

ANSWER to question # 22: Answers 1, 2 & 3 are correct.

The term のに (NONI) has at least FOUR DIFFERENT MEANINGS in Japanese. The first three meanings listed below are related to one other, but the fourth meaning is completely different from the other three.

MEANING # 1. のに (noni) can mean “EVEN THOUGH” or “in spite of the fact that.” For example, このビールは高いのにおいしくない (kono biiru wa takai noni, oishikunai) = “even though this beer is expensive, it isn’t delicious.”

MEANING # 2. のに (noni) can mean “TOO BAD.” For example, さっきまで晴れそうだったのに (sakki made, hare soo datta noni) = “until a while ago, it looked like it would be sunny, too bad.”

MEANING # 3. のに (noni) can mean “IF ONLY.” For example, タクシーが来ればいいのに (takushii ga kureba ii noni) = “if a taxi comes, good, if only.”

Notice that these first three meanings are all somewhat EMOTIONAL and suggest a sense of REGRET that things are different from expected.

The five suggested answers to this Question all use のに (noni) in the sense of “if only.” In addition, each of the first four answers uses one of the FOUR CONDITIONAL FORMS that were discussed in Answer 19. These are the ば (BA), たら (TARA), と (TO) and なら (NARA) forms.

ANSWER 1 is CORRECT. It uses ば (ba) to mean “if.” 雨が降らなければいいのに (ame ga furanakereba ii noni) = “if it doesn’t rain, it’s good, if only.”

ANSWER 2 is also CORRECT. It uses たら (tara) to mean “if.” 雨が降らなかつたらいいのに (ame ga furanakattara ii noni) = “if it doesn’t rain, it’s good, if only.”

ANSWER 3 is also CORRECT. It uses と (to) to mean “if.” 雨が降らないといいのに (ame ga furanai to ii noni) = “if it doesn’t rain, it’s good, if only.”

ANSWER 4 is NOT CORRECT. It uses なら (nara) to mean “if.” However, 雨が降らないなら (ame ga furanai nara) = “in case it will not rain” is NOT an appropriate way to use なら (nara). According to Makino and Tsutsui in “A Dictionary of Japanese Grammar,” this construction is wrong because it is nonsensical to suppose that it will not rain tomorrow, since no one can know. Or, from another point of view, a Japanese friend tells me that this sentence

seems wrong to him because it makes it seem as though humans could control the rain.

Using the same logic, you may NOT say 地震があるなら家を出てください (jishin ga aru nara, ie o dete kudasai) = “in case if there is an earthquake, please leave the house.”

However, it IS OK to say 寒いならストーブをつけてください (samui nara sutoobu o tsukete kudasai) = “in case if it is cold, please turn on the heater.” Although this might seem to be a situation that is similar to the ones involving rain and earthquakes, it is different, in the sense that the sensation of cold is defined by individual humans, and the temperature of a room can be controlled by humans.

It is ALSO OK to say 雨が降らなかったならよかったのに (ame ga furanakatta nara yokatta noni) = “in case if it didn’t rain, it was good, if only” or “I wish it hadn’t rained.” This is true since, once an uncontrollable event has already occurred, one is free to use なら (nara) to talk about it hypothetically.

ANSWER 5 is also NOT CORRECT. 雨が降らなくていい (ame ga furanakute ii) means “not raining, it’s good” or “it will be good if it doesn’t rain,” and the addition of のに (noni) = “too bad” makes no sense in this context.

MEANING 4. To wrap up our discussion of のに (noni), it has ONE MORE MEANING that is completely different from the three meanings mentioned above. It can mean “FOR THE PURPOSE OF” or “in order to do.” This is similar to the meaning of ために (tame ni). For example, ご飯を作るのに水と米がいます (gohan o tsukuru noni, mizu to kome ga irimasu) = “for the purpose of making cooked rice, water and uncooked rice are needed.”

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Question 22. “Noni”

You want to say, “I wish it wouldn’t rain” or “if only it wouldn’t rain.”

Which of the following 5 Japanese sentences is correct?

1. 雨が降らなければいいのに (ame ga furanakereba ii noni).
2. 雨が降らなかったらいいのに (ame ga furanakattara ii noni).
3. 雨が降らないといいのに (ame ga furanai to ii noni).

4. 雨が降らないならいいのに (ame ga furanai nara ii noni).

5. 雨が降らなくていいのに (ame ga furanakute ii noni).