

Comparing similar verbs

Ref Hsk5 Grammar

vs — “it looks / it seems”

= “looks (like)” from **appearance or observation** (the sky, a face, a dish).

= “it seems / apparently,” a **judgement or inference** the speaker draws, often sentence-initial.

{zh: |kàn qǐ lái|it looks like / |yào|about to / |xià yǔ|rain / |le / 。
}

It looks like rain.

{zh: |kàn lái|it seems / |tā|he / |bù|isn't / |lái|coming / |le / 。 }

It seems he's not coming.

Remember: = what your **EYES** report (the sky looks like rain);

= what your **MIND** concludes (“it seems... he's not coming”). Appearance vs inference — is the “to the senses” tag; is “as I see it, ...”.

Watch out

- A visible look → ; a reasoned conclusion → . They aren't freely swappable.

vs — “appear” vs “look”

Both touch on appearance. simply reports how something **looks**. says something **comes across / appears (more)** ... — usually implying a comparison or the impression it gives off, often with .

{zh: |chuān|wearing / |shàng / |zhè jiàn|this / |yī fu|outfit / ,
|tā|she / |xiǎn de|comes across as / |gèng|more / |nián qīng|young /
|le / 。 }

In this outfit she comes across as younger.

{zh: |tā|he / |kàn qǐ lái|looks / |hěn|very / |lèi|tired / 。 }

He looks tired.

Remember: = plain “looks...”; = “comes ACROSS as (more)...”

— an impression actively *given off*, usually by contrast and often with (, “makes her look younger”). = “show / reveal.”

Watch out

- implies *something creates* the impression (the outfit, the lighting); is
a neutral observation.