

Answer to Question # 30: Answers 2 & 3 are correct.

Once again, this question is about four different expressions that mean “seems to be” in Japanese. By now, you probably know that those four expressions are そう (SOU), よう (YOU), らしい (RASHII) and みたい (MITAI).

In this question, we are combining those expressions with a VERB, 降る (furu) = “precipitate,” rather than with a noun or with an adjective as in previous questions.

When used with a verb, そう (sou) [meaning “seems to be”] must be combined with a verb STEM, meaning the pre-masu form. In the case of 降る (furu) = 降ります (furimasu) = “precipitate,” the stem is 降り (furi).

By contrast, よう (you), らしい (rashii) and みたい (mitai) are combined with ordinary PLAIN SPEECH VERBS, such as 降る (furu) = “precipitate.”

With this in mind, we can say 雨が降りそうです (ame ga furi sou desu) = 雨が降るようです (ame ga furu you desu) = 雨が降るらしいです (ame ga furu rashii desu) = 雨が降るみたいです (ame ga furu mitai desu) = “it appears that it will rain.”

In this question, however, we are dealing with the NEGATIONS of these sentences. How do we say that it DOESN'T seem that something will happen?

It turns out that we have TWO different CHOICES for negating the combination of そう (SOU) [meaning “seems to be”] and a verb stem. We may add either そうもない (sou mo nai) or そうにない (sou ni nai) to the stem.

Therefore, ANSWER # 2 and ANSWER # 3 are CORRECT.

We can negate the idea that an I ADJECTIVE seems to be true by following the adjective stem with そうでない (sou dewa nai) or そうじゃない (sou ja nai). For example, we can say おもしろそうじゃない (omoshirosou ja nai) = “it doesn't appear to be interesting.” However, we CANNOT use そうでない (sou dewa nai) or そうじゃない (sou ja nai) to negate the idea that a VERB seems to be true.

Therefore, ANSWER # 1 is INCORRECT.

Unfortunately, the Japanese language does not allow us to directly negate よう (you), らしい (rashii) or みたい (mitai).

Therefore, ANSWER # 4, ANSWER # 5 and ANSWER # 6 are all INCORRECT.

There IS a way to say that “it doesn’t seem that it will rain,” using よう (you), らしい (rashii) and みたい (mitai), but you have to change the sentence slightly and say “it seems that it will not rain.” So you may say 雨は降らないようだ (ame wa furanai you da) = 雨は降らないらしい (ame wa furanai rashii) = 雨は降らないみたいだ (ame wa furanai mitai da) = “it seems that it will not rain.”

By the way, you may have noticed that the affirmative “it will rain” sentences in this answer employ the particle が (ga) after 雨 (ame) = “rain,” while the negative sentences employ the particle は (wa) instead. What’s the reason for this difference?

When we say “rain will fall,” we are referring to a PARTICULAR rain, and therefore we use が (ga). On the other hand, when we say “rain will NOT fall,” we are referring to MANY different rains, and therefore we use は (wa).

In the same way, we say 質問があります (shitsumon ga arimasu) = “there’s a question,” but we tend to say 質問はありません (shitsumon wa arimasen) = “there aren’t any questions.”

This doesn’t mean that we should ALWAYS use は (wa) in negative sentences. There are lots of negative sentences where が (ga) may be more appropriate. For example, お金がない (okane ga nai) = “there is no money” may be used when one is introducing the topic of money, while お金はない (okane wa nai) = “there is no money” may be used in other situations, e.g., when we want to stress that, while we have no money, we have other things.

To learn more about when to use は (wa) and が (ga), please download the “Wa vs. Ga” document at <http://www.japaneseaudiolessons.com/download-japanese-lessons/>.

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Question 30. “Doesn’t Seem that It Will Happen”

You want to say, “It doesn’t seem that it will rain.”

Which of the following 6 Japanese sentences are correct?

1. 雨は降りそうじゃない (ame wa furi sou ja nai).
2. 雨は降りそうもない (ame wa furi sou mo nai).
3. 雨は降りそうにない (ame wa furi sou ni nai).
4. 雨は降るようじゃない (ame wa furu you ja nai).
5. 雨は降るらしいじゃない (ame wa furu rashii ja nai).
6. 雨は降降るみたいじゃない (ame wa furu mitai ja nai).