# The dictionary form

Oboeru 覚える

The form a dictionary lists, and the plain way to say “I drink” to a friend. Learn to go back and forth with the polite form and you can look up any verb you hear.

## From the polite form, by verb group

**Group 2 · る-verbs (ichidan)** — drop ます, add る. 開け**ます** → 開け**る** *akemasu → akeru*

**Group 3 · irregular** — します → **する** *suru*, 来ます → **来る** *kuru*

**Group 1 · う-verbs (godan)** — change the last kana to the one in the same row with a **u** sound:

## Group 1: swap the i sound for its u sound

| Polite form ends in | い | き | ぎ | し | ち | に | び | み | り |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dictionary form uses | う | く | ぐ | す | つ | ぬ | ぶ | む | る |

## Every group, in one table

| Group | Polite form | | Dictionary form | Meaning |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group 1 godan | 使います *tsukaimasu* | → | 使**う** *tsukau* | use |
| | 聞きます *kikimasu* | → | 聞**く** *kiku* | listen, ask |
| | 泳ぎます *oyogimasu* | → | 泳**ぐ** *oyogu* | swim |
| | 持ちます *mochimasu* | → | 持**つ** *motsu* | hold |
| | 飲みます *nomimasu* | → | 飲**む** *nomu* | drink |
| | 作ります *tsukurimasu* | → | 作**る** *tsukuru* | make |
| Group 2 ichidan | 開けます *akemasu* | → | 開け**る** *akeru* | open |
| | 起きます *okimasu* | → | 起き**る** *okiru* | get up |
| Group 3 irregular | します *shimasu* | → | **する** *suru* | do |
| | 来ます *kimasu* | → | **来る** *kuru* | come *(reading changes)* |

## Use it

**〜ことができます** can do — 泳ぐことができます

**〜つもりです** I plan to — 使うつもりです

**〜と** whenever — 聞くと分かります

**〜前に** before doing — 飲む前に

**趣味は〜ことです** my hobby is — 泳ぐことです

**plain speech** to friends — コーヒーを飲む

### Which group is a new verb in?

**Does not end in る** → always Group 1.

**Ends in る** → if the sound before る is **e** or **i** (開ける・起きる) it is usually Group 2; otherwise (作る) it is Group 1.

**Six to memorise.**
帰る・入る・走る・知る・切る・要る *return, enter, run, know, cut, need* look like Group 2 but are Group 1.

### Two things you get free

**Looking words up.** Dictionaries only list this form, so hearing 飲みました and finding 飲む is the same skill.

**Every other form starts here.** て, た, ない and the “can do” form are all built from the dictionary form.


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