二つの「そうです」

そう

そう

Looks Like or They Say?

Track the evidence before you build the ending.

Learn the core difference between an impression or prediction based on current evidence and a report of information from another source. Compare verb and adjective forms, keep source phrases meaningful, and stop rejecting おいしいそうです without context. This is a focused guide, not a complete account of らしい・ようだ・みたい or every negative and past variant.

Post-beginner to early intermediate / approximately N4-N3

32 practice tasks | Explained answers | English guidance

LEARN. PRACTICE. UNDERSTAND.

Your route through this book

Learn the core difference between an impression or prediction based on current evidence and a report of information from another source. Compare verb and adjective forms, keep source phrases meaningful, and stop rejecting おいしいそうです without context. This is a focused guide, not a complete account of らしい・ようだ・みたい or every negative and past variant.

Before you begin

Post-beginner to early intermediate / approximately N4-N3. Levels are approximate teaching guidance, not an official JLPT syllabus or a proficiency guarantee.

Read, try, compare, retry

Read one lesson, study the Japanese examples and English meanings, then complete the matching practice. Write short answers on the lines and longer responses in a notebook. Check the reason as well as the answer. Return to the lesson when you cannot explain your choice.

How to use the answers

Open tasks have model answers, not the only possible wording. Accept natural alternatives that preserve the requested meaning and viewpoint. For each task, check both the answer and your reason. The final practice set is a self-check: try it without notes, then review the categories you missed.

Reading and use

This PDF is designed for zoomed reading and printing. Japanese examples use normal spelling; vocabulary notes support key words. No recorded audio or personal feedback is included. You may keep and use your downloaded files for personal study without a time limit. Printing for your own study is allowed. Sharing, redistribution, and resale are not permitted. © 2026 Junichiro Japanese.

Two jobs behind one sound

Decide whether you are judging or reporting.

Your assessment of evidence

With appearance/prediction そうです, the speaker presents an impression or a likely development based on evidence. A wobbling pile of boxes can prompt a prediction that they will fall. You are not claiming that somebody has already told you they will fall.

Information attributed to a source

With reported-information そうです, the speaker relays a proposition learned from someone or from a source such as a notice, forecast or article. 'Hearsay' is a traditional label, but the source need not be an oral conversation or a rumor.

Same world, different route

A forecast and dark clouds can both point toward rain. The two constructions distinguish how the speaker presents the information, not two numerical confidence levels. Start by asking 'Am I making this assessment, or passing on a report?'

箱が落ちそうです。

The boxes look as though they are about to fall.

店員の話では、新しい箱が明日届くそうです。

The shop assistant says the new boxes will arrive tomorrow.

天気予報によると、午後は雨が降るそうです。

According to the forecast, it will rain in the afternoon.

DECISION / Label the route first: assessment from evidence, or attributed report. Then build the form.

WORDS / 箱（はこ） box; 落ちる（おちる） fall; 届く（とどく） arrive; 店員（てんいん） shop assistant; 天気予報（てんきよほう） weather forecast

AT A GLANCE

JUDGMENT FROM SIGNS

おいしそうです。 / It looks delicious.

INFORMATION RECEIVED

おいしいそうです。 / I hear it is delicious.

Verbs: stem versus plain form

Build 降りそう and 降るそう for different intentions.

Prediction uses the ます stem

For the basic verb prediction pattern, remove ます from the ます form and add そうです. 降ります becomes 降りそうです; 壊れます becomes 壊れそうです. The pattern presents a likely development, sometimes one that seems imminent.

A report keeps the plain proposition

For a report, use the plain form before そうです: 降るそうです, 壊れたそうです. Do not put a polite verb such as 降ります directly before the reported-information ending.

A prediction is not an intention

If you are announcing a deliberate plan, use the appropriate plan or intention expression. 'I will study tonight' is not automatically 勉強しそうです. Prediction そう can describe what seems likely; it is not a general future-tense marker.

雨が降りそうです。

It looks likely to rain.

予報では、明日は雨が降るそうです。

The forecast says it will rain tomorrow.

管理人の話では、昨日ドアが壊れたそうです。

The caretaker says the door broke yesterday.

DECISION / Do not choose a form from English future tense alone. First identify prediction versus reported content.

WORDS / 降る（ふる） fall (rain/snow); 壊れる（こわれる） break; 管理人（かんりにん） caretaker; 昨日（きのう） yesterday

Identify the route

Review: 01-02. Answer the prompt and give a short reason.

Q001 You see a loose book sliding toward the edge of a shelf. You predict it will fall. Choose 落ちそうです or 落ちるそうです, and name the information route.

Q002 A delivery notice says the parcel will arrive tomorrow. Report it using 届く（とどく） and そうです. Begin お知らせによると、荷物は明日. 荷物（にもつ） = parcel.

Q003 Can reported-information そうです be used for something you read rather than heard aloud? Give one possible source in English.

Q004 Does 降りそうです always express a lower fixed percentage of certainty than 降るそうです? Explain.

Answers Q001-Q008

Q001 落ちそうです. It is your prediction from current evidence.

The task does not give a source reporting that it will fall. 落ちます supplies the stem 落ち for the prediction form.

Q002 お知らせによると、荷物は明日届くそうです。

You are passing on the notice's proposition. The plain non-past verb 届く remains before そうです.

Q003 Yes. A written notice, newspaper article or forecast can provide the reported information.

The construction is about relaying sourced content, not the physical act of hearing sound.

Q004 No. They distinguish a prediction from an attributed report, not fixed numerical confidence levels.

Either route can involve stronger or weaker evidence. A grammar form does not assign an exact probability.

Q005 壊れそうです。

Remove ます and attach そうです to 壊れ. The sentence presents a likely development from current evidence.

Q006 天気予報によると、明日は雪が降るそうです。

Reported-information そうです takes the plain proposition, not a polite ます form.

Q007 管理人の話では、昨日、窓が壊れたそうです。

The past content 壊れた stays before そうです. It is not a present prediction that the window is about to break.

Q008 No. Prediction そうです presents what seems likely, not simply a deliberate plan or general future tense.

Use a suitable intention expression such as 今夜は勉強するつもりです for the stated purpose. 今夜（こんや） means tonight.

This answer excerpt includes Q005-Q008; those tasks are not shown in this sample.

Keep the distinction

Identify the route: your assessment from evidence, or a proposition attributed to a source.

Appearance/prediction basics: Vます stem + そう; i-adjective minus final い + そう; na-adjective stem + そう.

Special appearance forms: いい/よい → よさそう; ない → なさそう.

Report basics: plain proposition + そうです; retain だ for non-past affirmative nouns and na-adjectives.

Put negative or past reported content before そうです.

Written sources can provide reports; sounds can provide evidence for your own assessment.

Never assign exact confidence percentages to the two constructions or reject おいしいそう without context.

Make it yours

Choose three tasks you found difficult. Change the people, objects or setting, then write a new example that follows the same distinction. Revisit it the next day and explain the choice without looking at the answer.