

〜てあげる

do for someone (favour)

Romaji: **te ageru**

〜てあげる means doing something FOR someone as a favour, with the benefit flowing outward from you to them. 妹に本を読んであげました is “I read my little sister a book.” Attach あげる to the て-form. It belongs to a three-verb family — あげる gives outward, くれる gives inward toward you, and もらう receives — and Japanese requires one of them whenever an action is a kindness rather than a bare event. The catch is that 〜てあげる can sound self-congratulatory, so it is used less freely than English “for you”.

構文 CONSTRUCTION

Verb (て-form) + あげる

友だちに写真を送ってあげた。 — I sent my friend the photos.

The person helped takes に

子供に絵本を読んであげます。 — I read the children a picture book.

Toward someone senior, swap to a humble verb instead of 〜てさしあげる

先生に資料をお送りしました。 — I sent the documents to my teacher.

Offering: 〜てあげようか / 〜てあげましょうか

手伝ってあげようか。 — Shall I give you a hand?

例文 EXAMPLES

① いもうと ほん よ
妹に本を読んであげました。

I read my little sister a book.

② とも えき ち ず か
友だちに駅までの地図を書いてあげた。

I drew my friend a map to the station.

③ いぬ さんぽ つ い
犬を散歩に連れて行ってあげます。

I'll take the dog for a walk.

注意点 NUANCES

- ▶ Saying it to the person you are helping can sound like you want credit. 荷物を持ってあげます is well-meant but lands as “I shall carry that for you”; 持ちましょうか is what a considerate speaker says.
- ▶ 〜てさしあげる looks like the polite version and is a trap: it draws attention to your own generosity toward someone senior. Use humble forms instead — お持ちします, ご案内します.
- ▶ The direction is fixed. An action done for YOU can never be 〜てあげる — that is 〜てくれる, and mixing them up is one of the most noticeable learner errors.
- ▶ For animals, plants and children the pattern is completely natural and carries no awkwardness: 犬を散歩に連れて行ってあげた.

やってみよう YOUR TURN

Describe three kind things you did for other people this week with 〜てあげました. Then rewrite one of them as an offer to the person's face — and notice why 〜ましょうか sounds better than 〜てあげましょうか.