

は / が

Indicate subjects by coming after them

Meanings: "is, am, are"

*One thing to know about は is that it's not pronounced "ha" but pronounced "wa"

は emphasizes what comes after it
が emphasizes what comes before it

わたし は こういち です: I am Koichi

わたし が こういち です: I am Koichi

* The first example would be used when you're introducing yourself to someone, the second one would be more like one of those movies where one person has the gun pointed at two identical targets, where they are saying "I am Koichi" and "No, I'm Koichi!" The important (emphasized) part is the *I* portion, so you'd use が.

Examples:

わたし は がくせい です

I am a student (where は is "am" in this sentence)

あの がくせい は ばか です

That student is stupid

あなた は おもしろい です

You are interesting

なに が たべたい?

What is it that you want to eat?

すし が すき です

I like sushi / it is sushi that I like

へ

Emphasizing the Destination

How it's used: This is a lot like the particle "ni" but emphasizes the destination. It's more like "heading towards" than anything else (see examples below)

Examples:

にほん へ いきます

Heading towards Japan

の

The Possessive

Meanings: "Apostrophe S" & "of"

*Makes something possessive, like saying "my monkey," "Jenny's friend," or "Bobby of Sony (i.e. Sony's Bobby)."

Examples:

わたし の なまえ は こういち です

My name is is Koichi

ポッピーさん の いぬ です

It's Bobby's dog

を

The Direct Object

How it's used: All it does is shows what the direct object is. Used when you're directly doing something (the verb) to something (the object).

Examples:

すし (object) を (particle) たべます (verb)

Eat sushi

わたし は Xbox を かいます

I will buy an X-Box

*Not used when you aren't directly involved or responsible (i.e. "the radio is broken" vs. "I broke the radio" - the second one uses を)

で

Shows Context

Meaning: "By way of" / "at"

Can show how and where an action takes place.

Examples:

くるま で いきます

I went by Car

わたし は レストラン で たべた

I ate at the restaurant

も

Also / Too

Meanings: "also" and "too" - it can also emphasize "any"

Examples:

わたしも

Me too / Me also

ポッピーさん も アイキア に 行きます

Bobby also will go to Ikea

なに も たべなかった

I didn't eat anything

に

Movement and Time

How it's used: Used to show what an action is directed to, and also shows destinations, directions, places, and time. Remember, when you move you use your knees (ni)

Examples:

わたし は にほん に いきます

I will go to Japan

3じ に すし を たべます

At 3 o'clock I will eat sushi

*Some Movement Verbs: いきます, きます, かえります, のります, のぼります, はいります

か、と、や、よ、ね

"Other" Particles

か : Question marker - used on the end of a sentence to make a question, like a question mark!

と : Used to list nouns when you are listing *everything* and you know everything on the list

や : Used to list nouns when you aren't listing everything, and maybe there are other things not included.

ね : Sentence ender that gives an "isn't it" feeling used to receive agreement for what you're saying.

よ : Sentence ender that gives a "you know" feeling, often when relaying new information.