

The dictionary form

The form a dictionary lists, and the plain way to say "I drink" to a friend. Learn to go back and forth with the polite form and you can look up any verb you hear.

From the polite form, by verb group

Group 2 · る-verbs (ichidan) — drop ます, add る. 開け**ます** → 開け**る** *akemasu* → *akeru*

Group 3 · irregular — します → **する** *suru*, 来ます → **来る** *kuru*

Group 1 · う-verbs (godan) — change the last kana to the one in the same row with a **u** sound:

Group 1: swap the i sound for its u sound

Polite form ends in	い	き	ぎ	し	ち	に	び	み	り
Dictionary form uses	う	く	ぐ	す	つ	ぬ	ぶ	む	る

Every group, in one table

Group	Polite form		Dictionary form	Meaning
Group 1 godan	使います <i>tsukaimasu</i>	→	使 う <i>tsukau</i>	use
	聞きます <i>kikimasu</i>	→	聞 く <i>kiku</i>	listen, ask
	泳ぎます <i>oyogimasu</i>	→	泳 ぐ <i>oyogu</i>	swim
	持ちます <i>mochimasu</i>	→	持 つ <i>motsu</i>	hold
	飲みます <i>nomimasu</i>	→	飲 む <i>nomu</i>	drink
	作ります <i>tsukurimasu</i>	→	作 る <i>tsukuru</i>	make
Group 2 ichidan	開けます <i>akemasu</i>	→	開 け る <i>akeru</i>	open
	起きます <i>okimasu</i>	→	起 き る <i>okiru</i>	get up
Group 3 irregular	します <i>shimasu</i>	→	する <i>suru</i>	do
	来ます <i>imasu</i>	→	来る <i>kuru</i>	come (<i>reading changes</i>)

Use it

～ことができます can do — 泳ぐことができます

～つもりです I plan to — 使うつもりです

～と whenever — 聞くと分かります

～前に before doing — 飲む前に

趣味は～ことです my hobby is — 泳ぐことです

plain speech to friends — コーヒーを飲む

Which group is a new verb in?

Does not end in る → always Group 1.

Ends in る → if the sound before る is **e** or **i** (開**け**る・起**き**る) it is usually Group 2; otherwise (作**る**) it is Group 1.

Six to memorise.

帰る・入る・走る・知る・切る・要る *return, enter, run, know, cut, need* look like Group 2 but are Group 1.

Two things you get free

Looking words up. Dictionaries only list this form, so hearing 飲みました and finding 飲む is the same skill.

Every other form starts here. て, た, ない and the "can do" form are all built from the dictionary form.



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