

IV. Grammar Explanation

1. Imperative and prohibitive forms

1) How to make the imperative form of verbs (See Main Textbook, Lesson 33, p. 62, 練習 A1.)

Group I : Change the last sound of the ます-form into the sound of the え-line.

Group II : Attach ろ to the ます-form.

Group III : します becomes しろ and きます becomes こい.

[Note] Non-volitional verbs such as わかる, できる, ある, etc., do not have imperative forms.

2) How to make the prohibitive form of verbs (See Main Textbook, Lesson 33, p. 62, 練習 A1.)

With every verb, attach な to the dictionary form.

2. Use of the imperative and prohibitive forms

1) The imperative form is used to force a person to do something and the prohibitive form is used to command a person not to do something. Both the imperative and prohibitive forms have strong coercive connotations, so much so that the use of these forms alone or at the end of an imperative sentence is very limited. In colloquial expressions, the use of either form is, in most cases, limited to male speakers.

2) Both the imperative and prohibitive forms are used alone or at the end of a sentence in the following instances:

(1) By a man senior in status or age to a person junior to him, or by a father to his child.

① 早く寝ろ。

Go to bed immediately.

② 遅れるな。

Don't be late.

(2) Between men who are friends. In this case, the particle よ is often attached at the end of the sentence to soften the tone.

③ あしたうちへ来い[よ]。

Come to my house tomorrow.

④ あまり飲むな[よ]。

Don't drink too much.

(3) When there is not enough time to be very polite; e.g., when giving instructions to a large number of people in a factory or during an emergency, etc. Even in this case, they may be used only by men senior in status or age.

⑤ 逃げろ。

Run.

⑥ エレベーターを使うな。

Don't use the elevator.

(4) When a command is required during training many people or making students take exercise at schools and sports clubs.

⑦ 休め。

Rest.

⑧ 休むな。

Don't rest.

(5) When cheering at sporting events. In this case the expressions below are sometimes used by women as well.

⑨ 頑張れ。

Fight!

⑩ 負けるな。

Don't lose!

(6) When a strong impact or brevity is required, as in a traffic sign or in a slogan.

⑪ 止まれ。

Stop.

⑫ 入るな。

Don't enter.

[Note] V ます-form なさい is another imperative style. It is used by parents to their children or by teachers to their students and is a little gentler than the imperative form. So women use this style instead of the imperative form. Yet it is not used when speaking to a senior.

⑬ 勉強しなさい。

Study.

3. ~と読みます and ~と書いてあります

⑭ あの漢字は何と読むんですか。

How do you read that kanji?

⑮ あそこに「止まれ」と書いてあります。

“Tomare” is written over there.

と in ⑭ and ⑮ indicates the content in the same way as と of ~と いいます (Lesson 21).

4. XはYという意味です “X” means “Y”

This pattern is used to define the meaning of the word represented by “X.” と いいう comes from といいます. The interrogative どういう is used to ask the meaning.

⑯ 「立ち禁止」は入るなと いう意味です。 “Tachiiri-Kinshi” means don't enter.

⑰ このマークは どういう意味ですか。 What does this sign mean?

…洗濯機で洗えると いう意味です。 …It means machine washable.

5. “S”と言っていた plain form

～と いいました is used when quoting a third person's words (Lesson 21), while ～と いって いました is used when conveying a third person's message.

⑱ 田中さんは「あした休みます」と言っていた。

Mr. Tanaka said, “I will take a day off work tomorrow.”

⑲ 田中さんはあした休むと言っていた。

Mr. Tanaka said that he would take a day off work tomorrow.

6. “S”と伝えていただけませんか plain form

These expressions are used when politely asking someone to convey a message.

⑳ ワンさんに「あとで電話をください」と伝えていただけませんか。

Could you please tell Mr. Wang to give me a call later?

㉑ すみませんが、渡辺さんにあしたのパーティーは6時からだと伝えていただけませんか。

Could you please tell Ms. Watanabe that the party tomorrow will be from 6 o'clock?