし は みる。

While the first version is the most common, all of these versions are grammatically correct.

Singular/Plural

Although the sentence above was translated as “I see a crystal.”, it could also be “I see crystals.” The reason for this is that Japanese does not often distinguish between one thing and many things by modifying its nouns like English does. So, until further explained, Japanese things are often like Schrödinger's cat in that they are in multiple states of being. They are both one thing and many things at the same time.

There are exceptions to this though, especially when talking about people, and these will be covered in more detail below in the ーたち、ーら section.

No Spaces

Particles are very useful for telling us how to read a sentence, and they are *always* written in Hiragana. Since Japanese is written in a mixture of kanji and its alphabets, it is very easy to find where the particles are in a sentence. It's so easy, in fact, that there is actually no need for spaces between words in Japanese.

Let's add kanji (and furigana) to the previous example sentence. When we do this, we just have to find the particles, and the particles will define where each word is.

^{わたし}私は^みクリスタルを見る。

After finding the particles, we can see that there are three parts to this sentence. ^{わたし}私は、^みクリスタルを、and 見る。 Now that we have everything separated into word-particle sets, we can easily determine the meaning of the sentence.



に

Our next particle, に, is used when showing location or movement. It can mean “to”, “in”, “on”, or “at”.

For example:

わたし は トラック に いる = I am in the truck.

And, without spaces: 私^{わたし}はトラックにいる。

We can see that the に defines トラック as the location to be in / to go to and makes トラック に a word-particle set. We then add this to the わたし は word-particle set, and then いる shows us that a living thing (I) is in the truck.

Now, let's see another example.

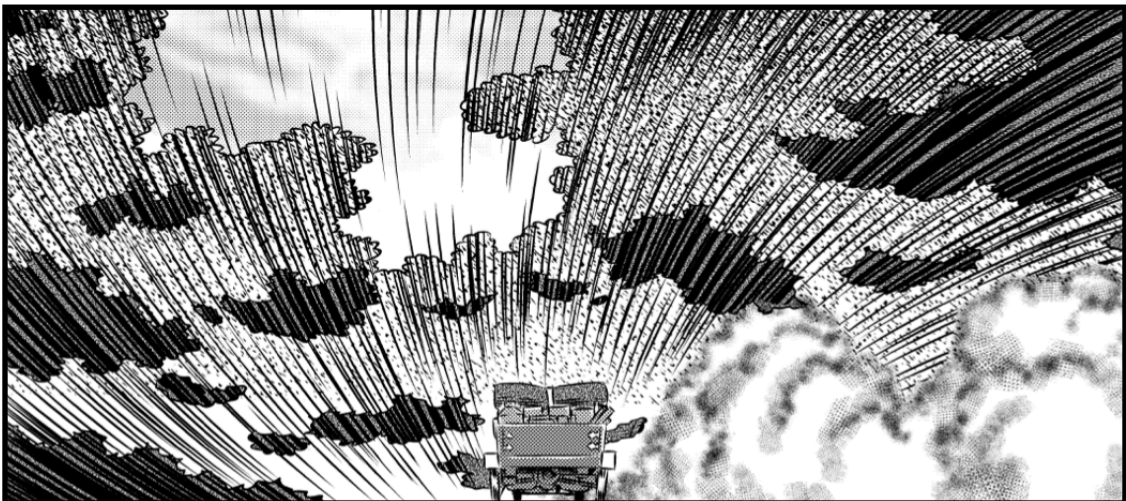
わたし は あそこ に いく = I go over there.

Without spaces: 私^{わたし}はあそこ^いに行く。

Sometimes, like above, the word before the particle is all in Hiragana, and for the untrained eye, it can be hard to see where each word is. But remember, all we have to do is separate each part of the sentence into word-particle sets, and it becomes easy to see.

わたし
私は あそこ^いに行く

It takes a little practice, but eventually it becomes very easy to do this automatically.



が

Like は, the particle が can also mark the subject of a sentence, and discerning whether to use は or が can often be very difficult for Japanese learners, even for people who have reached near-native levels. But don't worry! Crystal Hunters only uses が in one way, so within our story at least, it is fairly easy to understand.

The way が is used in Crystal Hunters is actually more like an object, meaning that it replaces を, but only when paired with certain verbs/adjectives.

For example:

^{かいぶつ}怪物 が いる = There is a monster.

Without spaces: ^{かいぶつ}怪物がいる。



が often joins with いる when introducing where something is. In addition, we can see that いる translates to “there is” in this sentence.

Now, let's make it slightly more complicated:

あそこ ^{かいぶつ}に 怪物 が いる = There is a monster over there.

Without spaces: あそこ ^{かいぶつ}に怪物がいる。

Within the Crystal Hunters story, we treat word-particle sets with が as ones that include a verb, so ^{かいぶつ}怪物がいる is one set. This is our “が set”. In real Japanese, we can break the verb off and move it around, but it gets very complicated very quickly when we do this, so we will avoid that here.

So, with ^{かいぶつ}怪物がいる being one set, all we have to do is add あそこに either before or after ^{かいぶつ}怪物がいる、 and the meaning becomes “There is a monster over there”.

Using が for adjective-verbs

What is an “adjective verb”? Well, it’s a word that is a verb in English, but is an adjective in Japanese. For words like this, we use が.

For example:

わたしは クリスタル が すき だ = I like crystals.

Without spaces: ^{わたし}私は^すクリスタルが好きだ。



Wow, there’s a lot in this sentence! Let’s unpack it.

First, let’s start with the part we know. We know that わたし は is a set, and we know what that means, so let’s take it out for now.

クリスタル が すき だ

OK, now we know that クリスタル が is a word-particle combination, and we know that we want to add a verb to make it a complete “が set”. But... where is the verb?

OK, so looking at our Crystal Hunters Vocabulary List, we see that すき means “like”, and だ means “to be”. Looking closer, we can see that すき is not “to like”, which means that this “like” is an adjective in Japanese, not a verb! To make it a “verb”, we combine it with だ. So, for this sentence すき だ is the verb.

To make our “が set” we add クリスタル が to すき だ and we get クリスタル が すき だ which means “(someone) likes crystals.”

Then we add our わたし は back in, and we get:
わたし は クリスタル が すき だ = I like crystals.

Without spaces: 私^{わたし}はクリスタル^すが好きだ。

Further information on “が sets”.

In Crystal Hunters, these verbs/adjectives are used in “が sets”.

いる

ある

すき だ

ほしい

みえる

And all verbs in their “can” forms (to be explained later).



However! This does not mean that all of these words are *always* part of a “が set”. We only use them in “が sets” when there is an object in the sentence.

For example, let’s start with the sentence:

わたし は かいぶつ が みえる。 = I can see a monster.

Without spaces: 私^{わたし}は怪物^{かいぶつ}が^み見える。

If we take out the object in this sentence (monster), then we get:

わたし は みえる = I can see (it).

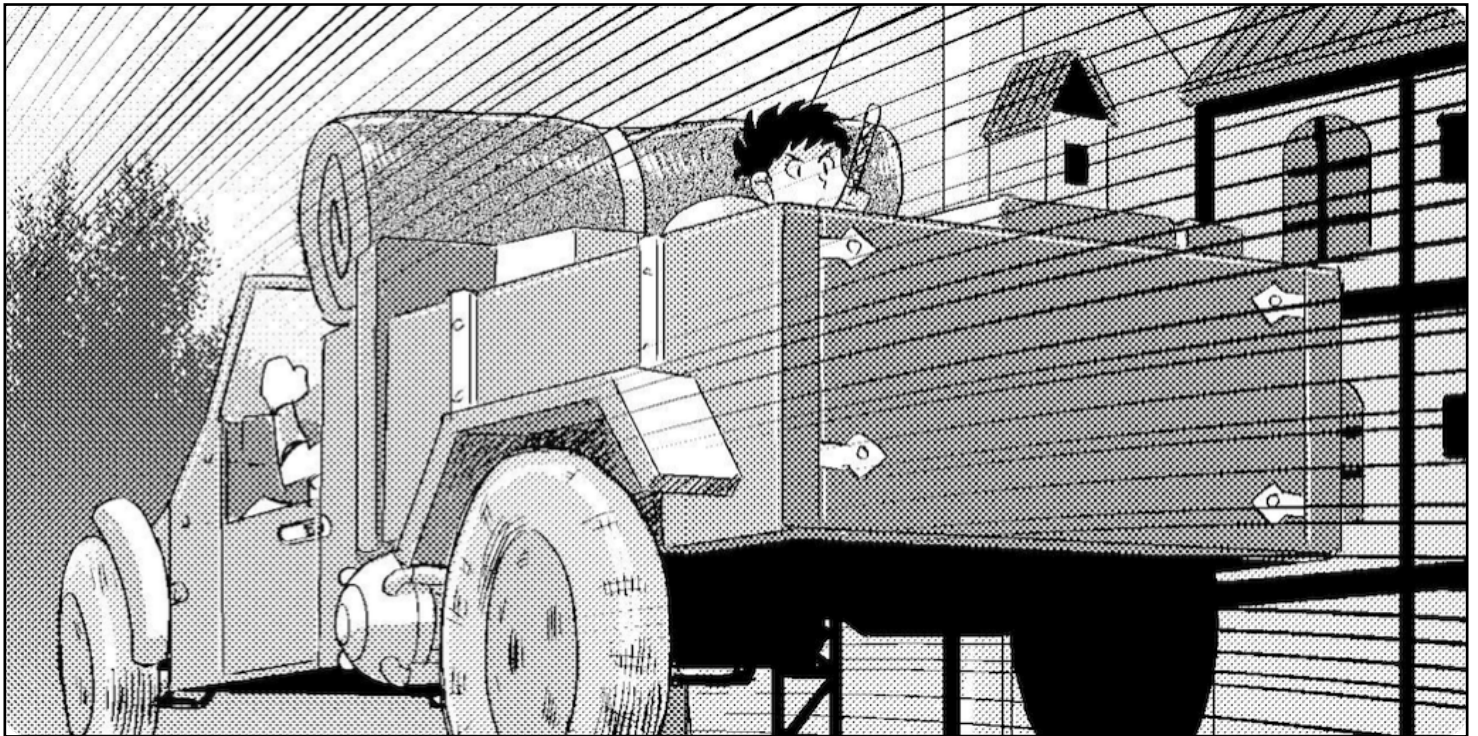
Without spaces: 私^{わたし}は^み見える。

Since there is only a subject, and no object in this sentence, we don't form a “が” set”. In fact, this sentence in particular would be very strange if we turned it into a “が” set”:

わたし が みえる = (I) can see myself.

Without spaces: ^{わたし み}私が見える。

Unless you're looking in a mirror, this would be a very strange thing to say.



の

Phew! We made it through the hard particles! The final three particles are all relatively easy! Let's go through these quick.

First, there's の, which is a possessive particle. This means it often means "s" in English, or it changes "me" into "my" or "mine" or something like that.

Example:

わたしのけんはあそこだ = My sword is over there.

When の is used, the word-particle set expands. This means that while わたしの is a word-particle combination, it is not the full set. の is a joiner, not a breaker. Therefore, the whole word-particle set goes all the way until は.

わたしのけんは = my sword.

Then we add あそこ and だ for the "over there" and "is" and we get:

わたしのけんはあそこだ = My sword is over there.

Without spaces: ^{わたし けん}私の剣はあそこだ。

As some of you may have already noticed, there is no に attached to あそこ here, and that's because だ is a special verb which likes to do its own thing, and だ doesn't like に, so no に here. However, if we use ある instead of だ, we need to use the に. Also, we're using ある, not いる, because a sword is an inanimate object.

わたしのけんはあそこにある = My sword is over there.

Without spaces: ^{わたし けん}私の剣はあそこにある。

か

The last two particles are used like punctuation marks, but spoken, and they are usually added to the end of the sentence. か is like a question mark.

For example, if we add か to the previous example sentence, it becomes a question:

わたしのけんはあそこにあるか? = Is my sword over there?

Without spaces: ^{わたし けん}私の剣はあそこにあるか?

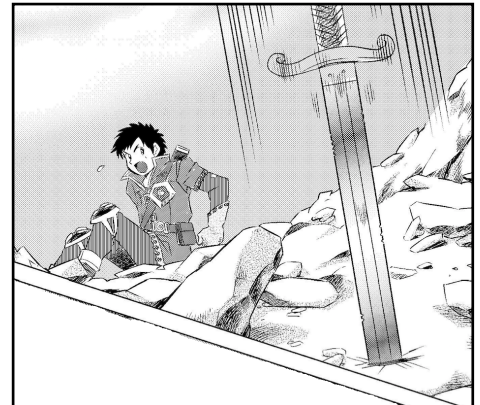
Technically, a か is not necessary to form a question, but using か is similar to moving the “is” in the previous sentence to the front of the sentence when asking a question in English. If you make a statement in English, but lift your inflection at the end of the statement, it becomes a question. This is true for Japanese too.

^{わたし けん}私の剣はあそこにある? = My sword is over there?

よ

Last particle! よ is like an exclamation point. If we take off the か and add よ to the previous example sentence, it's like adding an exclamation point.

^{わたし けん}私の剣はあそこにあるよ! = My sword is over there!



As with か, it is not completely necessary to add よ when using an exclamation point, but it adds an extra amount of oomph!

Disappearing words

We made it through the particles! We're not far from the end now! But, let's take a short detour before we go through the last few grammar rules to talk about something fun!

So far, we've been showing you standard sentences in Japanese, but just like a ninja, the Japanese language doesn't always show all of itself. Many of the words in a sentence can disappear and the sentence works just fine.

For example, we can remove half the words/particles from the following sentence:

わたしはクリスタルが好きだ。 → クリスタルが好き。

First, we can take off the ^{わたし}私^は because the default subject in Japanese is "I". We don't have this for statements in English, but we do have something similar for command forms.

For example: "GO! GO NOW!" has a default subject of "You".

So, ^{わたし}私^は disappears and the meaning remains unchanged.

Also, the ^だ used after some adjective-verbs can be chopped right off and the meaning of the sentence remains fairly unchanged.

Questions Too!

Yes, there is a default subject for questions too, but the default subject for questions is "You".

So, for example:

あなたはクリスタルが好きか？ → クリスタルが好きか？

The か is also not necessary, so: クリスタルが好き？ is also OK.

Remaining Grammar Rules:

Ok, let's power through some tenses and other quick grammar rules, and then we're almost done with the tutorial and off to the manga!

Present/Future Tense

Present tense in Japanese can also be future tense. Yes, that's correct, and there is no future tense in Japanese. Phew! That saves us a lot of time! No need to learn future tense!

Just remember that present tense is not only present tense, but also representative of something to be done in the future.

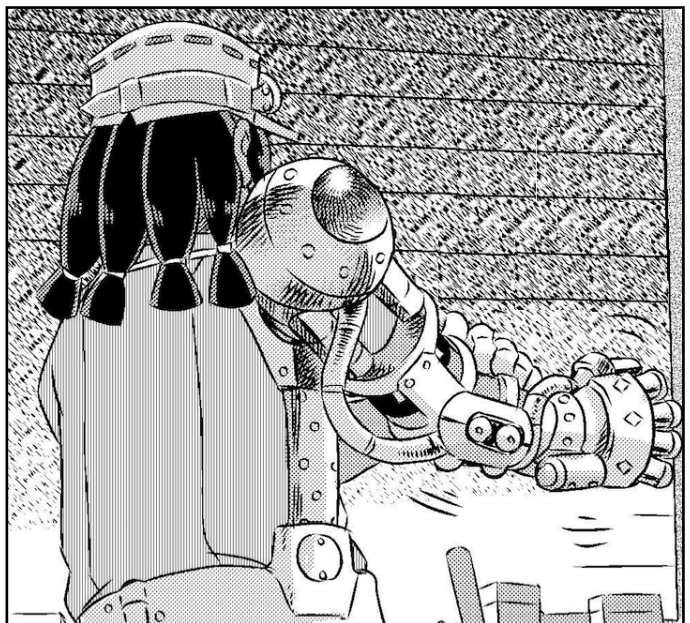
So, ^いトラックに行く can be both "I go to the truck." and "I'll go to the truck." depending on the context of the situation.

However, there is one exception. ^だ does its own thing again here too, and ^だ cannot be used in the future tense. Instead, ^だ changes to ^に なる (to become) when using "be verbs" in the "future" tense.

For example:

これは^{きかい}機械だ。 = This is a machine.

これは^{きかい}機械になる。 = This will be/become a machine.



Negative Form

In English, to make a sentence negative, we just add “not” or “do not” or something like that and the sentence becomes negative. Something similar happens in Japanese, but we don’t add a word, we conjugate the verb differently. This is because Japanese loves to conjugate verbs. **LOVES**. Seriously. There are so many verb conjugations in Japanese. We do our best to keep verb conjugations to a minimum here though, so there are only dictionary form (base form) + five types of conjugations in Crystal Hunters.

There are a couple ways to conjugate a verb into its negative form, and which way you conjugate it depends on how the spelling of the verb ends. Surprisingly, it’s actually easier to think about this with English letters than Japanese letters. As well, it is easy to tell when a verb has been turned into its negative form, as all negative conjugations end in **ない**.

Normal Way

All verbs in Japanese end in a character that has an “u” sound. The normal way to conjugate the verb is to cut off the “u” sound at the end of the verb and add “anai”. This means that the last letter will change, and then you add “ない” after that.

For example:

いく changes to **いかない**

トラックに^い行かない。 = I don’t/won’t go to the truck.



One slight modification to the normal way is for verbs ending in う. In stead of adding “anai” after taking off “u”, you add “wanai”.

For example:

つかう changes to つかわない

き かい つか
機械を使わない。 = I don't/won't use machines.

The “-eru” way.

For verbs that end in -eru, it is very easy to conjugate into negative forms. Just take off る, and add ない.

For example:

みえる changes to みえない.

み
クリスタルが見えない。 = I can't see the crystal(s).

The “-iru” Hybrid

Verbs that end in “-iru” can behave like a normal verb, or they can behave like -eru verbs, it just depends on the verb. Unfortunately you just have to memorize which are which for this one.

Example:

しる changes to しらない (normal way).

かれ し
彼は知らない。 = He doesn't know.

みる changes to みない (-eru way).

クリスタルを^み見ない = I don't/won't see the crystals.



だ & ある

Of course, **だ** does its own weird thing again like it always does.

だ changes to **じゃない**.

クリスタルが^す好きじゃない。 = I don't like crystals.

ある also does its own thing here. It just changes to **ない**.

ここにクリスタルがない。 = There are no crystals here.

Here is a full list of all the verbs in Crystal Hunters and their conjugations from dictionary form to negative form.

Dictionary Form Negative Form

ある	ない
だ	じゃない
いる	いない
いく	いかない
かんがえる	かんがえない
みえる	みえない
みる	みない
もつ	もたない
なる	ならない
にげる	にげない
しる	しらない
たおれる	たおれない
とめる	とめない
つかう	つかわない
わかる	わからない
のる	のらない
あう	あわない
やめる	やめない



Past Tense

Like English, to turn a present sentence into a past tense sentence, you need to conjugate the verb. For the most part, verbs fall into the same conjugations groups we saw in the negative form (“normal” and “eru”). And like before there are a few exceptions. That said, it is easy to discern a past tense conjugation since all the past conjugations in Crystal Hunters end in た (although some verbs not in Crystal Hunters end in だ).

Normal Way

Usually, there are a few different subsets for the normal way when conjugating into past tense, but luckily, all the normal conjugation verbs in Crystal Hunters fall into the same group!

When making a verb into past tense in this way, all you have to do is take off the last character (the whole character and not just the “u”), and then add “tta” or った.

For example:

つかう changes to 使った.

きかい
機械をつかった。 = I used a machine.

The “-eru” Way (and some “iru”)

Again, this way is slightly easier than the normal way. Just take off る and add た.

かのじょ かんが
彼女は考えた。 = She thought.



だ

だ does it's own thing again, especially because you don't cut anything off of it, but it's actually fairly normal here.

Just add った.

かれ けん す
彼は剣が好きだった = He liked swords / He used to like swords.

Here is a full list of all the verbs in Crystal Hunters and their conjugations from dictionary form to past form.

Dictionary Form	Past Form
-----------------	-----------

ある	あった
だ	だった
いる	いた
いく	いった
かんがえる	かんがえた
みえる	みえた
みる	みた
もつ	もった
なる	なった
にげる	にげた
しる	しった
たおれる	たおれた
とめる	とめた
つかう	つかった
わかる	わかった
のる	のった
あう	あった
やめる	やめた



Adjective Past & Negative Past

In Japanese, instead of conjugating the verb to turn an adjective into the past tense (for example: “I was happy”), we conjugate the adjective itself. If the adjective ends in い, 99% of the time it is an adjective you conjugate. If it does not end in い, you add the past form of だ, or だった. We saw the だった version in the previous example:

かれ けん す
彼は剣が好きだった = He liked swords / He used to like swords.

However, if we use an adjective that ends in い, like うれしい, then it conjugates differently (this is also the reason why we don't need だ after ほしい when making a “が” set.) For past tense with these い adjectives, we conjugate the adjective directly. Doing this is very simple. Just take off the い and add かった.

Example:

うれしい changes to うれしかった.

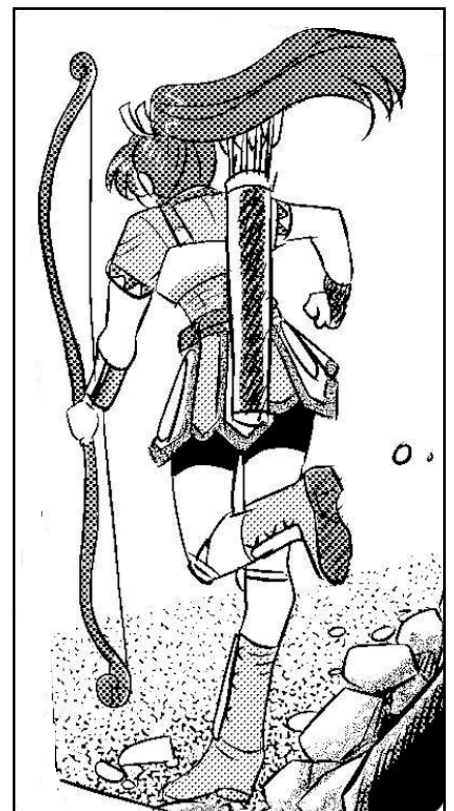
うれ
嬉しかった。 = I was happy.

Also, since all of the negative verb forms end in ない, all of them are conjugated like い adjectives.

Example:

つかわない changes to つかわなかった.

つか
トラックを使わなかった。 = I didn't use a truck.



Negative Adjectives

Just like we can conjugate adjectives that end in い to make them past tense, we can also conjugate them to make them negative.

When we do this, we just cut the い part of the adjective off and add on くない. Just like with verbs, negative conjugations end with ない.

For example:

ほしい changes to ほしくない

きかい
機械がほしくない。 = I don't want a machine.

For adjectives that don't end in い, you treat them the same as sentences that end in だ. Just add じゃない at the end. In fact, you've already seen a sentence with a negative adjective in it!

Here it is again.

クリスタルが^す好きじゃない。 = I don't like crystals.



“て” Form

“て” form for verbs is super easy to learn after learning their past form. All you have to do is change the た on the end to て! Easy! Also, we don't have to worry about a weird だ variation, because there is no “て” form of だ!

“て” form is really useful to know, because you can use it to do a lot of things, such as connecting it to other verbs and adjectives.

Soft Command “て”

The simplest way to use “て” form is to use it in its naked state. That is, without connecting it to anything else. When you do this, it becomes a “soft” command. That is, it's a command, but a somewhat polite command. Japanese has three primary command form conjugations and this is the most neutral. Don't worry, we won't learn the other command conjugations here.

As in English, the default subject for command form is “You”.

For example:

つかう changes to ^{つか}つかって.
これを使^{つか}って。 = Use this.



Here is a list of all the verbs in Crystal Hunters in their “て” form.

Dictionary Form “て” Form

ある	あって
だ	N/A
いる	いて
いく	いって
かんがえる	かんがえて
みえる	みえて
みる	みて
もつ	もって
なる	なって
にげる	にげて
しる	しって
たおれる	たおれて
とめる	とめて
つかう	つかって
わかる	わかって
のる	のって
あう	あって
やめる	やめて



Soft Command “て” – Negative Form

Negative form “て” is also easy. We just take the negative form of a verb and add で. That’s it!

For example:

みない changes to みないで.

わたし み
私を見ないでよ! = Don’t look at me!!

て+いる

But, once you put some “clothes” (other verbs and adjectives) on your naked “て”, it can very quickly acquire a different meaning.

For example, て+いる is essentially “-ing” in English. There are some slight nuance differences, but for the majority of situations て+いる = “-ing”.

For example:

けん つか
剣を使っている。 = I am using a sword.

For negative form, just change the いる at the end into いない.

For example:

きかい も
機械を持っていない。 = I am not holding a machine /
I don't have a machine on me.



て+いい

This is essentially the “You may/You can” or “May I/Can I” form.

For example:

けん つか
剣を使っていい? = May I use a sword?

And then the traditional response to this is:

はい、けん つか
剣を使っていい。 = Yes, you may use a sword.

But, like in English, a response to a question can be cut down considerably, with the simplest response being “Yes”. Since the question is asked with an “いい”, the “いい” version of “yes” is a more common response here. “はい” would not be wrong though, just less natural.

Example:

A:トラックに乗^のっていい? = Can I ride in the truck?

B: いいよ。 = Yeah, go for it.

In this situation, adding a よ adds an equivalent “go for it” or “that’s fine”, and is much more common than just saying いい。 Only saying いい is much less friendly. It’s confirming that it’s OK, but it doesn’t necessarily mean that the person saying it is happy about it.



“Let’s” Form

The “Let’s” Form is a verb conjugation that lets us say things like “Let’s go over there” or “Let’s use this.” This conjugation form is not so difficult to learn because there are luckily no *だ* or *ある* versions of this conjugation, and the other verbs fall into the same “normal” and “-eru/some -iru” groups that we’ve been using until now. The “let’s” form is also easy to identify because it always ends in “ou” (sounds like “oh”).

For the normal verbs, we just delete the last “u”, and we add “ou”.

For example:

いく changes to いこう.

あそこ^いに行こう。 = Let’s go over there.

For the -eru/some -iru verbs, we delete the last る and we add よう.

For example:

にげる changes to にげよう.

^に逃げようよ！ = Let’s run away!



Shall We?

When the “let’s” form is used in a question, it becomes “shall we” instead of “let’s”.

Example:

なかま
仲間になろうか? = Shall we be partners/group friends?

Here’s the same list of verbs and their “let’s” form conjugations.

Dictionary Form “Let’s” Form

ある	N/A
だ	N/A
いる	いよう
いく	いこう
かんがえる	かんがえよう
みえる	みえよう
みる	みよう
もつ	もとう
なる	なろう
にげる	にげよう
しる	しろよう
たおれる	たおれよう
とめる	とめよう
つかう	つかおう
わかる	わかろう
のる	のろう
あう	あおう
やめる	やめよう



“Can” Form or “Potential” Form

This verb conjugation means that someone “can” or “is able to” to do something. Again, we divide our verbs into the same “normal” and “-eru/some -iru” groups. And again, there’s no **だ** or **ある** versions of this conjugation so we don’t have to worry about those two.

This is one of the harder verb forms to recognize though, because although all of the “can” form verbs end in “eru”, there are dictionary form verbs that also end in “eru”. So, to distinguish this form, you need to know what the dictionary form of the verb is before you can determine if it’s a “can” form or not.

As well, as mentioned in the particles section, “can” form verbs become part of “**が** sets” when there is an object in the sentence.

For verbs in the “normal” group, we just delete the last “u” and add “eru”.

For example:

つかう changes to つかえる.

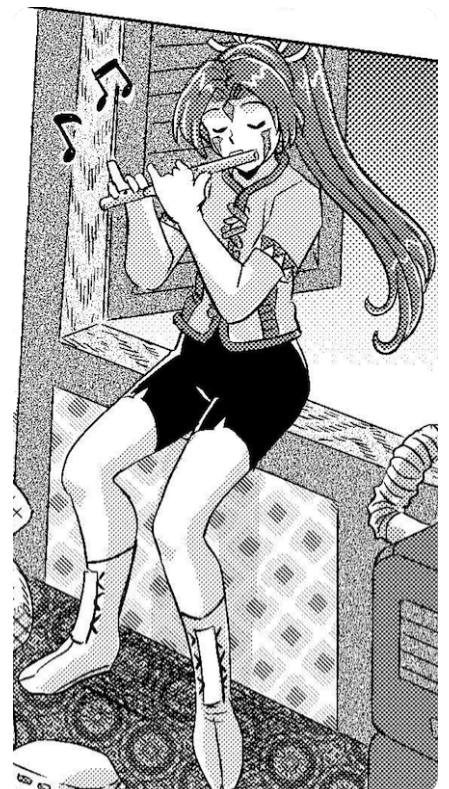
きかい つか
機械**が**使える = I can use machines.

For verbs in the “eru/some iru” group, we delete the last **る** and we add **られる**.

For example:

にげる changes to 逃げられる.

に
逃げられるよ！ = I can run away!



Here's the same list of verbs and their "can" form conjugations.

Dictionary Form	"can" Form
-----------------	------------

ある	N/A
だ	N/A
いる	いられる
いく	いける
かんがえる	かんがえられる
みえる	みえられる
みる	みられる
もつ	もてる
なる	なれる
にげる	にげられる
しる	しれる
たおれる	たおられる
とめる	とめられる
つかう	つかえる
わかる	わかる
のる	のれる
あう	あえる
やめる	やめられる



C-c-c-combo!

We've learned all the conjugations we need to be able to read Crystal Hunters! Let's celebrate this accomplishment by throwing all the conjugations we've learned on top of each other!

One of the fun things about Japanese is that you can just keep adding conjugations and connections on to verbs and adjectives to make more and more complex sentences.

For example, using only things that we have learned so far, we can conjugate and connect our way up from "I meet" to saying "I'm happy I was able to meet you."

Step 1: 会^あう = "I meet", "I will meet"

+ "can" form

Step 2: 会^あえる = "I can meet", "I am able to meet"

+ "te" form

Step 3: 会^あえて = "Go be able to meet" ??? (nonsensical)

+うれしい

Step 4: 会^あえて^{うれ}しい = "I'm happy to be able to meet (you)"

+ past tense

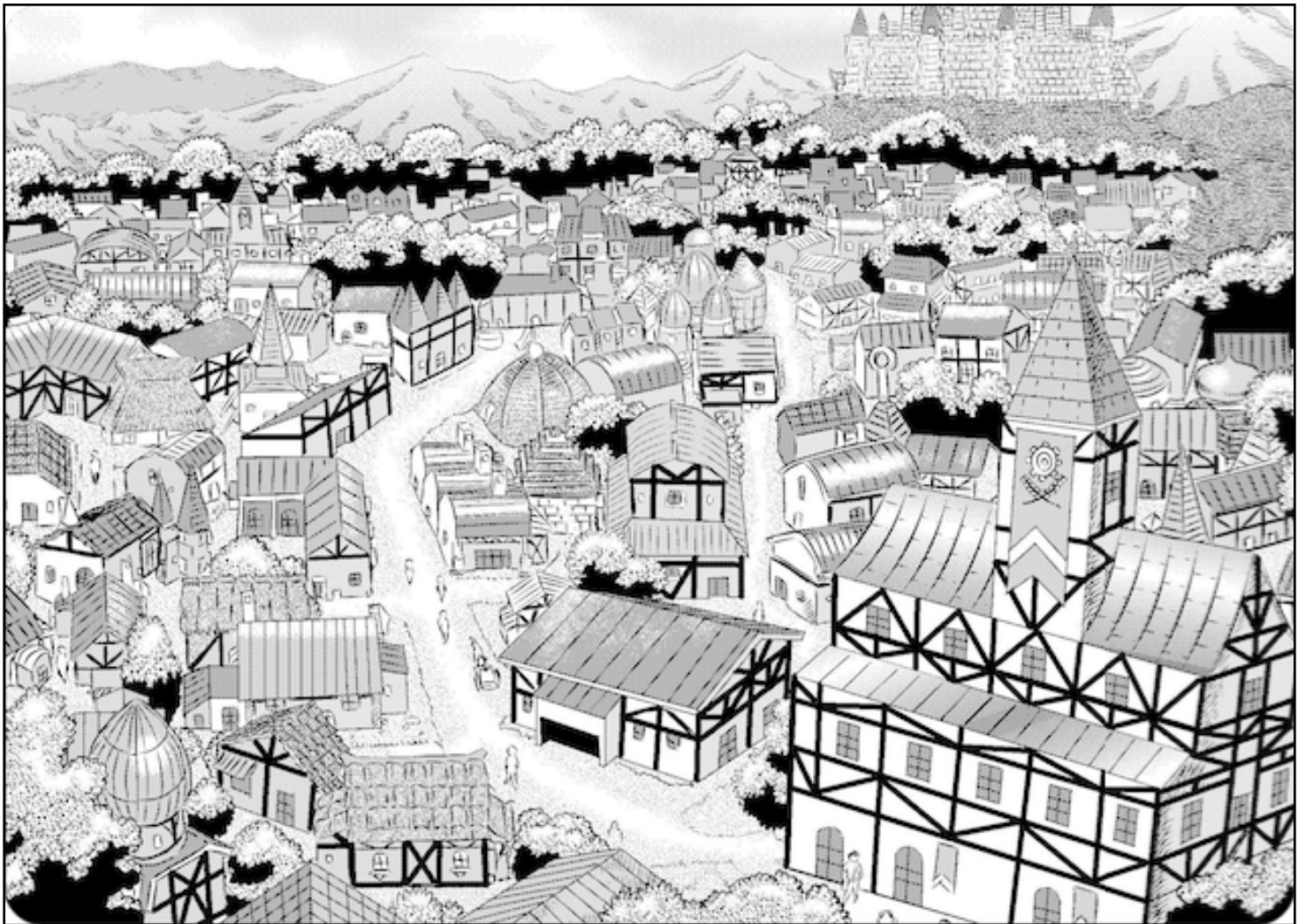
Step 5: 会^あえて^{うれ}しかった = "I'm happy I was able to meet (you)"



We did it! Using four conjugations/connections, we were able to build up to an 8-word sentence (9 if you count “I’m” as two words!) using just 2 Japanese words! Nice! We’ve taken a big first step on our way to becoming Japanese masters!

And now, we just have a few quirks of the Japanese language to go through before we’re all set and ready to read 100+ pages of manga!

(By the way, if you want to quick check all of the verb conjugations, there’s a list of all the verbs and their conjugations on the last page.)



Japanese Language Quirks:

Last section!! Just skim this quick and go read the manga!!

This/That Differences

In Japanese, there are six different words for this/that, and we use all of them in Crystal Hunters. It's fairly simple to understand the difference between them though, so just give this a quick look.

この/これ

Both この and これ mean "this". However, we use この when we are specifying "this (something)".

For example:

このトラックが^す好きだ。 = I like this truck.

And then これ is used when we aren't specifying anything, and are using "this" only.

これが^す好きだ。 = I like this.

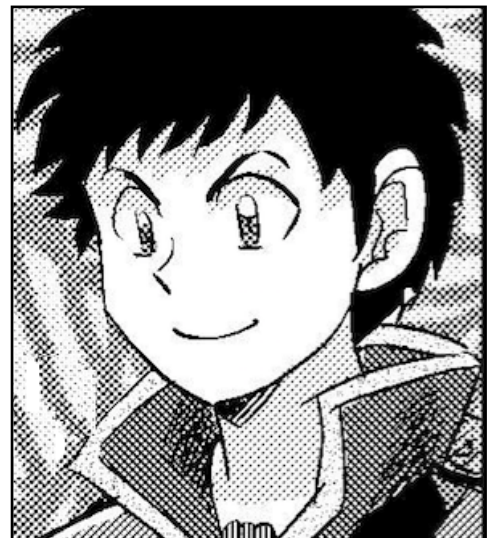
その/それ

その and それ are identical to この and これ, but they mean "that", and specifically "that" when it is fairly close to you.

For example:

そのクリスタルが^ほ欲しい。 = I want that crystal.

それが^ほ欲しい。 = I want that.



あの／あれ

Again, the same pattern here, but this time for “that over there”.

あのところ^いに行く。 = I will go to that place over there.

あの^{ひと かな}人は悲しい。 = That person over there is sad.

Girl/Boy vs. Someone's Child

The way we say “girl” in Japanese is:

おんな^{おんな} + の + こ^こ = 女の子

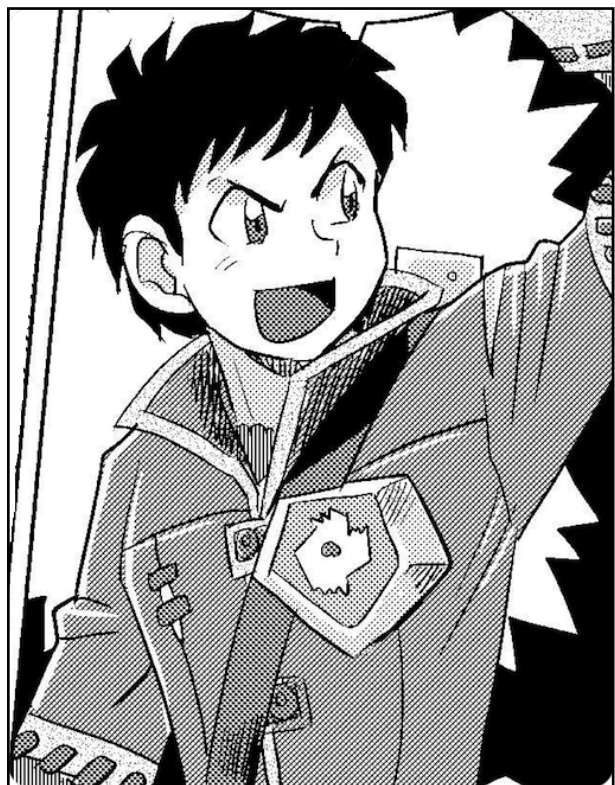
And the way we say “boy” in Japanese is:

おとこ^{おとこ} + の + こ^こ = 男の子

Since we've described の as a possessive particle, it may look like those examples above should mean “the woman's child” and “the man's child”, but instead の is just joining those two words together to make the equivalent of one word in English here.

HOWEVER!! If we added a その before those, for example:

その^{おとこ こ}男の子, then it could mean both “that man's child” and “that boy” depending on the context of the sentence.



Going to People/Things:

In English, we can easily say things like “I’m going to Kal.” Or “I’m going to the monster.” Well, in Japanese saying カル^いに行く or 怪物^{かいぶつ}に行く would be weird because you’re not going to a “place”. So, in Japanese, you add の + ところ to the thing or person you are going to, which makes it so you are going to that thing’s / that person’s place.

Example:

カルは怪物^{かいぶつ}のところ^いに行く！ = Kal goes to the monster!

Having Things

In Japanese there’s a distinction between having something on you at that moment, and having something in general (maybe on you, maybe at home).

For having something on you, Japanese uses 持^もっている or “holding”, but this is not limited to what is in your arms, it just needs to be on your person.

Example:

バンソムは機^き械^{かい}を持^もっている。 = Bansom has a machine. /
Bansom is holding a machine.

For having something in general, we use ある。

お金^{かね}がある。 = I have money (but not necessarily on me).



I Know That!

In Japanese, the distinction between “understand” and “know” is drawn using different lines.

In simple terms, わかる is used for showing that something went from unclear -> clear. Whereas 知る is used for showing that something went from unknown -> known.

So:

わかる = I understand the meaning of what you said /
I understand the concept of what you're explaining /
I get it.

知る = I have that information / I have learned that already.

And:

わからない = I don't understand what you're saying /
I'm not completely sure.

知らない = I haven't heard of that /
I don't have enough information.



The Mysteries of “They”

For some reason, Japan has two suffixes for making groups of people plural. They have the exact same meaning, but they attach to different words. The most common one is **—たち**, and is used for most situations.

For example:

わたし + たち = ^{わたしたち} 私達 = we

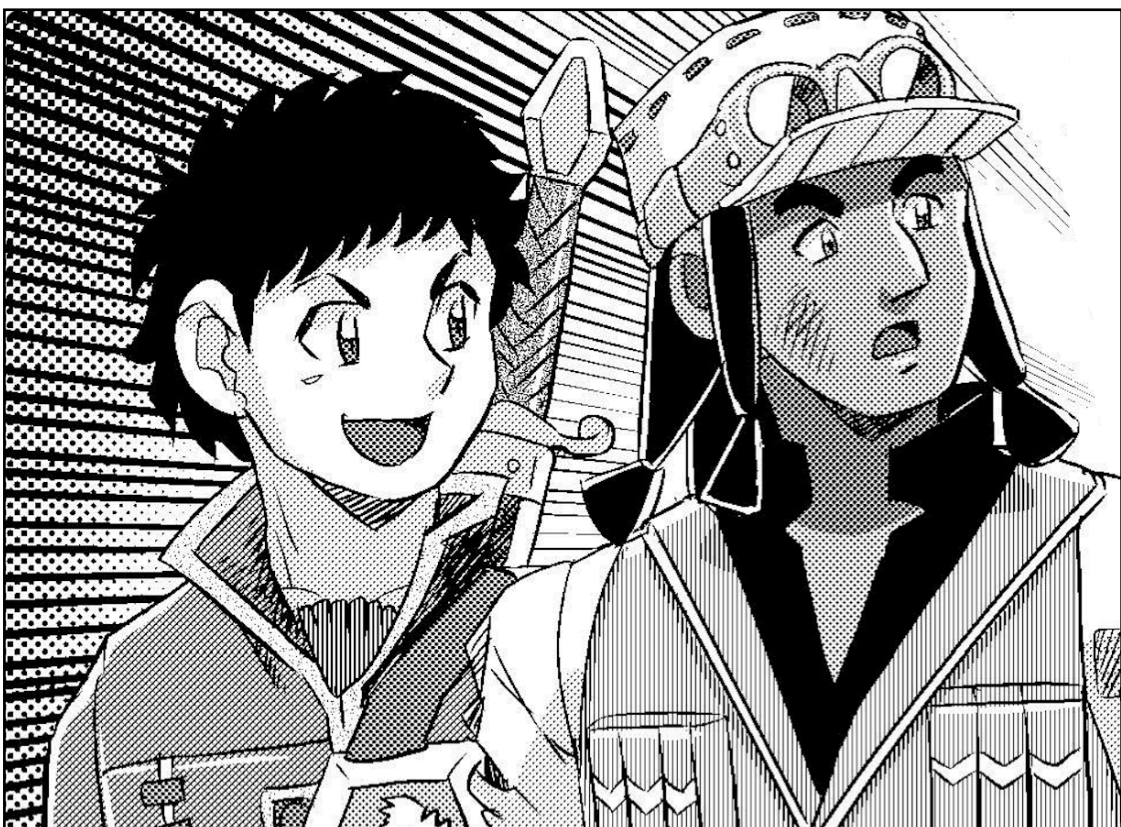
かのじょ + たち = ^{かのじょたち} 彼女達 = they (group of girls/women)

But, for some reason, we use a different suffix for **かれ**, and that suffix is **—ら**.

かれ + ら = ^{かれ} 彼ら = they (group of all boys, or a group of people that one that has at least 1 boy in it)

However, if a group is predominantly female, but there are one or two boys in it, it is best to use:

あの + ひと + たち = ^{ひとたち} あの人達 = those people.



I Can See!

As some of you may have already noticed, there is both a verb that means “can see” (見える), and a “can” form of the verb 見る (見られる). There is a some crossover between the two, but the basic distinction is that 見える (dictionary form) is more in the moment, and the other 見られる (“can” form of 見る) is more that there is a possibility of being able to see something under certain circumstances. Crystal Hunters does not use 見られる, so you don’t need to worry about this too much, just clarifying it for people who might have been confused.

TUTORIAL COMPLETE!!

You are now ready to read Crystal Hunters! Have fun being bilingual enough to be able read an over 100-page manga in the most difficult language in the world! This is an accomplishment, be proud of yourself! Go start reading the manga.



[Japanese Version: \(ebook\)](#)

[Japanese Version: \(free\)](#)

And, if you want a translated version:

[English Version: \(ebook\)](#)

[English Version: \(free\)](#)

Book 2 of Crystal Hunters is available now!



[Book 2 Guide](#)

[Japanese Version](#)

[Natural Japanese Version](#)

Conjugation list

Dictionary Form	Negative Form	Past Tense	“て” Form	“Let’s” Form	“Can” Form
ある	ない	あった	あって	n/a	n/a
だ	じゃない	だった	n/a	n/a	n/a
いる	いない	いた	いて	いよう	いられる
いく	いかない	いった	いって	いこう	いける
かんがえる	かんがえない	かんがえた	かんがえて	かんがえよう	かんがえられる
みえる	みえない	みえた	みえて	みえよう	みえられる
みる	みない	みた	みて	みよう	みられる
もつ	もたない	もった	もって	もとう	もてる
なる	ならない	なった	なって	なるう	なれる
にげる	にげない	にげた	にげて	にげよう	にげられる
しる	しらない	しった	しって	しろう	しれる
たおれる	たおれない	たおれた	たおれて	たおれよう	たおれられる
とめる	とめない	とめた	とめて	とめよう	とめられる
つかう	つかわない	つかった	つかって	つかおう	つかえる
わかる	わからない	わかった	わかって	わかるう	わかれる
のる	のらない	のった	のって	のろう	のれる
あう	あわない	あった	あって	あおう	あえる
やめる	やめない	やめた	やめて	やめよう	やめられる