KR

KOREAN LESSON

Basic Conversation 2 · Chapter 9 · The Past

Korean Basic Conversation 2

Chapter 9 · Talking About the Past: Yesterday & Last Weekend

⏪ Talking About the Past — 어제와 지난 주말

*You have already used a few past forms as ready-made phrases (재미있었어요, 시켰어요, 아팠어요). This chapter teaches the **whole past-tense pattern**, so that you can tell what you did yesterday, last weekend or on your last trip. It also settles the question left open since Chapter 7: **안 or 못?** By the end you will be able to tell a short story in order. Dialogs carry a **Hard words** note, and the tables keep the "Say it" column.*

eo = ㅓ (short, open "uh") **eu** = ㅡ (unrounded "oo") **ss** in -ssyo / -sseoyo = tense ㅆ (tight "ss")

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

① Yesterday — 어제 뭐 했어요?

A:

어제 뭐 했어요?

What did you do yesterday?

B:

집에서 쉬었어요. 그리고 영화를 봤어요.

I rested at home. And I watched a film.

A:

무슨 영화를 봤어요?

What film did you watch?

B:

한국 사극을 봤어요. 정말 재미있었어요.

A Korean historical drama. It was really good.

Hard words: 쉬었어요 swi-eo-sseo-yo · 봤어요 bwa-sseo-yo · 사극 sa-geuk · 재미있었어요 jae-mi-i-sseo-sseo-yo

② Last Weekend — 지난 주말에 뭐 했어요?

A:

지난 주말에 뭐 했어요?

What did you do last weekend?

B:

토요일에는 친구를 만났어요. 같이 한강에 갔어요.

On Saturday I met a friend. We went to the Han River together.

A:

한강에서 뭐 했어요?

What did you do at the Han River?

B:

자전거를 타고 치킨을 먹었어요.

We rode bikes and ate fried chicken.

Hard words: 지난 주말 ji-nan ju-mal · 만났어요 man-na-sseo-yo · 한강 han-gang · 자전거 ja-jeon-geo · 타고 ta-go

③ An Excuse — 못 갔어요

A:

어제 파티에 왜 안 왔어요?

Why didn't you come to the party yesterday?

B:

못 갔어요. 일이 많았어요. 그래서 늦게 퇴근했어요.

I couldn't go. I had a lot of work. So I finished late.

A:

아, 그랬어요? 아쉬워요.

Oh, I see. What a pity.

B:

죄송해요. 다음에는 꼭 갈게요!

I'm sorry. I'll definitely come next time!

Hard words: 못 갔어요 mot ga-sseo-yo [mon ga-sseo-yo] · 많았어요 ma-na-sseo-yo · 그래서 geu-rae-seo · 퇴근했어요 toe-geun-hae-sseo-yo · 아쉬워요 a-swi-wo-yo

④ 안 or 못? — 아침을 안 먹었어요

A:

아침 먹었어요?

Did you eat breakfast?

B:

아니요, 안 먹었어요. 시간이 없었어요.

No, I didn't. I had no time.

A:

그럼 점심은요?

And lunch?

B:

점심도 못 먹었어요. 회의가 길었어요.

I couldn't eat lunch either. The meeting was long.

A:

지금 같이 먹을까요?

Shall we eat now?

Hard words: 안 먹었어요 an meo-geo-sseo-yo · 없었어요 eop-sseo-sseo-yo · 못 먹었어요 mon meo-geo-sseo-yo · 회의 hoe-ui · 길었어요 gi-reo-sseo-yo

⑤ A Trip — 지난달에 부산에 갔어요

A:

지난달에 어디에 갔어요?

Where did you go last month?

B:

부산에 갔어요.

I went to Busan.

A:

누구하고 갔어요?

Who did you go with?

⑥ Two Friends (casual) — 고생했어!

A:

어제 뭐 했어?

What did you do yesterday?

B:

하루 종일 잤어! 한 번도 안 일어났어.

I slept all day! I didn't get up even once.

A:

부러워! 나는 어제 일했어.

I'm jealous! I worked yesterday.

B:

가족하고 갔어요. KTX를 타고 갔어요. 바다에서 회를 먹었어요.

With my family. We took the KTX. We ate raw fish by the sea.

A:

어땠어요?

How was it?

B:

정말 좋았어요!

It was really great!

Hard words: 지난달 ji-nan-dal · 부산 bu-san · 누구하고 nu-gu-ha-go · 가족 ga-jok · 회 hoe · 좋았어요 jo-a-sseo-yo

B:

헐, 고생했어!

Wow, you must have had a hard time!

Hard words: 하루 종일 ha-ru jong-il · 잤어 ja-sseo · 한 번도 han beon-do · 부러워 bu-reo-wo · 고생했어 go-saeng-hae-sseo

🔑 Key Phrases — 중요한 표현

SITUATION	POLITE	CASUAL
What did you do yesterday?	어제 뭐 했어요? *eo-je mwo hae-sseo-yo?*	어제 뭐 했어? *eo-je mwo hae-sseo?*
Where did you go?	어디에 갔어요? *eo-di-e ga-sseo-yo?*	어디 갔어? *eo-di ga-sseo?*
Who did you go with?	누구하고 갔어요? *nu-gu-ha-go ga-sseo-yo?*	누구랑 갔어? *nu-gu-rang ga-sseo?*
How was it?	어땠어요? *eot-tae-sseo-yo?*	어땠어? *eot-tae-sseo?*
I couldn't go.	못 갔어요. *mot ga-sseo-yo.*	못 갔어. *mot ga-sseo.*

SITUATION	POLITE	CASUAL
It was great!	정말 좋았어요! *jeong-mal jo-a-sseo-yo!*	진짜 좋았어! *jin-jja jo-a-sseo!*

🔤 Three Verbs for Your Stories — 동사

VERB	EVERYDAY POLITE (-요)	FORMAL (-ㅂ니다)	CASUAL
to ride; to take (transport) (타다)	타요 *ta-yo*	탑니다 *tam-ni-da*	타 *ta*
to buy (사다)	사요 *sa-yo*	삽니다 *sam-ni-da*	사 *sa*
to play; to hang out (놀다)	놀아요 *no-ra-yo*	놉니다 *nom-ni-da*	놀아 *no-ra*

놀다 drops its ㄹ before ㅂ (like 살다 in Chapter 5): 놉니다.

🧱 Five Tools for the Past

1. The past tense — -았어요 / -었어요

Start from the everyday polite form (가요, 먹어요) and swap the final **요** for **ㅆ어요**, joining it to the vowel before it: 가요 → 갔어요. The simple rule from the stem: last vowel **ㅏ or ㅗ** → **-았어요**, any other vowel → **-었어요**, and **-하다** → **-했어요**. Where the stem ends in a vowel the two sounds melt together (가 + 았 → 갔, 보 + 았 → 봤, 마시 + 었 → 마셨).

VERB	PRESENT (-요)	PAST (-었어요)	SAY IT	CASUAL PAST
가다 go	가요	갔어요	*ga-sseo-yo*	갔어
오다 come	와요	왔어요	*wa-sseo-yo*	왔어
보다 see	봐요	봤어요	*bwa-sseo-yo*	봤어

VERB	PRESENT (-요)	PAST (-었어요)	SAY IT	CASUAL PAST
사다 buy	사요	샀어요	*sa-sseo-yo*	샀어
만나다 meet	만나요	만났어요	*man-na-sseo-yo*	만났어
자다 sleep	자요	잤어요	*ja-sseo-yo*	잤어
먹다 eat	먹어요	먹었어요	*meo-geo-sseo-yo*	먹었어
마시다 drink	마셔요	마셨어요	*ma-syeo-sseo-yo*	마셨어
쉬다 rest	쉬어요	쉬었어요	*swi-eo-sseo-yo*	쉬었어
하다 do	해요	했어요	*hae-sseo-yo*	했어
듣다 listen	들어요	들었어요	*deu-reo-sseo-yo*	들었어
있다 be; have	있어요	있었어요	*i-sseo-sseo-yo*	있었어
이다 be (is)	이에요 / 예요	이었어요 / 였어요	*i-eo-sseo-yo / yeo-sseo-yo*	이었어 / 였어

Describing words use the same pattern: 좋아요 → 좋았어요, 많아요 → 많았어요, 길어요 → 길었어요, and the ㅂ-irregular words become 더웠어요, 추웠어요, 아쉬웠어요 (Chapter 6). The pronunciation: **ㅆ어요** is said "sseo-yo", with a tight ss.

Formal past: -았/었습니다 (갔습니다, 먹었습니다). **Casual past:** drop the 요 (갔어, 먹었어).

2. Time words for the past — 과거 시간 표현

ENGLISH	KOREAN	SAY IT
yesterday	어제	*eo-je*
the day before yesterday	그저께 (그제)	*geu-jeo-kke (geu-je)*

ENGLISH	KOREAN	SAY IT
last night	어젯밤	*eo-jet-ppam*
this morning	오늘 아침	*o-neul a-chim*
a while ago	아까	*a-kka*
last week	지난주	*ji-nan-ju*
last weekend	지난 주말	*ji-nan ju-mal*
last month	지난달	*ji-nan-dal*
last year	작년	*jang-nyeon*

Words like 어제, 그저께, 작년 and 아까 do not take 에, but 지난 주말에, 지난달에 and 토요일에 do.

3. 안 or 못? — the answer

	안	못
Meaning	not (a choice, a plain "no", or a state)	cannot (inability or circumstances)
Present	안 가요 I'm not going / I don't go	못 가요 I can't go
Past	안 갔어요 I didn't go	못 갔어요 I couldn't go
With 하다	운동 안 했어요	숙제를 못 했어요
With a describing word	안 비싸요 it's not expensive	(not used)

Put **안/못** directly before the verb. With a **noun + 하다** verb it goes between the noun and 하다: 공부 안 해요, 운동 못 했어요. **못** makes a gentle excuse because it shows you were prevented, not unwilling (못 갔어요, "I couldn't go"), whereas **안** can sound like you did not want to. Pronunciation: 못 가요 is said "mon gayo".

4. Telling a story in order — 연결어

KOREAN	SAY IT	MEANING
먼저	*meon-jeo*	first
그다음에	*geu-da-eu-me*	after that; then
그리고	*geu-ri-go*	and; also
그래서	*geu-rae-seo*	so; therefore
그런데	*geu-reon-de*	but; by the way
마지막으로	*ma-ji-ma-geu-ro*	finally

A Model Story — 지난 주말

지난 주말에 친구하고 서울숲에 갔어요. 먼저 점심을 먹었어요. 그다음에 공원에서 자전거를 탔어요. 날씨가 아주 좋았어요. 그리고 저녁에는 영화를 봤어요. 정말 재미있었어요. 그런데 집에 늦게 도착했어요. 그래서 일요일에는 늦게 일어났어요.

Last weekend I went to Seoul Forest (a park) with a friend. First we had lunch. Then we rode bikes in the park. The weather was great. And in the evening we watched a film. It was really good. But I got home late. So on Sunday I got up late.

Hard words: *서울숲* seo-ul-sup · *도착했어요* do-cha-kae-sseo-yo (arrived) · *날씨* nal-ssi.

5. Sentence builder — one frame for every story

Almost every past-tense story uses this frame: **time** (지난 주말에) + **who with** (친구하고) + **where** (한강에서) + **what** (치킨을) + **past verb** (먹었어요). Korean puts the verb last, so you fill the frame from left to right and finish with the verb.

📖 Vocabulary — 어휘

#	KOREAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	어제	*eo-je*	yesterday	noun
2	그저께	*geu-jeo-kke*	the day before yesterday	noun
3	어젯밤	*eo-jet-ppam*	last night	noun
4	지난주	*ji-nan-ju*	last week	noun
5	지난달	*ji-nan-dal*	last month	noun
6	작년	*jang-nyeon*	last year	noun
7	아까	*a-kka*	a while ago	adverb
8	하루 종일	*ha-ru jong-il*	all day long	phrase
9	가족	*ga-jok*	family	noun
10	한강	*han-gang*	the Han River (Seoul)	noun
11	회의	*hoe-ui*	meeting	noun
12	누구	*nu-gu*	who	question word
13	타다	*ta-da*	to ride; to take (transport)	verb
14	사다	*sa-da*	to buy	verb
15	놀다	*nol-da*	to play; to hang out	verb
16	도착하다	*do-cha-ka-da*	to arrive	verb
17	고생하다	*go-saeng-ha-da*	to go through hardship; to work hard	verb
18	아쉽다	*a-swip-tta*	to be a pity; to be regrettable	adjective
19	그래서	*geu-rae-seo*	so; therefore	connector

#	KOREAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
20	마지막으로	*ma-ji-ma-geu-ro*	finally	adverb

Say It Right: -ㅆ어요

The past ending sounds like **"sseo-yo"** with a tight, hissing ss. The syllable before it joins on to the ㅆ in speech: 갔어요 is "ga-sseo-yo", 먹었어요 is "meo-geo-sseo-yo". Listen for that doubled s at the end of a Korean verb: it is the signal that something happened already.

The Han River Picnic

The Han River parks are where Seoul goes on a nice evening: people ride bikes, sit on the grass, and order fried chicken, pizza and noodles delivered right to their picnic spot. Convenience stores nearby even have machines for cooking instant ramen (한강 라면). When someone says 한강에서 놀았어요, this is what they mean.

고생했어요: Acknowledging Effort

고생했어요 literally means "you went through hardship". Koreans use it after a hard day, a long trip or a tough task to say "you've worked so hard". Close relatives are **수고했어요** ("thank you for your effort"), more common between colleagues. These small phrases are part of being kind in Korean.

As Heard in Dramas — 드라마에서

You will hear **헐** ("wow, what?!") and **대박** ("amazing!") as reactions to a friend's story. Dramas also love the question 어제 어디 갔었어? ("where were you yesterday?"), delivered with a suspicious look. The extra **-었-** there (갔었어) marks something finished and done with, but you can use plain 갔어요 for now.

Grammar Pointer

The past forms you saw earlier (Chapter 4: 재미있었어요, 어땠어요; Chapter 7: 시켰어요, 식었어요; Chapter 8: 아팠어요, 걸렸어요) all follow the pattern in this chapter. The ㅂ-irregular past (더웠어요) is from Chapter 6, and 하루에 한 번-style frequency is from Chapter 2. Next, Korean Basic Conversation 2, Chapter 10 uses the polite and formal endings on the phone.

✍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

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

1. Say "Yesterday I rested at home and watched a film."

▼ Show answer

어제 집에서 쉬었어요. 그리고 영화를 봤어요.

2. Put into the past: 가요, 먹어요, 해요, 만나요, 더워요.

▼ Show answer

갔어요, 먹었어요, 했어요, 만났어요, 더웠어요

3. Say "I couldn't go to the party. I had a lot of work."

▼ Show answer

파티에 못 갔어요. 일이 많았어요.

4. Say "I didn't eat breakfast, so I'm hungry now" (just do the first part).

▼ Show answer

아침을 안 먹었어요.

5. Ask a friend "Who did you go to Busan with?" (polite).

▼ Show answer

부산에 누구하고 갔어요?

6. Ask a close friend casually, "What did you do last weekend?"

▼ Show answer

지난 주말에 뭐 했어?