

JP

JAPANESE LESSON

Vdd To Have

Aru — To Have, Exist

Polite & Casual Conjugation

The Verb Conjugated

ある (aru) is the other "to be" verb in Japanese — the counterpart to **いる**. It describes existence of **inanimate** things (objects, places, events, abstract ideas) and is also the everyday way to say **"to have"** (possession is expressed as "X exists for me"). Below are the most common forms in polite and casual speech.

POLITE PRESENT & PAST (～ます FORM)

Form	Hiragana	Romaji	Gloss
Present	あります	<i>arimasu</i>	there is/have (polite)
Past	ありまして	<i>arimashita</i>	there was/had (polite)
Negative	ありません	<i>arimasen</i>	there isn't/don't have (polite)
Neg. Past	ありませんでした	<i>arimasen deshita</i>	there wasn't/didn't have (polite)

Pattern: The verb base is **あり (ari)**. In polite form it becomes **あります (arimasu)** in present and **ありました (arimashita)** in past — regular ～ます conjugation, used in formal speech, business, and writing.

CASUAL PRESENT & PAST (DICTIONARY FORM)

Form	Hiragana	Romaji	Gloss
Present	ある	<i>aru</i>	there is/have (casual)
Past	あった	<i>atta</i>	there was/had (casual)
Te-form	あって	<i>atte</i>	being present (connective)
Negative	ない	<i>nai</i>	there isn't/don't have (casual)

Pattern: ある is **irregular** in one place: the negative is not the expected **あらない (aranai)** — it is simply **ない (nai)**, conjugated afterward like an い-adjective (なかった, なくて). Every other casual form (あった, あって) follows the regular godan pattern.

🌸 FORMAL & BUSINESS FORM

ございます (gozaimasu) — the very polite, humble-register version of **あります**, heard constantly in shops, restaurants, and customer service. Example: こちらにございます (Kochira ni gozaimasu — It's right here [very formal]).

You'll also recognize it from **ありがとうございます** (arigatou gozaimasu — thank you), which literally contains this form.

おありになる (o-ari ni naru) — the honorific form, used to describe something belonging to or connected with a person you're showing respect to. Less common in daily speech, more common in very formal writing or announcements.

PRONUNCIATION

あります (arimasu) = "ah-ree-mah-soo" (stress on first syllable)

ありました (arimashita) = "ah-ree-mah-shee-tah" (stress on first syllable)

ある (aru) = "ah-roo" (short, like "ah" + "roo")

あった (atta) = "aht-tah" (crisp double consonant)

ない (nai) = "nai" (rhymes with "bye" + "eye")

Conversational Practice

Here are six mini-dialogues using **ある** in various contexts: asking about objects, the past, casual chat, the special ~てある resultant-state grammar, negation/possession, and the very formal **ございます**.

① IS THERE A PEN?

A:

つくえの上にペンがありますか？ **あります (polite)**

Tsukue no ue ni pen ga arimasu ka?

Is there a pen on the desk?

B:

はい、ペンがあります。

あります

Hai, pen ga arimasu.

Yes, there is a pen.

② WAS THERE A MEETING?

A:

昨日会議がありましたか？

ありました (past polite)

Kinou kaigi ga arimashita ka?

Was there a meeting yesterday?

B:

はい、午前中にありました。

ありました

Hai, gozenchuu ni arimashita.

Yes, there was one in the morning.

③ GOT WIFI?

A:

このカフェ、Wi-Fiある？

ある (casual)

Kono kafe, Wi-Fi aru?

Does this café have wifi?

B:

うん、あるよ。パスワードもあるよ。 **ある**

Un, aru yo. Pasuwaado mo aru yo.

Yeah, it has (wifi). There's a password too.

④ THE WINDOW IS OPEN

A:

⑤ NO TIME TODAY

A:

今日は時間がありますか？

ありますか (polite question)

⑥ AT THE STORE

A:

すみません、この本はありますか？ **ありますか (polite)**

あれ、窓が開けてありますね。

～てある (resultant state)

Are, mado ga akete arimasu ne.

Oh, the window's been left open.

B:

ええ、涼しい風を入れるために開けてあります。 ～てあります

Ee, suzushii kaze wo ireru tame ni akete arimasu.

Yes, it's been left open to let in the cool breeze.

Kyou wa jikan ga arimasu ka?

Do you have time today?

B:

すみません、今日は時間ありません。

ありません (negative polite)

Sumimasen, kyou wa jikan ga arimasen.

Sorry, I don't have time today.

Sumimasen, kono hon wa arimasu ka?

Excuse me, do you have this book?

B:

はい、ございます。少々お待ちください。

ございます (very formal)

Hai, gozaimasu. Shoushou omachi kudasai.

Yes, we have it. Please wait a moment.

Related Verbs & Vocabulary

Below are 12 related verbs and expressions commonly paired with ある. Note which ones share ある's quirky "godan verb that looks ichidan" shape, and which are simply related in meaning.

#	JAPANESE (HIRAGANA)	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTES
1	いる / います iru / imasu		to exist, be (animate)	verb	[Related meaning] — いる for animate; ある for inanimate
2	ない nai		to not exist, not have	verb	[Similar conjugation] — the irregular negative of ある itself
3	ございます gozaimasu		to be/have (very formal)	verb	[Similar conjugation] — keigo substitute for あります
4	もつ / もちます motsu / mochimasu		to hold, own, carry	verb	[Related meaning] — active possession, vs ある's passive "exists for me"
5	できる / できます dekiru / dekimasu		to be possible, be able	verb	[Related meaning] — describes capability, often paired with things that "exist" as options
6	のこる / のこります nokoru / nokorimasu		to remain, be left over	verb	[Related meaning] — a quantity that continues to exist
7	たりる / たります tariru / tarimasu		to be enough, suffice	verb	[Related meaning] — often used with お金 (money) alongside ある
8	おく / おきます oku / okimasu		to put, place	verb	[Related meaning] — the action that creates the state described by ～てある

#	JAPANESE (HIRAGANA)	ROMAJI	ENGLISH	TYPE	NOTES
9	きまる / きまります kimaru / kimarimasu		to be decided, settled	verb	[Related meaning] — a plan that now "exists" as fixed
10	はいる / はいります hairu / hairimasu		to enter, fit inside	verb	[Similar conjugation] — godan る-verb that looks ichidan, just like ある
11	かえる / かえます kaeru / kaerimasu		to return, go home	verb	[Similar conjugation] — godan る-verb that looks ichidan, just like ある
12	しる / しります shiru / shirimasu		to know, find out	verb	[Similar conjugation] — godan る-verb that looks ichidan, just like ある

Key Takeaways

💡 TIP 1: ある VS いる

Japanese splits "to be" by animacy: **ある (aru)** for inanimate things (objects, places, events, abstract ideas) and **いる (iru)** for animate things (people, animals). "ペンがある" (pen ga aru — there is a pen) vs. "猫がいる" (neko ga iru — there is a cat).

💡 TIP 2: THE ONE IRREGULAR SPOT — ない, NOT あらない

ある is almost perfectly regular, but its negative breaks the pattern: it's **ない (nai)**, not the expected あらない (aranai). ない then conjugates like an い-adjective: なかった (nakatta — wasn't), なくて (nakute — not being). This is the single quirk to memorize about ある.

💡 TIP 3: 〜てある — RESULTANT STATE

Unlike いる's 〜ている (ongoing action), ある's te-form combination **〜てある (te aru)** describes a deliberate, lasting result of someone's action: "窓が開けてある" (mado ga akete aru — the window has been opened [and left that way]). It implies intent — someone did this on purpose and the result persists.

💡 TIP 4: あります ALSO MEANS "I HAVE"

Japanese doesn't have a direct verb "to have" for most possession — instead it says the thing exists for you: **車があります** (kuruma ga arimasu — I have a car, lit. "a car exists"), **お金がありません** (okane ga arimasen — I don't have money). The person is marked with は or omitted, and the possessed thing takes が.

💡 TIP 5: ございます IN REAL LIFE

ございます (gozaimasu) is everywhere in Japanese customer service — shop clerks, hotel staff, and train announcements use it instead of **あります**. You already know a piece of it from **ありがとうございます** (arigatou gozaimasu — thank you very much), which is built on this same polite root.