KR

LANGUAGE COURSE

Korean Grammar 1

Word order, particles, verbs, adjectives, numbers and the polite speech levels: the sentence core of Korean.

10 Chapters

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KOREAN GRAMMAR 1

Contents

Chapter 1	Sentence Order	2
Chapter 2	Hangul Extras	7
Chapter 3	Topic and Subject	14
Chapter 4	Object and Place	19
Chapter 5	To Be	24
Chapter 6	Polite Present	29
Chapter 7	Past and Future	34
Chapter 8	Adjectives and Questions	39
Chapter 9	Numbers and Time	45
Chapter 10	Putting It Together	51

🧩 How a Korean Sentence Works — 한국어 문장의 구조

English builds a sentence by word order: the order of the words tells you who did what to whom. Korean builds it by word jobs: small markers attached to nouns say what each noun is doing, and the one fixed rule is that the verb comes last. This chapter shows you the shape of a Korean sentence before you learn the pieces. You have already learned to read Hangul in Korean Alphabet 1; here you start to read whole sentences with it.

How examples are written: Hangul first, then Revised Romanization in italics, then English. **eo** = ㅓ (a short, open "uh")

eu = ㅡ (the unrounded "oo") **ae** = ㅐ (like the vowel in "bed"; taught in Chapter 2)

- hyphens in romanisation only show where a word ends and its marker begins

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

A Korean sentence ends with its **verb**. Before the verb come the other parts, usually in the order **subject** → **object** → **verb** (SOV). English says "I *eat* an apple" (subject, verb, object); Korean says "I apple *eat*."

Subject, object, verb: English against Korean

Compare one idea in the two languages. The Korean verb sits at the very end, and the object stands in front of it.

ENGLISH (S-V-O)	KOREAN (S-O-V)	WORD BY WORD
I eat an apple.	**저는 사과를 먹어요.** *jeo-neun sagwa-reul meogeoyo.*	I (topic) · apple (object) · eat
A friend reads a book.	**친구가 책을 읽어요.** *chingu-ga chaek-eul ilgeoyo.*	friend (subject) · book (object) · reads
The cat sleeps.	**고양이가 자요.** *goyang-i-ga jayo.*	cat (subject) · sleeps
I go to school.	**학교에 가요.** *hakgyo-e gayo.*	school (to) · go

Do not worry yet about the little endings on the nouns (**는**, **가**, **를**, **을**, **에**). They are **particles**, and they are the subject of Chapters 3 and 4. For now, notice only two things: each one is written attached to the noun before it, and the verb is always last.

Watch out: a final "verb" is not always a verb of action

The last word of a sentence can also be an adjective (*"is pretty"*) or the word for "to be". Korean treats all of these as verb-like words with endings, so the rule is better stated as: **the sentence ends with a predicate**. Chapters 5 to 8 take them in turn.

Words, particles and spaces

Korean puts a space between each **word unit**, but a particle is written *without* a space, joined to the noun it marks. So **사과를** is one unit (apple + object marker), and **저는 사과를 먹어요** is three units.

UNIT	MADE OF	MEANING
저는 *jeoneun*	저 (I, polite) + 는 (topic marker)	as for me
사과를 *sagwareul*	사과 (apple) + 를 (object marker)	(the) apple, as the thing eaten
먹어요 *meogeoyo*	먹- (eat) + -어요 (polite present ending)	eat(s)

Also note what Korean writing does *not* have: there are **no capital letters**, and the full stop, comma and question mark are used much as in English.

No articles

Korean has no word for *a*, *an* or *the*. **사과** alone can mean "an apple", "the apple" or "apples"; the situation tells you which. Nouns do not change for singular and plural either. A plural marker **들** *deul* exists, but it is optional and is used much less often than English *-s*, so a bare noun is the normal choice.

> **Watch out: do not translate every English "the" or "-s"**
> A learner who adds a word for "a/the" or a plural ending to every noun sounds stiff. Leave the bare noun alone unless the number really matters (then use a number and a counter, Chapter 9).

The subject (and more) is often left out

When it is clear from the situation who is meant, Korean simply does not say it. "I", "you" and "it" disappear far more often than in English. A one-word-short reply is perfectly complete:

QUESTION	REPLY	WHAT WAS DROPPED
어디 가요? *eodi gayo?* Where are you going?	**학교에 가요.** *hakgyo-e gayo.* (I) go to school.	"you" in the question and "I" in the reply
뭐 마셔요? *mwo masyeoyo?* What are you drinking?	**물 마셔요.** *mul masyeoyo.* (I) drink water.	"you", "I", and (casually) the object marker

In speech, the object marker and the topic marker are also often dropped in casual conversation, as in **물 마셔요**. This course writes them in full so you learn what they do first.

Word order is flexible, but the verb stays last

Because the particles label each noun, the nouns can be moved around for emphasis without changing the meaning. The one thing you cannot do in an ordinary sentence is move the verb away from the end.

ORDER	SENTENCE	NOTE
Subject, object, verb	**친구가 책을 읽어요.** *chinguga chaegeul ilgeoyo.*	the neutral order
Object, subject, verb	**책을 친구가 읽어요.** *chaegeul chinguga ilgeoyo.*	same meaning; stresses "the *book*"

Both sentences mean "A friend reads a book." If you swap the particles instead (**친구를 책이 읽어요**), you get "The book reads the friend": the markers, not the position, decide who does what.

Dictionary form: every verb ends in 다

Verbs are listed in dictionaries in a form that ends in **다** *da*. Remove the **다** and you have the **stem**, which is what the endings attach to (Chapter 6). The sentences above use the everyday polite ending **-요**.

DICTIONARY FORM	STEM	POLITE PRESENT	MEANING
먹다 *meokda*	먹-	**먹어요** *meogeoyo*	to eat
가다 *gada*	가-	**가요** *gayo*	to go
자다 *jada*	자-	**자요** *jayo*	to sleep
마시다 *masida*	마시-	**마셔요** *masyeoyo*	to drink
읽다 *ikda*	읽-	**읽어요** *ilgeoyo*	to read

> **Watch out: the written form is not always what you say**
> **읽다** is pronounced *ikda* on its own, but **읽어요** is pronounced *ilgeoyo*: the final ㄺ keeps both sounds when a vowel follows. Spelling and sound drift apart in Korean; Chapter 2 teaches the changes you need. For now, copy the pronunciations shown.

Questions use the same order

A yes/no question needs no change of word order and no extra word: the polite ending stays and the voice rises at the end. In writing you add a question mark.

STATEMENT	QUESTION
학생이에요. *haksaeng-ieyo.* (I) am a student.	**학생이에요?** *haksaeng-ieyo?* Are you a student?
커피 마셔요. *keopi masyeoyo.* (I) drink coffee.	**커피 마셔요?** *keopi masyeoyo?* Do you drink coffee?

🗣️ In Use — 실제 예문

The rule in short exchanges. Notice how much is left unsaid.

① Where to?

A:
어디 가요?
eodi gayo?
Where are you going?

B:
학교에 가요.
hakgyo-e gayo.
I'm going to school.

② Coffee?

A:
커피 마셔요?
keopi masyeoyo?
Do you drink coffee?

B:
아니요, 물 마셔요.
aniyo, mul masyeoyo.
No, I drink water.

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

FEATURE	KOREAN	EXAMPLE
Basic order	subject → object → verb	**친구가 책을 읽어요.**
Verb position	always last	**저는 사과를 먹어요.**
Noun jobs	marked by particles written joined to the noun	**학교에**
Articles	none	**사과** = apple / an apple / the apple
Plural	usually not marked (optional 들)	**친구** = friend(s)
Subject	often dropped	**학교에 가요.**
Dictionary verb	ends in 다	**먹다**, **가다**
Question	same sentence, rising voice, **?**	**학생이에요?**

🖍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. What is the last word in **저는 물을 마셔요.** and what does it mean?

▼ Show answer

마셔요 (*masyeoyo*), "drink(s)". The verb is last.

2. Put the English order "A friend eats an apple" into Korean order, using the words 친구가, 사과를, 먹어요.

▼ Show answer

친구가 사과를 먹어요. (*chinguga sagwareul meogeoyo.*) Subject, object, verb.

3. Is **책을 친구가 읽어요** a correct sentence? What changes compared with **친구가 책을 읽어요**?

▼ Show answer

Yes. The meaning is the same; only the emphasis changes (the book is stressed). The particles still label each noun and the verb is still last.

4. How many word units are in **친구가 책을 읽어요**?

▼ Show answer

Three: **친구가**, **책을**, **읽어요**. A particle is joined to its noun, not written separately.

5. Does Korean have a word for "the" or "a"? How would you say "apple" in Korean?

▼ Show answer

No. **사과** covers "apple", "an apple", "the apple" and "apples".

6. Someone asks **어디 가요?** Reply "(I) go to school" without using "I".

▼ Show answer

학교에 가요. (*hakgyo-e gayo.*) The subject is dropped because the situation makes it clear.

7. Find the stem of **가다**, **자다** and **먹다**.

▼ Show answer

Remove 다: **가-**, **자-**, **먹-**.

8. How do you turn the statement **커피 마셔요.** into a question?

▼ Show answer

Write it as **커피 마셔요?** and say it with a rising voice. The words and their order do not change.

Coming up in Chapter 2: Hangul Beyond the Basics. The tense consonants, the compound vowels, double final consonants and the sound changes that explain why **읽어요** is said *ilgeoyo*. It builds on *Korean Alphabet 1*, chapters 9 and 10.

🔤 Hangul Beyond the Basics — 한글 더 알아보기

*Korean Alphabet 1 taught you the 24 basic letters and the final consonant (chapters 1 to 9) and gave you reading practice (chapter 10). It deliberately left out four things that grammar needs from now on: the **tense consonants**, the **compound vowels**, the **double final consonants** and the **sound changes** that happen when syllables meet. This chapter fills those gaps, with the sound changes in the order you will meet them.*

[ ] square brackets show how a word is *said* when that differs from how it is *written*.

RR = Revised Romanization, the official system. It mostly follows the spelling, but follows the sound for some changes (see the end of the chapter).

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

Korean spelling keeps each word's **base form**, but the sound shifts where syllables join. Three things to look at: **what the final consonant of one block is**, **what starts the next block**, and whether that next block begins with a silent ㅇ. The written form stays the same; the spoken form follows the rules below.

1. The five tense consonants

Each tense consonant is a doubled letter, and it is said with a tight throat and no puff of air, with a slightly higher pitch on the following vowel. It is a separate sound from both the plain and the aspirated (breathy) letter you already know.

TENSE	RR	PLAIN	ASPIRATED
ㄲ	kk	ㄱ g/k	ㅋ k
ㄸ	tt	ㄷ d/t	ㅌ t
ㅃ	pp	ㅂ b/p	ㅍ p
ㅆ	ss	ㅅ s	(none)
ㅉ	jj	ㅈ j	ㅊ ch

The three-way difference changes meaning, so it matters. Say each trio aloud:

PLAIN	ASPIRATED	TENSE
달 *dal* moon	**탈** *tal* mask	**딸** *ttal* daughter
불 *bul* fire	**풀** *pul* grass	**뿔** *ppul* horn
자요 *jayo* (someone) sleeps	**차요** *chayo* (it) is cold	**짜요** *jjayo* (it) is salty

More words with tense consonants: **까치** *kkachi* magpie · **빠르다** *ppareuda* to be fast · **싸다** *ssada* to be cheap · **아저씨** *ajeossi* middle-aged man, mister.

Watch out: ㅆ is both an initial and a final

ㅆ is also a letter you will meet at the end of a block in past-tense endings (**갔어요** *gasseoyo*, Chapter 7). As a final it is said like ㄷ (a "t" sound that stops the syllable).

2. The compound vowels

Eleven more vowel letters are built by joining the basic vowels you know. They look new, but each one is a short glide.

LETTER	RR	ROUGH SOUND	EXAMPLE
ㅐ	ae	"e" in *bed*	**개** *gae* dog
ㅔ	e	"e" in *bed* (same as ㅐ for most speakers today)	**게** *ge* crab
ㅒ	yae	"yeh"	**얘기** *yaegi* talk, story
ㅖ	ye	"yeh"	**예** *ye* yes (polite)
ㅘ	wa	"wa" in *want*	**사과** *sagwa* apple
ㅙ	wae	"weh"	**왜** *wae* why
ㅚ	oe	"weh" in everyday speech	**회사** *hoesa* company
ㅝ	wo	"wuh"	**뭐** *mwo* what
ㅞ	we	"weh"	**웨이터** *weiteo* waiter
ㅟ	wi	"wee"	**귀** *gwi* ear
ㅢ	ui	ㅡ then ㅣ, said quickly	**의사** *uisa* doctor

Watch out: several of these sound the same

In everyday speech ㅐ and ㅔ are said the same, and ㅙ ㅚ ㅞ are all close to "weh". You hear the same sound but must *spell* each word as it is written, so learn the spelling with the word. ㅢ also varies: as the possessive particle **의** it is usually said "eh", and after a consonant in a word like **희망** it is said "ee".

3. Double final consonants

Eleven pairs of consonants can sit at the foot of a block. When nothing follows, or a consonant follows, **only one of the two is said**; which one depends on the pair.

FINAL	SAID AS	EXAMPLE	MEANING
ㄳ	ㄱ	**몫** *[mok]*	share, portion
ㄵ	ㄴ	**앉다** *[an-tta]*	to sit
ㄶ	ㄴ	**많다** *[man-ta]*	to be many

FINAL	SAID AS	EXAMPLE	MEANING
ㄺ	ㄱ	**읽다** *[ik-tta]*	to read
ㄻ	ㅁ	**젊다** *[jeom-tta]*	to be young
ㄼ	ㄹ	**넓다** *[neol-tta]*	to be wide
ㄽ	ㄹ	**곬** *[gol]*	groove (rare word)
ㄾ	ㄹ	**핥다** *[hal-tta]*	to lick
ㄿ	ㅂ	**읊다** *[eup-tta]*	to recite
ㅀ	ㄹ	**싫다** *[sil-ta]*	to be disliked
ㅄ	ㅂ	**없다** *[eop-tta]*	to not exist, not have

Two more everyday nouns: **값** *[gap]* price and **닭** *[dak]* chicken. A few words are exceptions to the pattern in the table (for example **밟다** is said *[bap-tta]* although ㄼ usually gives ㄹ), so learn exceptions as you meet them.

When a vowel follows (including a silent ㅇ), both consonants are said, and the second one moves to the next block:

WRITTEN	SAID	RR
읽어요	[일거요]	*ilgeoyo*
앉아요	[안자요]	*anjayo*
없어요	[업써요]	*eopseoyo*
닭이	[달기]	*dalgi*

> **Watch out: ㅎ goes silent before a vowel**
> In **많아요** the ㅎ is not said, so the word is *[마나요] manayo*. The same happens to a ㅎ at the foot of **싫어요** *sireoyo* ("dislike") and **좋아요** *joayo* ("good, like").

4. Sound changes where syllables meet

Six changes cover almost everything you will meet. Look at the *final* consonant (or ending sound) of one block and the *first* consonant of the next.

A. Linking

A final consonant followed by the silent ㅇ moves forward to be the start of the next syllable.

WRITTEN	SAID	RR	MEANING
한국어	[한구거]	*hangugeo*	the Korean language
음악	[으막]	*eumak*	music

WRITTEN	SAID	RR	MEANING
먹어요	[머거요]	*meogeoyo*	(I) eat

B. Tensing

After a final ㄱ, ㄷ or ㅂ sound (k, t, p), a plain ㄱ, ㄷ, ㅂ, ㅅ or ㅈ at the start of the next block is said tense.

WRITTEN	SAID	RR	MEANING
학교	[학꾜]	*hakgyo*	school
먹다	[먹따]	*meokda*	to eat
입다	[입따]	*ipda*	to wear

C. Nasalisation

A final ㄱ, ㄷ or ㅂ sound before ㄴ or ㅁ becomes the nasal in its own place of the mouth: ㄱ → ㅇ (ng), ㄷ → ㄴ, ㅂ → ㅁ.

WRITTEN	SAID	RR	MEANING
한국말	[한궁말]	*hangungmal*	the Korean language (spoken)
감사합니다	[감사함니다]	*gamsahamnida*	thank you
국물	[궁물]	*gungmul*	soup, broth

D. The letter ㅎ

ㅎ next to ㄱ, ㄷ, ㅈ makes the aspirated sound (ㅋ, ㅌ, ㅊ), in either order.

WRITTEN	SAID	RR	MEANING
좋다	[조타]	*jota*	to be good
축하	[추카]	*chuka*	congratulations

E. ㄴ and ㄹ together

ㄴ next to ㄹ becomes ㄹ + ㄹ.

WRITTEN	SAID	RR	MEANING
연락	[열락]	*yeollak*	contact
신라	[실라]	*Silla*	Silla (a historic kingdom)

F. Softening before 이

A final ㄷ or ㅌ followed by the ending **이** is said as **지** or **치**.

WRITTEN	SAID	RR	MEANING
같이	[가치]	*gachi*	together
해돋이	[해도지]	*haedoji*	sunrise

Watch out: Revised Romanization does not mark every change

RR follows the sound for linking (*hangugeo*), nasalisation (*hangungmal*), the ㅎ changes (*jota*), ㄴ+ㄹ (*yeollak*) and the ㅇ-softening, but it does **not** mark tensing: **학교** is written *hakgyo*, although you say "hakkyo". That is why the romanisations in this course sometimes look unlike what you hear.

🗣️ In Use — 실제 예문

Read each exchange aloud, applying the sound changes.

① Is it salty?

A:
국물이 짜요?
gungmuri jjayo?
Is the soup salty?

B:
아니요, 좋아요.
aniyo, joayo.
No, it's good.

② A seat

A:
여기 앉아요.
yeogi anjayo.
Sit here.

B:
감사합니다.
gamsahamnida.
Thank you.

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

TOPIC	REMEMBER
Tense consonants	ㄲ ㄸ ㅃ ㅆ ㅉ: tight throat, no puff; plain, aspirated and tense differ in meaning
Compound vowels	11 letters; ㅐ = ㅔ and 괘 = 쇠 = 궤 sound alike, so learn spelling with each word
Double finals	one consonant said before a consonant or at the end; both when a vowel follows
Linking	final + silent ㅇ moves forward: **한국어** [한구거]
Tensing	k/t/p + plain consonant → tense: **학교** [학꾜]
Nasalisation	k/t/p + ㄴ/ㅁ → ng/n/m: **국물** [궁물]
ㅎ	makes ㅋ ㅌ ㅊ next to ㄱ ㄷ ㅈ; silent before a vowel
ㄴ + ㄹ	→ ㄹㄹ: **연락** [열락]
Softening	ㄷ/ㅌ + 이 → 지/치: **같이** [가치]

🖍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. Which word means "daughter": **달**, **탈** or **딸**?

▼ Show answer

딸 *ttal*, with the tense ㄸ. (달 = moon, 탈 = mask.)

2. Which letter has the tense sound that sits between ㅈ and ㅊ?

▼ Show answer

None: ㅉ *jj* is a third, separate sound, not a blend. The three are ㅈ (plain), ㅊ (aspirated) and ㅉ (tense).

3. Name the compound vowel in **사과** and give its RR.

▼ Show answer

ㅘ *wa*, so the word is *sagwa*.

4. Which two vowel letters sound the same for most speakers today?

▼ Show answer

ㅐ and ㅔ (both "e" as in *bed*). ㅙ, ㅚ and ㅞ are also close to one another.

5. Which consonant is said in the written final ㅄ of **없다**?

▼ Show answer

Only ㅂ: the word is said *[업따]*, and the ㄷ of 다 is tensed (rule B).

6. How is **읽어요** said, and why is the written ㄺ pronounced differently from **읽다**?

▼ Show answer

[일거요]. A vowel follows (the silent ㅇ), so both consonants are said and ㄱ moves to the next block. In **읽다** a consonant follows, so only ㄱ is said: *[익따]*.

7. Apply the nasalisation rule to **국물**. What is the spoken form?

▼ Show answer

[궁물] gungmul: final ㄱ before ㅁ becomes ㅇ (ng).

8. How is **좋다** said?

▼ Show answer

[조타] jota: ㅎ and ㄷ together give the aspirated ㅌ.

9. How is **같이** said?

▼ Show answer

[가치] gachi: ㅌ before 이 is said as 치.

10. The RR of **학교** is *hakgyo*. Is it said "hakgyo"?

▼ Show answer

No: it is said *[학꾜]* with a tense ㄱ. RR does not mark tensing.

Coming up in Chapter 3: Topic and Subject Particles. You will meet **은/는** and **이/가**, and learn to choose between each pair by looking at the final sound of the noun, which uses the final-consonant ideas from this chapter.

🏷️ Topic and Subject Particles — 은/는 과 이/가

*Korean Grammar 1, chapter 1 showed that Korean marks the job of each noun with a small particle. The two most common particles mark the noun that the sentence is about. There are two pairs: 은/는 marks the **topic** and 이/가 marks the **subject**. Each pair is two forms of the same particle: you pick one by looking at the last sound of the noun. The choice between the two pairs is the hard part of Korean for English speakers, so this chapter takes it step by step.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

Step 1 (the form): if the noun ends in a **consonant** (a block with a final), use **은** or **이**. If it ends in a **vowel**, use **는** or **가**.

Step 2 (the job): use **은/는** for what the sentence is *about* (known, or contrasted); use **이/가** for the *new* thing, or the one that answers "who?" or "what?".

Step 1: Choosing the form by the final sound

Look only at the **last block** of the noun. If it has a final consonant (*batchim*, Korean Alphabet 1, chapter 9), the noun ends in a consonant. If it does not, the noun ends in a vowel. Remember that ㅇ at the start of a block is silent, but a ㅇ at the *bottom* of a block is a real final (the "ng" sound).

NOUN ENDS IN	TOPIC	SUBJECT
a **vowel**	**는** *neun*	**가** *ga*
a **consonant**	**은** *eun*	**이** *i*

NOUN	ENDS IN	+ TOPIC	+ SUBJECT
친구 *chingu* friend	vowel	**친구는** *chingu-neun*	**친구가** *chingu-ga*
사과 *sagwa* apple	vowel	**사과는** *sagwa-neun*	**사과가** *sagwa-ga*
고양이 *goyang-i* cat	vowel	**고양이는** *goyang-i-neun*	**고양이가** *goyang-i-ga*
책 *chaek* book	consonant (ㄱ)	**책은** *chaeg-eun* [채근]	**책이** *chaeg-i* [채기]
물 *mul* water	consonant (ㄹ)	**물은** *mul-eun* [무른]	**물이** *mul-i* [무리]
학생 *haksaeng* student	consonant (ㅇ)	**학생은** *haksaeng-eun*	**학생이** *haksaeng-i*

When the particle starts with ㅇ (은 and 이), the final of the noun moves across to it (Korean Grammar 1, chapter 2, rule A): **물은** is said "mu-reun", not "mul eun".

Watch out: a final ㅇ counts as a consonant

학생 ends in ㅇ at the bottom of its last block, so it takes **은/이**. A noun like **고양이** ends in the silent ㅇ at the *top* of its last block (the vowel 이), so it takes **는/가**. Look at where the ㅇ sits.

Watch out: the subject particle 이 looks like other words

이 is also the word for "this" (**이 책**, this book) and for "tooth". Only the position tells you which: the particle is joined to the end of a noun and has no space before it.

Step 2: Choosing the job

The topic: 은/는 means "as for..."

The topic is what you are talking *about*. It is usually something already known to both speakers, or something you are setting up to say a comment about. It can also set one thing in **contrast** with another. The English "as for" is the nearest, though Korean uses it far more often than English does.

SENTENCE	MEANING	NOTE
저는 학생이에요. *jeo-neun haksaeng-ieyo.*	I am a student. (As for me, a student.)	introducing yourself; sets the topic (this sentence is built in Korean Grammar 1, chapter 5)
물은 차요. *mul-eun chayo.*	The water is cold. (As for the water...)	the water is already in view
저는 커피를 마셔요. 친구는 물을 마셔요. *jeo-neun keopi-reul masyeoyo. chingu-neun mul-eul masyeoyo.*	I drink coffee; my friend drinks water.	contrast: *I* do this, *my friend* does that

The subject: 이/가 means "it is X that..."

The subject marker points at the thing that does or is something, and is used when this is **new information**, or when the noun answers a question word like "who?". Question words are marked with 이/가: **누가** *nu-ga* (who is the one that...?) and **뭐가** *mwo-ga* (what is it that...?).

SENTENCE	MEANING	NOTE
고양이가 있어요. *goyang-i-ga isseoyo.*	There is a cat.	introduces something new into the conversation
누가 와요? *nu-ga wayo?*	Who is coming?	a question word as the subject takes 가
친구가 와요. *chingu-ga wayo.*	My friend is coming. (It is my friend who comes.)	the answer fills the "who?"
책이 많아요. *chaeg-i manayo.*	There are many books.	describing what is there

The same noun, both ways

WITH 이/가: STATING A FACT, OR ANSWERING	WITH 은/는: TALKING ABOUT IT, OR CONTRASTING
물이 차요. *mul-i chayo.* The water is cold. (I notice and report it.)	**물은 차요.** *mul-eun chayo.* The water, now, is cold. (Perhaps the coffee is not.)
제가 마셔요. *je-ga masyeoyo.* I'm the one who drinks it.	**저는 마셔요.** *jeo-neun masyeoyo.* As for me, I drink it.

Watch out: the pronouns change before 가

저 (I, polite), **나** (I, casual) and **너** (you, casual) change their vowel before the subject particle: **저 + 가 → 제가** *jega*, **나 + 가 → 내가** *naega*, **너 + 가 → 네가** *nega*. Before the topic particle there is no change: **저는**, **나는**, **너는**.

Habits that help

- **New thing → 이/가; known thing or contrast → 은/는.** A story often starts with 이/가 ("There was a cat") and carries on with 은/는 ("The cat slept").
- **Introductions and general facts use 은/는** (**저는 학생이에요**).
- **Both marks never sit on the same noun.** A noun is topic *or* subject, not both.
- **In casual speech either can be dropped** when the meaning is clear: **친구 와요**. This course writes them in full.
- **Not sure?** A question word (**누가**, **뭐가**) always takes 이/가. Otherwise try 은/는; a native speaker will usually understand you either way.

🗣️ In Use — 실제 예문

The rule in short exchanges. Spot the 이/가 on the new information and the 은/는 on the known one.

① Who is coming?

A:

누가 와요?

nu-ga wayo?

Who is coming?

B:

친구가 와요.

chingu-ga wayo.

My friend is coming.

A:

친구는 학생이에요?

chingu-neun haksaeng-ieyo?

Is your friend a student?

② Coffee or water?

A:

커피 마셔요?

keopi masyeoyo?

Do you drink coffee?

B:

저는 커피를 마셔요. 친구는 물을 마셔요.

jeo-neun keopi-reul masyeoyo. chingu-neun mul-eul masyeoyo.

I drink coffee. My friend drinks water.

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

PARTICLE	AFTER	USE	EXAMPLE
는	vowel	topic, contrast	친구는
은	consonant	topic, contrast	책은
가	vowel	subject, new information, "who/what?"	고양이가, 누가
이	consonant	subject, new information	물이
Pronouns before 가		저 → 제, 나 → 내, 너 → 네	제가

🖍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. Add the topic particle: **친구**, **책**, **학교**.

▼ Show answer

친구는, **책은**, **학교는**. (학교 ends in a vowel, so 는.)

2. Add the subject particle: **물**, **사과**, **학생**.

▼ Show answer

물이, **사과가**, **학생이**.

3. Why does **고양이** take 는/가 and not 은/이?

▼ Show answer

Its last block **이** has no final consonant: the ㅇ is the silent one at the top, so the noun ends in a vowel.

4. How is **책이** said?

▼ Show answer

[채기]: the final ㄱ moves across to the silent ㅇ.

5. Which particle goes on the question word in **누___ 와요?** (Who is coming?)

▼ Show answer

가: **누가 와요?** Question words as subject take 이/가.

6. Make "I'm the one who drinks it" with 저 and 마셔요.

▼ Show answer

제가 마셔요. (*jega masyeoyo.*) 저 becomes 제 before 가.

7. Which particle fits: **저___ 학생이에요.** (introducing yourself)?

▼ Show answer

는: **저는 학생이에요.** Introductions use the topic particle.

8. Say "There is a cat" and "As for the cat, it sleeps". Which uses 이/가 and which 은/는?

▼ Show answer

고양이가 있어요. (new information, 가) and **고양이는 자요.** (known, being talked about, 는).

9. Can you write **친구는가** (both particles on one noun)?

▼ Show answer

No. A noun takes the topic *or* the subject marker, not both.

10. What is the difference in feeling between **물이 차요** and **물은 차요**?

▼ Show answer

With 이: you notice and report that the water is cold. With 은: you are talking about the water (or contrasting it with something else) and say it is cold.

Coming up in Chapter 4: Object, Place and Direction Particles. You will meet **을/를**, **에**, **에서**, **으로**, **와/과** and **도**, and use the same vowel-or-consonant test you learned here.

📍 Object, Place and Direction Particles — 을/를, 에, 에서, 으로, 와/과, 도

*Korean Grammar 1, chapter 3 gave you the particles that mark the topic and the subject. This chapter adds the rest of the everyday set: the one that marks the **object**, the ones that say **where**, **by what means** and **with whom**, and the one that means **also**. Where English uses word order and prepositions (to, at, with), Korean attaches a small particle to the noun.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

Some particles have **two forms**, chosen by the last sound of the noun, exactly as in Chapter 3: **을/를** (object), **으로/로** (direction, means) and **과/와** (with, and). The others are **one form only**: **에** (to, at, in), **에서** (at, from) and **도** (also).

The object particle 을/를

The particle marks the thing that the verb acts on: **을** after a noun that ends in a consonant, **를** after a noun that ends in a vowel. The object comes before the verb (Korean Grammar 1, chapter 1).

NOUN	+ OBJECT	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
사과 *sagwa* apple	**사과를**	**사과를 먹어요.** *sagwa-reul meogeoyo.* (I) eat an apple.
물 *mul* water	**물을** *mul-eul* [무를]	**물을 마셔요.** *mul-eul masyeoyo.* (I) drink water.
책 *chaek* book	**책을** *chaeg-eul* [채글]	**책을 읽어요.** *chaeg-eul ilgeoyo.* (I) read a book.
친구 *chingu* friend	**친구를**	**친구를 만나요.** *chingu-reul mannayo.* (I) meet a friend.

Watch out: the Korean object is not always an English object

Some verbs that take a preposition in English take 을/를 in Korean. **친구를 만나요** is "meet a friend" (no "with"), and **사과를 좋아해요** *sagwa-reul joahaeyo* is "(I) like apples". The reverse also happens, so learn each verb with its particle.

Watch out: 을/를 is often dropped in speech

In casual conversation **물 마셔요** is as common as **물을 마셔요**. Write it in full while learning; expect it missing when you listen.

에: to, at, in (a place or a time)

에 never changes. It marks the **destination** of going and coming, the place where something **is or exists**, and a **time**.

USE	EXAMPLE	MEANING
destination	**학교에 가요.** *hakgyo-e gayo.*	(I) go to school.
where something is	**집에 있어요.** *jib-e isseoyo.*	(I) am at home.
where someone lives	**서울에 살아요.** *seoul-e sarayo.*	(I) live in Seoul.
a time of day	**아침에 커피를 마셔요.** *achim-e keopi-reul masyeoyo.*	(I) drink coffee in the morning.

에서: where an action happens, or where it starts

에서 also never changes. It marks the place where an **action takes place** (reading, eating, working) and the place something **comes from**.

USE	EXAMPLE	MEANING
where an action happens	**도서관에서 책을 읽어요.** *doseogwan-eseo chaeg-eul ilgeoyo.*	(I) read a book at the library.
where it starts (from)	**친구가 한국에서 와요.** *chingu-ga hanguk-eseo wayo.*	My friend comes from Korea.

> **Watch out: 에 or 에서?**
> Ask what the verb does. If the verb is about **being, living or going to** a place (**있다** to be, **살다** to live, **가다** to go, **오다** to come), use **에**. If the verb is an **action carried out in** a place (read, eat, study, work), use **에서**. Compare **집에 있어요** (I am at home) with **집에서 먹어요** (I eat at home).

으로/로: direction and means

The particle marks the **direction** something moves in ("toward") and the **means or tool** used ("by, with"). The form depends on the last sound:

NOUN ENDS IN	PARTICLE	EXAMPLE
a **vowel**	**로** *ro*	**버스로 가요.** *beoseu-ro gayo.* (I) go by bus.
the consonant **ㄹ**	**로** *ro*	**서울로 가요.** *seoul-lo gayo.* (I) go to Seoul.
any **other consonant**	**으로** *euro*	**손으로 먹어요.** *son-euro meogeoyo.* (I) eat with my hands.
any **other consonant**	**으로** *euro*	**집으로 가요.** *jib-euro gayo.* (I) go home (toward home).

> **Watch out: ㄹ counts as a vowel for this particle**

> Nouns ending in ㄹ take **로**, not 으로: **서울로**, **물로** (with water). This is the one place where the "consonant means 으" rule has an exception. Also compare **학교에 가요** (the school is the destination) with **학교로 가요** (heading toward the school): 에 names the goal, 으로/로 stresses the direction.

과/와: with, and

The particle links nouns ("A and B") or says who accompanies you ("with"). The form depends on the last sound: **과** after a consonant, **와** after a vowel. Careful: unlike 은/는 and 을/를, the consonant form **과** itself begins with a consonant, so its pairing looks "backwards" at first.

EXAMPLE	MEANING	NOTE
친구와 가요. *chingu-wa gayo.*	(I) go with a friend.	vowel → 와
책과 연필 *chaek-gwa yeonpil*	a book and a pencil	consonant → 과

In speech you will mostly hear **하고** *hago* instead, which has one form for every noun (**친구하고 가요**, **책하고 연필**), and in casual talk **(이)랑** *(i)rang*. 과/와 is the neater form in writing.

도: also, too

도 is one form and goes after any noun. It **replaces** 은/는, 이/가 and 을/를 and adds the meaning "also".

EXAMPLE	MEANING	REPLACES
저도 학생이에요. *jeo-do haksaeng-ieyo.*	I am a student too.	저는
커피도 마셔요. *keopi-do masyeoyo.*	(I) drink coffee too.	커피를

It does not replace 에, 에서 or 으로, but is added after them: **학교에도 가요** (I go to school too), **도서관에서도 읽어요** (I read at the library too). The topic particle can be added after them in the same way: **학교에는**.

Two more you will see: 의 and 에게/한테

PARTICLE	MEANING	EXAMPLE
의 *ui* (said "e" in this use)	of, 's (possession)	**친구의 책** *chingu-ui chaek*: my friend's book
에게 *ege* / **한테** *hante*	to (a person), from a person: *indirect object*	**친구에게 책을 줘요.** *chingu-ege chaek-eul jwoyo.* (I) give my friend a book.

🗣️ In Use — 실제 예문

Read each exchange aloud and name the job of each particle.

① Where do you read?

A:
어디에서 책을 읽어요?
eodi-eseo chaeg-eul ilgeoyo?
Where do you read books?

B:
도서관에서 읽어요.
doseogwan-eseo ilgeoyo.
I read at the library.

② How do you go?

A:
학교에 어떻게 가요?
hakgyo-e eotteoke gayo?
How do you go to school?

B:
버스로 가요. 친구도 버스로 가요.
beoseu-ro gayo. chingu-do beoseu-ro gayo.
I go by bus. My friend goes by bus too.

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

PARTICLE	AFTER	MEANING / USE
을 / 를	consonant / vowel	object
에	any	to, at, in; time; where something is or lives
에서	any	at, in (where an action happens); from
으로 / 로	consonant / vowel or ㄹ	toward; by (means or tool)
과 / 와	consonant / vowel	and, with
도	any	also; replaces 은/는, 이/가, 을/를
의	any	of, 's
에게 / 한테	any	to a person

🖍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. Add the object particle: **책**, **사과**, **물**.

▼ Show answer

책을, **사과를**, **물을**.

2. Say "(I) read a book at the library."

▼ Show answer

도서관에서 책을 읽어요. (에서 because reading is an action done in a place.)

3. Choose 에 or 에서: **학교___ 가요** and **학교___ 공부해요** (study at school).

▼ Show answer

학교에 가요 (going to a place) and **학교에서 공부해요** (an action in a place).

4. Add 으로 or 로: **버스**, **손**, **서울**, **집**.

▼ Show answer

버스로 (vowel), **손으로** (consonant), **서울로** (ㄹ takes 로), **집으로** (consonant).

5. Choose 과 or 와: **친구___**, **책___**.

▼ Show answer

친구와 (vowel) and **책과** (consonant).

6. Make "(I) drink coffee too" from **커피를 마셔요**.

▼ Show answer

커피도 마셔요. 도 replaces 를.

7. Make "I am a student too" using 저 and 학생이에요.

▼ Show answer

저도 학생이에요. 도 replaces 는.

8. How is **물을** said?

▼ Show answer

[무를] mureul: the final ㄹ moves across to the silent ㅇ of 을.

9. What is the difference between **학교에 가요** and **학교로 가요**?

▼ Show answer

The first names the school as the destination; the second stresses the direction ("toward the school").

10. Say "My friend's book" and "(I) give my friend a book".

▼ Show answer

친구의 책 and **친구에게 책을 줘요.**

Coming up in Chapter 5: To Be. You will build "A is B" and "A is not B" with **이다** and **아니다**, using the topic and subject particles from Korean Grammar 1, chapter 3.

To Be — 이다 와 아니다

*You have been reading sentences like **저는 학생이에요** since Korean Grammar 1, chapter 1 without being told how they are built. This chapter explains them. Korean has two words for "to be" when you want to say what something is: **이다** ("is") and **아니다** ("is not"). They join a noun to its description: "A is B" and "A is not B".*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

A is B: A + 은/는 + B + **이에요** (after a consonant) or **예요** (after a vowel).

A is not B: A + 은/는 + B + **이/가 아니에요**.

The B word is a **noun** (a student, a doctor, a book). Describing words such as "big" or "cold" are a different kind of word, taken in Korean Grammar 1, chapter 8.

이다: "A is B"

The dictionary form is **이다**, but you never meet it on its own. It is joined directly to the noun (no space), and takes the everyday polite ending **-요**. The form depends on the last sound of the noun:

NOUN ENDS IN	POLITE FORM	EXAMPLE
a **consonant**	**-이에요** *-ieyo*	**학생이에요.** *haksaeng-ieyo.* (I) am a student.
a **vowel**	**-예요** *-yeyo*	**의사예요.** *uisa-yeyo.* (I) am a doctor.

NOUN	ENDS IN	SENTENCE
책 book	consonant	**책이에요.** *chaeg-ieyo.* [채기에요] It is a book.
선생님 *seonsaengnim* teacher	consonant	**선생님이에요.** *seonsaengnim-ieyo.* (He/she) is a teacher.
친구 friend	vowel	**친구예요.** *chingu-yeyo.* (He/she) is a friend.
의사 doctor	vowel	**저는 의사예요.** *jeo-neun uisa-yeyo.* I am a doctor.
한국 사람 *hanguk saram* Korean (person)	consonant (람 ends in ㅁ)	**저는 한국 사람이에요.** *jeo-neun hanguk saram-ieyo.* I am Korean.

Watch out: no "he/she/it" and no "I/you" needed

친구예요 alone can mean "(he) is a friend", "(she) is a friend", "(it) is a friend" or "(you) are a friend". Korean Grammar 1, chapter 1 explained why: the subject is dropped when it is clear. Add **저는**, **이분은** (this person) or a name only when you need to.

Who, what, where: question words with 이다

Question words are nouns, so they take 이다 in the same way. **뭐**, **누구** and **어디** all end in a vowel, so they take **예요**.

QUESTION	MEANING
뭐예요? *mwo-yeyo?*	What is it?
누구예요? *nugu-yeyo?*	Who is it?
어디예요? *eodi-yeyo?*	Where is it? (What place is it?)

This, that, and that over there

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE
이것 *igeot*	this (near me)	**이것은 책이에요.** *igeos-eun chaeg-ieyo.* This is a book.
그것 *geugeot*	that (near you)	**그것은 뭐예요?** *geugeos-eun mwo-yeyo?* What is that?
저것 *jeogeot*	that over there (far from both)	**저것은 학교예요.** *jeogeos-eun hakgyo-yeyo.* That over there is a school.

Watch out: 저 means two different things

저 by itself is "I" (the polite word from Chapter 3) *and* the "that over there" in **저것**. Position tells you which: **저는** is "I", while **저것은** or **저 책** points at something. In speech, **이것** is often shortened to **이거**, and 그것 and 저것 to **그거** and **저거**.

아니다: "A is not B"

The negative is a separate word, **아니다**, not 이다 with a "not". Its polite form is **아니에요** *anieyo*. The noun that you deny takes the **subject particle 이/가** (Korean Grammar 1, chapter 3), and 아니에요 is written as a separate word after it.

FORM	EXAMPLE	MEANING
consonant + 이	**저는 학생이 아니에요.** *jeo-neun haksaeng-i anieyo.*	I am not a student.
vowel + 가	**저는 의사가 아니에요.** *jeo-neun uisa-ga anieyo.*	I am not a doctor.
with 도 (not … either)	**친구도 학생이 아니에요.** *chingu-do haksaeng-i anieyo.*	My friend is not a student either.

Watch out: 아니에요 is both "is not" and "no"

아니에요 is a full sentence that can mean "No, it isn't". The plain word for "no" is **아니요** *aniyo*; "yes" is **네** *ne*. They answer questions of any kind, not just ones with 이다.

Questions and answers

QUESTION	YES	NO
학생이에요? *haksaeng-ieyo?* Are you a student?	**네, 학생이에요.** *ne, haksaeng-ieyo.*	**아니요, 학생이 아니에요.** *aniyo, haksaeng-i anieyo.*
의사예요? *uisa-yeyo?* Are you a doctor?	**네, 의사예요.** *ne, uisa-yeyo.*	**아니요, 의사가 아니에요.** *aniyo, uisa-ga anieyo.*

Note the answer pattern: a Korean "yes" or "no" agrees with the *fact*, not with the way the question was put. **학생이 아니에요?** ("Aren't you a student?") is answered **네** if you are *not* a student, because it agrees with the "not" in the question. Be ready for this: it is the opposite of the usual English habit.

The formal form: 입니다 and 아닙니다

The ending **-입니다** *-imnida* (said [임니다]) is the formal form of 이다, and **아닙니다** *animnida* (said [아님니다]) of 아니다. They do not change with the last sound of the noun. You will hear them in announcements, news, and meeting people formally: **저는 학생입니다.** *jeo-neun haksaeng-imnida*. The levels of politeness are laid out in Korean Grammar 1, chapter 10.

	EVERYDAY POLITE	FORMAL
is (after a consonant)	**학생이에요**	**학생입니다** / **의사입니다**
is (after a vowel)	**의사예요**	
is not	**학생이 아니에요**	**학생이 아닙니다**

> **Watch out: 이다 is not "there is" or "have"**
> Do not use 이다 for existence. "There is a cat" and "(I) have a book" are said with **있다**: **고양이가 있어요** (Korean Grammar 1, chapter 3), **책이 있어요** (I have a book). 이다 only joins two nouns.

🗣️ In Use — 실제 예문

Short introductions and questions. Pick out the 예요 and 이에요.

① Meeting

A:
저는 민수예요. 학생이에요?
jeo-neun minsu-yeyo. haksaeng-ieyo?
I'm Minsu. Are you a student?

B:
네, 저는 지연이에요. 학생이에요.
ne, jeo-neun jiyeon-ieyo. haksaeng-ieyo.

② What is this?

A:
이것은 뭐예요?
igeos-eun mwo-yeyo?
What is this?

B:
책이에요. 저것은 학교예요.
chaeg-ieyo. jeogeos-eun hakgyo-yeyo.

Yes, I'm Jiyeon. I'm a student.

It's a book. That over there is a school.

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

MEANING	AFTER A CONSONANT	AFTER A VOWEL
is (polite)	-이에요	-예요
is (formal)	-입니다	
is not (polite)	-이 아니에요	-가 아니에요
is not (formal)	-이 아닙니다	-가 아닙니다
this / that / that over there	이것 / 그것 / 저것	
what / who / where is it?	뭐예요 / 누구예요 / 어디예요	
yes / no	네 / 아니요	

🖍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. Choose 이에요 or 예요: **선생님**___, **친구**___, **의사**___, **책**___.

▼ Show answer

선생님이에요, **친구예요**, **의사예요**, **책이에요**.

2. Say "I am a teacher."

▼ Show answer

저는 선생님이에요. (*jeo-neun seonsaengnim-ieyo.*)

3. Make this negative: **저는 의사예요.**

▼ Show answer

저는 의사가 아니에요. The noun takes 가 (vowel) and 아니에요 follows as a separate word.

4. Make this negative: **이것은 책이에요.**

▼ Show answer

이것은 책이 아니에요. (책 ends in a consonant, so 이.)

5. How do you ask "What is that over there?"

▼ Show answer

저것은 뭐예요? (*jeogeos-eun mwo-yeyo?*)

6. Someone asks **학생이에요?** You are a doctor. Answer politely in full.

▼ Show answer

아니요, 학생이 아니에요. 의사예요.

7. What does 저 mean in **저는** and in **저것**?

▼ Show answer

In **저는** it means "I". In **저것** it means "that over there". Same spelling, different words.

8. Give the formal version of **저는 학생이에요**, and say how it is pronounced.

▼ Show answer

저는 학생입니다. Said *[저는 학쌩임니다]*: the ㅂ of 입 becomes ㅁ before the ㄴ of 니 (nasalisation, Korean Grammar 1, chapter 2).

9. Say "My friend is not a doctor either" using 도.

▼ Show answer

친구도 의사가 아니에요.

10. Which verb, not 이다, do you use for "There is a book"?

▼ Show answer

있다: **책이 있어요.**

Coming up in Chapter 6: Verbs 1: The Everyday Polite Present. You will learn how any ordinary verb is turned into its polite present form, starting from the dictionary form ending in **다**, and how the many verbs ending in **하다** work.

🏃 Verbs 1: The Everyday Polite Present — 현재 시제

*You have used verbs in the polite **-요** form since Korean Grammar 1, chapter 1 (**먹어요**, **가요**, **마셔요**). Now you learn the rule that builds them. Korean verbs do not change for person or number: **먹어요** means "I eat", "you eat", "she eats" and "they eat". All the grammar is in the ending, and one ending, **-아요/-어요**, covers the everyday polite present.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

1. Take the dictionary form (ends in **다**) and remove 다. What is left is the **stem**.
2. Look at the **last vowel of the stem**. If it is **ㅏ or ㅗ**, add **-아요**. If it is any other vowel, add **-어요**.
3. If the stem ends in a *vowel*, the vowels often merge (the contractions below). The verb **하다** becomes **해요**.

Step 1: Dictionary form and stem

DICTIONARY FORM	MEANING	STEM
먹다 *meokda*	to eat	먹-
읽다 *ikda*	to read	읽-
가다 *gada*	to go	가-
마시다 *masida*	to drink	마시-
공부하다 *gongbuhada*	to study	공부하-

Step 2: Stems ending in a consonant

When the stem ends in a final consonant there is no merging: simply add the ending. The ending is **아요** if the stem's vowel is ㅏ or ㅗ, otherwise **어요**.

DICTIONARY FORM	MEANING	STEM VOWEL	POLITE PRESENT
앉다 *anda*	to sit	ㅏ	**앉아요** *anjayo*
받다 *batda*	to receive	ㅏ	**받아요** *badayo*
살다 *salda*	to live	ㅏ	**살아요** *sarayo*
놀다 *nolda*	to play, to hang out	ㅗ	**놀아요** *norayo*
먹다 *meokda*	to eat	ㅓ	**먹어요** *meogeoyo*
읽다 *ikda*	to read	ㅣ	**읽어요** *ilgeoyo*
입다 *ipda*	to wear	ㅣ	**입어요** *ibeoyo*

DICTIONARY FORM	MEANING	STEM VOWEL	POLITE PRESENT
웃다 *utda*	to laugh, to smile	ㅜ	**웃어요** *useoyo*
있다 *itda*	to be, to have	ㅣ	**있어요** *isseoyo*
없다 *eopda*	to not be, to not have	ㅓ	**없어요** *eopseoyo*

Because the ending begins with the silent ㅇ, the stem's final consonant moves across to it (Korean Grammar 1, chapter 2, rule A): **앉아요** is said [안자요], **읽어요** [일거요], **입어요** [이버요].

Step 3: Stems ending in a vowel

When the stem ends in a vowel, the stem vowel and the ending vowel run together. These contractions are the heart of Korean verb forms, so learn the patterns.

STEM ENDS IN	WHAT HAPPENS	DICTIONARY FORM	POLITE PRESENT
ㅏ	아 is absorbed: ㅏ + 아 → ㅏ	**가다** to go **자다** to sleep **사다** to buy **만나다** to meet **타다** to ride	**가요** *gayo* **자요** *jayo* **사요** *sayo* **만나요** *mannayo* **타요** *tayo*
ㅓ	어 is absorbed: ㅓ + 어 → ㅓ	**서다** to stand	**서요** *seoyo*
ㅗ	ㅗ + 아 → ㅘ	**오다** to come **보다** to see, to watch	**와요** *wayo* **봐요** *bwayo*
ㅜ	ㅜ + 어 → ㅝ	**주다** to give **배우다** to learn	**줘요** *jwoyo* **배워요** *baewoyo*
ㅣ	ㅣ + 어 → ㅕ	**마시다** to drink **기다리다** to wait	**마셔요** *masyeoyo* **기다려요** *gidaryeoyo*
ㅡ	ㅡ drops, then 어 is added	**쓰다** to write, to use	**써요** *sseoyo*

> **Watch out: the contraction is the normal spelling**
>
> You will never see the uncontracted **가아요** or **마시어요** in ordinary writing. Learn the contracted form as the form, and do not try to "uncontract" it when you read.

하다 verbs: the largest family

하다 means "to do". It is irregular: its polite present is **해요** *haeyo* (from **하** + **여요**). Add 하다 to a noun and you get a verb, and every one of them follows the same pattern: drop 다, put **해요** on the end. Thousands of Korean verbs are made this way, many from words borrowed from Chinese or English.

NOUN	하다 VERB	POLITE PRESENT
공부 study	**공부하다** to study	**공부해요** *gongbuhaeyo*
일 work	**일하다** to work	**일해요** *ilhaeyo*
운동 exercise	**운동하다** to exercise	**운동해요** *undonghaeyo*
요리 cooking	**요리하다** to cook	**요리해요** *yorihaeyo*
전화 telephone	**전화하다** to phone	**전화해요** *jeonhwahaeyo*
좋아 (liking)	**좋아하다** to like	**좋아해요** *joahaeyo*

With many of them you can also separate the noun and mark it with 을/를: **공부를 해요** ("do study") is the same as **공부해요**. The verb 좋아하다 always takes an object: **사과를 좋아해요** (I like apples).

One form, several meanings

The polite present form is used for everything English splits into several tenses:

KOREAN	CAN MEAN
공부해요.	(I) study. (I) am studying. (I) will study (when the time is clear).
가요.	(I) go. (I) am going. As a question **가요?** "Are you going?"; as an invitation "Let's go"; sometimes "Go!" Context and tone decide.

Watch out: a few verbs are irregular

Some stems change their last sound before the ending. Two you will meet early: **듣다** *deutda* (to listen, to hear) → **들어요** *deureoyo*, and **모르다** *moreuda* (to not know) → **몰라요** *mollayo*. Treat these as vocabulary to learn with the verb; a later course takes the irregular patterns in full.

In Use — 실제 예문

Find the stem of each verb in the exchange, and check which ending it took.

① What are you doing?

A:
뭐 해요?
mwo haeyo?
What are you doing?

B:
공부해요. 책을 읽어요.
gongbuhaeyo. chaeg-eul ilgeoyo.

② Work

A:
어디에서 일해요?
eodi-eseo ilhaeyo?
Where do you work?

B:
서울에서 일해요. 서울에 살아요.
seoul-eseo ilhaeyo. seoul-e sarayo.

I'm studying. I'm reading a book.

I work in Seoul. I live in Seoul.

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

STEM	RULE	EXAMPLE
ends in a consonant, vowel ㅏ or ㅗ	+ 아요	**앉다 → 앉아요**
ends in a consonant, other vowel	+ 어요	**먹다 → 먹어요**
ends in ㅏ / ㅓ	merges: ㅏ+아 → ㅏ, ㅓ+어 → ㅓ	**가다 → 가요**
ends in ㅗ / ㅜ	ㅘ / ㅝ	**오다 → 와요**, **주다 → 줘요**
ends in ㅣ	ㅕ	**마시다 → 마셔요**
ends in ㅡ	ㅡ drops, + 어요	**쓰다 → 써요**
하다	→ 해요	**공부하다 → 공부해요**

🖍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. Give the polite present of **먹다** and **앉다**, and say why they take different endings.

▼ Show answer

먹어요 (stem vowel ㅓ → 어요) and **앉아요** (stem vowel ㅏ → 아요).

2. Give the polite present of **가다** and **자다**.

▼ Show answer

가요 and **자요**. (ㅏ + 아 merges to ㅏ.)

3. Give the polite present of **오다** and **보다**.

▼ Show answer

와요 and **봐요**. (ㅗ + 아 → ㅘ.)

4. Give the polite present of **마시다** and **기다리다** (to wait).

▼ Show answer

마셔요 and **기다려요**. (ㅣ + 어 → ㅕ.)

5. Give the polite present of **주다** and **배우다**.

▼ Show answer

줘요 and **배워요**. (ㅜ + 어 → ㅝ.)

6. Give the polite present of **쓰다** (to write).

▼ Show answer

써요 *sseoyo*: ㅡ drops and 어요 is added.

7. Give the polite present of **운동하다** and **좋아하다**.

▼ Show answer

운동해요 and **좋아해요**.

8. How is **앉아요** said, and why?

▼ Show answer

[안자요]: the ㅈ of 앉 moves across to the silent ㅇ of 아요 (only the ㄴ is left at the foot).

9. Say "I live in Seoul and I work in Seoul", using what you know about 에 and 에서 (Korean Grammar 1, chapter 4).

▼ Show answer

서울에 살아요. 서울에서 일해요. (살다 takes 에; 일하다 is an action, so 에서.)

10. Make "Do you read books?" from **책을 읽어요**, and give two possible meanings of **가요?**.

▼ Show answer

책을 읽어요? with a rising voice. **가요?** can mean "Are you going?" or "Shall we go?"

Coming up in Chapter 7: Verbs 2: Past, Future and Negation. You will add **-았어요/-었어요** for the past, **-(으)ㄹ 거예요** for the future, and make verbs negative with **안** and **-지 않다**.

⏳ Verbs 2: Past, Future and Negation — 과거, 미래, 부정

*Korean Grammar 1, chapter 6 gave you the polite present, which Korean uses for the present and often for the near future. This chapter adds the two other tenses you need every day, the **past** and the **future**, and the two ways of saying **not**. Everything builds on the 아요/어요 forms you already know.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

Past: the present stem form + **ㅆ어요**. In practice: **-았어요** (stem vowel ㅏ or ㅗ) or **-었어요** (any other vowel); **했어요** for 하다.

Future: stem + **-ㄹ 거예요** (after a vowel) or **-을 거예요** (after a consonant).

Not: put **안** in front of the verb, or add **-지 않아요** to the stem.

The past: -았어요 / -었어요

The vowel rule is the same as for the present: ㅏ or ㅗ in the stem gives **았**, any other vowel gives **었**. Take the polite present, remove **요**, and add **ㅆ어요**. When the stem ends in a vowel, the same contractions as in Chapter 6 apply, and the extra ㅆ lands in the contracted block as its final consonant.

DICTIONARY FORM	PRESENT	PAST	SAID
가다 to go	**가요**	**갔어요** *gasseoyo*	[가써요]
오다 to come	**와요**	**왔어요** *wasseoyo*	[와써요]
보다 to see	**봐요**	**봤어요** *bwasseoyo*	[봐써요]
마시다 to drink	**마셔요**	**마셨어요** *masyeosseoyo*	[마셔써요]
주다 to give	**줘요**	**줬어요** *jwosseoyo*	[줘써요]
쓰다 to write	**써요**	**썼어요** *sseosseoyo*	[써써요]
먹다 to eat	**먹어요**	**먹었어요** *meogeosseoyo*	[머거써요]
앉다 to sit	**앉아요**	**앉았어요** *anjasseoyo*	[안자써요]
있다 to be, to have	**있어요**	**있었어요** *isseosseoyo*	[이써써요]
공부하다 to study	**공부해요**	**공부했어요** *gongbuhaesseoyo*	[공부해써요]

The past of 이다 and 아니다

PRESENT	PAST
학생이에요 (after a consonant)	**학생이었어요** *haksaeng-ieosseoyo* (was a student)

PRESENT	PAST
의사예요 (after a vowel)	**의사였어요** *uisa-yeosseoyo* (was a doctor)
학생이 아니에요	**학생이 아니었어요** *haksaeng-i anieosseoyo* (was not a student)

Time words

WORD	MEANING
어제 *eoje*	yesterday
오늘 *oneul*	today
내일 *naeil*	tomorrow
지금 *jigeum*	now

Use them where English does, usually near the start: **어제 학교에 갔어요.** *eoje hakgyo-e gasseoyo*. (Yesterday I went to school.)

The future: -(으)ㄹ 거예요

The ending is **-ㄹ 거예요** after a vowel and **-을 거예요** after a consonant. It literally means "it is the case that (I) will...": **거** is a word for "thing, fact", followed by 예요 (Korean Grammar 1, chapter 5). The ㄹ is written at the foot of the stem's last block.

DICTIONARY FORM	STEM ENDS IN	FUTURE	SAID
가다 to go	vowel	**갈 거예요** *gal geoyeyo*	[갈 꺼예요]
마시다 to drink	vowel	**마실 거예요** *masil geoyeyo*	[마실 꺼예요]
공부하다 to study	vowel	**공부할 거예요** *gongbuhal geoyeyo*	[공부할 꺼예요]
먹다 to eat	consonant	**먹을 거예요** *meogeul geoyeyo*	[머글 꺼예요]
읽다 to read	consonant	**읽을 거예요** *ilgeul geoyeyo*	[일글 꺼예요]
살다 to live	ㄹ	**살 거예요** *sal geoyeyo*	[살 꺼예요]

> **Watch out: a stem ending in ㄹ takes no extra ㄹ**
>
> **살다** (to live) already ends in ㄹ, so it takes **살 거예요**, not 살을 거예요. All ㄹ-stems behave this way: **놀다** → **놀 거예요** (will play).

> **Watch out: the 거 is said tense**
>
> After the ㄹ of this ending, the 거 is said as if it began with a tense consonant: **갈 거예요** is said "gal-kkeoyeyo" (Korean Grammar 1, chapter 2, rule B). Revised Romanization still writes it *geoyeyo*, so do not copy the romanisation for the sound.

The present tense with a time word is also used for plans, as in English "I'm going tomorrow": **내일 가요.** You will hear both **내일 가요** and **내일 갈 거예요**.

Saying "not": 안 and -지 않다

안 + verb

안 is a separate word placed right *before* the verb. It never changes with the sound of the verb and works with every tense.

TENSE	EXAMPLE	MEANING
present	**안 가요.** *an gayo.*	(I) don't go.
present	**커피를 안 마셔요.** *keopi-reul an masyeoyo.*	(I) don't drink coffee.
past	**안 갔어요.** *an gasseoyo.*	(I) didn't go.
future	**안 갈 거예요.** *an gal geoyeyo.*	(I) won't go.

Watch out: with 하다 verbs, 안 goes before 하다

For a verb like **공부하다** the 안 goes between the noun and 하다: **공부 안 해요** *gongbu an haeyo* ("I don't study"), not **안 공부해요**. (The noun part is the thing you do; 하다 is the verb you negate.) This is true for most 하다 verbs; a few, such as **좋아하다**, go the other way: **안 좋아해요** (I don't like it).

Stem + 지 않다

The second way is a little more formal and is common in writing. Add **-지** to the stem and follow it with **않다** (to not do), which is conjugated like any verb: **않아요** *anayo* [아나요], past **않았어요** *anasseoyo*.

TENSE	EXAMPLE	MEANING
present	**가지 않아요.** *gaji anayo.*	(I) don't go.
present	**먹지 않아요.** *meokji anayo.* [먹찌 아나요]	(I) don't eat.
past	**가지 않았어요.** *gaji anasseoyo.*	(I) didn't go.
future	**가지 않을 거예요.** *gaji aneul geoyeyo.*	(I) won't go.
하다 verb	**공부하지 않아요.** *gongbuhaji anayo.*	(I) don't study.

This form has no trouble with 하다 verbs, which is why many learners prefer it for them. The meaning is the same as 안.

Watch out: "can't" is a different word

못 *mot* in front of a verb means "cannot": **못 가요** (I can't go: I'm unable or prevented). **안 가요** is "I don't go" by choice or habit. And **있다** has its own opposites: **없다** (there isn't) rather than 안 있다, and 이다 has **아니다** (Korean Grammar 1, chapter 5).

🗣️ In Use — 실제 예문

Notice the tense of each verb and whether it is positive or negative.

① Yesterday

A:

어제 뭐 했어요?

eoje mwo haesseoyo?

What did you do yesterday?

B:

친구를 만났어요. 영화를 봤어요.

chingu-reul mannasseoyo. yeonghwa-reul bwasseoyo.

I met a friend. I watched a film.

② Tomorrow

A:

내일 학교에 갈 거예요?

naeil hakgyo-e gal geoyeyo?

Will you go to school tomorrow?

B:

아니요, 안 갈 거예요. 집에서 공부할 거예요.

aniyo, an gal geoyeyo. jib-eseo gongbuhal geoyeyo.

No, I won't go. I'll study at home.

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

TENSE	FORM	가다	먹다	공부하다
present	-아요 / -어요	**가요**	**먹어요**	**공부해요**
past	-았어요 / -었어요	**갔어요**	**먹었어요**	**공부했어요**
future	-ㄹ / -을 거예요	**갈 거예요**	**먹을 거예요**	**공부할 거예요**
not (present)	안 + verb	**안 가요**	**안 먹어요**	**공부 안 해요**
not (present)	stem + 지 않아요	**가지 않아요**	**먹지 않아요**	**공부하지 않아요**

🖍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. Put into the past: **먹어요**, **앉아요**, **가요**.

▼ Show answer

먹었어요, **앉았어요**, **갔어요**.

2. Put into the past: **와요**, **마셔요**, **줘요**.

▼ Show answer

왔어요, **마셨어요**, **줬어요**.

3. Put into the past: **공부해요** and **좋아해요**.

▼ Show answer

공부했어요, **좋아했어요**.

4. Say "I was a student" and "I was not a doctor".

▼ Show answer

학생이었어요. and **의사가 아니었어요.**

5. Make the future of **마시다**, **읽다** and **살다**.

▼ Show answer

마실 거예요, **읽을 거예요**, **살 거예요** (an ㄹ-stem adds no ㄹ).

6. Say "I didn't drink coffee yesterday" using 안.

▼ Show answer

어제 커피를 안 마셨어요.

7. Say "I don't study" in both ways.

▼ Show answer

공부 안 해요. and **공부하지 않아요.**

8. Make **먹어요** negative with 지 않다 in the present and the past.

▼ Show answer

먹지 않아요 and **먹지 않았어요**.

9. What is the difference between **안 가요** and **못 가요**?

▼ Show answer

안 가요 is "I don't go" (by choice or habit); **못 가요** is "I can't go" (unable or prevented).

10. Say "Yesterday I went to school, and tomorrow I will study at home."

▼ Show answer

어제 학교에 갔어요. 내일 집에서 공부할 거예요.

Coming up in Chapter 8: Adjectives and Questions. Describing words behave like verbs in Korean, so you already know most of how they work. You will also learn the question words and how to ask a question in different ways.

🎨 Adjectives and Questions — 형용사와 의문문

*The good news about Korean "adjectives" is that you already know how to use them. A word like **크다** ("to be big") is a **describing verb**: it ends in 다, has a stem, and takes the same endings as the verbs in Korean Grammar 1, chapters 6 and 7. In English you say "The house is big", with the extra verb "is". In Korean the describing word itself does that job: **집이 커요** is "the house is big", with no 이/다. This chapter shows the common describing words, how they sit in front of a noun, and how to ask questions.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

Describing at the end of the sentence: noun + 이/가 or 은/는 + **adjective in the 아요/어요 form**. There is no separate "to be": **날씨가 좋아요** (the weather is good).

Describing in front of a noun: adjective stem + **-ㄴ** (after a vowel) or **-은** (after a consonant) + noun: **큰 집** (a big house), **좋은 친구** (a good friend).

Describing words in the polite present and past

DICTIONARY FORM	MEANING	POLITE PRESENT	PAST
크다 *keuda*	to be big	커요 *keoyo*	컸어요 *keosseoyo*
작다 *jakda*	to be small	작아요 *jagayo*	작았어요 *jagasseoyo*
좋다 *jota*	to be good	좋아요 *joayo*	좋았어요 *joasseoyo*
나쁘다 *nappeuda*	to be bad	나빠요 *nappayo*	나빴어요 *nappasseoyo*
많다 *manta*	to be many, much	많아요 *manayo*	많았어요 *manasseoyo*
싸다 *ssada*	to be cheap	싸요 *ssayo*	쌌어요 *ssasseoyo*
비싸다 *bissada*	to be expensive	비싸요 *bissayo*	비쌌어요 *bissasseoyo*
예쁘다 *yeppeuda*	to be pretty	예뻐요 *yeppeoyo*	예뻤어요 *yeppeosseoyo*
바쁘다 *bappeuda*	to be busy	바빠요 *bappayo*	바빴어요 *bappasseoyo*
아프다 *apeuda*	to hurt, to be ill	아파요 *apayo*	아팠어요 *apasseoyo*
맛있다 *masitda*	to be delicious	맛있어요 *masisseoyo*	맛있었어요 *masisseosseoyo*
피곤하다 *pigonhada*	to be tired	피곤해요 *pigonhaeyo*	피곤했어요 *pigonhaesseoyo*

Look at the pattern: **크다** → **커요** and **예쁘다** → **예뻐요** follow the ㅡ-drop of Korean Grammar 1, chapter 6; **좋아요** and **많아요** are the ordinary consonant-stem cases; and every **-하다** word ends in **-해요**. Nothing here is a new rule.

Watch out: the ㅡ-drop picks 아 or 어 from the syllable before

The ㅡ drops, and the ending is chosen by the vowel of the syllable *before* it: **바쁘다** (바 has ㅏ) → **바빠요**, **아프다** (아 has ㅏ) → **아파요**, **예쁘다** (예 has ㅖ) → **예뻐요**. A one-syllable stem like **크** has nothing before it, so it takes 어: **커요**.

Watch out: some describing words are irregular

Several very common ones change their stem before a vowel ending: **춥다** *chupda* (to be cold, of weather) → **추워요** *chuwoyo*, **덥다** *deopda* (to be hot) → **더워요** *deowoyo*, **어렵다** (to be difficult) → **어려워요**, **쉽다** (to be easy) → **쉬워요**. Learn them as vocabulary; a later course explains the pattern.

Sentences with a describing word

KOREAN	MEANING
날씨가 좋아요. *nalssi-ga joayo.*	The weather is good.
집이 커요. *jib-i keoyo.*	The house is big.
사과는 싸요. *sagwa-neun ssayo.*	Apples are cheap.
어제 많이 바빴어요. *eoje mani bappasseoyo.*	I was very busy yesterday.
안 비싸요. / **비싸지 않아요.** *an bissayo.* / *bissaji anayo.*	It's not expensive. (Chapter 7 negation works the same.)

How much? Intensifying words

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE
아주 *aju*	very	**아주 커요.** It's very big.
정말 *jeongmal*	really	**정말 맛있어요.** It's really delicious.
너무 *neomu*	too, very much	**너무 비싸요.** It's too expensive.
조금 *jogeum*	a little	**조금 작아요.** It's a little small.

They go straight in front of the describing word, just as 안 does.

Describing a noun in front of it

To put the description *before* the noun (a big house, a good friend), change the stem ending to the "modifier" form:

- Stem ends in a **vowel**: add **-ㄴ** to the last block. **크다** → **큰**, **예쁘다** → **예쁜**.
- Stem ends in a **consonant**: add **-은**. **작다** → **작은**, **좋다** → **좋은**, **많다** → **많은**.
- Stem is **-하다**: **-한**. **조용하다** → **조용한** (quiet).

- Stem is **-있다 or -없다** (such as 맛있다): **-는**. **맛있다 → 맛있는**.

KOREAN	MEANING
큰 집 *keun jip*	a big house
작은 집 *jageun jip*	a small house
좋은 친구 *joeun chingu*	a good friend
예쁜 꽃 *yeppeun kkot*	a pretty flower
조용한 도서관 *joyonghan doseogwan*	a quiet library
맛있는 사과 *masinneun sagwa* [마신는]	a delicious apple

> **Watch out: the description is attached, the noun stays as it is**
>
> Nothing changes on the noun itself, and no article is added (Korean Grammar 1, chapter 1). **큰 집** means "big house", "a big house" or "the big house". The same idea works with verbs: a present-tense verb takes **-는** in front of a noun, so **먹는 사람** is "a person who eats". Chapter 10 of this course returns to building longer sentences.

Questions

Yes/no questions

As in Chapter 1, a yes/no question is the statement with a rising voice and a question mark. **비싸요?** ("Is it expensive?") is answered **네, 비싸요.** or **아니요, 안 비싸요.**

Question words

A question word replaces the part you want to know, in the **same place** in the sentence where the answer would go. Korean does not move it to the front.

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE
뭐 *mwo*	what	**뭐 먹어요?** *mwo meogeoyo?* What are you eating?
누구 *nugu* / **누가** *nuga*	who / who (subject)	**누가 와요?** *nuga wayo?* Who is coming?
어디 *eodi*	where	**어디에 가요?** *eodi-e gayo?* Where are you going?
언제 *eonje*	when	**언제 와요?** *eonje wayo?* When are you coming?
왜 *wae*	why	**왜 안 가요?** *wae an gayo?* Why aren't you going?
어떻게 *eotteoke*	how (in what way)	**어떻게 가요?** *eotteoke gayo?* How do you go?
어때요? *eottaeyo?*	how is it? what is it like?	**날씨가 어때요?** *nalssi-ga eottaeyo?* How is the weather?
얼마 *eolma*	how much	**얼마예요?** *eolma-yeyo?* How much is it?

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE
무슨 *museun* + noun	what kind of	**무슨 책이에요?** *museun chaeg-ieyo?* What (kind of) book is it?
어느 *eoneu* + noun	which	**어느 학교예요?** *eoneu hakgyo-yeyo?* Which school is it?

Watch out: 뭐 has a short form before 을/를

In speech **뭐를** becomes **뭘** *mwol*: **뭘 먹어요?** means the same as **뭐를 먹어요?** and, like other object markers, is often dropped altogether: **뭐 먹어요?**

Watch out: question words have two jobs

The same words can mean "somebody", "somewhere" or "something" in a statement, depending on context: **어디 가요** is "where are you going?" with a rising voice but can also be "(I'm) going somewhere" with a falling one. The intonation tells you which.

🗣️ In Use — 실제 예문

Find the describing words and the question words.

① How is the food?

A:
한국 음식은 어때요?
hanguk eumsig-eun eottaeyo?
How is Korean food?

B:
아주 맛있어요. 조금 짜요.
aju masisseoyo. jogeum jjayo.
It's very tasty. It's a little salty.

② When and why?

A:
언제 서울에 갈 거예요?
eonje seoul-e gal geoyeyo?
When will you go to Seoul?

B:
내일 갈 거예요. 친구가 서울에 살아요.
naeil gal geoyeyo. chingu-ga seoul-e sarayo.
Tomorrow. A friend lives in Seoul.

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

TOPIC	REMEMBER
Describing words	behave like verbs; no 이다 needed: **집이 커요**
Tenses and negation	same as verbs: **컸어요**, **안 커요**, **크지 않아요**
Before a noun	vowel stem + ㄴ, consonant stem + 은, 하다 → 한, 있다/없다 → 는
Intensifiers	**아주 정말 너무 조금** before the describing word
Yes/no question	same sentence, rising voice
Question words	stay in the place of the answer: **뭐 누구 어디 언제 왜 어떻게 얼마**

🏏 Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. Give the polite present of **좋다**, **싸다** and **피곤하다**.

▼ Show answer

좋아요, **싸요**, **피곤해요**.

2. Give the polite present of **크다** and **예쁘다**.

▼ Show answer

커요 and **예뻐요** (— drops and 어 is added).

3. Put **바빠요** and **아파요** into the past.

▼ Show answer

바빴어요 and **아팠어요**.

4. Say "The apples are expensive" and "The apples are not expensive".

▼ Show answer

사과가 비싸요. and **사과가 안 비싸요.** (or **비싸지 않아요**).

5. Say "It's a little small" and "It's too expensive".

▼ Show answer

조금 작아요. and **너무 비싸요.**

6. Put the description in front of the noun: "a big book", "a good book", "a quiet library".

▼ Show answer

큰 책, **좋은 책**, **조용한 도서관**.

7. Why is it **맛있는 사과** and not **맛있은 사과**?

▼ Show answer

Describing words ending in 있다 or 없다 take 는, not 은 or ㄴ.

8. Ask "Where are you going?" and "Why aren't you going?"

▼ Show answer

어디에 가요? and **왜 안 가요?**

9. Ask "How much is it?" and "How is the weather?"

▼ Show answer

얼마예요? and **날씨가 어때요?**

10. What does 뭘 stand for in **뭘 먹어요?**

▼ Show answer

뭐를 (what + the object particle).

Coming up in Chapter 9: Numbers, Counters and Time. Korean has two number systems, native Korean and Sino-Korean, and words you add to a number to count different kinds of things. You will also tell the time.

🔢 Numbers, Counters and Time — 숫자, 단위, 시간

*Korean has **two complete sets of numbers**. One is native Korean (**하나, 둘, 셋**...) and the other was borrowed from Chinese long ago (**일, 이, 삼**..., called Sino-Korean). Each is used for different jobs, and you must choose the right one. When you count things, you also add a small word called a **counter**, a bit like "three cups of tea" or "two head of cattle" in English, but used for everything. This chapter covers both systems, the main counters, and how to tell the time, say the date and talk about money.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

Sino-Korean (일, 이, 삼...): dates, months, minutes, money, phone numbers, floors, addresses and any number above 99.
Native Korean (하나, 둘, 셋...): counting things and people with a counter, age (살), and the hour in clock time (시).
Order: noun + number + counter. **사과 세 개** (three apples).

Sino-Korean numbers

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
영 / 공	일	이	삼	사	오	육	칠	팔	구	십
yeong / gong	*il*	*i*	*sam*	*sa*	*o*	*yuk*	*chil*	*pal*	*gu*	*sip*

Bigger numbers are built by **putting numbers side by side**, largest first. There is no special word for the teens or twenties.

NUMBER	BUILT AS	KOREAN
11	10 + 1	**십일** *sibil*
12	10 + 2	**십이** *sibi*
20	2 × 10	**이십** *isip*
25	2 × 10 + 5	**이십오** *isibo*
99	9 × 10 + 9	**구십구** *gusipgu*
100		**백** *baek*
1,000		**천** *cheon*
10,000		**만** *man*

Watch out: Korean counts in ten-thousands

Korean has a single word for 10,000, **만**, and builds large numbers from it, not from thousands: 50,000 is **오만** ("five ten-thousands"), 15,000 is **만 오천** ("ten-thousand five-thousand"). Also, 10, 100 and 1,000 are said without the 일: **십**, **백**, **천**, not 일십, 일백, 일천.

Native Korean numbers

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
하나	둘	셋	넷	다섯	여섯	일곱	여덟	아홉	열
hana	*dul*	*set*	*net*	*daseot*	*yeoseot*	*ilgop*	*yeodeol*	*ahop*	*yeol*

The tens go on with their own words: **스물** *seumul* 20, **서른** *seoreun* 30, **마흔** *maheun* 40, **쉰** *swin* 50, **예순** *yesun* 60, **일흔** *ileun* 70, **여든** *yeodeun* 80, **아흔** *aheun* 90. Numbers in between put the ones after the tens: 11 is **열하나**, 12 is **열둘**, 21 is **스물하나**. There is no native word for 100 or above, so from 100 the Sino-Korean numbers are used.

> **Watch out: five numbers change shape before a counter**
>
> When a native number is followed by a counter, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 20 take short forms: **하나** → **한**, **둘** → **두**, **셋** → **세**, **넷** → **네**, **스물** → **스무**. So "one person" is **한 명**, not 하나 명. The other numbers (**다섯**, **여섯**…) stay as they are.

Counters

A counter follows the number and says what sort of thing is being counted. **개** works for most objects when you don't know the exact counter.

COUNTER	COUNTS	EXAMPLE
명 *myeong*	people	**친구 세 명** *chingu se myeong* three friends
개 *gae*	things in general	**사과 다섯 개** *sagwa daseot gae* five apples
마리 *mari*	animals	**고양이 두 마리** *goyang-i du mari* two cats
권 *gwon*	books	**책 세 권** *chaek se gwon* three books
잔 *jan*	cups, glasses of a drink	**커피 한 잔** *keopi han jan* a cup of coffee
병 *byeong*	bottles	**물 두 병** *mul du byeong* two bottles of water
살 *sal*	years of age	**스무 살** *seumu sal* twenty years old

The question "how many?" is **몇** *myeot* + counter: **몇 명이에요?** (How many people?), **몇 개 있어요?** (How many are there?), **몇 살이에요?** (How old are you?). Particles go after the whole group: **사과 세 개를 먹어요** (I eat three apples).

Telling the time

Clock time mixes the two systems: the hour (**시** *si*) uses a **native** number and the minutes (**분** *bun*) use a **Sino-Korean** number. **반** *ban* means "half" (:30). **오전** *ojeon* is a.m. and **오후** *ohu* is p.m.

TIME	KOREAN
1:00	**한 시** *han si*

TIME	KOREAN
3:00	**세 시** *se si*
3:10	**세 시 십 분** *se si sip bun*
3:30	**세 시 반** *se si ban*
3 p.m.	**오후 세 시** *ohu se si*
12:00	**열두 시** *yeoldu si*

몇 시예요? *myeot si-yeyo?* is "What time is it?" and "at three o'clock" is **세 시에** with the particle 에 from Korean Grammar 1, chapter 4: **세 시에 만나요.** (We meet at three.)

Days, months and dates

Months and dates are Sino-Korean numbers plus **월** *wol* (month) or **일** *il* (day). The order is month, then day.

MONTH	KOREAN	MONTH	KOREAN
January	**일월**	July	**칠월**
February	**이월**	August	**팔월**
March	**삼월**	September	**구월**
April	**사월**	October	**시월** *siwol*
May	**오월**	November	**십일월**
June	**유월** *yuwol*	December	**십이월**

> **Watch out: June and October are irregular**
> The expected **육월** and **십월** are not used. June is **유월** and October is **시월**.

"What date is it?" is **몇 월 며칠이에요?** *myeot wol myeochir-ieyo?* A date is month + day: **시월 이십팔 일** is 28 October.

Days of the week

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
월요일	**화요일**	**수요일**	**목요일**	**금요일**	**토요일**	**일요일**
woryoil	*hwayoil*	*suyoil*	*mogyoil*	*geumyoil*	*toyoil*	*iryoil*

Each is a one-syllable word (月 moon, 火 fire, 水 water, 木 tree, 金 metal, 土 earth, 日 sun) plus **요일** (day of the week). "On Monday" is **월요일에**.

Money

The Korean currency is the won, **원** *won*, counted with Sino-Korean numbers: **삼천 원** *samcheon won* (3,000 won), **만 오천 원** *man ocheon won* (15,000 won). Ask the price with **얼마예요?** (Korean Grammar 1, chapter 8), and answer **삼천 원이에요.**

🗣️ In Use — 실제 예문

Listen for which number system each speaker uses.

① Time and date

A:
지금 몇 시예요?
jigeum myeot si-yeyo?
What time is it now?

B:
세 시 반이에요. 오늘은 시월 이십팔 일이에요.
se si ban-ieyo. oneur-eun siwol isippal il-ieyo.
It's half past three. Today is 28 October.

② Buying apples

A:
사과 세 개 얼마예요?
sagwa se gae eolma-yeyo?
How much are three apples?

B:
삼천 원이에요.
samcheon won-ieyo.
3,000 won.

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

USE	SYSTEM	EXAMPLE
things and people with a counter	native	**사과 세 개, 친구 두 명**
age	native + 살	**스무 살**
hour	native + 시	**세 시**
minute	Sino + 분	**십 분**
month, day	Sino + 월 / 일	**시월 이십팔 일**
money	Sino + 원	**삼천 원**
short forms before a counter	native	한, 두, 세, 네, 스무

🖍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. Say 15, 36 and 100 in Sino-Korean.

▼ Show answer

십오, **삼십육**, **백**.

2. Say 50,000 and 15,000 (Sino-Korean).

▼ Show answer

오만 and **만 오천**.

3. Say "one person", "two people" and "three people".

▼ Show answer

한 명, **두 명**, **세 명**.

4. Say "two cups of coffee" and "three books".

▼ Show answer

커피 두 잔 and **책 세 권**.

5. Say "I am twenty years old" (native numbers with 살).

▼ Show answer

스무 살이에요. (스물 becomes 스무 before a counter.)

6. Say "It is four o'clock" and "It is 4:30".

▼ Show answer

네 시예요. and **네 시 반이에요.**

7. Say "at 2:20" (as in "We meet at 2:20").

▼ Show answer

두 시 이십 분에: **두 시 이십 분에 만나요.**

8. Say the dates 6 June and 10 October.

▼ Show answer

유월 육 일 and **시월 십 일** (June and October are irregular).

9. Say "on Friday" and "on Sunday".

▼ Show answer

금요일에 and **일요일에**.

10. Ask how much something costs, and answer "4,000 won".

▼ Show answer

얼마예요? and **사천 원이에요.**

Coming up in Chapter 10: Putting It Together. You will build and read whole sentences using everything in the course, meet the levels of politeness in outline, and finish with a recap and the combined course PDF.

🧱 Putting It Together — 문장 만들기

*You now have every part of a basic Korean sentence: the order (Korean Grammar 1, chapter 1), the sounds (chapter 2), the particles (chapters 3 and 4), "to be" (chapter 5), verbs and describing words (chapters 6 to 8), and numbers and time (chapter 9). This last chapter shows you how the parts fit into whole sentences, reads a short passage with you, explains the **levels of politeness** in outline, and recaps the course.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

A sentence is built **left to right**, and the verb comes last:

[when] + [topic/subject + 은/는/이/가] + [place + 에/에서] + [object + 을/를] + [verb or describing word + ending]

Leave out whatever the listener already knows, and put the polite **-요** ending on the end.

A recipe for any sentence

1. **Decide the final word first.** What is the verb or describing word, and which tense? (Chapters 5 to 8)
2. **Put the endings on it.** Dictionary form → stem → **-아요/-어요**, **-았어요/-었어요** or **-ㄹ 거예요**; add **안** for "not". (Chapters 6 and 7)
3. **Add the nouns in front, each with its particle.** Doer: **은/는** or **이/가**. Thing acted on: **을/를**. Place: **에** or **에서**. Means: **(으)로**. (Chapters 3 and 4)
4. **Choose each particle by the final sound** of its noun: consonant or vowel.
5. **Add time at the start** (**어제**, **세 시에**) and drop what is obvious.
6. **Check the sounds.** Where syllables meet, apply the sound changes from Chapter 2.

One sentence, grown step by step

STEP	KOREAN	MEANING
verb	**읽어요.** *ilgeoyo.*	(I) read.
+ object	**책을 읽어요.** *chaeg-eul ilgeoyo.*	(I) read a book.
+ place	**도서관에서 책을 읽어요.** *doseogwan-eseo chaeg-eul ilgeoyo.*	(I) read a book at the library.
+ topic	**저는 도서관에서 책을 읽어요.** *jeo-neun doseogwan-eseo chaeg-eul ilgeoyo.*	I read a book at the library.
+ time	**어제 저는 도서관에서 책을 읽었어요.** *eoje jeo-neun doseogwan-eseo chaeg-eul ilgeosseoyo.*	Yesterday I read a book at the library.
+ description	**어제 저는 조용한 도서관에서 큰 책을 읽었어요.**	Yesterday I read a big book at a quiet library.

A short passage to read

Every word and ending below comes from this course. Read it aloud, then check each sentence against the meaning.

KOREAN	ROMANIZATION	ENGLISH
저는 민수예요.	*jeo-neun minsu-yeyo.*	I am Minsu.
저는 서울에 살아요.	*jeo-neun seoul-e sarayo.*	I live in Seoul.
저는 학생이에요.	*jeo-neun haksaeng-ieyo.*	I am a student.
아침에 학교에 가요.	*achim-e hakgyo-e gayo.*	In the morning I go to school.
도서관에서 책을 읽어요.	*doseogwan-eseo chaeg-eul ilgeoyo.*	I read books at the library.
세 시에 친구를 만나요.	*se si-e chingu-reul mannayo.*	At three I meet a friend.
친구는 커피를 마셔요. 저는 물을 마셔요.	*chingu-neun keopi-reul masyeoyo. jeo-neun mul-eul masyeoyo.*	My friend drinks coffee. I drink water.
오늘은 바빠요. 내일은 안 바빠요.	*oneur-eun bappayo. naeir-eun an bappayo.*	Today I'm busy. Tomorrow I'm not busy.

Count the clues the particles give you: **저는** and **친구는** set up a contrast between the two people, **친구를** and **책을** are objects, **서울에** and **학교에** are where something is or where you go, and **도서관에서** is where an action happens.

Levels of politeness: an outline

Korean verbs and describing words change their ending to show how you speak to the listener. This is separate from the tenses. There are several levels; here are the ones a learner meets first, shown with the verb **가다** (to go) and the question "Are you going?"

LEVEL	ENDING	"(I) GO"	USED FOR
Formal polite	**-ㅂ니다 / -습니다**	**갑니다** *gamnida* [감니다]	news, speeches, announcements, first meetings, customer service
Everyday polite	**-아요 / -어요**	**가요** *gayo*	most daily speech with strangers, colleagues, older people (the form used throughout this course)
Casual	the 아요/어요 form *without* 요	**가** *ga*	close friends, younger people, family

> **Watch out: the casual level can be rude**
> Casual speech (**반말** *banmal*) is warm among friends of the same age, but rude to a stranger or an older person. If you are unsure, use the everyday polite **-요** form: it is never wrong.

The formal polite level

Take the stem: after a **vowel** add **-ㅂ니다**, after a **consonant** add **-습니다**. For a question change 다 to **까**: **갑니까?** *gamnikka?* (Are you going?). The formal form is the same for all verbs, including 하다 verbs; no 아/어 vowel rule is needed.

DICTIONARY FORM	EVERYDAY POLITE	FORMAL POLITE
가다 to go	**가요**	**갑니다** *gamnida*
마시다 to drink	**마셔요**	**마십니다** *masimnida*
공부하다 to study	**공부해요**	**공부합니다** *gongbuhamnida*
먹다 to eat	**먹어요**	**먹습니다** *meokseumnida* [먹씀니다]
읽다 to read	**읽어요**	**읽습니다** *ikseumnida* [익씀니다]
살다 to live	**살아요**	**삽니다** *samnida* (the ㄹ drops)
이다 to be	**이에요 / 예요**	**입니다** *imnida*

The casual level

Drop the **요** from the everyday form: **먹어**, **가**, **해**, **좋아**. For "to be" the casual forms are **이야** (after a consonant) and **야** (after a vowel): **학생이야**, **친구야**.

Showing respect to the person you talk about: -(으)세요

Separate from the speech level, Korean has an **honorific** marker **-(으)시-** for a respected person who is the doer. In the everyday form it appears as **-세요** after a vowel or **-으세요** after a consonant. It is also the usual polite way to make a request, and it makes up many set phrases.

KOREAN	MEANING
가세요 *gaseyo*	(please) go; (he/she, whom I respect) goes
읽으세요 *ilgeuseyo*	(please) read
물 주세요. *mul juseyo.*	Please give me water.
안녕하세요? *annyeonghaseyo?*	Hello. (a polite greeting)
드세요 *deuseyo*	(please) eat / drink (honorific for 먹다, 마시다)
계세요 *gyeseyo*	is (there) (honorific for 있다, used for people)
감사합니다. *gamsahamnida.*	Thank you. (formal)

> **Watch out: do not use the honorific about yourself**
> The honorific -(으)시- is for the other person (or a third person you respect), never for yourself: say **저는 가요**, not 저는 가세요. A later course covers honorifics, humble forms and the other speech levels in full.

🗣️ In Use — 실제 예문

A first meeting at two levels.

① Meeting for the first time

A:

안녕하세요? 저는 민수입니다.

annyeonghaseyo? jeo-neun minsu-imnida.

Hello. I am Minsu. (formal)

B:

안녕하세요? 저는 지연이에요. 학생이에요?

annyeonghaseyo? jeo-neun jiyeon-ieyo. haksaeng-ieyo?

Hello. I am Jiyeon. Are you a student?

A:

네, 학생이에요. 서울에 살아요.

ne, haksaeng-ieyo. seoul-e sarayo.

Yes, I am a student. I live in Seoul.

② Two friends

A:

뭐 해?

mwo hae?

What are you doing? (casual)

B:

공부해. 너는?

gongbuhae. neo-neun?

Studying. And you?

A:

나는 커피 마셔.

na-neun keopi masyeo.

I'm drinking coffee.

📋 Course Recap — 정리

CHAPTER	THE KEY IDEA
1 · How a Korean Sentence Works	subject → object → verb; the verb is last; no articles; the subject is often dropped
2 · Hangul Beyond the Basics	tense consonants, compound vowels, double finals; six sound changes
3 · Topic and Subject Particles	은/는 and 이/가: choose the form by the final sound, the job by what is new or contrasted
4 · Object, Place and Direction Particles	을/를, 에, 에서, (으)로, 과/와, 도
5 · To Be	이다 → 이에요/예요; 아니다 → 이/가 아니에요
6 · Verbs 1: The Everyday Polite Present	stem + 아요/어요 with contractions; 하다 → 해요
7 · Verbs 2: Past, Future and Negation	-았/었어요, -ㄹ/을 거예요, 안 and -지 않다
8 · Adjectives and Questions	describing words act as verbs; modifier forms; question words
9 · Numbers, Counters and Time	two number systems; counters; clock, dates, money
10 · Putting It Together	building sentences; levels of politeness

What this course did not cover

Korean Grammar 1 is the sentence core. Still to learn: the irregular verb patterns, joining clauses ("and", "but", "because"), suggestions and requests, ability and wanting, and the honorific and humble forms in full. You can already read and build simple, correct Korean sentences.

🖍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. Build "I drink water at home." from 저, 집, 물, 마시다.

▼ Show answer

저는 집에서 물을 마셔요. (집에서: an action in a place; 물을: consonant, so 을.)

2. Build "Yesterday my friend went to school."

▼ Show answer

어제 친구가 학교에 갔어요.

3. Build "Tomorrow I will not read a book."

▼ Show answer

내일 책을 안 읽을 거예요. (or **책을 읽지 않을 거예요**.)

4. Build "I am not a doctor; I am a teacher."

▼ Show answer

저는 의사가 아니에요. 선생님이에요.

5. Say "It's a very quiet library" using a describing word in front of the noun.

▼ Show answer

아주 조용한 도서관이에요.

6. Ask "What time are you going to school?" and answer "At eight."

▼ Show answer

몇 시에 학교에 가요? and **여덟 시에 가요.**

7. Change to the formal polite level: **공부해요**, **먹어요**, **학생이에요**.

▼ Show answer

공부합니다, **먹습니다**, **학생입니다**.

8. Change to the casual level: **마셔요**, **좋아요**, **친구예요**.

▼ Show answer

마셔, **좋아**, **친구야**.

9. Ask politely for water.

▼ Show answer

물 주세요.

10. Read the opening of the passage and say what the topic particle on **저는** and **친구는** is doing.

▼ Show answer

It sets up the two people as topics and, by putting them side by side, contrasts them: *I* drink water, *my friend* drinks coffee (Korean Grammar 1, chapter 3).

Course Complete. You have finished **Korean Grammar 1**. The next steps are the irregular verbs, joining clauses and the full honorific system, which a later course would take up.