



Japanese Grammar:

「～がする」

Complete Guide

An in-depth look at the versatile Japanese grammar pattern "～がする (ga suru)". Learn how to express your senses and feelings naturally in Japanese.



Hearing



Smell



Taste



Feeling

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「名詞 + が + する」 = to sense/feel/notice something

Meaning & Functions of "～がする"

"～がする" is used to express sensations and impressions mainly experienced through the five senses or one's intuition/feeling. It often means "to feel/sense/notice (something)," e.g., sound, smell, taste, or even a vibe or hunch.

Key Functions:

-  Express sounds or voices you hear
-  Describe smells or scents you notice
-  Talk about tastes you experience
-  Convey feelings, hunches or impressions

Examples:

音がします

Oto ga shimasu

"I hear a sound"

いいにおいがする

Ii nioi ga suru

"It smells good"

雨が降りそうな気がする

Ame ga furisou na ki ga suru

"I feel like it's going to rain"



Important: In Japanese, the subject is the source of sensation, not the person experiencing it.

Grammatical Forms

Basic Structure:

「感覚を表す名詞 + が + する」

[Sense Noun] + が + する/します

The structure uses a noun describing a sensation + the particle が + the verb する.

Formality Levels:

Casual:

がする

ga suru

Formal/Polite:

がします

ga shimasu

Common Sense Nouns:



Hearing

音 (oto) - sound

声 (koe) - voice

物音 (mono-oto) - noise



Smell

におい (nioi) - smell

香り (kaori) - scent

匂い (nioi) - odor



Taste

味 (aji) - taste

甘み (amami) -
sweetness

風味 (fūmi) - flavor



Feeling

感じ (kanji) - feeling

気 (ki) - feeling/sense

予感 (yokan) -
premonition






Remember: In "～がする" expressions, the sense noun is always the subject of the sentence.

Hearing Expressions with "～がする"

Use 音がする (oto ga suru) or 声ができる (koe ga suru) to talk about sounds or voices you hear.

Common Usage:

-  General sounds:
音がする (oto ga suru) - "There is a sound"
-  Human/animal voices:
声ができる (koe ga suru) - "There is a voice"
-  Specific sound types:
足音がする (ashioto ga suru) - "I hear footsteps"



Remember: The sound/voice is the subject, not the person hearing it.

Examples:

隣の部屋から変な音がします。

Tonari no heya kara hen na oto ga shimasu.

"A strange sound is coming from the next room."

遠くで犬の声がしますね。

Tooku de inu no koe ga shimasu ne.

"I hear a dog barking in the distance."

家の外で大きな音がした。

Ie no soto de ookina oto ga shita.

"There was a loud sound outside the house."

(Past tense example)

Smell Expressions with "～がする"

Use "においがする" (nioi ga suru) or "香りがする" (kaori ga suru) when describing smells or scents you notice.

Key Points:

- ✓ "においがする" is used for general smells
- ✓ "香りがする" is often for pleasant fragrances
- ✓ Can modify with adjectives: いい、悪い、変な



Remember!

The smell itself is the grammatical subject, not the person who smells it.

Examples:

キッチンからカレーの匂いがしてきます。

Kicchin kara karē no nioi ga shite kimasu.

"I can smell curry from the kitchen."

パン屋さんの前を通るといいにおいがする。

Pan-ya san no mae wo tooru to ii nioi ga suru.

"It smells nice when passing by the bakery."

この花は甘い香りがします。

Kono hana wa amai kaori ga shimasu.

"This flower has a sweet fragrance."

Taste Expressions with "～がする"

Use "味がする (aji ga suru)" when talking about taste sensations.

Common Usage:

- ✓ Describing flavors you detect
- ✓ Indicating unusual or unexpected tastes
- ✓ Comparing tastes to other flavors

Common Taste Words:

甘い味 - sweet 辛い味 - spicy/hot 苦い味 - bitter

塩辛い味 - salty 酸っぱい味 - sour

Examples:

このお菓子、コーヒーの味がしますね。

- 1 Kono okashi, koohii no aji ga shimasu ne.
"This snack tastes like coffee."

腐っているのか、変な味がする。

- 2 Kusatte iru no ka, hen na aji ga suru.
"It tastes weird, maybe it's spoiled."

この料理は海の味がします。

- 3 Kono ryōri wa umi no aji ga shimasu.
"This dish tastes like the ocean."

Feeling & Impression Expressions

"～がする" can express feelings, physical sensations, or impressions that aren't directly tied to the five senses.

Common Expressions:



感じがする (kanji ga suru)

Expressing a subjective impression



気がする (ki ga suru)

Expressing intuition or a feeling about something



Physical Sensations:

寒気がする (samuke) – feeling chills

吐き気がする (hakike) – feeling nauseous

めまいがする (memai) – feeling dizzy

Examples:

この景色を見ていると、夢のような感じがします。

Kono keshiki wo mite iru to, yume no you na kanji ga shimasu.

"Looking at this view feels like a dream."

雨が降りそうな気がする。

Ame ga furisou na ki ga suru.

"I feel like it's going to rain."

風邪を引いたみたいで、寒気がします。

Kaze wo hiita mitai de, samuke ga shimasu.

"I seem to have caught a cold and feel chills."

Note: These expressions are very common in daily conversation and make your Japanese sound more natural.

Negative, Interrogative & Past Forms

× Negative Form

音がしない

Oto ga shinai

"There is no sound"

においがしません

Nioi ga shimasen

"I don't smell anything"

Structure:

Casual: [Noun] + が + しない

Polite: [Noun] + が + しません

? Interrogative Form

何かにおいがしますか？

Nanika nioi ga shimasu ka?

"Do you smell something?"

変な音がしませんか？

Hen na oto ga shimasen ka?

"Don't you hear a strange sound?"

Structure: Casual: [Noun] + が + する？

Polite: [Noun] + が + します + か

🕒 Past Form

家の外で大きな音がした

Ie no soto de ookina oto ga shita

"There was a loud sound outside"

いいにおいがしていました

Ii nioi ga shite imashita

"It was smelling good"

Structure:

Casual: [Noun] + が + した

Polite: [Noun] + が + しました



Key Point:

Like all Japanese verbs, する follows regular conjugation patterns. The difference is that in "～がする" expressions, the sense is always the subject (marked by が), not the person.

Formal vs. Casual Usage

Like most Japanese expressions, "～がする" has both formal and casual forms that you'll need to choose between depending on the social context.

Casual

がする

ga suru

Use with friends, family, and peers

Formal

がします

ga shimasu

Use with superiors, customers, or in business settings

When to Choose Each Form:

- ✓ Consider your relationship with the listener
- ✓ Consider the formality of the situation
- ✓ Match the politeness level of the rest of your speech

Examples in Context:

Casual Situation



友達に話す時：

「このケーキ、いい匂いがするね。」

Kono kēki, ii nioi ga suru ne.

"This cake smells good, doesn't it?"

Formal Situation



先生に話す時：

「今日は頭痛がします。休んでもいいですか。」

Kyō wa zutsū ga shimasu. Yasunde mo ii desu ka.

"I have a headache today. May I take a rest?"

Comparison with Similar Grammar

Expression	Usage	Example	Focus
～がする <i>ga suru</i>	All five senses and impressions	いいにおいがする <i>"It smells good"</i>	The sensation is the subject
～が聞こえる <i>ga kikoeru</i>	Hearing only	音楽が聞こえる <i>"I can hear music"</i>	Sounds that naturally reach you
～が見える <i>ga mieru</i>	Visual perception only	山が見える <i>"I can see a mountain"</i>	Things visible to your eyes
～を感じる <i>o kanjiru</i>	Abstract feelings and sensations	不安を感じる <i>"I feel anxiety"</i>	More conscious perception with "を"

Key Differences:

Subject vs. Object

がする, が聞こえる, and が見える use が (the sensation is the subject), while を感じる uses を (the sensation is the object).

Agency

がする often expresses more passive sensations, while を感じる implies more active perception or conscious recognition of feelings.

Application Range

がする is the most versatile, covering all senses and impressions, while others are specific to certain senses or more abstract feelings.

Common Mistakes & Tips

Common Errors

1. Using Wrong Particle

- × 変な味をします
- ✓ 変な味がします

2. Using Verbs/Adjectives

- × 甘いがします
- ✓ 甘い味がします

Key Reminder

Always use a **sense noun** + が + する.

3. Making People the Subject

- × 私はにおいがする
- ✓ ににおいがする

The sensation is the subject, not the person experiencing it!

Learning Tips

- ✓ Practice with all five senses: sound, smell, taste, touch, and impression
- ✓ Memorize common sense nouns for each category
- ✓ Remember: English says "I smell/hear something" but Japanese says "smell/sound exists"

Extended Usage & L1 Interference

Extended Usage:

Beyond Five Senses

- 予感がする
yoKAN ga suru - have a premonition
- 寂しさがする
sabishisa ga suru - feel loneliness
- 違和感がする
iwakan ga suru - feel discomfort/odd

Practice Tips:

- ✓ Create daily journal entries using "～がする" expressions
- ✓ Practice with all forms: past, negative, question
- ✓ Try shadowing practice with native content

L1 Interference Issues:

English speakers often struggle with "～がする" because of how the languages express sensations differently:

English Structure:

I smell something nice
I hear a strange sound
(*Person is the subject*)

Japanese Structure:

いいにおいがする
変な音がする
(*Sensation is the subject*)

Common Errors:

- ✗ 私はいいいにおいがする
Wrong: Making person the subject
- ✓ いいにおいがする
Correct: Sensation is subject