

～させる

make/let someone do (causative)

Romaji: **saseru**

～させる is the causative: it means “make someone do” or “let someone do”, depending on whether the person wanted to. 子供に野菜を食べさせました can be “I made my child eat vegetables” or “I let my child eat vegetables” — the form is identical and only context decides. る-verbs take ～させる (食べる → 食べさせる), う-verbs shift to the あ-row plus せる (書く → 書かせる), and the two irregulars are する → させる and 来る → 来させる. Which particle marks the person depends on whether the verb already has an object.

構文 CONSTRUCTION

る-verb: drop る + させる

妹に部屋を片付けさせました。 — I made my little sister tidy her room.

う-verb: あ-row + せる (書く → 書かせる, 待つ → 待たせる)

子供に手紙を書かせました。 — I had my child write a letter.

Intransitive verb → the person takes を

子供を公園で遊ばせます。 — I let the children play in the park.

Verb with its own object → the person takes に

学生に本を読ませます。 — I have the students read a book.

Asking permission for yourself: ～させてください

少し考えさせてください。 — Please let me think about it for a moment.

例文 EXAMPLES

① はは わたし やさい た
母は私に野菜を食べさせました。

My mother made me eat my vegetables.

② こども こうえん あそ
子供を公園で遊ばせています。

I'm letting the children play in the park.

③ すこ かんが
少し考えさせてください。

Please let me think about it for a moment.

注意点 NUANCES

- ▶ “Make” or “let” is not in the grammar — it is in the situation. 休ませる is “let them rest” with a tired employee and “make them rest” with a stubborn one.
- ▶ The particle rule is worth memorising: no existing を in the sentence, the person takes を; already an を, the person takes に. Avoiding two を in one clause is what it exists to do.
- ▶ With an intransitive verb the choice is not purely mechanical — it leans on meaning. 子供を歩かせる pushes the child into walking; 子供に歩かせる lets them. を tends toward “make”, に toward “let”.
- ▶ Causing someone senior to do something is socially awkward, so Japanese switches to ～ていただく instead: 部長に確認していただきました, never ×部長に確認させました.
- ▶ ～させてください is the everyday face of this pattern — 説明させてください, やらせてください. It is how you volunteer for something politely, by asking to be allowed.
- ▶ う-verbs ending in す take さ (話す → 話させる), and verbs ending in う take わ (買う → 買わせる) — the same あ-row rule as the negative form.

やってみよう YOUR TURN

Write one sentence where a parent makes a child do something, and one where the same parent lets the child do something — using ～させる for both. Then ask permission to do something yourself with ～させてください.