

IV. Grammar Explanation

1. Causative verbs

How to make causative verbs (See Main Textbook, Lesson 48, p. 188, 練習A1.)

Causative verbs			
		polite form	plain form
I	いきます	いかせます	いかせる
II	たべます	たべさせます	たべさせる
III	します します	こさせます させます	こさせる させる

All causative verbs are Group II verbs; they conjugate into the dictionary form, ない-form, て-form, etc.

e.g. いかせる, いかせ(ない), いかせて

2. Causative verb sentences

There are two types of causative sentences: those which indicate the subject of an action with を, and those which indicate it with に. When the verb is intransitive, as in 1) below, を is used, while when the verb is transitive, as in 2), に is used irrespective of whether the object of the verb is stated or not.

1) N(person)を V(intransitive) causative make/let a person V(intransitive verb)

① 部長は 加藤さんを 大阪へ 出張させます。

The department manager makes Mr. Kato go to Osaka on business.

② わたしは 娘を 自由に 遊ばせました。

I let my daughter play freely.

[Note] When an intransitive verb with “N(place)を” is used in the sentence, the subject of the action is indicated with に, as shown in ③, but without a phrase with を, the subject of the action is indicated with を, as shown in ④.

③ わたしは 子どもに 道の 右側を 歩かせます。

I make my child walk on the right side of the road.

④ わたしは 子どもを 歩かせます。 I make my child walk.

2) N(person)に Nを V(transitive) causative make/let a person V(transitive verb)

⑤ 朝は 忙しいですから、娘に 朝ごはんの 準備を 手伝わせます。

I am busy in the morning, so I make my daughter help prepare breakfast.

⑥ 先生は 生徒に 自由に 意見を 言わせました。

The teacher let her students freely voice their opinions.

3. Usage of a causative

Causative verbs indicate compulsion or permission. A causative sentence is used when the relationship between a senior person and a junior person is very clear (e.g., a parent and child, an elder brother and younger brother, a superior and subordinate, etc.) and the senior

person forces the junior person to do a certain act, or allows him to do something. ① and ⑤ are examples of compulsion and ② and ⑥ are those of permission. But when the speaker tells a person from outside his own group that he will make someone from within his group do something, as seen in the example below, the causative sentence is used regardless of their status.

⑦ 駅に 着いたら、お電話を ください。
係の 者を 迎えに 行かせますから。

…わかりました。

When you arrive at the station, please call me.

I will send a member of my staff to the station to pick you up.

…Thank you.

[Note 1] When a junior person has a senior person do a certain action and the senior versus junior relationship between them is obvious, V て-form いただきます is used. If the two are equal or the relationship is delicate in terms of which one is senior, V て-form もらいます is used instead.

⑧ わたしは 部長に 説明して いただきました。

I had the department manager explain it to me.

⑨ わたしは 友達に 説明して もらいました。

I had my friend explain it to me.

[Note 2] As shown in ⑧ above, a causative verb usually cannot be used to describe a junior person having a senior person do something. However, as can be seen in ⑩, there is an exception when verbs denoting emotion such as あんしんする, しんばいする, がっかりする, よろこぶ (be glad), かなしむ (feel sad), おこる (get angry), etc., are used. The Main Textbook, however, does not cover this usage.

⑩ 子どもの とき、体が 弱くて、母を 心配させました。

When I was a child, my poor health worried my mother.

4. V causative て-form いただけませんか Would you please let me do ...?

In Lesson 26 you learned V て-form いただけませんか, which is used to request someone to do something. V causative て-form いただけませんか, on the other hand, is used to seek permission.

⑪ コピー機の 使い方を 教えて いただけませんか。

Would you please tell me how to use the photocopier?

(L. 26)

⑫ 友達の 結婚式が あるので、早退させて いただけませんか。

As I'm going to attend my friend's wedding, would you please let me leave earlier?

(L. 48)

In ⑪ おしえる will be done by the listener, while in ⑫ そうたいする will be done by the speaker.