

Answer to question # 25: Answer 3 is correct.

すぎる (SUGIRU) is an auxiliary verb. It can be combined with the STEM (the pre-masu form) of another verb to mean that something is done excessively. For example, 食べすぎます (tabesugimasu) = “eat too much.”

すぎる (sugiru) can also be combined with the ROOT of an I ADJECTIVE (the part that remains after you remove the final “i”) to mean “too much.” For example, 早い (hayai) = fast. Its root is はや (haya). 早すぎる (hayasugiru) = “go too fast.”

Note that, if you want to say that something is “TOO GOOD,” you say よすぎる (YOSUGIRU), NOT いすぎる (isugiru). For example, 家内は私によすぎる (kanai wa watashi ni yosugiru) = “my wife is too good for me.”

When you use すぎる (sugiru) after ない (NAI), change ない (nai) to なさ (NASA). The combination of なさ (nasa) and すぎる (sugiru) means “not enough.” For example, 力がなさすぎる (chikara ga nasa sugiru) = “there isn’t enough power.” 野菜を食べなさすぎる (yasai wo tabenasa sugiru) = “he eats too few vegetables.”

すぎる (sugiru) can also be combined with NA ADJECTIVES to mean “too much.” For example, 静かすぎる (shizuka sugiru) = “too quiet.”

With this in mind, how would you say “you eat too fast”?

Answer 1, 早すぎる食べます (hayasugiru tabemasu), might seem like a reasonable choice until you realize that it contains two verbs right next to each other. Literally, it means something like “you go too fast you eat.” Therefore, ANSWER # 1 is INCORRECT.

Sometimes you can make a NOUN from a Japanese verb STEM. For example, 帰ります (kaerimasu) = “to return” and 帰り (kaeri) = “the return.” You can also make a noun from the stem of 早すぎる (hayasugiru) = “go too fast.” 早すぎ (hayasugi) means “too fast,” and you can use it to say things like 早すぎです (hayasugi desu) = “it’s too fast.”

However, there is no way to combine 早すぎ (hayasugi) with 食べる (taberu) to say “you eat too fast.” Therefore, ANSWER # 2 is also INCORRECT.

That leaves Answer 3, 早く食べすぎます (hayaku tabesugimasu). To our English-thinking brains, this sentence may seem to mean “quickly you eat too much,” but to a Japanese person it means “you eat too fast.” Therefore, ANSWER # 3 is CORRECT.

By the way, another possible answer might be 早すぎて食べます (hayasugite tabemasu). This seems plausible since the te or de form of a verb can be used as an adverb. For example, the de form of 急ぐ (isogu) = “I hurry” is 急いで (isoide), and this can be used to make a sentence like 急いで行きます (isoide ikimasu) = “I go hurriedly.” Unfortunately, 早すぎて食べます (hayasugite tabemasu) is also INCORRECT.

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Question 25. “Sugiru”

You have only eaten a few bites, but your friend has already finished his meal. You want to say, “You eat too fast.”

Which of the following 3 Japanese sentences is correct?

1. 早すぎる食べます (hayasugiru tabemasu).
2. 早すぎに食べます (hayasugi ni tabemasu).
3. 早く食べすぎます (hayaku tabesugimasu).

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The following exchange occurred on Facebook after Answer 25 was published:

Question: well, already knew that, but have a small question which is not directly linked to the topic but to the content of your answer.

As you mentioned the part with なさ。 is it the same thing you as when you want to say e.g. the following:

これは出来そう。 ("that seems possible")

これは出来なさそう。 ("that doesn't seem to be possible")

It is OK to use such forms isn't it?

Answer:

Your sentence reads, *これは出来なさそう (kore wa dekinasa sou) = "as for this, it appears to be not possible."* When we use *そう (SOU)* in the sense "appears to be," and we want to say that it appears that something is NOT, using *ない (nai) = "does not exist,"* we must change *ない (nai)* to *なさ (nasa)*.

A somewhat similar example using *そう (sou)* is *これはよさそうです (kore wa yosa sou desu) = "as for this, it appears to be good."* When we use *そう (sou)* in the sense "appears to be," and we want to say that something appears to be GOOD, we must change the term *いい (ii) = "good"* to *よさ (yosa)*.

As discussed in Answer 25, we must ALSO change *ない (nai)* to *なさ (NASA)* when we use *ない (nai)* before *すぎる (SUGIRU) = "too much."* To repeat an example used above, *野菜を食べなさすぎる (yasai wo tabenasa sugiru) = "he eats too few vegetables."*

In contrast, again as discussed in Answer 25, when we want to say that something is "too good," we say *よすぎる (yosugiru)*, NOT *いすぎる (isugiru)* and NOT *よさすぎる (yosasugiru)*. Here is another example used above: *家内は私によすぎる (kanai wa watashi ni yosugiru) = "my wife is too good for me."*

In summary, perhaps we can try to remember these guidelines:

1) *ない (nai) = "does not exist"* is converted to *なさ (NASA)* before both *そう (SOU)* [meaning "appears to be"] AND *すぎる (SUGIRU)*.

2) *いい (ii) = "good"* is converted to *よさ (YOSA)* before *そう (SOU)*, but it is converted to *よ (YO)* before *すぎる (SUGIRU)*.

[In addition, of course, *いい (ii)* is converted to *よ (yo)* when forming the adverb *よく (yoku) = "well" or "frequently,"* and when forming the negative form *よくない (yokunai) = よくありません (yoku arimasen) = "not good."*]

Reply: and thanks again for making things clear! Great job