

인사 (Greetings)

Now that you master the alphabet, we can move on to the real process of learning the language starting with greetings, then we'll move on to grammar with topic markers/particles, to finish with the study of the verb "to be". After this lesson, you should be able to greet Korean people and introduce yourself in a simple way.

1) 인사 (greetings)

Today, we are going to learn the basic and most useful words that you should memorize when going to Korea. Korean is an Asian language and like in many Asian countries, politeness and manners matter, so better start off on the right foot!



안녕하세요?

[annyeonghaseyo]

Hello (polite form)



안녕

[annyeong]

Hi



감사합니다!

[kamsahamnida*]

Thank you!



죄송합니다!

[joesonghamnida*]

Sorry!



안녕히 가세요.

[anyeonghi gaseyo]

Goodbye (to someone leaving)



안녕히 계세요.

[anyeonghi geseyo]

Goodbye (to someone staying)

*As we go further into the study of the Korean language, you will notice that many final consonants have their pronunciation altered (hereinabove in red); it is mainly due to the fact that like English, Korean links the syllables together when speaking and reading (see after), and in order to ease the pronunciation and make the language more fluid, some sounds change. In our case, ㅁ becomes ㅁ̂.



Reading and speaking syllables

Each syllable has a sound in Korean and can be read on its own. However, when speaking and reading, the final consonant of a syllable is connected (and read) to the following letter of the next syllable (when it starts with a vowel) → ex: 영어 [yeong eo] = *The English language*; it is actually pronounced [yeon geo].

The final ㅇ is read together with 여.

✚ **연습** (*Exercise*): **Practise and read the following words in a fluid way:**

-음악 = *music* [eu mak]

--스페인어 = *Spanish language* [seu pe i neo]

--미국 사람이에요. = *I am American.* [miguk sara mieyo]

-선생님이에요. = *He is a teacher.* [seon saeng ni mieyo]

-이름이 뭐예요? = *What is your name?* [ireu mi mweoyeyo?]

☞ **Cultural aspect:**

Bowing is an important part of the Korean culture, and you should always do it when speaking the words learnt in #1). If, at the beginning, it may feel unusual and awkward (especially for Western people), you will pick it up quickly and start doing it without even realizing it. After all, we just copy what we see.

You might have also noticed that we did not teach you how to say “please”, because it does not exist. In Korean (and Japanese), this word of politeness is included in the fixed expression “주세요” which we will study later.

2) **Topic markers: 는/은**

There are many markers in Korean. They have a grammatical use and indicate the role of a word in a sentence (*subject, object, location, plural, possessive...*). They are very important but some are often omitted when speaking as we understand the situation with the context. In movies or dramas, they are often not present, but at the beginner’s level, we strongly encourage you not to skip them in order to master them and use them correctly when actually necessary.

Let’s now start learning our first markers: *topic markers* or *topic particles*. As their names imply, they refer to the topic (*to be differentiated with a subject marker. See after*) of a sentence; in other words,

the action or description of the subject. Topic markers are not always used and can be dropped when speaking. However, one uses them when he/she wishes to insist on a new action.

Markers in Korean always work in pairs. Since it is so important to keep the language fluid, you will always encounter 2 particles for one same use: **one that goes with vowels**, and, **one that goes with**

consonants → **는/은**

ex: **저는** 프랑스 사람이에요. (= I am French) ; **제 이름은** 지수예요. (=My name is Jisoo)

In our case, **저는** insists on “me” being the center of the topic. In **제 이름은**, the important part is that it’s “my name”, not someone else’s that matters; it is “my name” we are talking about. In English, they are often translated by “regarding...” or “as for..;”



The difference between a topic marker and a subject marker:

This may be one of the hardest grammatical points to understand for Westerners, as they do not exist in Western languages, but it is essential. And, even though, we are not going to work on subject particles now, we want you to start remembering that two types exist and that they are often referred to as “subject” in Western languages, but it is a bit more complex than that.

Subject particles mark the subject in a sentence, but this subject is not the **main focus of the conversation** → 수지가 설거지 했어요. = (Suji did the dishes) → Here the focus is on

“who” did the action of the sentence, and the answer is “Suji”; but in 수지는 지금 쇼핑하고 있어요 = (Suji is now shopping) → the focus here is on the action of “shopping”, even though it is Suji who is doing it.

3) **이다** (≈ to be)

이다 is the infinitive form of the English “to be”. In Korean, verbs are also conjugated but it is much simpler as there are only two forms (one for **vowels**, and one for **consonants**) for the same reason as we learnt before, that is to say, the language fluidity →

예요

[yeyo]

이에요

[ieyo]

ex: 저는 **지수예요**.

(I **am** Jisoo).

당신은 **지운씨이에요**.

(You **are** Jiwoon.)

 **연습** (Exercise): Circle the correct form in the following sentences:

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| -I am English → 저는 영국사람..... | 이에요 | 예요 |
| -I am a doctor → 저는 의사..... | 이에요 | 예요 |
| -Coco is a bird → 코코는 새..... | 이에요 | 예요 |
| -The cat is 3 years old → 고양이는 세살..... | 이에요 | 예요 |
| -My name is Mary → 제 이름은 메리..... | 이에요 | 예요 |