

〜かどうか

whether or not

Romaji: **ka dou ka**

〜かどうか means “whether or not”. It packages a yes/no question into a noun-like clause you can drop inside a bigger sentence: 来るかどうか分かりません is “I don’t know whether he’s coming.” Attach it to plain forms, and drop **だ** after nouns and **な**-adjectives (本物かどうか, 必要かどうか). The one rule that catches everybody: **どうか** is the “or not” half, so it only fits a yes/no question — when the embedded question uses **who**, **where** or **when**, you use bare **か** instead.

構文 CONSTRUCTION

Verb / い-adjective (plain) + かどうか

間に合うかどうか分かりません。 — I don’t know whether we’ll make it in time.

Noun / な-adjective (no だ) + かどうか

本物かどうか調べてください。 — Please check whether it’s genuine.

Followed by verbs of knowing, checking, deciding, worrying

来られるかどうか、聞いてみます。 — I’ll ask whether they can come.

Question-word question → か alone, never かどうか

誰が来るか分かりません。 — I don’t know who’s coming.

例文 EXAMPLES

① ^{かれ} ^く ^わ 彼が来るかどうか分かりません。

I don’t know whether he’s coming.

② ^{みず} ^の ^{しら} この水が飲めるかどうか調べてください。

Please check whether this water is safe to drink.

③ ^い ^き 行くかどうか、まだ決めていません。

I still haven’t decided whether to go.

注意点 NUANCES

- ▶ **どうか** means “or not”, so it needs a question with two possible answers. ×誰が来るかどうか is wrong because “who” has no opposite.
- ▶ Nouns and **な**-adjectives lose their **だ** before it: 学生かどうか, 便利かどうか — never ×学生だかどうか.
- ▶ The whole clause behaves like a noun, so it can take **を** or **が**: 行くかどうかを決めました. In speech that particle is usually dropped.
- ▶ **かどうか** is neutral. It says the question is open and takes no position on which way it will go — that is what makes it the polite way to raise an uncertain point.

やってみよう YOUR TURN

Say three things about tomorrow you honestly don’t know yet, each with **〜かどうか**. Then say one thing you don’t know that starts with a question word, using plain **か** — and see why **どうか** can’t go there.