

〜てくる

come to / start to (toward speaker)

Romaji: **te kuru**

〜てくる attaches to a verb's て-form and literally means to do something and come — motion toward the speaker, as in 帰ってくる "come back (here)" or 持ってくる "bring." Just as important are its aspectual senses: a change emerging up to now (日本語が分かってきた "I've started to understand Japanese," 増えてきた "has been increasing") and an action continuing from the past up to the present (十年間働いてきた "have worked for ten years"). It also marks onset in the speaker's here-and-now: 雨が降ってきた "it started to rain."

構文 CONSTRUCTION

Verb て-form + くる (motion toward speaker)

父が駅から歩いてきた。 — Dad walked here from the station.

Verb て-form + くる (do and come back)

ちょっとパンを買ってくる。 — I'll go buy some bread (and come back).

Verb て-form + きた (change emerging)

日本語が分かってきた。 — I've started to understand Japanese.

Verb て-form + きた (continuing up to now)

十年間この町で働いてきた。 — I have worked in this town for ten years.

例文 EXAMPLES

① ちょっとコンビニに^い行ってくるね。

I'm just popping to the convenience store — back in a bit.

② おお ^{いぬ}大きな犬が^{はし}こっちに走ってくるよ。

A big dog is running this way!

③ だんだん^{さむ}寒くなってくる^{きせつ}季節ですね。

It's the season when it gradually starts getting colder, isn't it?

注意点 NUANCES

- Its mirror image is 〜ていく: てくる moves toward the speaker or up to the present (増えてきた "has been increasing"), while ていく moves away or onward into the future (増えていく "will keep increasing").
- In the "do and come back" sense the return is built in — 買ってくる promises you will be back, which is exactly what 行ってきます means when leaving the house.
- With weather and bodily sensations, てくる marks onset: 雨が降ってきた "it started raining," お腹が空いてきた "I'm getting hungry."
- As an auxiliary it is normally written in kana (帰ってくる rather than 帰って来る), especially in the aspectual senses.

やってみよう YOUR TURN

Write one sentence with てくる for physical motion (someone or something coming toward you) and one for a change you have noticed building up lately.