

～が最後

once you do, that's it

Romaji: **ga saigo**

～が最後 means “once you do it, that is the end of it” — the first action sets off a consequence nobody can then stop. 彼は話し始めたが最後、止まらない is “Once he starts talking, there’s no stopping him.” Attach it to the plain past, and make the second clause something inevitable and usually unwelcome. The 最後 is literal: that was your last chance to avoid what follows. Read it as a warning delivered with a sigh.

構文 CONSTRUCTION

Verb (plain past) + が最後

寝たが最後、朝まで起きない。 — Once he’s asleep, he’s out until morning.

The second clause names something unstoppable

あの店に入ったが最後、財布が空になる。 — Set foot in that shop and your wallet ends up empty.

Spoken variant: ～たら最後

始めたら最後、途中でやめられない。 — Once you start, you can’t stop halfway.

例文 EXAMPLES

① ^{かれ} ^{はな} ^{はじ} ^{さいご} ^と
彼は話し始めたが最後、止まらない。

Once he starts talking, there’s no stopping him.

② ^{みせ} ^{はい} ^{さいご} ^{さいふ} ^{から}
あの店に入ったが最後、財布が空になる。

Set foot in that shop and your wallet ends up empty.

③ ^{いちどはじ} ^{さいご} ^{とちゅう}
一度始めたら最後、途中でやめられない。

Once you start, you can’t stop halfway.

注意点 NUANCES

- ▶ The consequence has to be out of anyone’s control. A plain sequence — “after I ate, I slept” — is ～てから, not this.
- ▶ It almost always carries resignation or warning, which is why the second clause so often ends in ない or in an outcome the speaker regrets.
- ▶ ～たら最後 is the more conversational variant and means the same thing. ～が最後 is the written, heavier one.
- ▶ Taking 最後 literally — “that is the last of it” — makes the pattern much easier to remember than treating it as an idiom.

やってみよう YOUR TURN

Warn someone about two temptations using ～たが最後 — a shop, a game, a packet of biscuits — where the second clause names the consequence nobody can stop.