

〜ず

without / not (literary)

Romaji: **zu**

〜ず is the classical negative that still lives in modern written Japanese. It means what 〜ないで and 〜なくて mean, but sounds formal, terse and slightly old: 何も言わず、部屋を出た (“He left the room without a word”). Build it by taking the ない-form and swapping ない for ず — 行かない → 行かず. The one irregular every learner meets is する, which becomes せず, never ×しず. In practice you will see 〜ずに more often than bare 〜ず.

構文 CONSTRUCTION

ない-form minus ない + ず

傘を持たず、家を出た。 — I left the house without an umbrella.

〜ずに — “without doing” (the common form)

朝ご飯を食べずに学校へ行った。 — I went to school without eating breakfast.

する → せず / せずに (irregular)

何もせずに一日が終わった。 — The day ended without my doing anything.

〜ずにはいられない — “can’t help doing”

笑わずにはいられなかった。 — I couldn’t help laughing.

例文 EXAMPLES

① ^{かれ} ^{なに} ^い ^へ ^や ^で
彼は何も言わずに部屋を出た。

He left the room without saying anything.

② ^{あさ} ^{はん} ^た ^{がっこう} ^い
朝ご飯を食べずに学校へ行きました。

I went to school without eating breakfast.

③ ^{なに} ^{いちにち} ^お
何もせずに一日が終わった。

The day ended without my doing anything.

注意点 NUANCES

- ▶ する is the trap: せず and せずに, never ×しず. 来る behaves regularly as 来ず (こず).
- ▶ 〜ず and 〜ずに belong to the written register. The same idea in speech is 〜ないで, and slipping ずに into casual conversation makes you sound like a narrator.
- ▶ Bare 〜ず can also join clauses the way a negative て-form does: 雨も降らず、風もなく — “no rain and no wind”.
- ▶ You will meet it constantly in literature, news and signage, which makes it worth recognising long before you ever need to produce it.

やってみよう YOUR TURN

Rewrite three of your own 〜ないで sentences as 〜ずに, and make sure one of them uses する so you have to reach for せずに.