い and な adjectives

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Japanese has two kinds of adjective and they behave differently. One changes its own ending; the other never changes and lets です do the work.

Telling them apart

い-adjectives — end in い and change their own ending. 高い *takai, expensive* → 高**くない**・高**かった**

な-adjectives — never change. です or だ after them does all the work. 静か *shizuka, quiet* → 静か**です**・静か**でした**

The な only shows up before a noun — 静か**な**店 *a quiet shop*, but この店は静かです *this shop is quiet*. An い-adjective needs nothing: 高い店.

All eight forms of each

	い-adjective · 高い *expensive*	**な-adjective · 静か** *quiet*
Polite · is	高いです *takai desu*	静かです *shizuka desu*
Polite · is not	高**くない**です *takakunai desu*	静か**じゃない**です *shizuka ja nai desu*
Polite · was	高**かった**です *takakatta desu*	静か**でした** *shizuka deshita*
Polite · was not	高**くなかった**です *takakunakatta desu*	静か**じゃなかった**です *shizuka ja nakatta desu*
Plain · is	高い *takai*	静か**だ** *shizuka da*
Plain · is not	高**くない** *takakunai*	静か**じゃない** *shizuka ja nai*
Plain · was	高**かった** *takakatta*	静か**だった** *shizuka datta*
Plain · was not	高**くなかった** *takakunakatta*	静か**じゃなかった** *shizuka ja nakatta*

Swap い for く and an い-adjective behaves like a verb. じゃない can be written ではない, which sounds more formal.

Joining and describing

Job	**い-adjective**	**な-adjective**
Before a noun	高い店 an expensive shop	静か**な**店 a quiet shop
Joining two	高**くて**静かです	静か**で**高いです
Describing a verb	高**く**売ります sell it high	静か**に**してください please be quiet

Watch out

An い-adjective never takes でした. Past is 高かったです, never 高いでした.

Ending in い does not make it an い-adjective. きれい・有名・嫌い・元気 *pretty, famous, disliked, well* are all な-adjectives.

いい is irregular. Its forms come from よい: よくない・よかった・よくて, never いくない.

Two things you get free

"Becomes". 高**く**なります *gets expensive*, 静か**に**なります *gets quiet* — the same く and に as above.

Comparing. こっちのほうが高いです *this one is more expensive*; 一番高いです *the most expensive*. The adjective itself never changes for this.

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