ている・てある・ておく



State, Result, Preparation

Describe what is there, what was arranged, and what you will do ahead

A focused workbook for learners who know the te-form and basic transitive/intransitive pairs. Learn to separate an observed state, an intentional result, and an action done in preparation. This is not a complete catalogue of ている or verb pairs.

Late beginner / approximately N4

32 practice tasks | Explained answers | English guidance

LEARN. PRACTICE. UNDERSTAND.

Your route through this book

A focused workbook for learners who know the te-form and basic transitive/intransitive pairs. Learn to separate an observed state, an intentional result, and an action done in preparation. This is not a complete catalogue of ている or verb pairs.

Before you begin

Late beginner / approximately N4. 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.

01 Three questions, one room

Identify the message before choosing an ending.

Look at your purpose

An open cupboard can be described in several ways. Are you simply reporting its state? Are you presenting that state as the result of a deliberate arrangement? Or are you deciding what to do in advance? The room alone does not choose your grammar.

A small decision path

State now: use an appropriate state expression, often an intransitive verb + ている. Deliberately arranged result: consider a transitive verb + てある. Preparatory action: use a suitable action verb + ておく. Keep the time reference in view: ておいた reports past preparation.

戸棚が開いています。

The cupboard is open.

道具を取り出しやすいように、戸棚が開けてあります。

The cupboard has been left open so that the tools are easy to take out.

作業の前に戸棚を開けておきます。

I will open the cupboard before the work starts.

DECISION / Choose what you want to claim, not just what the picture looks like.

WORDS / 戸棚（とだな） cupboard; 道具（どうぐ） tools; 作業（さぎょう） work; 開く（あく） open; 開ける（あける） open something

AT A GLANCE

STATE NOW
ドアが開いている。

DELIBERATE RESULT
ドアが開けてある。

PREPARE / KEEP A STATE
ドアを開けておく。

02 ている does not always mean ongoing

Recognize result states with change verbs.

An event can leave a state

With 開く, 閉まる, and 消える, ている commonly describes the state after a change: open, closed, off. It does not need to mean that the change is happening slowly in front of you.

Keep the verb in the analysis

With a deliberate action such as 開ける, ている can instead show a person in the middle of opening something. Compare the complete predicate and its participants. Neither ending nor English tense alone gives the answer.

入口のドアが閉まっています。

The entrance door is closed.

係の人がドアを閉めています。

The attendant is closing the door.

廊下の電気が消えています。

The corridor light is off.

DECISION / Do not change every English “is” into an ongoing action.

WORDS / 入口（いりぐち） entrance; 閉まる（しまる） close; 閉める（しめる） close something; 係（かかり）の人 attendant; 廊下（ろうか） corridor; 消える（きえる） go off

State or action?

Review: 1. Answer the prompt and give a short reason.

Q001 The corridor light is off now. Use 電気が + 消える + ている in polite form.

Q002 A person is in the middle of closing a door. Choose: ドアが閉まっています / 人がドアを閉めています.

Q003 Explain: Does 窓が開いています prove that nobody deliberately opened it?

Q004 Complete both sentences in polite form:
ドアが（閉まる＋ている）。私はドアを（閉める＋ます）。

Answers Q001-Q008

Q001 廊下の電気が消えています。

消える describes the light going off; ている presents the resulting off-state.

Q002 人がドアを閉めています。

The actor is performing 閉める. The other sentence ordinarily describes the door as closed.

Q003 No. It reports an open state without specifying its cause.

Absence of an intention claim is not a claim that the change was accidental.

Q004 ドアが閉まっています。私はドアを閉めます。

Keep the intransitive state and transitive action patterns separate.

Q005 カーテンが閉めてあります。

The core result construction requires the deliberate transitive action 閉める.

Q006 席に名札が置いてあります。

置いてある presents the placement as an arrangement now in place.

Q007 Yes, if presenting it as a deliberately placed notice.

The actor can be unknown or unimportant.

Q008 The first reports an off-state; the second presents the off-state as a result of someone deliberately turning the light off.

Both may describe the same light; the second foregrounds intentional arrangement.

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

Keep the distinction

Report a state: appropriate verb + ている. It need not be ongoing.

Present a deliberate result: appropriate transitive verb + てある. The actor may be unknown.

Do something ahead of a need: verb + ておく. Past preparation uses ておいた.

Leave something as it is: context may give ておく a maintenance reading.

Check verb choice, particles, time, and what the sentence actually claims.

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.