

Design: Masako Ban



はらはら
hara-hara

ドキドキ
doki-doki



Pera Pera Penguin's

5-minute Japanese Class by Hitomi Hirayama

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I went to see a movie with a friend. Afterward, when we were discussing the movie, she said, "**kono ēga o mitakatta node yūbe wa 'waku-waku' deshita yo** (I really wanted to see this movie, so I was **waku-waku** last night). **saisho wa 'doki-doki,' tochū kara 'hara-hara,' 'hiya-hiya,' nodo wa 'kara-kara' deshita** (When the movie started, I was **doki-doki**. In the middle, I was **hara-hara** and **hiya-hiya**. My throat was **kara-kara**...?). **saigo wa 'hotto' shita yo** (At the end, I was **hotto**)." While she was asking me what I thought about the movie, I wondered if she was an alien from outer space. "**waku-waku, doki-doki**..." It seemed like a language spoken on another planet. I had absolutely no idea what she meant.

■■■ I went to see the same movie. Just like your friend, I was "**hara-hara**" (nervous), "**doki-doki**" (feeling like my heart was pounding) and "**hiya-hiya**" (scared). When it ended, my stomach was "**peko-peko**" (hungry). But I'm not an extraterrestrial! In fact, these expressions are called **onomatopoeia**. They are commonly used in cartoons and spoken by young children, and they are frequently used in daily life, as well.

Generally, **onomatopoeic** Japanese words are made up of repeated sounds, such as "**doki-doki**." **Onomatopoeia** is used as an adjective to describe actions, feelings and situations. It is a very handy way to convey emotions, and there are more than 2,000 **onomatopoeic** expressions in the language. Most phrases use **onomatopoeia** in various ways. I will explain the general meaning of some of them.

Tense of **onomatopoeia**

Subject	は wa	onomatopoeia	tense
			↓
● present tense		です。 desu	でした。 deshita
● negative tense		じゃないです。 janai desu	じゃなかったです。 janakatta desu

- scattered/inconsistent
ばらばら
bara-bara
 The pearls of my necklace are scattered all over the place.
パールネックレスはばらばらです。
pearl no necklace wa bara-bara desu
- destroyed
めちゃくちゃ
mecha-kucha
 Houses were destroyed in the typhoon.
家は台風でめちゃくちゃです。
uchi wa taifū de mecha-kucha desu
- messy/confused
ごちゃごちゃ
gocha-gocha
 I'm confused.
頭の中はごちゃごちゃです。
atama no naka wa gocha-gocha desu
- exhausted
くたくた
kuta-kuta
 I'm exhausted after working 12 hours.
12時間働いてくたくたです。
jū-ni-jikan hataraitte kuta-kuta desu
- separately
べつべつ
betsu-betsu
 We'd like to pay separately.
支払いはべつべつです。
shiharai wa betsu-betsu desu

- empty/few people (ex., in a room, a shop, a train, etc)
がらがら
gara-gara
 The restaurant is nearly empty.
店はがらがらです。
mise wa gara-gara desu
- barely/almost
ぎりぎり
giri-giri
 The car barely fit in the garage.
車はぎりぎりです。
kuruma wa giri-giri de shako ni hairimashita
- not good enough more
まだまだ
mada-mada
 My Japanese is not good enough.
日本語はまだまだです。
Nihongo wa mada-mada desu
- sticky
べたべた
beta-beta
 My hands are sticky with glue.
手はノリでべたべたです。
te wa nori de beta-beta desu
- rumpled/wrinkled
よれよれ
yore-yore
 The pants were wrinkled.
ズボンによれよれでした。
zubon wa yore-yore deshita
- dizzy/with unsteady steps
ふらふら
fura-fura
 I feel dizzy because I stayed up all night.
徹夜をしてふらふらです。
tetsuya o shite fura-fura desu
- fluently/flimsy
ぺらぺら
pera-pera
 I cannot speak Japanese fluently yet.
日本語はまだぺらぺらじゃないです。
Nihongo wa mada pera-pera janai desu
- drenched
びしょびしょ
bisho-bisho
 (I forgot my umbrella, so) I'm drenched.
雨でびしょびしょです。
ame de bisho-bisho desu
- jam-packed
ぎゅうぎゅう
gyū-gyū
 The subway was jam-packed.
地下鉄はぎゅうぎゅうでした。
chikatetsu wa gyū-gyū deshita



Onomatopoeia

Which onomatopoeic phrase is suitable for the following sentences?

- I had so much to drink last night that I could barely walk.
夕べは飲み過ぎて **yūbe wa nomi-sugite** dizzy/with unsteady steps でした。
(last night) (too much drink) **deshita**
- Opinions are always inconsistent at meetings.
会議の時いつも意見は **kaigi no toki itsumo iken wa** scattered/inconsistent です。
(meeting) (when) (always) (opinion) **desu**
- The tax hadn't been separated from the service charge.
税金とサービス料は **zēkin to service-ryō wa** separately じゃなかったです。
(tax) (and) (service charge) **janakatta desu**
- My shirt stuck to my skin because of the humidity.
すごく蒸し暑いのでシャツが **sugoku mushi-atsui node shirt ga** sticky でした。
(very) (humid) (so) **deshita**
- Next month's schedule is already jam-packed!
来月のスケジュールはもう **raigetsu no schedule wa mō** jam-packed ですよ。
(next month) (already) **desu yo**
- Most of the time, he is barely on time.
あの人はいつも時間に **ano hito wa itsumo jikan ni** barely/almost です。
(that person) (always) (time) **desu**
- I'm exhausted because I came back from a business trip this morning and went straight to work.
けさ出張から帰ってきてそのまま会社で **kesa shutchō kara kaette-kite sonomama** exhausted です。
(this morning)(business trip)(from) (return) (as is) (to work) (so) **desu**

Answers			
1) 11	2) 1	3) 5	4) 9
5) 14	6) 7	7) 4	