長い文をほどく





Who Did What?

Read noun-modifying clauses and recover omitted subjects.

Learn to bracket the words before a noun, identify the main statement, and use context to decide who acts. Know plain verb forms and basic particles first. This is a focused reading workbook, not a complete account of Japanese relative clauses or discourse.

Post-beginner / approximately N4 to early N3

48 practice tasks | Explained answers | English guidance

LEARN. PRACTICE. UNDERSTAND.

Your route through this book

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Before you begin

Post-beginner / approximately N4 to early N3. Levels are approximate teaching guidance, not an official JLPT syllabus or a proficiency guarantee.

Read, try, compare, retry

Read one lesson, study the Japanese examples and English meanings, then complete the matching practice. Write short answers on the lines and longer responses in a notebook. Check the reason as well as the answer. Return to the lesson when you cannot explain your choice.

How to use the answers

Open tasks have model answers, not the only possible wording. Accept natural alternatives that preserve the requested meaning and viewpoint. For each task, check both the answer and your reason. The final practice set is a self-check: try it without notes, then review the categories you missed.

Reading and use

This PDF is designed for zoomed reading and printing. Japanese examples use normal spelling; vocabulary notes support key words. No recorded audio or personal feedback is included. You may keep and use your downloaded files for personal study without a time limit. Printing for your own study is allowed. Sharing, redistribution, and resale are not permitted. © 2026 Junichiro Japanese.

01 / Find the noun being described

Read a modifier and its head noun as one unit.

The description comes first

In ［兄が撮った］写真, the bracketed clause describes 写真. We call 写真 the head noun: the main noun in this whole phrase. Read it as “the photograph my older brother took.” Japanese places this description before the noun; do not stop at 撮った and treat it as the end of the whole sentence.

A phrase can join a larger sentence

［兄が撮った］写真 is a noun phrase, not necessarily a complete statement. Add はきれいです and the whole sentence says the photograph is beautiful. The fact that the brother took it helps identify the photograph. Our square brackets are learning annotations, not punctuation required in normal Japanese.

［兄が撮った］写真

the photograph that my older brother took

［兄が撮った］写真はきれいです。

The photograph my older brother took is beautiful.

［母が焼いた］パンを食べました。

I ate the bread my mother baked. (In a report about my meal.)

DECISION / Find the noun after the describing clause before assigning the whole sentence a subject.

WORDS / 兄（あに） my older brother; 撮る（とる） take a photo; 写真（しゃしん） photograph; 焼く（やく） bake; パン bread

AT A GLANCE

[MODIFYING CLAUSE] + NOUN

[昨日買った] 本 / the book bought yesterday

FIND THE MAIN PREDICATE

[昨日買った本]を読みました。

CHECK WHAT CONTEXT SUPPLIES

Who bought it? Who read it? Do not force one answer.

02 / Locate the main statement

Separate the whole sentence's predicate from a modifier's predicate.

Work from the sentence ending

In ［父が選んだ］映画を妹が見ました, the final predicate is 見ました. That is the main event: the younger sister watched a film. 選んだ belongs inside the description of 映画; it tells us who chose the film.

Use a shorter skeleton

Temporarily replace the long noun phrase with その映画: その映画を妹が見ました. This makes the main relationship easier to see. The skeleton is a reading aid, not a claim that every detail can be deleted from the real message. Restore the modifier afterward so you keep both events.

［父が選んだ］映画を妹が見ました。

My younger sister watched the film my father chose.

その映画を妹が見ました。

My younger sister watched that film.

［弟が作った］箱は小さいです。

The box my younger brother made is small.

DECISION / The main statement can describe a property, not only an action.

WORDS / 父（ちち） my father; 選ぶ（えらぶ） choose; 映画（えいが） film; 妹（いもうと） my younger sister; 箱（はこ） box; 小さい（ちいさい） small

Bracket the description

Review: 1. Answer the prompt and give a short reason.

Q001 In 兄が撮った写真はきれいです, bracket the clause describing 写真. Do not translate until after marking it.

Q002 Identify the head noun: 母が焼いたパン. 焼いた = baked.

Q003 Is 友達が選んだ映画 by itself a noun phrase or a complete polite statement? Identify its head noun.

Q004 Mark modifier and head noun: 弟が作った箱は小さいです。

Answers Q001-Q008

Q001 ［兄が撮った］写真はきれいです。 / The photograph my older brother took is beautiful.
兄が撮った describes 写真. The main statement is about the photograph's beauty.

Q002 パン. The phrase means "the bread my mother baked."
The noun after the describing clause is the head. 母 is the person inside the clause, not the head noun.

Q003 A noun phrase; the head noun is 映画. "The film a friend chose."
The modifier describes a film, but no main predicate has been added.

Q004 Modifier: ［弟が作った］. Head: 箱. "The box my younger brother made is small."
作った is inside the modifier. 小さいです is the main predicate.

Q005 見ました. "My younger sister watched the film my father chose."
選んだ belongs to the film's description; 見ました reports the main event.

Q006 その本を弟が読みました。 / My younger brother read that book.
Removing only the descriptive material keeps the main object and reader intact.

Q007 The sentence is short. Full translation: "The sentence the teacher wrote is short."
先生が書いた identifies the sentence; 短いです is the main property being asserted.

Q008 ［姉が買った］かばんを私は［main: 使います］。 / I use the bag my older sister bought.
The bag is shared across buying and using, but 姉 and 私 have different roles.

This answer excerpt includes Q005-Q008; those tasks are not shown in this sample.

Keep the distinction

Find the final main predicate, then bracket the description before its head noun.

A long noun phrase works as one unit; its following particle marks its main-clause role.

Assign an actor separately to each event. The first が is not automatically the main subject.

Use plain verb forms inside ordinary noun-modifying clauses, even when the main sentence is polite.

Use context for omitted people. A direct answer can refer to the speaker or to a previously named third person.

When context is absent, “not specified” can be the accurate answer. Do not force every omission to mean 私.

Retry Q001-016 for structure and roles, Q017-020 for forms, Q021-028 for omitted subjects, Q029-040 for construction and passages. Retake Q041-048.

Make it yours

Choose three tasks you found difficult. Change the people, objects or setting, then write a new example that follows the same distinction. Revisit it the next day and explain the choice without looking at the answer.