

-(으)ㄴ 직하다

looks worth ...; seems plausible

Two related things share this shape: a small set of fused adjectives you should learn as words, and a productive pattern meaning "plausible." The spacing tells them apart.

HOW TO ATTACH IT

Fused adjective	joined	먹다 → 먹음직하다
Fused adjective	joined	믿다 → 믿음직하다
Everyday word	바람직하다	desirable, advisable
Plausible	spaced	있음 직하다
Before a noun	-(으)ㄴ 직한	있음 직한 일
Near-synonym	-(으)ㄴ 법하다	있을 법한 일

WHEN TO USE IT

The fused adjectives are written joined and behave as ordinary words: 먹음직하다 (looks good to eat), 믿음직하다 (dependable), 바람직하다 (desirable). These are a closed set, best learned as vocabulary rather than as grammar.

The productive pattern is written with a space and means "there is reason to think so": 충분히 있음 직한 일이다 — entirely plausible.

In that use it overlaps closely with -(으)ㄴ 법하다, and either usually fits.

Both uses are formal or literary. 바람직하다 is the exception — it is everyday vocabulary and appears constantly in writing and speech about what ought to be done.

IN USE

- 1 빵이 노릇노릇하게 구워져 먹음직해 보였다.
The bread was baked golden and looked good to eat.
- 2 그는 어떤 일이든 맡길 만한 믿음직한 사람이다.
He is a dependable man you could entrust with anything.
- 3 환경을 고려한 설계가 바람직합니다.
A design that takes the environment into account is desirable.
- 4 충분히 있음 직한 일이라고 생각합니다.
I consider it entirely plausible.
- 5 직접 만들었다고 해도 믿음직한 솜씨였다.
The workmanship was such that you would believe it was handmade.

6 누구에게나 일어남직한 실수였어요.

It was the sort of mistake that could happen to anyone.

COMPARED WITH

-(으)ㄹ 법하다

In the "plausible" reading the two are close. 법하다 is rather more common in modern writing; -(으)ㄹ 직하다 sounds older.

있을 법한 이야기 / 있음직한 이야기

-(으)ㄹ 만하다

만하다 rates something as worth doing; the fused 먹음직하다 says it looks worth doing, judged by appearance.

먹을 만해요. (edible enough) / 먹음직해요. (looks appetising)

바람직하다

Worth separating out. It has drifted away from the pattern into ordinary vocabulary meaning "desirable," and appears constantly in policy and advice.

바람직한 태도 / 바람직하지 않습니다

WATCH OUT

X 빵이 먹음 직해 보였다.

O 빵이 먹음직해 보였다.

먹음직하다 is a single fused adjective and is written joined. The space belongs to the "plausible" use.

X 충분히 있음직한 일이다. — meaning "plausible"

O 충분히 있음직한 일이다.

In the plausibility reading, 직하다 is an auxiliary and takes a space.

X 그 사람은 가음직하다.

O 그 사람은 믿음직하다.

The fused adjectives are a closed set — 먹음직하다, 믿음직하다, 바람직하다 and a few others. New ones cannot be coined.