KR

KOREAN LESSON

Basic Conversation 1 · Chapter 4 · Where You're From

Korean Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 4 · Where You're From: Countries & Nationalities

🌍 Where You're From — 어느 나라 사람이에요?

*In this chapter you learn to say which country you come from, where you live, and which languages you speak, and to ask the same of other people. Two small particles do most of the work: **에서** ("from") and **에** ("in" or "to"), which you met in Korean Grammar 1, chapter 4. You will also meet the Korean names of countries, which are mostly written in Hangul as they sound.*

eo = ㅓ (short, open "uh") **eu** = ㅡ (unrounded "oo") **ae** = ㅐ (like the vowel in "bed")

[ ] = how the word is actually said, where it differs from the spelling

① Which Country? — 어느 나라 사람이에요?

A:

어느 나라 사람이에요?

Eoneu nara saram-ieyo?

Which country are you from?

B:

저는 영국 사람이에요.

Jeoneun yeongguk saram-ieyo.

I'm British.

A:

영국 어디에서 왔어요?

Yeongguk eodi-eseo wasseoyo?

Where in Britain are you from?

B:

스코틀랜드에서 왔어요.

Seukoteullaendeu-eseo wasseoyo.

I'm from Scotland.

② A Korean Visitor — 한국에서 왔어요

A:

한국 사람이에요?

Hanguk saram-ieyo?

Are you Korean?

B:

네, 한국 사람이에요. 서울에서 왔어요.

Ne, hanguk saram-ieyo. Seoul-eseo wasseoyo.

Yes, I'm Korean. I'm from Seoul.

A:

서울이요? 정말 좋아요!

Seouriyo? Jeongmal joayo!

Seoul? That's great!

③ A Formal Introduction — 어디에서 오셨어요?

A:

안녕하세요. 어디에서 오셨어요?

Annyeonghaseyo. Eodi-eseo osyeosseoyo?

Hello. Where have you come from?

B:

독일에서 왔습니다.

Dogil-eseo watseumnida.

I'm from Germany.

A:

아, 그래요? 만나서 반갑습니다.

A, geuraeyo? Mannaseo bangapseumnida.

Oh, really? Nice to meet you.

④ Where Do You Live? — 어디에 살아요?

A:

어디에 살아요?

Eodi-e sarayo?

Where do you live?

B:

에든버러에 살아요. 에든버러는 스코틀랜드에 있어요.

Edeunbeoreo-e sarayo. Edeunbeoreo-neun Seukoteullaendeu-e isseoyo.

I live in Edinburgh. Edinburgh is in Scotland.

A:

그래요? 예뻐요?

Geuraeyo? Yeppeoyo?

Really? Is it pretty?

B:

네, 정말 예뻐요.

Ne, jeongmal yeppeoyo.

Yes, it's really pretty.

⑤ Two Friends (casual) — 친구끼리

A:

너 어느 나라 사람이야?

Neo eoneu nara saram-iya?

Which country are you from?

B:

나는 미국 사람이야. 너는?

Naneun miguk saram-iya. Neoneun?

I'm American. And you?

A:

나는 한국 사람이야. 서울에서 왔어.

Naneun hanguk saram-iya. Seoul-eseo wasseo.

I'm Korean. I'm from Seoul.

⑥ Languages — 한국어 해요?

A:

한국어 해요?

Hangugeo haeyo?

Do you speak Korean?

B:

조금 해요. 아직 잘 못해요.

Jogeum haeyo. Ajik jal moshaeyo.

A little. I can't speak it well yet.

A:

아니에요, 한국어 잘하세요!

Anieyo, hangugeo jalhaseyo!

No, your Korean is good!

B:

감사합니다!

Gamsahamnida!

Thank you!

🔑 Key Phrases — 중요한 표현

Use the polite column with people you don't know well. The casual column is for friends your own age or younger, and for understanding what you hear.

SITUATION	POLITE	CASUAL
Which country are you from?	어느 나라 사람이에요? *eoneu nara saram-ieyo?*	어느 나라 사람이야? *eoneu nara saram-iya?*
Where are you from? (a place)	어디에서 왔어요? *eodi-eseo wasseoyo?* (respectful: 어디에서 오셨어요?)	어디에서 왔어? *eodi-eseo wasseo?*
I'm British	저는 영국 사람이에요 *jeoneun yeongguk saram-ieyo*	나는 영국 사람이야 *naneun yeongguk saram-iya*
I'm from Scotland	스코틀랜드에서 왔어요 *seukoteullaendeu-eseo wasseoyo*	스코틀랜드에서 왔어 *seukoteullaendeu-eseo wasseo*
Where do you live?	어디에 살아요? *eodi-e sarayo?*	어디에 살아? *eodi-e sara?*
I live in Edinburgh	에든버러에 살아요 *edeunbeoreo-e sarayo*	에든버러에 살아 *edeunbeoreo-e sara*
Do you speak Korean?	한국어 해요? *hangugeo haeyo?*	한국어 해? *hangugeo hae?*

SITUATION	POLITE	CASUAL
A little / not well yet	조금 해요. 아직 잘 못해요. *jogeum haeyo. ajik jal moshaeyo.*	조금 해. 아직 잘 못해. *jogeum hae. ajik jal moshae.*
Your Korean is good!	한국어 잘하세요! *hangugeo jalhaseyo!*	한국어 잘해! *hangugeo jalhae!*

🔤 Three Verbs You Can Already Use — 동사

*"Where are you from?" in Korean literally asks where you came from, so the key verb is **오다** (to come), together with **살다** (to live) and **잘하다** (to be good at).*

VERB	EVERYDAY POLITE (-요)	FORMAL (-ㅂ니다)	CASUAL
to come (오다)	와요 *wayo*	옵니다 *omnida*	와 *wa*
(past) came (오다)	왔어요 *wasseoyo*	왔습니다 *watseumnida [왇씀니다]*	왔어 *wasseo*
to live (살다)	살아요 *sarayo*	삽니다 *samnida*	살아 *sara*
to be good at (잘하다)	잘해요 *jalhaeyo*	잘합니다 *jalhamnida*	잘해 *jalhae*

> **"I'm From" Means "I Came From"**
> **스코틀랜드에서 왔어요** is literally "I came from Scotland": **에서** ("from") plus the *past* tense of 오다 (Korean Grammar 1, chapter 7). Use **에서** to say where you come from, and **에** for where you *live* or are: 서울에 살아요, 서울에서 왔어요 (Korean Grammar 1, chapter 4).

🏳️ Countries, People and Languages — 나라, 사람, 말

Countries

COUNTRY	KOREAN	SAY IT
South Korea	한국	*han-guk*
The UK / Britain	영국	*yeong-guk*
Scotland	스코틀랜드	*seu-ko-teul-laen-deu*
England	잉글랜드	*ing-geul-laen-deu*
Ireland	아일랜드	*a-il-laen-deu*
The USA	미국	*mi-guk*
Canada	캐나다	*kae-na-da*
Australia	호주	*ho-ju*
France	프랑스	*peu-rang-seu*
Germany	독일	*do-gil*
Hungary	헝가리	*heong-ga-ri*
Japan	일본	*il-bon*
China	중국	*jung-guk*

People and languages

For a person, put **사람** saram ("person") after the country: 한국 사람, 영국 사람, 스코틀랜드 사람. For a language, the country name's key syllable is joined to **어** eo ("language"):

COUNTRY	PERSON	LANGUAGE
Korea	한국 사람	한국어 *hangugeo*
Britain / England	영국 사람	영어 *yeong-eo* (English)

COUNTRY	PERSON	LANGUAGE
Japan	일본 사람	일본어 *ilbon-eo*
China	중국 사람	중국어 *jungguk-eo*
Germany	독일 사람	독일어 *dogil-eo*
France	프랑스 사람	프랑스어 *peurangseu-eo*
Hungary	헝가리 사람	헝가리어 *heonggari-eo*

Some cities

CITY	KOREAN	SAY IT
Seoul	서울	*seo-ul*
Busan	부산	*bu-san*
Jeju	제주	*je-ju*
Edinburgh	에든버러	*e-deun-beo-reo*
London	런던	*reon-deon*

📖 Vocabulary — 어휘

20 key words. Read the Korean first, then check the romanization and the "Say it" column.

#	KOREAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	나라	*na-ra*	country	noun
2	사람	*sa-ram*	person	noun
3	한국	*han-guk*	South Korea	noun

#	KOREAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
4	영국	*yeong-guk*	the UK; Britain	noun
5	스코틀랜드	*seu-ko-teul-laen-deu*	Scotland	noun
6	미국	*mi-guk*	the USA	noun
7	한국어	*han-gu-geo*	the Korean language	noun
8	영어	*yeong-eo*	English (language)	noun
9	도시	*do-si*	city	noun
10	고향	*go-hyang*	hometown	noun
11	어느	*eo-neu*	which	question word
12	어디	*eo-di*	where	question word
13	조금	*jo-geum*	a little	adverb
14	아직	*a-jik*	still; not yet	adverb
15	오다	*o-da*	to come	verb
16	살다	*sal-da*	to live	verb
17	잘하다	*jal-ha-da*	to be good at	verb
18	-에서	*e-seo*	from; at (where an action happens)	particle
19	-에	*e*	in; at; to (place)	particle
20	그래요?	*geu-rae-yo*	really? is that so?	phrase

사람 or 인? Both Are Correct

A Korean person is a **한국 사람** or, more formally and in writing, a **한국인** (the 인 here means "person"). Both are fine: 영국 사람이에요 and 영국인이에요 mean the same thing. In

conversation 사람 is the more natural one.

Don't Say "I Am Korea"

Do not answer "Where are you from?" with just the country and 이에요: 저는 한국이에요 means "I am Korea". Say 한국 사람이에요 ("I am a Korean person") or 한국에서 왔어요 ("I came from Korea"). You can also say 저는 한국 출신이에요 jeoneun hanguk chulsin-ieyo, "I'm originally from Korea", which is useful when you now live somewhere else.

Britain, England and Scotland

영국 is the word for the United Kingdom as a whole, so a British person is a **영국 사람**. Korean also uses **잉글랜드** and **스코틀랜드** for the individual countries, for instance in football coverage where they play as separate teams. If you want to be specific, say **스코틀랜드에서 왔어요** ("I'm from Scotland"); Koreans will understand it. (How Koreans choose between 영국, 잉글랜드 and 스코틀랜드 in everyday speech wasn't something I could confirm, so listen for it.)

Your Korean Is Good!

When a foreigner says even a few words of Korean, people often respond **한국어 잘하세요!** It is a compliment and a kindness, not a real assessment. A modest reply is **아니에요, 조금 해요** ("no, only a little"), or just **감사합니다**. You can also say the language name two ways: **한국어** (more formal) and **한국말** (everyday).

As Heard in Dramas — 드라마에서

Characters often mention their **고향** (hometown) and sometimes switch to a regional **사투리** saturi (dialect), such as the speech of Busan or Jeju, which drama subtitles often mark with a note. Casual questions like **너 어디서 왔어?** ("where are you from?") use the shortened **어디서** for 어디에서.

Grammar Pointer

The particles **에서** and **에** are explained in Korean Grammar 1, chapter 4; the past tense **왔어요** in Korean Grammar 1, chapter 7; and "noun + 이에요/예요" in Korean Grammar 1, chapter 5.

✍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Say "I'm British" politely.

▼ Show answer

저는 영국 사람이에요. (Jeoneun yeongguk saram-ieyo.)

2. Say "I'm from Scotland."

▼ Show answer

스코틀랜드에서 왔어요. (Seukoteullaendeu-eseo wasseoyo.)

3. Say "I live in Edinburgh."

▼ Show answer

에든버러에 살아요. (Edeunbeoreo-e sarayo.)

4. Ask "Which country are you from?" politely, and then to a close friend.

▼ Show answer

어느 나라 사람이에요? and 어느 나라 사람이야?

5. Choose 에 or 에서: 서울___ 살아요 (I live in Seoul) and 서울___ 왔어요 (I came from Seoul).

▼ Show answer

서울에 살아요 (where you live: 에) and 서울에서 왔어요 (where you came from: 에서).

6. Someone says 한국어 잘하세요! and you only know a little. Reply modestly.

▼ Show answer

아니에요, 조금 해요. (Anieyo, jogeum haeyo.) or 아직 잘 못해요. or simply 감사합니다.