

Answer to Question # 31: Answer 1 is correct.

Once again (for the LAST time, I promise), this question is about four different expressions that mean “seems to be” in Japanese. As you know, those four expressions are そう (SOU), よう (YOU), らしい (RASHII) and みたい (MITAI).

The purpose of this question is to clarify when and how these four expressions may be converted into NA ADJECTIVES.

Let’s start by discussing そう (SOU). When we want to say that an I ADJECTIVE seems to be, we remove the final “i” from the adjective and add そう (sou). For example, the i adjective 高い (takai) means “expensive.” If we remove the final “i” and add そう (sou), we get 高そう (takasou) = “it seems to be expensive.”

In Answer 30, we mentioned that そう (sou) (meaning “seems to be”) can also be used after a VERB STEM, meaning the pre-masu form of a verb. In the case of 降る (furu) = 降ります (furimasu) = “precipitate,” the stem is 降り (furi), and we can combine a stem like this with そう (sou) to say things like 雨が降りそうです (ame ga furi sou desu) = “it appears that it will rain.”

In addition, we may use そう (sou) AFTER NA ADJECTIVES. For example, 賑やかそうです (nigiyaka sou desu) = “it appears to be lively.”

[However, as discussed in Answer 27, we may NOT use そう (sou) (meaning “seems to be”) after NOUNS.]

To convert an expression using そう (sou) (meaning “seems to be”) to a NA ADJECTIVE, just add な (na) to the expression. For example, 高そうな車 (takasou na kuruma) = “an expensive-looking car.” 雨が降りそうな空 (ame ga furisou na sora) = “a sky that looks like it will rain.” 賑やかそうな店 (nigiyaka sou na mise) = “a seemingly lively store.”

Therefore, ANSWER # 1 is CORRECT.

Next, let’s consider よう (YOU) = “seems to be.” よう (you) may be used after I ADJECTIVES and plain speech VERBS. For example, おいしいようです (oishii you desu) = “it appears to be delicious.” 食べるようです (taberu you desu) = “it appears that she will eat.”

In addition, よう (you) may be used after NOUNS and NA ADJECTIVES. After nouns, add の よう (no you). For example, 車のようです (kuruma no you desu) = “it seems to be a car.” After na adjectives, add なよう (na you). For example, 賑やかなようです (nigiyaka na you desu) = “it seems to be lively.”

We can create a NA ADJECTIVE from an expression containing よう (you), but ONLY when よう (you) follows a NOUN, NOT when it follows an adjective or a verb. So you may say something like 田中さんのような人 (tanakasan no you na hito) = “a person who looks like Tanaka” or 車のような形 (kuruma no you na katachi) = “a shape that looks like a car.” However, you may NOT say things like 高いような車 (takai you na kuruma), 賑やかなような店 (nigiyaka na you na mise), or 雨が降るような空 (ame ga furu you na sora).

Therefore, ANSWER # 2 is INCORRECT.

Next, let's consider らしい (RASHII) = “seems to be.” You may use らしい (rashii) after verbs, i adjectives, na adjectives, and nouns. For example, the following 4 sentences are correct: 雨が降るらしい (ame ga furu rashii) = “it seems that it will rain.” 高いらしい (takai rashii) = “it seems expensive.” 賑やからしい (nigiyaka rashii) = “it seems lively.” 車らしい (kuruma rashii) = “it seems to be a car.” [です (desu) is optional in all 4 of these sentences.]

However, you may NOT use らしい (rashii) to make a NA ADJECTIVE.

Therefore, ANSWER # 3 is INCORRECT.

らしい (RASHII) is actually an i adjective, and it can be used as an ADJECTIVE after some NOUNS REPRESENTING PEOPLE. For example, 先生らしい人 (sensei rashii hito) = “a person who seems like a teacher.” Here's another example: 男らしい女の人 (otoko rashii onna no hito) = “a woman who seems like a man.”

However, you should not use らしい (rashii) as an adjective after nouns that don't represent people. For example, 車らしい形 (kuruma rashii katachi) SOUNDS AWKWARD. You may not use らしい (rashii) as an adjective after verbs. For example, 雨がふるらしい空 (ame ga furu rashii sora) is NOT OK. You may not use らしい (rashii) as an adjective after other adjectives. For example, 高いらしい車 (takai rashii kuruma) and 賑やからしい店 (nigiyaka rashii mise) are NOT OK.

Finally, let's consider **みたい (MITAI)** = "seems to be." **みたい (mitai)** can be used after verbs, nouns, i adjectives and na adjectives. For example, the following 4 sentences are correct: 雨が降るみたい (ame ga furu mitai) = "it seems that it will rain." 車みたい (kuruma mitai) = "it seems to be a car." 高いみたい (takai mitai) = "it seems to be expensive." 賑やかみたい (nigiyaka mitai) = "it seems to be lively." [です (desu) is optional in all 4 of these sentences.]

Like **よう (you)**, **みたい (mitai)** can sometimes be used to form a NA ADJECTIVE but ONLY AFTER NOUNS, not after adjectives or verbs. So you may say things like 田中さんみたいな人 (tanakasan mitai na hito) = "a person who looks like Tanaka" or 車みたいな形 (kuruma mitai na katachi) = "a shape that looks like a car."

However, you may NOT use **みたい (mitai)** after adjectives or verbs to say things like 高いみたいな車 (takai mitai na kuruma), 静かみたいな公園 (shizuka mitai na kooen), or 雨が降るみたいな空 (ame ga furu mitai na sora).

Therefore, ANSWER # 4 is INCORRECT.

To sum up, you may not combine **そう (SOU)** with nouns. However, you MAY combine **そう (sou)** with verb stems, adjective roots and na adjectives, and you may add **な (na)** to any of those combinations to form a na adjective. Therefore, Answer 1 is correct.

You may combine **よう (YOU)** with i adjectives and verbs. Use **のよう (no you)** after nouns. Use **なよう (na you)** after na adjectives. To CREATE a NA ADJECTIVE, you may add **のよう な (no you na)** to a NOUN, but not to another adjective or to a verb. Therefore, Answer 2 is incorrect.

You may combine **らしい (RASHII)** with verbs, nouns, i adjectives and na adjectives. You may NOT use **らしい (rashii)** to create na adjectives. However, **らしい (rashii)** may be used as an i adjective after nouns representing people, like 先生 (sensei) = "teacher." It follows that Answer 3 is incorrect.

You may combine **みたい (MITAI)** with verbs, nouns, i adjectives and na adjectives. To CREATE a NA ADJECTIVE, you may add **みたいな (mitai na)** to a NOUN, but not to another adjective or to a verb. Therefore, Answer 4 is incorrect.

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Question 31. "Using 'Seeming' as an Adjective"

You want to say, “It’s an expensive-seeming car.”

Which of the following 4 Japanese sentences is correct?

1. 高そうな車だ (takasou na kuruma da).
2. 高いような車だ (takai you na kuruma da).
3. 高いらしいな車だ (takai rashii na kuruma da).
4. 高いみたいな車だ (takai mitai na kuruma da).