

～かと思うと

just when / no sooner than

Romaji: **ka to omou to**

～かと思うと means “no sooner had A happened than B” — two events piling onto each other faster than you expected. 泣いたかと思うと、もう笑っていた is “No sooner had she started crying than she was laughing again.” Attach it to the plain past. The second half has to be something that already happened and caught you off guard. That is what rules out plans, requests and commands after it.

構文 CONSTRUCTION

Verb (plain past) + かと思うと

席に着いたかと思うと、すぐに立ち上がった。 — He'd barely sat down before he was up again.

Variants: ～かと思えば ・ ～かと思ったら

晴れたかと思ったら、また降り出した。 — Just when it cleared up, it started raining again.

Often paired with もう or すぐに in the second clause

横になったかと思うと、もう眠っていた。 — He was asleep almost the moment he lay down.

例文 EXAMPLES

① ^な泣いたか^{おも}と思うと、もう^{わら}笑っていた。

No sooner had she started crying than she was laughing again.

② ^は晴れたか^{おも}と思ったら、また^ふ降り^だ出した。

Just when it cleared up, it started raining again.

③ ^{よこ}横になったか^{おも}と思うと、もう^{ねむ}眠っていた。

He was asleep almost the moment he lay down.

注意点 NUANCES

- ▶ The second clause must be a completed, surprising fact. ×帰ったかと思うと、電話してください is impossible — no requests, no plans, no intentions.
- ▶ The subject is normally someone or something other than you, because your own actions rarely surprise you. ×私は座ったかと思うと立った reads strangely.
- ▶ ～かと思ったら is the everyday spoken variant with the same meaning and less formality; ～かと思えば often adds a note of “and yet”.
- ▶ Its natural habitat is weather, moods, small children and anything else that changes faster than you can follow.

やってみよう YOUR TURN

Describe a day of unpredictable weather and a friend in an unpredictable mood, using ～かと思うと twice. Keep both second clauses in the past — that is the rule this pattern lives by.