

と言う

～と言うか (どうか) “or rather / I mean / how should I put it...”

** ** *

The speaker says something, then adjusts, softens, or searches for a more accurate way to express it.

Aどうか、B

= A... or rather, B.

Nuance: that A isn't necessarily completely wrong. The speaker feels that A doesn't express the idea perfectly, so they add B.

□ Memory image A → □ → B “I said A... hmm... actually, B is closer.”

彼は優しいどうか、ちょっとおせっかいなんだ。

He's kind... or rather, he's a little meddlesome.

疲れたどうか、もう何もしたくない。

I'm tired... or rather, I don't want to do anything anymore.

Here, 疲れた is the first approximation. The speaker then explains the stronger/more precise feeling.

A useful way to think about them is:

と言うか → “or rather...” → I want to correct/rephrase what I just said

と言うと → “speaking of / when you say...” → I'm reacting to a word/idea just mentioned

と言うより → “rather than...” → A is not quite right; B is more accurate

と言っても → “although I say...” → what I just said sounds stronger/different than the reality

～という vs ～どうか

～と言うか (どうか) “or rather / I mean / how should I put it...”

The speaker says something, then adjusts, softens, or searches for a more accurate way to express it.

Pattern:

Aどうか、B

= A... or rather, B.

The important nuance is that **A isn't necessarily completely wrong**. The speaker feels that A doesn't express the idea perfectly, so they add B.

例 :

～と言うと (という) “when you say A...” / “speaking of A...” / “if you mention A...”

It takes something that has just been mentioned or brought to mind and uses it as a starting point for the next statement.

Pattern:

Aというと、B

=Speaking of A, B.

Aというと、どういう意味ですか。When you say A, what do you mean?

例 :

～という vs ～どうか

Compare:

東京というと、何を思い浮かべますか。

Speaking of Tokyo / When you hear Tokyo, what comes to mind?

= You're taking Tokyo as a topic/trigger.

But:



~という vs ~というか (cont)

彼は優しいというか、ちょっとおせっかいなんだ。He's kind... or rather, he's a little meddlesome.

=Here, 疲れた is the first approximation. The speaker then explains the stronger/more precise feeling.

日本の夏というと、暑さを思い出します。When I think of Japanese summer, I think of the heat.

=The phrase 日本の夏 triggers the association.

東京というか、日本の大都市は人が多い。Tokyo—or rather, big Japanese cities—are crowded.

= You're correcting/rephrasing your previous expression.

東京というと、何を思い浮かべますか。When you hear "Tokyo," what comes to mind?

Easy distinction

□ Memory image: A → □ → B

"I said A... hmm... actually, B is closer."

Important nuance: **という** often has an **association/trigger feeling**:

A → □ B : A makes you think of B.

という = A makes me think of B

というか = A... actually, B

というか vs というより vs といっても

~と言うより (というより) "rather than A, B"

** **

This is used when A is not the best description, and B is closer to the truth.

Pattern

Aというより、B

Rather than A, it's B.

より — the comparison particle: more than / rather than / compared with

例 :

「優しい」と言うより、「甘い」と言ったほうが近い。Rather than calling him "kind," it's more appropriate to call him "lenient."



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Not published yet.
Last updated 22nd September, 2026.
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