

Answer to Question # 29: Answers 2, 3 & 4 are correct.

Like Questions 27 and 28, this question focuses on four ways to say “seems to be”: そう (SOU), よう (YOU), らしい (RASHII) and みたい (MITAI).

In the Answer to Question 28, we said that when ない (NAI) precedes そう (sou) [meaning “appears to be”], ない (nai) must be converted to なさ (NASA).

Similarly, when いい (II) = よい (YOI) = “good” precedes そう (sou) [meaning “appears to be”], いい (ii) or よい (yoi) must be converted to よさ (YOSA).

In addition, when an I ADJECTIVE precedes そう (sou) [meaning “appears to be”], the i adjective must be converted to its STEM FORM by removing the final i.

The first answer, その車は高いそうです (sono kuruma wa takai sou desu), fails to convert 高い (takai) to 高 (taka). This answer actually means, “REPORTEDLY, that car is expensive.”

Therefore, ANSWER # 1 is INCORRECT.

Answer # 1 SHOULD have read その車は高そうです (sono kuruma wa takasou desu).

ANSWERS # 2, # 3 and # 4 are all CORRECT. However, you should be aware of some DIFFERENCES IN NUANCE between these answers.

その車は高そうです (sono kuruma wa takasou desu), which is what Answer 1 SHOULD have been, and Answer 4, その車は高いみたいです (sono kuruma wa takai mitai desu), both mean “that car LOOKS expensive.” They are judgments based on appearance only.

On the other hand, Answer 2, その車は高いようです (sono kuruma wa takai you desu), and Answer 3, その車は高いらしいです (sono kuruma wa takai rashii desu), both mean “ACCORDING TO WHAT I’VE HEARD OR READ, that car seems expensive.” In other words, both are based on HEARSAY rather than just direct experience. Compared to らしい (rashii), よう (YOU) suggests a GREATER DEGREE OF CERTAINTY and may be based on the speaker’s direct experience, in addition to relatively reliable information and knowledge.

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Question 29. “Seems to be Expensive”

You want to say, “That car seems to be expensive.”

Which of the following 4 Japanese sentences is correct?

1. その車は高いそうです (sono kuruma wa takai sou desu).
2. その車は高いようです (sono kuruma wa takai you desu).
3. その車は高いらしいです (sono kuruma wa takai rashii desu).
4. その車は高いみたいです (sono kuruma wa takai mitai desu).