KR

LANGUAGE COURSE

Korean Grammar 4

10 Chapters

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Generated with Claude

KOREAN GRAMMAR 4

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✍️ Written and Spoken Korean — 문어와 구어

*Korean Grammar 3 finished the core grammar. Korean Grammar 4 is about **using Korean as it really appears**: in writing, in the news, in titles and address, in idiom and in everyday slang. The first step is the biggest: **written Korean sounds different from spoken Korean**. A learner who writes an essay in 해요체 sounds as odd as an English writer who puts "gonna" and "y'know" into a report. This chapter shows the plain written style (-ㄴ/는다), compares it with the spoken levels you already know, and teaches you to read the endings of any text.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

Korean has a **spoken** side (해요체, 합쇼체, 해체, with 요 and 습니다) and a **written** side. The ordinary written style is the **plain style (해라체)**: **-ㄴ다 / -는다** for verbs, plain **-다** for adjectives and 이다, **-았/었다** for the past. It has **no listener** in it, so it uses no polite endings and avoids colloquial contractions and fillers. See also Korean Grammar 2 1 (Speech Levels) for the seven levels.

One sentence in four styles

MEANING	해요체 (SPOKEN POLITE)	합쇼체 (FORMAL POLITE)	해체 (CASUAL)	PLAIN WRITTEN (해라체)
I go to school.	**학교에 가요.**	**학교에 갑니다.**	**학교에 가.**	**학교에 간다.**
I ate.	**먹었어요.**	**먹었습니다.**	**먹었어.**	**먹었다.**
It is good.	**좋아요.**	**좋습니다.**	**좋아.**	**좋다.**
He is a student.	**학생이에요.**	**학생입니다.**	**학생이야.**	**학생이다.**
I will go.	**갈 거예요.**	**갈 겁니다.**	**갈 거야.**	**갈 것이다.**

MEANING	해요체 (SPOKEN POLITE)	합쇼체 (FORMAL POLITE)	해체 (CASUAL)	PLAIN WRITTEN (해라체)
I do not go.	**안 가요.**	**가지 않습니다.**	**안 가.**	**가지 않는다.**

Forming the plain written style

Present tense

WORD TYPE	RULE	EXAMPLES
verb, vowel stem	stem + **-ㄴ다**	**가다 → 간다**, **하다 → 한다**, **마시다 → 마신다**
verb, consonant stem	stem + **-는다**	**먹다 → 먹는다**, **읽다 → 읽는다**
verb, ㄹ stem	drop ㄹ + **-ㄴ다**	**살다 → 산다**, **만들다 → 만든다**
adjective	stem + **-다** (the dictionary form)	**좋다**, **크다**, **예쁘다**
있다, 없다 (and 맛있다, 멋있다)	stay **-다**	**있다**, **없다**, **맛있다**
이다 / 아니다	noun + **(이)다**	**학생이다**, **학생이 아니다**

Past, future and negative

FORM	PLAIN WRITTEN	EXAMPLE
past	-았/었다	**어제 영화를 보았다.** (or **봤다**)
future, conjecture	-(으)ㄹ 것이다	**내일은 비가 올 것이다.**
negative	-지 않는다 / -지 않다 / 안 / 못	**그는 오지 않았다.**
honorific	-(으)시- stays	**선생님께서 말씀하셨다.**
suggestion	-자	**함께 가자.**

FORM	PLAIN WRITTEN	EXAMPLE
command (signs, rules)	-(으)라 / -지 마라	**조용히 하라.**

> **Watch out: adjectives do not take -ㄴ/는다**
>
> A common error is to put the verb ending on an adjective: ✗ **날씨가 좋는다**. Adjectives (and 이다, 있다, 없다) keep the plain **-다**: **날씨가 좋다**. Compare **비가 온다** (verb, takes -ㄴ다) with **날씨가 춥다** (adjective, plain -다).

Questions in written Korean

Direct questions are rare in plain writing, but when a writer asks one (often rhetorically, or in a title), the endings are different from speech:

TYPE	PLAIN WRITTEN	EXAMPLE
verb	-는가?	**왜 사람들은 떠나는가?** Why do people leave?
adjective	-(으)ㄴ가?	**과연 이것이 옳은가?** Is this really right?
wondering, "could it be…?"	-(으)ㄹ까?	**정말 가능할까?** Is it really possible?

Words that change in writing

Besides the endings, writers choose different words. Spoken short forms and fillers are replaced by fuller ones.

SPOKEN	WRITTEN	MEANING
이거 / 그거 / 저거	**이것 / 그것 / 저것**	this / that
뭐	**무엇**	what
얘기	**이야기**	story, talk
근데	**그런데**	by the way, but

SPOKEN	WRITTEN	MEANING
진짜 / 되게 / 엄청	정말 / 매우 / 아주	really, very
나 / 저는	나는, 필자는 (essay)	I

Writers also keep the **particles** that speech drops (**밥 먹었어?** is fine in speech, but writing says **밥을 먹었다**), and they avoid sentence-final fillers and exclamations.

Where each style appears

SITUATION	USUAL STYLE
diary, essay, article, textbook, thesis	plain written (**-ㄴ/는다**)
formal letter, speech text, notice, official email, presentation	formal polite (**-ㅂ니다 / -습니다**)
blog, message to a friendly reader, social media	spoken polite (**-아/어요**) or casual
subtitles, text messages	follow the speech of the speaker
news report	plain written, with headline style (Chapter 3)

> **Watch out: plain written is not "rude"**
> Because 해라체 is the low-politeness level in speech (Korean Grammar 2 1), learners worry that writing in it is rude. It is not: the writer is not addressing any one person, so there is no one to be polite to. The same **-ㄴ다** that would be rude spoken to a boss is neutral in an essay or a diary.

Reading the endings of a text

To know quickly what kind of text you have, look at the **ends of the sentences**:

- **-ㄴ다 / -는다 / -다**: plain written (article, essay, diary, narration).
- **-ㅂ니다 / -습니다**: formal polite (notice, speech, official document).

- **-아요 / -어요**: friendly spoken (blog, chat, informal explanation).
- **-아 / -어**: casual speech (to a friend, in dialogue).

In a novel, **narration** is in plain written style while the **dialogue** inside quotation marks follows the speakers' own levels. That switch is the clearest example of the two sides in one text.

🗣️ In Use — 실제 예문

The same day in three registers.

① A diary entry (plain written)

오늘은 친구와 함께 한강에 갔다. 날씨가 맑고 바람이 시원했다.

Today I went to the Han River with a friend. The weather was clear and the breeze was cool.

② A formal email (합쇼체)

회의 자료를 보내 드립니다. 확인 부탁드립니다.

I am sending you the meeting materials. Please confirm.

③ A blog post (해요체)

오늘은 친구랑 한강에 갔어요. 날씨가 정말 좋았어요!

Today I went to the Han River with a friend. The weather was really nice!

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

ITEM	PLAIN WRITTEN	SPOKEN POLITE
verb present	-ㄴ다 / -는다	-아요 / -어요
adjective present	-다	-아요 / -어요
이다	(이)다	예요 / 이에요

ITEM	PLAIN WRITTEN	SPOKEN POLITE
past	-았/었다	-았/었어요
future	-(으)ㄹ 것이다	-(으)ㄹ 거예요
negative	-지 않는다 / -지 않다	안 -아요 / -지 않아요
question	-는가? / -(으)ㄴ가? / -(으)ㄹ까?	-아요? / -어요?
demonstratives	이것 / 그것 / 저것	이거 / 그거 / 저거

🖍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. Put **먹어요, 가요, 좋아요, 학생이에요** into the plain written style.

▼ Show answer

먹는다 · 간다 · 좋다 · 학생이다

2. Put **살아요** (live) and **만들어요** (make) into the plain written style.

▼ Show answer

산다 · 만든다 (ㄹ stems drop the ㄹ before -ㄴ다).

3. Put the past **갔어요** and the future **갈 거예요** into plain written style.

▼ Show answer

갔다 · 갈 것이다

4. Why is **날씨가 좋는다** wrong?

▼ Show answer

좋다 is an adjective, so it keeps the plain -다: **날씨가 좋다.**

5. Rewrite for an essay: **저는 이거 되게 좋아요.**

▼ Show answer

나는 이것이 매우 좋다. (or **필자는 이것이 매우 마음에 든다**)

6. Write the plain written question "Why do people leave?" with a verb.

▼ Show answer

왜 사람들은 떠나는가?

7. Which style is each: **보내 드립니다**, **보냈다**, **보냈어요**?

▼ Show answer

formal polite (합쇼체) · plain written (해라체) · spoken polite (해요체)

8. Is it rude to write a diary in **-ㄴ다**? Explain.

▼ Show answer

No. The plain style is neutral in writing because the writer is not addressing a listener.

9. A novel has narration and quoted speech. Which parts use plain written style?

▼ Show answer

The narration; the quoted dialogue follows each speaker's own level.

Coming up in Chapter 2: Formal and Written Connectors. You will learn -며, -(으)나, -(으)므로, -(으)ㄹ뿐더러 and -는 동시에, the connecting words 그러나, 따라서, 또한, 한편, 반면에 and 게다가, and how to build a paragraph.

🔗 Formal and Written Connectors — 문어체 연결

Korean Grammar 4 1 (Written and Spoken Korean) showed that writing uses plain endings and fuller words. The same goes for ***connectors****. In speech you join clauses with* ***-고, -지만, -아/어서****; in articles, reports and essays you meet a more formal set:* ***-(으)며, -(으)나, -(으)므로, -(으)ㄹ뿐더러, -는 동시에****. You also need the* ***connecting words*** *that link whole sentences (****그러나, 따라서, 또한, 한편, 반면에, 게다가****). Together they let you build a paragraph that reads like Korean writing, not translated English.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

Clause connectors: -(으)며 and / while; **-(으)나** but; **-(으)므로** because; **-(으)ㄹ뿐더러** not only … but also; **-는 동시에** at the same time as. **Sentence connectors: 그러나** however; **따라서** therefore; **또한 / 게다가** also, moreover; **한편 / 반면에** meanwhile, whereas. All of these suit the plain written style; most sound stiff in casual speech.

Formal clause connectors

-(으)며: and, while

Stem + **-(으)며** (vowel stem: **-며**; consonant stem: **-으며**; noun: **(이)며**) links two actions or qualities. It replaces **-고** (listing) and **-(으)면서** (simultaneous actions) in formal writing.

USE	EXAMPLE	MEANING
listing qualities	**이 도시는 아름다우며 조용하다.**	This city is beautiful and quiet.
two actions at once	**그는 음악을 들으며 걸었다.**	He walked while listening to music.
noun	**그는 교수이며 작가이다.**	He is a professor and a writer.

-(으)나: but

The written equivalent of **-지만**. It takes tense markers.

EXAMPLE	MEANING
문제는 어려우나 해결할 수 있다.	The problem is hard, but it can be solved.
비가 왔으나 행사는 계속되었다.	It rained, but the event went on.

-(으)므로: because

The written equivalent of **-기 때문에** and **-아/어서**. It states an objective reason and is followed by a statement, not a command. Past: **-았/었으므로**; noun: **(이)므로**.

EXAMPLE	MEANING
비가 오므로 행사를 취소한다.	Because it is raining, the event is cancelled.
시간이 부족했으므로 계획을 바꾸었다.	Because time was short, the plan was changed.

> **Watch out: -(으)므로 against -(으)ㅁ으로(써)**
> **-(으)므로** means "because". Written together with the noun ending **-(으)ㅁ**, the pattern **-(으)ㅁ으로(써)** means "by doing": **노력함으로써 성공했다** "he succeeded by making an effort". The two look alike, so check the meaning.

-(으)ㄹ뿐더러: not only ... but also

The formal equivalent of **-(으)ㄹ 뿐만 아니라** (Korean Grammar 3 8).

EXAMPLE	MEANING
이 제품은 값이 쌀뿐더러 품질도 좋다.	This product is not only cheap but of good quality.

-는 동시에: at the same time as

Verb + **-는 동시에**, adjective + **-(으)ㄴ 동시에**, noun + **인 동시에**. It says two things are true or happen together, often a pair of roles or two sides of a situation.

EXAMPLE	MEANING
그는 학생인 동시에 사업가이다.	He is a student and a businessman at the same time.
정부는 세금을 줄이는 동시에 복지를 늘렸다.	The government cut taxes while also increasing welfare.

Connecting words between sentences

WORD	FUNCTION	EXAMPLE
그러나	however (formal)	값이 비싸다. 그러나 품질이 좋다.
따라서	therefore (written conclusion)	비가 많이 왔다. 따라서 경기는 취소되었다.
또한	also, in addition	이 방법은 간단하다. 또한 비용도 적게 든다.
게다가	moreover (adds a further point)	길이 막혔다. 게다가 비까지 왔다.
한편	meanwhile; turning to another matter	한편, 정부는 새 정책을 발표했다.
반면에	whereas, on the other hand (contrast)	도시는 편리하다. 반면에 시골은 조용하다.
즉	that is	한국의 수도, 즉 서울
예를 들어	for example	예를 들어, 버스는 요금이 싸다.

Choosing between similar connectors

PAIR	DIFFERENCE
그러나 / 하지만	Both mean "however". 그러나 is more formal and typical of writing; 하지만 is common in both speech and writing.
따라서 / 그래서	따라서 gives a logical conclusion in formal writing; 그래서 is the everyday "so" and appears in speech.
또한 / 게다가	또한 adds a neutral extra point; 게다가 adds a further, often stronger or more surprising point.

PAIR	DIFFERENCE
한편 / 반면에	한편 shifts to a new topic or another side; 반면에 sets two sides of the same subject against each other.

Building a paragraph

A short Korean paragraph usually follows a simple order: a **topic sentence**, **support** (with 또한 / 게다가), a **contrast** (그러나 / 반면에) and a **conclusion** (따라서). Notice how each connector marks the job of the sentence that follows.

Sample paragraph (plain written style)

대중교통은 도시 생활에 꼭 필요하다. 우선 요금이 싸며 시간도 정확하다. 또한 환경에도 도움이 된다. 그러나 출퇴근 시간에는 매우 붐빈다. 따라서 시간대를 나누어 이용하는 방법이 필요하다.

Public transport is essential to city life. First, the fares are cheap and the timetable is reliable. It also helps the environment. However, it is very crowded at commuting times. Therefore a way of spreading use across different times is needed.

SENTENCE	JOB	MARKER
1	topic	—
2	first support	**우선**, **-(으)며**
3	second support	**또한**
4	contrast	**그러나**
5	conclusion	**따라서**

Watch out: do not use these connectors in casual speech

따라서, **-(으)므로** and **-(으)나** in a friendly chat sound like a news reader. Use them for essays, reports and formal emails; in conversation keep to **그래서**, **-아/어서**, **-지만**.

🗣️ In Use — 실제 예문

Three short passages.

① A report (-(으)므로)

자료가 부족하므로 결론을 내리기 어렵다.

Because the data is insufficient, it is difficult to reach a conclusion.

② A review (반면에)

이 식당은 음식이 맛있다. 반면에 서비스는 아쉽다.

The food at this restaurant is tasty. The service, on the other hand, is disappointing.

③ A profile (-는 동시에)

그녀는 의사인 동시에 작가로도 활동한다.

She is a doctor and, at the same time, works as a writer.

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

SPOKEN	WRITTEN	MEANING
-고 / -(으)면서	-(으)며	and, while
-지만	-(으)나	but
-아/어서 / -기 때문에	-(으)므로	because
-(으)ㄹ 뿐만 아니라	-(으)ㄹ뿐더러	not only … but also
-(으)면서 / 동시에	-는 동시에	at the same time
하지만	그러나	however
그래서	따라서	therefore

🖍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. Join with -(으)며: **이 노래는 쉽다. 이 노래는 재미있다.**

▼ Show answer

이 노래는 쉬우며 재미있다.

2. Say "He walked while listening to music" in written style.

▼ Show answer

그는 음악을 들으며 걸었다.

3. Make a "but" sentence with -(으)나: **값이 비싸다 / 품질이 좋다**.

▼ Show answer

값이 비싸나 품질이 좋다.

4. Say "Because it rained, the match was cancelled" with -(으)므로.

▼ Show answer

비가 왔으므로 경기가 취소되었다.

5. Say "The room is not only large but also bright" with -(으)ㄹ뿐더러.

▼ Show answer

방이 클뿐더러 밝다.

6. Say "He is a teacher and, at the same time, a singer" with 동시에.

▼ Show answer

그는 교사인 동시에 가수이다.

7. Fill in with 그러나, 따라서 or 또한: "The method is cheap. ___ it is fast. ___ we choose it."

▼ Show answer

또한 (adds a point), 따라서 (conclusion): **이 방법은 싸다. 또한 빠르다. 따라서 이 방법을 선택한다.**

8. Choose 한편 or 반면에: "City life is convenient. ____ country life is peaceful."

▼ Show answer

반면에, because two sides of one subject are being contrasted.

9. Why does **친구와 이야기하다가 따라서 늦었어요** sound strange?

▼ Show answer

따라서 is a stiff written connector; in speech use 그래서 (and note that 따라서 also needs a logical conclusion, not just a cause).

Coming up in Chapter 3: Newspaper and Headline Korean. You will learn noun endings and headline style, common abbreviations, typical news verbs (밝히다, 알려지다, 전망되다) and reported speech in news, as in -(이)라고 밝혔다.

📰 Newspaper and Headline Korean — 신문과 기사

*News Korean has two layers: the **headline**, a compressed string of nouns, and the **body**, written in the plain style (Korean Grammar 4 1) with a small, repetitive set of reporting verbs. Both are very formulaic, which makes them the easiest real Korean to learn to read: a few dozen patterns cover most articles. All the headlines and sentences in this chapter are **invented examples** written in the style of news, not quotations from real articles.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

Headlines drop particles, endings and verbs: they end in a **noun** (**검토, 전망, 우려, 논란**) or a short verb stem, use **commas** for "and", **quotation marks** for speech and **…** to join two ideas. **Body text** is plain past tense, ending in a reporting verb: **-(이)라고 밝혔다** ("stated"), **-것으로 알려졌다** ("is reported"), **-것으로 전망된다** ("is forecast").

Reading a headline

A headline is a sentence with the grammar taken out. Put it back by asking: **who** (the word before the comma is often the subject), **what** (the final noun or verb), and **when** (present tense often stands for the past).

HEADLINE (INVENTED)	WHAT WAS DROPPED	MEANING
정부, 내년 최저임금 인상 검토	은/는, 을/를, 하고 있다	Government considering raising next year's minimum wage.
물가 3개월 연속 상승…서민 부담 커져	이/가, endings	Prices up for a third straight month… burden on ordinary people grows.
여름 폭염 전망…전력 수요 급증 우려	이/가, 이다	Summer heatwave forecast… fears of a surge in electricity demand.

HEADLINE (INVENTED)	WHAT WAS DROPPED	MEANING
시민단체 "환경 정책 후퇴" 비판	이/가, endings	Citizens' group criticises "retreat in environmental policy".
시험 결과 발표, 합격률 소폭 상승	은/는, 했다	Exam results announced; pass rate up slightly.

Headline habits

- **Noun endings:** a headline usually ends with a noun made from a 하다 verb with the 하다 removed: **검토** (reviewing), **발표** (announcement), **추진** (pushing ahead), **합의** (agreement).
- **Comma for "and", or to set off the subject: 정부, … 검토** = "Government is considering…".
- **Ellipsis (…) joins two linked points:** cause and effect, or two parts of a story.
- **Quotation marks for short quotes** with the speaker first and the quoting verb last: **대표 "…" 강조**.
- **Present tense for the past:** a headline reports yesterday's news in the present, as English headlines do.
- **Expectation endings: -ㄹ 전망** (expected), **-ㄹ 듯** (likely), **-ㄹ 가능성** (possibility), **-ㄹ 예정** (scheduled).

Common headline nouns

WORD	MEANING	WORD	MEANING
인상 / 인하	raise / cut (prices)	**증가 / 감소**	increase / decrease
급증 / 급감	surge / sharp drop	**확대 / 축소**	expansion / reduction
강화 / 완화	tightening / easing	**논란**	controversy
우려	concern	**전망**	outlook, forecast
추진	pushing ahead	**검토**	review, consideration
합의	agreement	**비판**	criticism

Reading the body: reporting verbs

News articles report what people *said*, and they are very consistent about how. The speaker comes first, then the quoted statement in plain style with **-고** or **-(이)라고**, then the reporting verb.

PATTERN	EXAMPLE (INVENTED)	MEANING
-(이)라고 밝혔다	**한국은행은 10일 기준금리를 동결했다고 밝혔다.**	The Bank of Korea stated on the 10th that it had held the base rate.
-(이)라고 말했다	**시장은 "내년에 공원을 짓겠다"고 말했다.**	The mayor said, "We will build a park next year."
-고 전했다	**현지 언론은 사고가 났다고 전했다.**	Local media reported that an accident occurred.
-고 덧붙였다 / 강조했다	**그는 "신중해야 한다"고 강조했다.**	He stressed, "We must be careful."
~에 따르면	**경찰에 따르면 피해자는 없었다.**	According to the police, there were no victims.

Passive and "it is reported" verbs

PATTERN	EXAMPLE	MEANING
-ㄴ/는 것으로 알려졌다	**사고는 오전에 발생한 것으로 알려졌다.**	The accident is reported to have happened in the morning.
-ㄹ 것으로 전망된다	**올해 성장률은 낮을 것으로 전망된다.**	This year's growth rate is forecast to be low.
-ㄹ 것으로 예상된다	**내일 비가 올 것으로 예상된다.**	Rain is expected tomorrow.
-ㄴ/는 것으로 나타났다	**조사 결과 응답자의 60%가 찬성한 것으로 나타났다.**	The survey found that 60% of respondents agreed.

PATTERN	EXAMPLE	MEANING
-ㄴ/는 것으로 확인됐다	**원인은 전기 합선인 것으로 확인됐다.**	The cause was confirmed to be an electrical short circuit.
-ㄹ 예정이다	**회의는 다음 주에 열릴 예정이다.**	The meeting is scheduled to be held next week.

The commonest news verbs

VERB	MEANING	VERB	MEANING
밝히다	state, reveal officially	**알려지다**	become known, be reported
전망되다	be forecast	**예상되다**	be expected
발표하다	announce	**추진하다**	push ahead with
확인되다	be confirmed	**나타나다**	appear, turn out
제기하다	raise (an issue)	**비판하다**	criticise

Time words, numbers and abbreviations

ITEM	MEANING / USE
지난 10일 / 10일	on the 10th (past date, day of the month)
이날 / 같은 날	on that day / on the same day
한편	meanwhile (turning to a new point)
전년 대비 5% 증가	up 5% compared with last year
1.5조 원 / 3억 원	1.5 trillion won / 300 million won
한은	short for 한국은행 (the Bank of Korea)
등	"and so on" at the end of a list

Headline writers shorten institution names (**한국은행 → 한은**) and often use single Chinese-character abbreviations such as **與** and **野** for the governing and opposition parties. The use of these characters is declining, so treat them as something to recognise rather than copy.

> **Watch out: headline style does not belong in your own writing**
> A headline's clipped nouns and missing particles are a professional convention. In an essay or an email, restore the particles and the verb: write **정부가 최저임금 인상을 검토하고 있다**, not **정부, 최저임금 인상 검토**.

🗣️ In Use — 실제 예문

Three invented news items in the style of a report.

① A headline and its first sentence

시청, 내년 도서관 3곳 신설 추진
City hall pushes plan to build 3 libraries next year.

시청은 내년에 도서관 3곳을 새로 지을 계획이라고 밝혔다.
City hall stated that it plans to build three new libraries next year.

② A forecast

기상청에 따르면 내일은 전국에 비가 올 것으로 예상된다.
According to the weather agency, rain is expected across the country tomorrow.

③ A survey

조사 결과 시민의 70%가 새 정책에 찬성한 것으로 나타났다.
The survey found that 70% of citizens support the new policy.

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

PATTERN	MEANING	EXAMPLE
headline noun ending	verb dropped	**인상 검토**
-(이)라고 밝혔다	stated	**동결했다고 밝혔다**
~에 따르면	according to	**경찰에 따르면**
-ㄴ/는 것으로 알려졌다	is reported	**발생한 것으로 알려졌다**
-ㄹ 것으로 전망된다	is forecast	**낮을 것으로 전망된다**
-ㄴ/는 것으로 나타났다	was found	**찬성한 것으로 나타났다**
-ㄹ 예정이다	is scheduled	**열릴 예정이다**

🖍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. Read the headline: **정부, 새 정책 발표**. What is the subject and what happened?

▼ Show answer

The government (subject) announced a new policy (발표, with 하다 and the particles dropped).

2. Restore the grammar: **물가 상승, 서민 부담**.

▼ Show answer

물가가 상승해 서민 부담이 커졌다. Prices rose, increasing the burden on ordinary people.

3. Say "The company stated that it would raise prices" in news style.

▼ Show answer

회사는 가격을 올리겠다고 밝혔다.

4. Say "According to the survey, 60% agree."

▼ Show answer

조사에 따르면 60%가 찬성한다.

5. Say "The accident is reported to have happened at night."

▼ Show answer

사고는 밤에 발생한 것으로 알려졌다.

6. Say "The meeting is scheduled for next month."

▼ Show answer

회의는 다음 달에 열릴 예정이다.

7. What do 인상 and 인하 mean, and what is the 5% in **전년 대비 5% 증가**?

▼ Show answer

인상 = raise, 인하 = cut. 전년 대비 5% 증가 = up 5% compared with last year.

8. Which tense does a headline use for yesterday's news?

▼ Show answer

The present (or just a noun); the article body then uses the past tense.

9. Read aloud and translate: **전력 수요 급증 우려**.

▼ Show answer

Fears of a surge in electricity demand.

Coming up in Chapter 4: Titles, Address and Social Language. You will learn the difference between 호칭 and 지칭, family and workplace titles, 님 / 씨 / 선생님, polite refusals and requests, and the language of customer service.

🤝 Titles, Address and Social Language — 호칭과 사회적 언어

*Korean avoids the word "you" wherever it can. Instead of a pronoun, speakers use a **name, a title or a relationship word**, and they choose it according to age, rank and closeness. Getting this right matters as much as choosing the right speech level (Korean Grammar 2 1). This chapter is a map of the commonest choices. Real usage varies by region, family and workplace, so treat the tables as the safe default rather than a law.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

호칭 is how you *call* someone to their face; **지칭** is how you *refer* to someone when talking about them. Address a superior by **title** + **님** (not by name alone), a peer or junior by **name** + **씨** or just the name, and avoid **당신** for "you". Say "you" by repeating the name or title.

호칭 and 지칭

SITUATION	호칭 (CALLING)	지칭 (REFERRING)
Your own mother	**엄마 / 어머니!**	**우리 엄마 / 어머니**
A manager	**김 과장님!**	**김 과장님** (to a colleague)
A friend	**민수야!**	**민수**

Family terms

Siblings are named from the **speaker's** point of view: the word for an older sibling depends on whether the speaker is male or female.

RELATIVE	MALE SPEAKER	FEMALE SPEAKER
Older brother	**형**	**오빠**
Older sister	**누나**	**언니**
Younger sibling	**동생** (to refer to them); when calling, use their name	
Mother / father	**엄마** · **아빠** (casual, also used by adults); **어머니** · **아버지** (more formal)	

To call a younger person or a close friend by name, add **-아** after a final consonant and **-야** after a vowel: **지은아, 민수야**. Never use this with someone older or senior.

Workplace titles

In a company people are called by **(surname) + job title + 님**, not by name. Use the title that matches the person's position.

TITLE	MEANING	EXAMPLE
사장님	company president; also a polite way to address a shop owner	**사장님, 안녕하세요.**
부장님	department head	**박 부장님, 회의 시작할까요?**
과장님	section chief	**김 과장님, 확인 부탁드립니다.**
팀장님	team leader	**팀장님, 잠깐 시간 되세요?**

님, 씨 and 선생님

FORM	USED FOR	CAREFUL WITH
-님	superiors, customers, respected people; attaches to titles	Do not add it to your *own* name or title.
-씨	equals and juniors, after a full name or first name	Not for superiors; **김 씨** (surname + 씨) sounds rude.
선생님	teachers, doctors, and respected people in general	Not limited to teachers: it is a respectful address for anyone.

Watch out: "you" is usually a name or title

Do not translate "you" as **당신** in ordinary talk. It is used between married couples or in arguments, and can sound confrontational otherwise. Repeat the person's title or name instead: **부장님은 어떻게 생각하세요?** ("What do you think, department head?"). Also prefer **우리나라** ("our country") to **저희 나라**, because **저희** lowers the speaker's own side before an audience, and the country is not something to humble.

Polite refusals and requests

PURPOSE	PHRASE	MEANING
Soft refusal	**죄송하지만 어려울 것 같습니다.**	I'm sorry, but I think that would be difficult.
Declining an offer	**괜찮습니다, 감사합니다.**	No, thank you.
Postponing	**다음에 하겠습니다.**	I'll do it next time.
Polite request	**도와주시겠어요?**	Would you help me?
Very polite request	**도와주실 수 있을까요?**	Might you be able to help me?
Calling attention	**저, 실례지만...**	Excuse me, but...

Customer-service language

Shops, banks and call centres use a stable set of phrases with **-겠습니다** and the honorific **-(으)시-**.

PHRASE	MEANING
고객님, 무엇을 도와드릴까요?	How can I help you, sir/madam?
확인해 보겠습니다.	I will check.
잠시만 기다려 주십시오.	Please wait a moment.
불편을 드려 죄송합니다.	We apologise for the inconvenience.
안내해 드리겠습니다.	I will guide you / explain it to you.

Watch out: do not honour things

Staff sometimes say **커피 나오셨습니다** ("the coffee has come out", with the honorific -시- on the coffee). Many Koreans consider this wrong, because -(으)시- honours a person, not an object. The standard form is **커피 나왔습니다**.

In Use — 실제 예문

Three short exchanges.

① At the office

김 과장님, 지금 잠깐 시간 되세요?

Manager Kim, do you have a moment now?

네, 말씀하세요.

Yes, go ahead.

② Declining politely

오늘 저녁에 같이 식사하실래요?

Would you like to have dinner together this evening?

죄송하지만 오늘은 어려울 것 같습니다. 다음에 하겠습니다.

I'm sorry, but I think today is difficult. Next time.

③ At a service desk

고객님, 확인해 보겠습니다. 잠시만 기다려 주십시오.

I will check for you. Please wait a moment.

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

NEED	USE
Call a superior	(surname) + title + 님
Call an equal or junior	name + 씨, or name + 아/야 for close friends
Say "you"	repeat the name or title
Older sibling	형 / 누나 (male speaker), 오빠 / 언니 (female speaker)
Refuse softly	죄송하지만 어려울 것 같습니다
Request politely	-아/어 주시겠어요?

🖍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. You are male. What do you call your older sister, and what would a female speaker call her?

▼ Show answer

You say **누나**; a female speaker says **언니**.

2. Call your friend 지은 by name, casually.

▼ Show answer

지은아! (ends in a consonant, so -아)

3. Call your section chief, whose surname is 이.

▼ Show answer

이 과장님!

4. Which is polite for a younger colleague: 민수 씨 or 민수 님?

▼ Show answer

민수 씨. 님 is for superiors and customers.

5. Ask your department head "What do you think?" without using 당신.

▼ Show answer

부장님은 어떻게 생각하세요?

6. Politely decline an offer of coffee.

▼ Show answer

괜찮습니다, 감사합니다.

7. Ask a colleague, very politely, whether they could help you.

▼ Show answer

도와주실 수 있을까요?

8. What is wrong with **커피 나오셨습니다**, and what is the standard form?

▼ Show answer

It puts the honorific -시- on an object. Say **커피 나왔습니다**.

9. As a shop assistant, say "Please wait a moment."

▼ Show answer

잠시만 기다려 주십시오.

Coming up in Chapter 5: Sino-Korean and Native Vocabulary. You will learn how 한자어 and 고유어 differ, how common roots build words, the prefixes and suffixes -적, -화, -성, 불- and 무-, and the 하다 / 되다 / 시키다 noun verbs.

🧩 Sino-Korean and Native Vocabulary — 한자어와 고유어

*Korean vocabulary has two big layers. **고유어** (native words) are the everyday, home-grown words. **한자어** (Sino-Korean words) were built from Chinese-character roots and make up a large share of the dictionary, especially in formal, academic and technical language. Once you know a few dozen roots, you can read and even guess hundreds of words. Each root below is shown with the word it appears in; the characters are not needed, only the sound and meaning.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

Native words feel **everyday and concrete**; Sino-Korean words feel **formal and abstract**. Sino-Korean roots are **one syllable each** and combine like building blocks (**학** + **교** → **학교**). Add **-적, -화, -성** to make new abstract words, **불-, 무-** to make negatives, and **하다 / 되다 / 시키다** to turn a noun into a verb.

Native and Sino-Korean pairs

Many ideas have both a native and a Sino-Korean word. The Sino-Korean one is usually the more formal or written choice.

NATIVE (EVERYDAY)	SINO-KOREAN (FORMAL)	MEANING
이름	성명	name
나이	연령	age
몸	신체	body
길	도로	road, way
밥	식사	meal
해	태양	the sun

Two number systems

The same split runs through numbers. **Sino-Korean** numbers (**일, 이, 삼…**) are used for dates, minutes, money, floors and phone numbers. **Native** numbers (**하나, 둘, 셋…**) are used for counting items, people and hours.

USE	EXAMPLE
Date, money (Sino)	**삼월 오일, 이천 원**
Counting people, things (native)	**세 명, 두 개**
Clock time (both)	**세 시 이십 분** (hour native, minute Sino)

Common roots

Learn the root from words you already know, then spot it in new ones.

ROOT	MEANING	WORDS
학	learning	**학교, 학생, 학습, 학문**
인	person	**한국인, 외국인, 인간**
국	country	**한국, 외국, 국가**
전	electricity	**전기, 전화, 전자**
화	speech	**전화, 대화, 회화**
차	vehicle	**자동차, 기차, 주차**

Suffixes: -적, -화, -성

SUFFIX	EFFECT	EXAMPLES
-적	"-ic", "-al"; makes a noun describe something	**경제적, 개인적, 일반적**

SUFFIX	EFFECT	EXAMPLES
-화	"-ization", becoming	**세계화, 현대화, 도시화**
-성	"-ness", "-ity"; a quality	**가능성, 중요성, 필요성**
-자	a person who does	**학자, 기자, 소비자**

A **-적** word attaches to a following noun with **-인** (**경제적인 문제**, "an economic problem") or to a verb with **-으로** (**경제적으로 어렵다**, "economically difficult").

Prefixes: 불-, 무-, 비-, 미-

PREFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLES
불-	not, un-	**불가능, 불편, 불행, 불만**
무-	without, lacking	**무관심, 무책임, 무료**
비-	non-	**비공식, 비정상**
미-	not yet	**미완성, 미확인**

Before the sounds ㄷ and ㅈ, 불- becomes **부-**: **부족** ("shortage"), **부정** ("denial").

Noun + 하다 / 되다 / 시키다

A Sino-Korean noun becomes a verb by adding one of three endings. Choose by the direction of the action.

ENDING	MEANING	EXAMPLE
-하다	do it (active)	**회사가 계획을 결정했다.** The company decided the plan.
-되다	it happens / is done (passive, intransitive)	**계획이 결정되었다.** The plan was decided.

ENDING	MEANING	EXAMPLE
-시키다	make someone or something do it (causative)	**선생님이 학생을 이해시켰다.** The teacher made the student understand.

The same noun can take all three: **시작하다** ("start", with an object), **시작되다** ("begin", on its own).

> **Watch out: formal does not always mean better**
>
> Sino-Korean words sound formal and precise, but a chain of them in speech can sound stiff. Say **밥 먹었어요?** to a friend, not **식사하셨습니까?** unless the situation is formal. Also, a sound can stand for several roots, as with **사고** ("accident") and **사고** ("thinking"). Context decides.

🗣️ In Use — 실제 예문

Three short examples.

① Suffix -성

이 계획은 실현 가능성이 높다.

This plan has a high chance of being realised.

② Suffix -화

도시화가 빠르게 진행되고 있다.

Urbanisation is progressing quickly.

③ Prefix 불-

이 길은 너무 좁아서 불편하다.

This road is so narrow that it is inconvenient.

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

FORM	MEANING	EXAMPLE
-적	-al, -ic	**경제적**

FORM	MEANING	EXAMPLE
-화	-ization	**세계화**
-성	-ness, -ity	**중요성**
불- (부-)	not, un-	**불편, 부족**
무-	without	**무관심**
-하다 / -되다 / -시키다	do / be done / make do	**결정하다 / 결정되다**

🖍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. What is the formal (Sino-Korean) word for **이름**?

▼ Show answer

성명.

2. Which number system for "two thousand won": Sino or native?

▼ Show answer

Sino: **이천 원**.

3. Say "three people" with the correct number system.

▼ Show answer

Native: **세 명**.

4. What does the root 학 mean, and what is one word containing it?

▼ Show answer

"Learning"; for example **학교** (school) or **학생** (student).

5. Make a noun meaning "possibility" from **가능**.

▼ Show answer

가능성.

6. Add 불- to **편** to say "inconvenient".

▼ Show answer

불편 (so **불편하다** = to be inconvenient).

7. Why is it **부족** and not **불족**?

▼ Show answer

Before ㅈ, 불- changes to 부-.

8. Choose: **결정했다** or **결정되었다** — "The plan was decided."

▼ Show answer

계획이 결정되었다. -되다 gives the passive.

9. Say "She made her child understand" using 이해 and the causative.

▼ Show answer

그녀는 아이를 이해시켰다.

Coming up in Chapter 6: Onomatopoeia and Mimetics. You will learn 의성어 (sound words) and 의태어 (manner words), pairs such as 반짝반짝 and 번쩍번쩍, how mimetics work in a sentence, and the commonest 40.

✨ Onomatopoeia and Mimetics — 의성어와 의태어

*Korean is rich in words that imitate sounds (**의성어**) and words that paint a manner, movement, shape or feeling (**의태어**). English has "bang" and "twinkle"; Korean has hundreds more, and uses them constantly in conversation, stories, comics, adverts and children's talk. They are cheap to learn, because most are a doubled syllable, and they make your Korean sound much more natural.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

의성어 copy a sound (**멍멍**, "woof"); **의태어** describe how something moves, looks or feels (**반짝반짝**, "twinkling"). Most are **doubled**. They go **straight before the verb** as adverbs: **별이 반짝반짝 빛난다**. To use one as an adjective or verb, add **-하다** or **-거리다**.

Sound words — 의성어

WORD	SOUND	WORD	SOUND
멍멍	dog barking	야옹	cat meowing
꿀꿀	pig oinking	짹짹	bird chirping
똑똑	knocking	딩동	doorbell
쿵	thud	쾅	bang, slam
펑	pop, boom	쨍그랑	glass shattering
똑딱똑딱	ticking clock	콜록콜록	coughing
꼬르륵	stomach rumbling	후루룩	slurping noodles
깔깔	laughing aloud	엉엉	sobbing loudly

Manner words — 의태어

Movement

WORD	MEANING	WORD	MEANING
살금살금	stealthily, on tiptoe	엉금엉금	crawling slowly
깡충깡충	hopping	성큼성큼	striding
데굴데굴	rolling	빙글빙글	spinning around
흔들흔들	swaying, wobbling	어슬렁어슬렁	strolling about idly
허둥지둥	in a flustered rush		

Light and feeling

WORD	MEANING	WORD	MEANING
반짝반짝	twinkling, sparkling	번쩍번쩍	flashing, glaring
깜빡깜빡	blinking	두근두근	heart pounding
싱글벙글	beaming with smiles		

Texture and appearance

WORD	MEANING	WORD	MEANING
울퉁불퉁	bumpy, uneven	반들반들	smooth and shiny
끈적끈적	sticky	말랑말랑	soft and springy
푹신푹신	soft and cushiony	알록달록	colourful, multi-coloured

Order and progress

WORD	MEANING	WORD	MEANING
차곡차곡	neatly piled up	**뒤죽박죽**	jumbled, in a mess
쑥쑥	growing fast	**술술**	smoothly, fluently

That makes 16 sound words and 24 manner words: the commonest 40 to start with.

How the sound changes the feeling

Mimetics come in families that differ by a vowel or consonant. As a rule of thumb, **light vowels** (ㅏ, ㅗ) give a *smaller, lighter, brighter* feel and **dark vowels** (ㅓ, ㅜ) a *bigger, heavier, duller* one; **tense or aspirated consonants** (ㄲ, ㄸ, ㅊ…) are usually *stronger* than plain ones.

LIGHT / SMALL	DARK / BIG
반짝반짝 twinkling	**번쩍번쩍** flashing
깡충깡충 small hops	**껑충껑충** big leaps
졸졸 a thin trickle	**줄줄** a heavier flow

Using them in a sentence

FORM	ROLE	EXAMPLE
word alone	adverb before a verb	**토끼가 깡충깡충 뛰어간다.** The rabbit hops away.
word + -하다	adjective or verb; before a noun: **-한**	**울퉁불퉁한 길** a bumpy road; **푹신푹신한 침대** a cushiony bed
word + -거리다	verb meaning "keep doing it"	**심장이 두근거린다.** My heart is pounding.
a few verbs	before a noun: **-는**	**반짝이는 별** a twinkling star

Watch out: keep them out of formal writing

Mimetics belong to speech, stories, comics, adverts and children's language. News, reports and essays (Chapters 1 to 3 of this course) normally use plain descriptive words instead. Also, not every doubled word is a mimetic: check it before adding **-하다**, because some take **-거리다** and some take neither.

🗣️ In Use — 실제 예문

Three short examples.

① Night sky

밤하늘에서 별이 반짝반짝 빛난다.

Stars are twinkling in the night sky.

② Nerves

발표 전에 가슴이 두근두근 뛰었다.

My heart pounded before the presentation.

③ Kitchen

찌개가 보글보글 끓는 소리가 났다.

There was the sound of the stew bubbling.

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

NEED	PATTERN	EXAMPLE
Adverb	word + verb	**살금살금 걷다**
Adjective / before noun	word + -한	**끈적끈적한 손**
"Keep doing"	word + -거리다	**흔들거리다**
Bigger or duller	dark vowels	**번쩍번쩍**

🖍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. Which is a sound word and which a manner word: **멍멍**, **반짝반짝**?

▼ Show answer

멍멍 is a sound word (의성어); 반짝반짝 is a manner word (의태어).

2. Say "The cat is meowing."

▼ Show answer

고양이가 야옹야옹 운다.

3. Say "The child crawls slowly."

▼ Show answer

아이가 엉금엉금 기어간다.

4. Say "a bumpy road" with a mimetic.

▼ Show answer

울퉁불퉁한 길.

5. How does 깡충깡충 differ from 껑충껑충?

▼ Show answer

The light vowels of 깡충깡충 give small hops; the dark vowels of 껑충껑충 give bigger leaps.

6. Make a verb meaning "to keep pounding" (heart) from 두근두근.

▼ Show answer

두근거리다.

7. Say "a sticky hand".

▼ Show answer

끈적끈적한 손.

8. Which fits "The room is a mess": **차곡차곡** or **뒤죽박죽**?

▼ Show answer

뒤죽박죽: **방이 뒤죽박죽이다.**

9. Should you use mimetics in a news report? Why?

▼ Show answer

Normally not: they belong to speech, stories and comics, while news uses plain descriptive words.

Coming up in Chapter 7: Idioms, Proverbs and Four-Character Phrases. You will learn 관용구, 속담 and 사자성어, and the body-part idioms such as 손이 크다 and 발이 넓다.

🏮 Idioms, Proverbs and Four-Character Phrases — 관용구, 속담, 사자성어

*Korean speakers use three kinds of ready-made expression all the time. **관용구** are idioms: short fixed phrases whose meaning is not the sum of the words. **속담** are proverbs: whole sentences of folk wisdom. **사자성어** are four-character phrases built from Sino-Korean roots (Korean Grammar 4 5), usually with a story or lesson behind them. They are fixed, so you learn them as units, but each follows ordinary grammar around it.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

An idiom has a **figurative meaning** and a **fixed form**: do not translate it word by word and do not swap its words. The verb ending still changes with tense and speech level (**발이 넓다 → 발이 넓어요**), and before a noun it takes the modifier form (**발이 넓은 사람**). Proverbs are usually quoted: **"..."라는 속담이 있다**.

Body-part idioms — 관용구

IDIOM	LITERAL	MEANING
손이 크다	the hand is big	generous; gives or cooks in big amounts
발이 넓다	the feet are wide	well connected; knows many people
입이 무겁다	the mouth is heavy	tight-lipped; keeps secrets
입이 가볍다	the mouth is light	talks too freely; can't keep a secret
눈이 높다	the eyes are high	has high standards; picky
귀가 얇다	the ears are thin	easily swayed by what others say
간이 크다	the liver is big	bold, daring

IDIOM	LITERAL	MEANING
눈코 뜰 새 없다	no time to open eyes and nose	extremely busy
한눈을 팔다	sell one eye	let your attention wander
배가 아프다	the stomach hurts	(figurative) jealous of another's success

Proverbs — 속담

PROVERB	LITERAL	SENSE
가는 말이 고와야 오는 말이 곱다	the going words must be lovely for the coming words to be lovely	speak kindly and you will be answered kindly
낮말은 새가 듣고 밤말은 쥐가 듣는다	birds hear day talk, mice hear night talk	walls have ears
호랑이도 제 말 하면 온다	even a tiger comes if you talk about it	speak of the devil
백지장도 맞들면 낫다	even a sheet of paper is better lifted together	many hands make light work
티끌 모아 태산	gather dust and it becomes a mountain	little by little adds up
원숭이도 나무에서 떨어진다	even monkeys fall from trees	anyone can make a mistake
소 잃고 외양간 고친다	fix the barn after losing the cow	locking the stable door after the horse has bolted
세 살 버릇 여든까지 간다	habits at three last until eighty	old habits die hard
우물 안 개구리	a frog in a well	someone with a narrow view
시작이 반이다	the start is half	well begun is half done

Four-character phrases — 사자성어

PHRASE	MEANING	EXAMPLE USE
일석이조	two gains from one action (two birds, one stone)	운동도 되고 돈도 아끼니 일석이조예요.
작심삼일	a resolution that lasts three days	다이어트가 작심삼일로 끝났다.
고진감래	after hardship comes joy	고진감래라더니 드디어 합격했다.
전화위복	turning misfortune into fortune	실패가 전화위복이 되었다.
설상가상	making a bad situation worse	설상가상으로 비까지 왔다.
이심전심	understanding without words	우리는 이심전심으로 통했다.
동문서답	answering a different question	그는 동문서답만 했다.
유비무환	being prepared means no trouble	유비무환이라고 미리 준비하자.
자업자득	reaping what you sowed	늦잠을 잤으니 자업자득이다.
십시일반	many give a little to help one	십시일반으로 돈을 모았다.

Fitting them into a sentence

KIND	COMMON FRAME	EXAMPLE
Idiom	conjugate normally	**그 사람은 발이 넓어요.**
Idiom before a noun	modifier form	**입이 무거운 친구**
Proverb	"…"라는 속담이 있다 / "…"고 하니까	**"시작이 반이다"라는 말이 있다.**
사자성어	noun + 이다 / 으로 / 라는 말	**작심삼일로 끝났다.**

Watch out: idioms are not literal and not flexible

눈이 높다 has nothing to do with eye position, and **손이 크다** is not about hand size. Do not change the words either: **손이 큰** is fine as a modifier, but swapping in **팔이 크다** means nothing. Context also matters: **배가 아프다** can be a real stomach ache or the idiom for jealousy.

🗣️ In Use — 실제 예문

Three short examples.

① A well-connected friend

민수는 발이 넓어서 모르는 사람이 없어요.

Minsu knows so many people that there is nobody he doesn't know.

② A resolution

운동 계획이 작심삼일로 끝났어요.

My exercise plan lasted only three days.

시작이 반이라고 하니까 다시 해 보세요.

They say the start is half the job, so try again.

③ A generous grandmother

할머니는 손이 커서 항상 음식을 많이 만드세요.

Grandmother is generous with portions, so she always makes lots of food.

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

TYPE	EXAMPLE	MEANING
관용구	**발이 넓다**	well connected
관용구	**입이 무겁다**	keeps secrets
속담	**티끌 모아 태산**	little by little adds up
속담	**시작이 반이다**	well begun is half done
사자성어	**일석이조**	two gains at once
사자성어	**작심삼일**	resolve lasting three days

📝 Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. What does **입이 무겁다** mean, and what is its opposite?

▼ Show answer

Tight-lipped, keeps secrets. The opposite is **입이 가볍다**.

2. Say "She is well connected" in polite speech.

▼ Show answer

그 사람은 발이 넓어요.

3. Put **귀가 얇다** before the noun 사람.

▼ Show answer

귀가 얇은 사람, someone easily swayed.

4. Which proverb means "many hands make light work"?

▼ Show answer

백지장도 맞들면 낫다.

5. A friend keeps meaning to start studying but never does. Which proverb encourages them?

▼ Show answer

시작이 반이다: starting is already half the job.

6. Which four-character phrase fits "Bad luck, and then it rained too"?

▼ Show answer

설상가상: **설상가상으로 비까지 왔다.**

7. Complete: **다이어트가 ____으로 끝났다** ("My diet lasted only three days").

▼ Show answer

작심삼일.

8. Quote the proverb 티끌 모아 태산 in a sentence with "라는 속담".

▼ Show answer

"티끌 모아 태산"이라는 속담이 있다.

9. Why is **배가 아프다** ambiguous?

▼ Show answer

It can mean a real stomach ache or the idiom for being jealous of someone's success. Context decides.

Coming up in Chapter 8: Spoken Korean: Contractions, Slang and Dialects. You will learn the spoken shortenings (뭐를 → 뭘, 그것이 → 그게), 반말 in dramas, common slang, and a first look at 경상도, 전라도 and 제주 speech.

💬 Spoken Korean: Contractions, Slang and Dialects — 구어, 신조어, 사투리

Chapter 1 showed how written Korean differs from the spoken kind. This chapter is the other side: how people really talk. Spoken Korean shortens words, drops particles, uses casual endings and slang, and varies by region. You will hear all of it in dramas and everyday life, so it is worth recognising even if you do not use it yourself.

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

In speech, **particles and syllables merge** (**뭐를** → **뭘**, **그것이** → **그게**); **반말** (casual speech) is for close friends and younger people; **slang** is short-lived and belongs to a group or an age; and a **사투리** (regional dialect) has its own endings and vocabulary. Recognise all of these, but use the polite standard form with people you do not know well.

Common contractions

FULL FORM	SPOKEN FORM	EXAMPLE
무엇을 / 뭐를	뭘	**뭘 먹을래?** What will you eat?
이것이 / 그것이	이게 / 그게	**이게 뭐야?** What's this?
이것은 / 그것은	이건 / 그건	**그건 아니야.** That's not it.
이것을 / 그것을	이걸 / 그걸	**그걸 샀어.** I bought that.
나는 / 너는	난 / 넌	**난 괜찮아, 넌?** I'm fine, you?
나를 / 너를	날 / 널	**날 믿어.** Trust me.
그런데	근데	**근데 왜?** But why?
그러면	그럼	**그럼 가자.** Then let's go.

FULL FORM	SPOKEN FORM	EXAMPLE
가지고	갖고	**책을 갖고 왔어.** I brought a book.

The noun **것** ("thing") shrinks to **거** and joins the particles in the same way: **할 거야** ("I will"), **먹는 게** ("eating, as subject"), **먹는 건** ("eating, as topic"), **먹는 걸** ("eating, as object").

반말 — casual speech

반말 (the 해체 style from Korean Grammar 2 1) drops **요** and is used among close friends, family and towards younger people. Dramas are full of it, along with a handful of endings.

ENDING	FEELING	EXAMPLE
-아/어	plain statement or question	**지금 뭐 해?** What are you doing now?
-지	"right?", confirmation	**맞지?** Right?
-거든	giving a reason	**바빠서 못 가. 일이 많거든.** I'm busy, you see.
-잖아	"you know", "as I said" (from -지 않아)	**내가 말했잖아.** I told you.
-네	noticing something	**비가 오네.** Oh, it's raining.
너 / 야	"you" / "hey"	**야, 너 어디 가?** Hey, where are you going?

Slang and text-speak — 신조어

Slang changes quickly and is tied to age groups, so any list is a snapshot. These are widely understood examples.

WORD	MEANING
대박	wow, amazing (or a huge success)
헐	"oh my god", surprise or dismay

WORD	MEANING
짱	the best, great
꿀잼 / 노잼	very fun / not fun
인싸 / 아싸	popular insider / outsider
ㅋㅋ / ㅎㅎ	laughter in texts
ㅠㅠ	crying face
ㅇㅇ	"yes" (from 응응)

Regional dialects — 사투리

The standard language (**표준어**) is based on educated speech from Seoul. Other regions keep their own endings and words. These are only the best-known features.

REGION	FEATURES	EXAMPLE
경상도 (Gyeongsang)	question endings **-나** (yes/no) and **-노** (with a question word)	**밥 먹었나? 어디 가노?** Have you eaten? Where are you going?
전라도 (Jeolla)	emphatic endings such as **-랑께**, and the filler **거시기** ("that thing, you know")	**그렇당께.** It really is so.
제주 (Jeju)	so different that it is often treated as a separate language, **제주어**	**혼저 옵서예.** Welcome, please come.

> **Watch out: 어떻게 and 어떡해 sound alike**
>
> **어떻게** means "how" (**어떻게 해?** "How do you do it?"), while **어떡해** is a contraction of **어떻게 해** meaning "what shall I do?" (**어떡해! 지갑을 잃어버렸어.** "Oh no! I lost my wallet."). Also, never use 반말 with someone older or a stranger, and do not copy slang you only half understand.

In Use — 실제 예문

Three short examples.

① Friends

야, 그걸 어디서 샀어?

Hey, where did you buy that?

온라인에서 샀지. 싸거든.

Online, of course. It's cheap, you see.

② Surprise

헐, 이게 진짜야? 대박!

Wow, is this real? Amazing!

③ Gyeongsang speech

밥 먹었나?

Have you eaten?

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

FULL	SPOKEN
뭐를	뭘
그것이 / 그것은 / 그것을	그게 / 그건 / 그걸
나는 / 너를	난 / 널
그런데 / 그러면	근데 / 그럼
-지 않아	-잖아
어떻게 해	어떡해

🖍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. Contract **뭐를 먹을래?** in speech.

▼ Show answer

뭘 먹을래?

2. Contract **그것이 무엇이에요?** in speech.

▼ Show answer

그게 뭐예요?

3. Say "I am a student" in contracted casual speech (나는 ...).

▼ Show answer

난 학생이야.

4. Which means "What shall I do?": 어떻게 or 어떡해?

▼ Show answer

어떡해?

5. What does **-잖아** add to **내가 말했어**?

▼ Show answer

내가 말했잖아 means "I told you (as you know)".

6. Whom is it acceptable to address in 반말?

▼ Show answer

Close friends, family and younger people, not strangers or elders.

7. What does **꿀잼** mean?

▼ Show answer

Very fun.

8. Say "Where are you going?" in Gyeongsang speech.

▼ Show answer

어디 가노?

9. Which contraction of 것 means "as object": 게, 건 or 걸?

▼ Show answer

걸 (것을).

Coming up in Chapter 9: Particles in Depth. You will compare 은/는 with 이/가, learn the choice between 에, 에서, 에게, 한테 and 께, meet the focus particles 만, 도, 조차, 마저, 부터 and 까지, and see how particles behave with passives and causatives.

🔗 Particles in Depth — 조사 심화

*Particles are the small words attached to nouns that show their job in the sentence. By now you know the basic ones. This chapter sharpens the choices that even advanced learners get wrong: **은/는 versus 이/가**, the family of "to / at / from" particles, the **focus particles** that add "only", "even" and "from… until", how particles **stack**, and what happens to them with passives and causatives.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

이/가 presents the subject as *new or answering a question*; **은/는** marks a *topic or a contrast*. **에** goes with things and places, **에게/한테** with people and animals, **께** with respected people, and **에서** with where an action happens or where something comes from. Focus particles **replace 이/가 and 을/를** but **stack after 에, 에서, 에게**.

은/는 versus 이/가

이/가	은/는
introduces something new	talks about something already known
answers "who / what?"	sets a topic ("as for…")
focuses on the subject	contrasts it with something else

SITUATION	EXAMPLE
Answering "who?"	**누가 왔어요? – 민수가 왔어요.** Minsu came.
Story: new, then known	**옛날에 한 왕이 살았어요. 그 왕은 아주 부자였어요.** Once upon a time a king lived. That king was very rich.
Contrast	**커피는 마시지만 차는 안 마셔요.** I drink coffee, but not tea.
After 되다 / 아니다	**의사가 되었다. 학생이 아니다.**

SITUATION	EXAMPLE
Topic + subject	**저는 머리가 아파요.** As for me, my head hurts.

에 / 에서 / 에게 / 한테 / 께

PARTICLE	USE	EXAMPLE
에	time; destination; where something *exists*; thing receiving an action	**학교에 가요. 집에 있어요. 꽃에 물을 줘요.**
에서	where an action happens; "from" a place; an organisation as the actor	**도서관에서 공부해요. 서울에서 왔어요.**
에게	"to" a person or animal (written)	**친구에게 선물을 줬어요.**
한테	the same, spoken	**친구한테 전화했어요.**
께	honorific "to"	**선생님께 드렸어요.**
에게서 / 한테서	"from" a person	**친구한테서 편지를 받았어요.**

The honorific subject particle **께서** replaces 이/가 for a respected person: **선생님께서 오셨어요.**

Focus particles

PARTICLE	MEANING	EXAMPLE
만	only	**물만 마셔요.** I drink only water.
밖에	only (with a negative)	**하나밖에 없어요.** There is only one.
도	also, too	**저도 갈게요.** I'll go too.
조차	even (unexpected, usually negative)	**이름조차 몰라요.** I don't even know the name.

PARTICLE	MEANING	EXAMPLE
마저	even / the last one too (feels sad or severe)	**너마저 떠나는구나.** Even you are leaving.
부터	from (a starting point)	**아침부터 비가 와요.** It has rained since morning.
까지	until; also "even"	**저녁까지 일했어요.** I worked until evening.

Stacking particles

You can add 은/는, 도 or 만 after **에, 에서, 에게, 한테, 부터, 까지** to add contrast or emphasis, but they **replace** 이/가 and 을/를 rather than sitting beside them.

COMBINATION	EXAMPLE	MEANING
에서 + 는	**집에서는 조용해요.**	At home it is quiet (but not elsewhere).
에서 + 도	**회사에서도 일해요.**	I work at the office too.
에게 + 만	**너에게만 말할게.**	I'll tell only you.
을/를 + 만 → 만	**책만 읽어요.**	I read only books.
이/가 + 도 → 도	**비도 와요.**	It rains too.

Particles with passives and causatives

When a sentence becomes passive, the object becomes the subject (이/가), and the doer is marked with **에게 / 한테** (a person or animal) or **에** (a thing).

TYPE	EXAMPLE
Active	**고양이가 쥐를 잡았다.** The cat caught the mouse.
Passive	**쥐가 고양이에게 잡혔다.** The mouse was caught by the cat.

TYPE	EXAMPLE
Passive (thing)	**바람에 문이 닫혔다.** The door was shut by the wind.
Causative	**어머니가 아이에게 옷을 입혔다.** Mother dressed the child.
Causative, intransitive verb	**어머니가 아이를 재웠다.** Mother put the child to sleep.

Watch out: three common slips

(1) Do not write **책을만** or **비가도**; the focus particle replaces 을/를 and 이/가. (2) Use 에 for places and things, 에게/한테 for people: **학교에 간다**, **친구에게 간다** (never **친구에** for a person). (3) 에 and 에서 are different: **집에 있어요** (it exists there) but **집에서 쉬어요** (the action happens there).

🗣️ In Use — 실제 예문

Three short examples.

① Who and as-for

누가 케이크를 만들었어요?

Who made the cake?

제가 만들었어요. 케이크는 처음이에요.

I made it. As for cake, it's my first time.

② Only and even

그 사람은 이름조차 몰라요. 얼굴만 알아요.

I don't even know that person's name. I only know the face.

③ Passive

제 우산이 바람에 날아갔어요.

My umbrella was blown away by the wind.

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

NEED	PARTICLE
New subject / answer to "who?"	이/가
Topic or contrast	은/는
Destination, existence, time	에
Where an action happens; from a place	에서
To a person / honorific	에게, 한테 / 께
Only / even	만, 밖에 / 조차, 마저
From / until	부터 / 까지

🖍️ Try It Yourself — 연습

Work out the answer first, then click to check.

1. Choose 은/는 or 이/가: **누구____ 왔어요?** (Who came?)

▼ Show answer

누가. A question word takes 이/가.

2. "I like coffee but not tea." Which particles?

▼ Show answer

커피는 좋아하지만 차는 안 좋아해요. 은/는 marks the contrast.

3. Choose 에 or 에서: **도서관____ 공부해요.**

▼ Show answer

에서 (the action happens there).

4. Choose 에 or 에게: **친구____ 편지를 썼어요.**

▼ Show answer

에게 (a person).

5. Say "I gave it to my teacher" with the honorific particle.

▼ Show answer

선생님께 드렸어요.

6. Say "I read only books" correctly.

▼ Show answer

책만 읽어요. 만 replaces 을/를.

7. Say "There is only one" using 밖에.

▼ Show answer

하나밖에 없어요. 밖에 needs a negative.

8. Make the passive of **고양이가 쥐를 잡았다**.

▼ Show answer

쥐가 고양이에게 잡혔다.

9. Say "Mother put the child to sleep."

▼ Show answer

어머니가 아이를 재웠다.

Coming up in Chapter 10: Reading Real Texts and Putting It Together. You will read a news paragraph, an email, a social post and a short story, see the whole grammar track on one map, work through an error clinic, and finish the course.

📖 Reading Real Texts — 실제 글 읽기

*This last chapter uses everything from the course. You will read four short texts in four registers, see the whole grammar track on one map, correct nine typical errors, and finish with a recap. All four texts are **invented** for practice, written in the style of real ones.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

Before you read, ask **what kind of text it is**. The register tells you what to expect: a news report uses plain past tense and reporting verbs; a formal email uses 합쇼체 and titles; a social post uses fragments, mimetics and slang; a story mixes plain narration with idioms. Then read for the **verb at the end**, which carries the tense, the style and the attitude.

Text 1 — A news paragraph

서울시는 12일 내년부터 시내버스 요금을 100원 인상한다고 밝혔다. 시는 연료비와 인건비가 올라 운영 적자가 커졌다고 설명했다. 이에 따라 일반 요금은 1,500원에서 1,600원으로 오를 것으로 전망된다. 한편 시민단체는 "서민 부담이 커진다"며 반대 의사를 밝혔다.

The Seoul city government stated on the 12th that it will raise city bus fares by 100 won from next year. The city explained that fuel and labour costs had risen and operating losses had grown. As a result, the standard fare is forecast to rise from 1,500 to 1,600 won. Meanwhile, a citizens' group voiced

opposition, saying "the burden on ordinary people grows".

What to notice: plain style throughout (Korean Grammar 4 1); **-고 밝혔다**, **설명했다** and **-것으로 전망된다** (Korean Grammar 4 3); **이에 따라** and **한편** as linking words (Korean Grammar 4 2); Sino-Korean nouns such as **인건비, 적자, 인상** (Korean Grammar 4 5).

Text 2 — A formal email

김민수 부장님께,
안녕하십니까. 마케팅팀 이지은입니다.
다음 주 회의 일정과 관련하여 말씀드립니다. 화요일 오후 2시로 예정되어 있던 회의를 수요일 오전 10시로 변경하고자 합니다. 불편을 드려 죄송합니다. 가능하신지 확인해 주시면 감사하겠습니다.
이지은 드림

To Department Head Kim Minsu,
Good day. This is Lee Jieun of the marketing team.
I am writing about next week's meeting schedule. I would like to move the meeting, scheduled for Tuesday at 2 pm, to Wednesday at 10 am. I apologise for the inconvenience. I would be grateful if you could confirm whether that is possible.
Respectfully, Lee Jieun

What to notice: title + **님께** and honorific endings (Korean Grammar 4 4); the formal **합쇼체** endings **-ㅂ니다** and **-겠습니다**; the formal purpose ending **-고자** ("intending to"); a polite request, **확인해 주시면**.

Text 3 — A social post

오늘 처음으로 한강에서 자전거 탔는데 완전 대박이었음ㅋㅋ 바람은 살랑살랑 불고 노을이 반짝반짝 빛났다. 근데 엉덩이가 너무 아픔ㅠㅠ 내일 또 갈 거임!

Rode a bike by the Han River for the first time today and it was totally awesome lol. The breeze blew gently and the sunset sparkled. But my backside hurts so much :'(Going again tomorrow!

What to notice: dropped particles (**자전거 탔는데**); slang and text-speak (**대박, ㅋㅋ, ㅠㅠ**) and the spoken **근데** (Korean Grammar 4 8); mimetics **살랑살랑, 반짝반짝** (Korean Grammar 4 6); and the noun-style endings **-음** typical of casual posts, a cousin of the headline style.

Text 4 — A short story

옛날에 한 마을에 발이 넓은 할아버지가 살았다. 할아버지는 손도 커서 마을 사람들에게 늘 음식을 나누어 주었다. 어느 날 큰 눈이 펑펑 내렸고, 길이 막혀 버렸다. 그러자 마을 사람들이 십시일반으로 쌀을 모아 할아버지께 가져갔다. 할아버지는 "고생 끝에 낙이 온다더니, 오늘이 그날이구나"라며 웃으셨다.

Once upon a time a grandfather who knew everyone lived in a village. He was generous too, and always shared food with the villagers. One day heavy snow fell and the road was blocked. Then the villagers each gave a little, gathered rice and took it to the grandfather. He smiled and said, "They say joy comes after hardship, and today is that day."

What to notice: 이/가 for the new character, then 은/는 (Korean Grammar 4 9); idioms 발이 넓다, 손이 크다, the four-character phrase 십시일반 and the proverb 고생 끝에 낙이 온다 (Korean Grammar 4 7); the mimetic 펑펑 for heavy snow; the honorific 할아버지께 and 웃으셨다.

The whole grammar track on one map — 문법 전체 지도

COURSE	BIG IDEA	MAIN TOPICS
Korean Grammar 1	Basic sentences	sentence order, topic and subject, objects and places, "to be", polite present, past and future, adjectives and questions, numbers and time
Korean Grammar 2	Speech and connection	speech levels, sentence endings, honorifics, irregular verbs, tenses and aspect, "and / but / so", purpose, time and condition, modifiers, reported speech, can / must / may / seems
Korean Grammar 3	Voice and meaning	passive and causative, degree and comparison, noun clauses, auxiliary verbs, reasons and results, contrast and concession, recall and discovery
Korean Grammar 4	Written Korean, register and vocabulary	written and spoken style, formal connectors, news Korean, titles and address, word formation, mimetics, idioms, spoken Korean and dialects, particles in depth

Watch out: register is a choice you make every sentence

The commonest advanced errors are not wrong grammar but **wrong register**: a polite ending in a report, a contraction in an essay, slang in an email, a plain ending to a superior. Before you write, name the register, then keep every verb ending consistent with it.

In Use — 실제 예문

The same news, three registers.

① Report (plain)

회의는 다음 주로 연기되었다.

The meeting was postponed until next week.

② Email (formal)

회의가 다음 주로 연기되었음을 알려 드립니다.

I am writing to inform you that the meeting has been postponed until next week.

③ Friend (casual)

회의 다음 주로 미뤄졌대.

I heard the meeting got pushed to next week.

📋 Quick Reference — 요약표

TEXT TYPE	REGISTER MARKERS
News	plain past; 밝혔다, 전망된다; Sino-Korean nouns
Formal email	합쇼체; title + 님; polite requests
Social post	dropped particles; slang; mimetics; -음 endings
Story	plain narration; idioms and proverbs; honorifics for elders

🖍️ Try It Yourself — 오류 찾기 클리닉

Each sentence has one problem. Find it and correct it, then click to check.

1. 저는 책을만 읽어요.

▼ Show answer

저는 책만 읽어요. 만 replaces 을/를 (Korean Grammar 4 9).

2. In a report: **이 문제는 매우 심각해요.**

▼ Show answer

이 문제는 매우 심각하다. A report uses the plain style, not 해요체 (Korean Grammar 4 1).

3. To your department head: **당신은 어떻게 생각해요?**

▼ Show answer

부장님은 어떻게 생각하세요? Use the title, not 당신, and an honorific (Korean Grammar 4 4).

4. A café worker says: **커피 나오셨습니다.**

▼ Show answer

커피 나왔습니다. The honorific -시- is for people, not objects (Korean Grammar 4 4).

5. 돈이 불족해요.

▼ Show answer

돈이 부족해요. 불- becomes 부- before ㅈ (Korean Grammar 4 5).

6. Introducing your country to an audience: **저희 나라는 아름답습니다.**

▼ Show answer

우리나라는 아름답습니다. (Korean Grammar 4 4)

7. 친구에 선물을 줬어요.

▼ Show answer

친구에게 선물을 줬어요. A person takes 에게/한테, not 에 (Korean Grammar 4 9).

8. In an essay: **그게 가장 중요하다.**

▼ Show answer

그것이 가장 중요하다. Do not use spoken contractions in formal writing (Korean Grammar 4 8).

9. You lost your wallet: **어떻게! 지갑을 잃어버렸어.**

▼ Show answer

어떡해! 지갑을 잃어버렸어. 어떡해 is "what shall I do?" (Korean Grammar 4 8).

🎓 Course Complete — 수고하셨습니다!

You have finished Korean Grammar 4, and with it the four-course Korean grammar track. In ten chapters you moved from the grammar of sentences to the choices that make Korean sound written, formal, colourful and natural. Here is the whole journey.

CHAPTER	TOPIC	YOU CAN NOW…
1	Written and Spoken Korean	Write in the plain style and tell it apart from the polite spoken styles.
2	Formal and Written Connectors	Join clauses with -(으)며, -(으)나, -(으)므로 and link paragraphs with 그러나, 따라서 and 또한.
3	Newspaper and Headline Korean	Read headlines and reporting verbs such as -(이)라고 밝혔다 and -것으로 전망된다.
4	Titles, Address and Social Language	Choose forms of address, polite refusals and customer-service phrases.
5	Sino-Korean and Native Vocabulary	Use roots, -적, -화, -성, 불-, 무- and the 하다 / 되다 / 시키다 verbs.
6	Onomatopoeia and Mimetics	Use sound and manner words and sense their light or heavy shades.
7	Idioms, Proverbs and Four-Character Phrases	Recognise and use common 관용구, 속담 and 사자성어.
8	Spoken Korean: Contractions, Slang and Dialects	Understand contractions, 반말, slang and regional speech.
9	Particles in Depth	Choose among 은/는, 이/가, 에, 에서, 에게 and the focus particles, and use them in passives and

CHAPTER	TOPIC	YOU CAN NOW…
		causatives.
10	Putting It Together	Read texts in four registers and correct typical errors.

Well done. Keep reading real Korean, such as news, emails, posts and stories, and ask yourself the register question each time. That habit will keep improving everything you learned in these four courses.