

ANSWER to question # 16: Answer 3 is correct.

Before discussing the answer to this question, let's start by reviewing the VERBS OF GIVING. They include:

差し上げる (SASHIAGERU) = “someone gives to a person of higher status who is not in my in-group” (showing extra respect). For example, 先生に本を差し上げました (sensei ni hon wo sashiagemashita) = “I gave the teacher a book.” (This could also mean “HE gave the teacher a book” or “YOU gave the teacher a book.”)

あげる (AGERU) = “someone gives to a person of equal or lower status who is not in my in-group” (showing normal respect). For example, 隣の子供さんに本をあげました (tonari no kodomosan ni hon wo agemashita) = “I gave the neighboring child a book.”

やる (YARU) = “I give to a member of my in-group” or “I or someone else give to a person who is inferior to the giver, or to an animal or plant.” やる (yaru) is a rough-sounding word, not normally used by women if the recipient is a human being.

Here are three examples: 子供に本をやりました (kodomo ni hon wo yarimashita) = “I gave my child a book” [a man must be speaking; a woman would use あげる (ageru) in this situation]. 犬にえさをやりました (inu ni esa wo yarimashita) = “I gave feed to the dog.” (This could also mean “YOU gave feed to the dog” or “SHE gave feed to the dog.”) 花に水をやりました (hana ni mizu wo yarimashita) = “I gave water to the flowers.”

くれる (KURERU) = “someone gives to me or to a member of my in-group.” The giver may be someone in your in-group, or someone outside your in-group who has equal or inferior status.

Here are three examples: 子供が本をくれました (kodomo ga hon wo kuremashita) = “my child gave me a book.” 友達が本をくれました (tomodachi ga hon wo kuremashita) = “my friend gave me a book.” 友達が子供に本をくれました (tomodachi ga kodomo ni hon wo kuremashita) = “my friend gave my child a book.”

くださる (KUDASARU) = “someone of greater age or status gives to me or to a member of my in-group.” Here are two examples: 先生が本をくださいました (sensei ga hon wo kudasaimashita) = “the teacher gave me a book.” 先生が子供に本をくださいました (sensei ga kodomo ni hon wo kudasaimashita) = “the teacher gave my child a book.”

Whew! With that out of the way, we can return to our question. In Japanese, when actions are done for the benefit of someone, you MUST express this benefit by using verbs of giving or verbs of receiving.

Answer # 1 fails to use a verb of giving or a verb of receiving, and it sounds very awkward in Japanese, even though it may sound OK to our English-thinking brains. Therefore, ANSWER # 1 IS INCORRECT.

Answer # 2 uses a verb of giving, but it uses あげる (ageru), which you should never use when the recipient is yourself or a member of your in-group. Therefore, ANSWER # 2 IS INCORRECT.

Answer # 3 uses くれる (kureru) which is the correct verb to use when someone gives to you or a member of your in-group. Therefore, ANSWER # 3 IS CORRECT.

Answer # 4 uses くださる (kudasaru) which would be fine if someone of greater age or status had given you the book. However, since it was just a friend, くださる (kudasaru) is TOO FORMAL. Therefore, ANSWER # 4 IS INCORRECT.

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Question # 16: “He did it for me”

You want to say, “My friend bought a book for me.”

Which of the following 4 Japanese sentences is correct?

1. 友達が私に本を買いました (tomodachi ga watashi ni hon wo kaimashita).
2. 友達が私に本を買ってあげました (tomodachi ga watashi ni hon wo katte agemashita).
3. 友達が私に本を買ってくれました (tomodachi ga watashi ni hon wo katte kuremashita).
4. 友達が私に本を買ってくださいました (tomodachi ga watashi ni hon wo katte kudasaimashita).