

～そうだ

looks like / seems (appearance)

Romaji: **sou da**

～そうだ attached to a verb stem or adjective stem means "looks like," "seems," or "about to" — a judgement based on what the speaker can see or sense right now. The attachment point is what disambiguates it: appearance そうだ follows the stem, so 雨が降りそうだ means "it looks like it's about to rain," and おいしそう means "looks delicious." If そうだ instead follows a complete plain form (雨が降るそうだ, "I heard it will rain"), you are reading the hearsay meaning.

構文 CONSTRUCTION

Verb (masu-stem) + そうだ

今にも雨が降りそうだ。 — It looks like it's about to rain any minute.

い-adjective (drop い) + そうだ

このケーキはおいしそうだ。 — This cake looks delicious.

な-adjective (stem) + そうだ

彼女は元気そうだ。 — She seems well.

良い → よさそう (irregular)

この本はよさそうだ。 — This book looks good.

例文 EXAMPLES

① そら くら いま あめ ふ
空が暗くて、今にも雨が降りそうだ。

The sky is dark — it looks like it's about to rain any minute.

② テーブルのうえのケーキ、すごくおいしそうだね。

That cake on the table looks really delicious, doesn't it?

③ てんき さんぽ い
天気がよさそうだから、散歩に行こう。

The weather looks good, so let's go for a walk.

注意点 NUANCES

- Two stems are irregular: 良い → よさそう and ない → なさそう. Saying おいしいそうだ with the い kept does not mean "looks tasty" — it reads as hearsay, "I hear it is tasty."
- The negative has its own forms: 降りそうもない / 降りそうにない "shows no sign of raining." Compare hearsay 降らないそうだ "I heard it won't rain" — completely different meaning.
- Appearance そうだ conjugates like a な-adjective: そうな before nouns (おいしそうなケーキ "a delicious-looking cake") and そうに as an adverb (嬉しそうに笑う "smile happily").
- It expresses impressions and predictions, not resemblance to a noun — for "looks like a cat," use 猫のようだ or 猫みたい, never 猫そうだ.

やってみよう YOUR TURN

Look around you and describe two things with stem + そうだ — one about how something looks (おいしそう, 高そう) and one about something on the verge of happening (落ちそう).