

〜ごとき

like / as if (literary)

Romaji: **gotoki**

〜ごとき is the classical ancestor of 〜のような: “like”, “such as”. It survives in two opposite registers. Applied to yourself it is humble — 私ごときが意見を申し上げるのは (“for someone like me to offer an opinion…”). Applied to someone else it is contemptuous — 子供ごときに負けるとは (“to lose to a mere child”). Its relatives are ごとく (the adverb, “just as”) and ごとし (sentence-final), and all three belong to written, ceremonial or deliberately archaic Japanese.

構文 CONSTRUCTION

Noun + ごとき — “someone or something like”

私ごときには分かりません。 — Someone like me wouldn’t understand.

Noun + ごとき + noun — dismissive modifier

子供ごとき相手に本気を出すな。 — Don’t go all out against a mere child.

Adverbial: 〜ごとく — “just as / like”

矢のごとく走り去った。 — He shot off like an arrow.

Sentence-final: 〜ごとし

光陰矢のごとし。 — Time flies like an arrow.

例文 EXAMPLES

① わたし 私ごときには、とても^{つと}務まりません。

Someone like me could never fill that role.

② こういん^や 光陰矢のごとし。

Time flies like an arrow.

③ かれ^や 彼は矢のごとく^{はし}走り去った。^さ

He shot off like an arrow.

注意点 NUANCES

- Direction sets the tone, and there is no neutral use: pointed at yourself it is self-deprecating, pointed at anyone else it is dismissive.
- It is written and archaic. The everyday equivalents are 〜のような, 〜みたいな and, for the contemptuous flavour, 〜なんか.
- ごとく is the adverb and ごとき the modifier — the same split as 静かに and 静かな.
- Its natural homes are proverbs, formal speeches, historical fiction and anything imitating classical style. Recognise it; produce it sparingly.

やってみよう YOUR TURN

Write one humble sentence about yourself with 私ごとき and one dismissive line about an opponent. Then rewrite both with のような, and notice how completely the attitude drains out.