

わ せ い え い ご

# 和製英語 English... MADE IN JAPAN

Wa-sei Eigo is English “made in Japan,” or foreign loan words that have been borrowed from English but have changed in meaning in the process. Quite often these are a source of miscommunication between Japanese and English-speakers, as the former think they’re saying something the latter understands.

和製英語	What a native speaker would think upon hearing the word	Actual English meaning
テレビ・ゲーム	TV game show	video game
ゲートボール	???	croquet
カンニング <sup>1</sup>	cunning	cheating (copying)
ガソリン・スタンド	gas/petrol station	gas/petrol station
スポーツ・マン	person who likes hunting & fishing	athlete, “jock”
ハーフ <sup>2</sup>	half	person of mixed race
ナイーブ <sup>3</sup>	naïve	(overly) sensitive
コンビニ	convict’s beanie?	convenience store
コンビ	???	good friends (good combination)
ビル	bill?	building
ホチキス <sup>4</sup>	hot kiss	stapler
ニュー・ハーフ <sup>5</sup>	new half	transvestite
ビニール・ハウス <sup>6</sup>	house covered in veneer	greenhouse (with vinyl walls)
くるま (車) の ハンドル	car door handle	steering wheel
シルバー・シート	silver seat?	reserved seating for aged, etc.

<sup>1</sup> Comes from “cunning”

<sup>2</sup> Means “half-Japanese and half-(other race),” yet seems offensive (“Are you ‘half?’”)

<sup>3</sup> Naïve usually has negative connotations in English but means “fragile and delicate” in Japanese

<sup>4</sup> “Hotchkiss” is actually an office equipment brand name

<sup>5</sup> “New half” was coined in a popular Japanese song

<sup>6</sup> “Biniiru” means “vinyl”

パト・カー	???	(police) patrol car
ブランコ	white (Spanish)	playground swing
アルバイト	work (German)	part-time job (for students)
エイ・ヴイ (AV)	audio-visual equipment	adult video
コンセント <sup>7</sup>	consent (permission)	electric outlet/plug
ジェット・コースター	drink holder for an airplane?	roller coaster
ゲレンデ	???	ski slope
ノート	note (memo)	notebook
ミドル <sup>8</sup>	middle, center	middle-aged person

One more oddity: A baseball “strike” is 「ストライク」 in Japanese, but to “strike” against the management is to 「ストライキ」.

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<sup>7</sup> Comes from “concentric plug”

<sup>8</sup> The phrase 「ナイス・ミドル」 thus means “friendly, middle-aged person.”