

～てはいけません

must not / may not

Romaji: **te wa ikemasen**

～てはいけません means “must not” — it refuses permission. Attach it to the て-form: ここで写真を撮ってはいけません is “You must not take photographs here.” It is the exact negative of ～てもいいです (“you may”), and it speaks with authority. That puts it on signs, in school rules and in what parents and teachers say, rather than in a request aimed at a friend or a superior. In speech it contracts to ～ちゃいけない (or ～じゃいけない after a voiced て-form).

構文 CONSTRUCTION

Verb (て-form) + はいけません

廊下を走ってはいけません。 — You must not run in the corridor.

Plain form: Verb (て-form) + はいけない

ここに入ってはいけない。 — You mustn't come in here.

Spoken contractions: ～ては → ～ちゃ ・ ～では → ～じゃ

嘘をついちゃいけないよ。 — You mustn't tell lies.

The same frame asking permission: ～てもいいですか

写真を撮ってもいいですか。 — May I take a photo?

例文 EXAMPLES

① ここで^{しゃしん}写真を撮^とってはいけません。

You must not take photographs here.

② ^{じゅぎょうちゅう}授業中に^た食べてはいけません。

You must not eat during class.

③ まだ^{かえ}帰っちゃいけないよ。

You can't go home yet.

注意点 NUANCES

- It speaks downward. Telling your manager 遅れてはいけません is not “please don't be late” — it is an instruction. For anyone senior, use ～ないでください.
- The は is the topic particle, so it is pronounced “wa”: 撮ってはいけません sounds like totte WA ikemasen.
- ～てはなりません is the stiffer written twin, found on notices and in legal text. ～てはだめ (or just だめ) is the everyday spoken end of the same scale: 走っちゃだめ.
- For a rule that applies to everyone rather than to the person in front of you, the plain ～てはいけない reads better than the polite form. Signs use it for exactly that reason.

やってみよう YOUR TURN

Write three library rules in Japanese with ～てはいけません. Then rewrite one of them as something you would actually say to a friend, using ～ちゃだめ — and notice how much the register changes.