

Answer to question # 39.

Answers 1, 2 and 3 are correct.

いらっしゃる (IRASSHARU) [or いらっしゃいます (IRASSHAIMASU)] is a very polite verb meaning “to exist,” “to come” or “to go.” You can never use this verb when referring to yourself, but you will often use it to refer to other people in polite situations. For example, 先生がいらっしゃいます (sensei ga irasshaimasu) can mean either “the teacher is here,” “the teacher will come,” or “the teacher will go.”

When you are greeting your friend at your apartment, the phrase よくいらっしゃいました (yoku irasshaimashita) means “you well came honorably” or “it’s good that you came.” This is an excellent way to say “Welcome” in this situation.

Therefore, ANSWER # 1 is CORRECT.

いらっしゃい (IRASSHAI) is the informal IMPERATIVE form of the verb いらっしゃる (irassharu). Another way to form the informal imperative form of いらっしゃる (irassharu) is to say いらっしゃってください (irasshate kudasai), meaning “please exist,” “please come,” or “please go.” Sometimes いらっしゃって (irasshate) is shortened to いらして (irashite), as in どうぞいらしてください (douzo irashite kudasai) = “go ahead, please come.” In this context, いらっしゃい (irasshai) means something like “Be welcome!”

By the way, ください (kudasai), which we usually translate as “please,” is also an informal imperative form, of the verb くださる (kudasaru), meaning “to honorably give to me or a member of my in-group.”

Imperative verb forms may sound rude to English-speaking people. For example, the informal imperative form of 行く (iku) = “to go” is 行け (ike), meaning “go!” Certainly it would be rude to say 行け (ike) to a person who is outside of your in-group. However, the imperative forms of very polite verbs like いらっしゃる (irassharu) and くださる (kudasaru) do not sound rude to Japanese people. On the contrary, they are thought to be extremely polite.

Therefore, ANSWER # 2 is also CORRECT.

In addition to its informal imperative form used in Answer 2, いらっしゃる (irassharu) = “to exist, come or go” has a FORMAL imperative form: いらっしゃいませ (IRASSHAIMASE) = “welcome.” This is the phrase that you will frequently hear when you enter a store or restaurant in Japan.

ませ (mase) is a very polite suffix that can be attached to certain already-polite phrases to make them even more polite. For example, if you wanted to invite someone to sit in a chair, you could say おかけください (okake kudasai) = “please honorably sit.” To make this even more polite, you could say おかけくださいませ (okake kudasaimase) = “please honorably sit.”

With this in mind, ANSWER # 3 is also CORRECT, but it is too formal to use when addressing a friend.

Unfortunately, the fourth choice, よくいらっしやい (yoku irasshai), is a beginner’s blunder, combining aspects of Answer 1 and Answer 2 in a way that is completely unacceptable to a Japanese person.

Therefore, ANSWER # 4 is INCORRECT.

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Question 39. “Welcome”

A friend comes to your apartment.

You want to say “Welcome.” In this situation, which of the following four phrases is correct?

1. よくいらっしやいました (yoku irasshaimashita).
2. いらっしやい (irasshai).
3. いらっしやいませ (irasshaimase).
4. よくいらっしやい (yoku irasshai).