

～かもしれない

might / maybe

Romaji: **kamo shirenai**

～かもしれない (kamo shirenai) means "might" or "maybe" — it marks a statement as a possibility the speaker is not sure about. It attaches directly to plain forms: dictionary, た, and ない forms of verbs and い-adjectives, and bare nouns or な-adjective stems without だ (雨かもしれない, not ×雨だかもしれない). The polite version is かもしれません, and in casual speech it shortens to just かも.

構文 CONSTRUCTION

Verb / い-adjective (plain form) + かもしれない

午後は雨が降るかもしれない。 — It might rain this afternoon.

Noun / な-adjective (no だ) + かもしれない

あの人は先生かもしれない。 — That person might be a teacher.

Polite: ～かもしれません

少し遅れるかもしれません。 — I may be a little late.

Casual: ～かも

明日は無理かも。 — Tomorrow might not work.

例文 EXAMPLES

① ^{こんや}今夜から^{あした}明日の^{あさ}朝まで^{ゆき}雪が^ふ降るかもしれない。

It might snow from tonight until tomorrow morning.

② ^{かぎ}鍵は^{くるま}車の中に^{なか}忘れたの^{わす}かもしれない。

I might have left my keys in the car.

③ ^{みせ}あの店が^{きょう}今日はもう^し閉まっているかもしれない。

That shop might already be closed for the day.

注意点 NUANCES

- ▶ In conversation it clips to かも, often with a final particle: 行けないかもね, 雨かもよ.
- ▶ On the certainty scale, かもしれない sits low ("possibly, 50-50 or less"). だろう/でしょう is a confident guess, and にちがいない is near-certainty.
- ▶ Adding もしかしたら or ひょっとしたら at the start of the sentence flags early on that a guess is coming: もしかしたら間に合わないかもしれない.
- ▶ Do not insert だ after nouns or な-adjectives: 静かかもしれない, 学生かもしれない — never ×静かだかもしれない.

やってみよう YOUR TURN

Make three guesses about tomorrow — the weather, a friend's plans, and something about your own day — using かもしれない, and rewrite one of them with casual かも.