Hello, everyone. I’m Chika. I’d like to introduce how to use the particle **wa** and **ga**. Many students say….

“I always get confused with **wa** and **ga**. It doesn’t make sense!!” What about you? <EYE CONTACT> I know how you feel. It’s a little bit tricky to use these two particles properly.

But when you master it, it will makes your Japanese more natural. So, I’ll try to explain the difference as clearly as possible.

The particle **wa** is the topic marker. It follows the topic of the sentence. The topic is the person or thing that the speaker wants to focus on in the sentence. For example, すみっさんは べんごし です。 In this case, the speaker wants to talk about Mr. Smith. And the listener also knows Mr. Smith. So, this sentence implies “**As for Mr. Smith, he is a lawyer.**"

However, the particle **ga** is the subject marker. It follows a subject of the sentence. When a subject is introduced for the first time, or when the speaker believes the listener doesn’t know the information, **ga** is used. For example, あそこの すみっさんが います。 In this case, the speaker doesn’t focus on anything. Because he believes that the listener doesn’t know about this. He just describes the state. So, this description becomes more general.
Let’s see the situations in **wa** and **ga**.

This is John and this is Hana. Hana is Japanese.

Hana starts to talk about what happened last night.

H: “きのう おとこのひとが うちに きました。”

Why does Hana use **ga**?

In this case, a subject “おとこのひと” is introduced for the first time. John doesn’t know who the man is.

If both of them can’t share the same information, the subject isn’t focused.

The conversation continues.

Hana says

H: “そのひとは けいさつかん でした”

In this case, the subject “そのひと” becomes very important for this conversation. Because the man became the topic.

So, Hana uses **wa**.

…..

By the way, the police man came? It’s no laughing matter!!

What did you do?, Hana!! <LAUGH>

Anyway, back to the story.

In this situation, the function of **a** and **the** in English is similar to that of **ga** and **wa** in Japanese.

Now, you can realise which particle should be used.

Let’s try to fill the gaps. <EYE CONTACT>

There is **a** restaurant on the ground floor.

**The** restaurant is on the ground floor.

Do you have the answer?

The answer to A is **ga**. In this sentence, any restaurant is ok.

But in B, the restaurant is the specific one for the speaker and the listener.

So, the answer is **wa**.

Does that make sense? <EYE CONTACT>

This is the first step towards mastering **wa** and **ga**.

Thank you for your attention.