

Korean Pronouns and Usage



Hey, I'm starting to learn Korean and while learning some new words from a list, I stumbled upon the word 드녀, which seems to be a feminine pronoun. As a native French speaker already knowing Japanese grammar structure, I was wondering whether pronouns such as he/her/you etc are commonly used in Korean? Or is it a bit like in Spanish or Japanese and it omitted most of the time ?



Great question! In Korean, personal pronouns like "he," "she," "you," etc., are indeed used, but they are *much less common* than in languages like French or English. It's closer to Japanese in this regard, where pronouns are often omitted when the subject or context is clear. Korean typically relies on context or verb conjugation to convey who is being spoken about.

Here are some key points about pronouns in Korean:

- Omission of Pronouns:** In everyday conversation, especially when it's clear from the context, Koreans frequently drop the subject entirely. For example, instead of saying "he is going" (그는 가요), they might just say "가요" ("is going"), since it's implied.
- Use of Pronouns:** When pronouns are used, it's often for emphasis or clarification. Korean has personal pronouns like:
 - **그 (geu)** for "he" and **그녀 (geunyeo)** for "she." However, **그녀** is less commonly used in casual speech and might feel a bit formal or literary. Instead of using explicit pronouns, people will often refer to the person by their name or title (e.g., "김 선생님" instead of "he/she").
 - **당신 (dangsin)** means "you," but it's rare in casual conversation and can sound overly formal or even confrontational. Koreans often address others by name, title, or use honorifics.
- Honorifics and Formality:** Korean is highly context-dependent and focused on levels of politeness, so instead of using pronouns, you'll often see nouns combined with honorifics, like **선생님** (teacher) or **아버지** (father), or even relationships like "older brother" **형/오빠**, instead of using "you" or "he/she."
- Gendered Pronouns:** Unlike in French or English, where pronouns are inherently gendered, Korean mostly avoids gender distinction, except for cases like **그 (geu)** for "he" and **그녀 (geunyeo)** for "she," which, as mentioned, aren't commonly used in informal conversation.

So, to sum up: yes, Korean does have pronouns, but they are often omitted when the context makes it clear who or what is being referred to—similar to Japanese or Spanish. The reliance on honorifics and context adds an extra layer of nuance to how people communicate relationships and respect.



Thanks. Another question please: I noticed the very few verbs I learned so far end with 다, which I guess is infinitive form. Is it a thing for verbs ? Do they all have this ending ? Are there exceptions ?



You're absolutely right! In Korean, almost all verbs in their dictionary or **infinitive form** end with 다 (**da**). This form is called the **basic form** or **dictionary form** because it's the one you'd find in a dictionary.

Why the 다 (da) Ending?

The -다 ending is essentially the root form of the verb before any tense, mood, or politeness level is applied. For example:

- 하다 (**hada**) = "to do"
- 먹다 (**meokda**) = "to eat"
- 가다 (**gada**) = "to go"

Are there Exceptions?

In modern Korean, *almost all verbs* end in -다 in their dictionary form. There are very few exceptions. The closest thing to an exception would be **adjectives (descriptive verbs)** in Korean, which also end with 다 but act differently from verbs in languages like English or French.

For example:

- 크다 (**keuda**) = "to be big"
- 작다 (**jakda**) = "to be small"

These are grammatically considered "verbs" in Korean (often referred to as **descriptive verbs**), but in English or French, they would correspond to adjectives. They conjugate like verbs and follow the same rules.

Verb Conjugation in Korean

When using these verbs in sentences, the 다 ending is removed, and the verb stem (the part before 다) is conjugated based on tense, politeness, and formality. For example:

- 하다 (**hada**) → 해요 (**haeyo**) (present polite)
- 먹다 (**meokda**) → 먹어요 (**meogeoyo**) (present polite)

Summary:

- Yes, verbs in their infinitive form nearly always end in 다.
- This applies both to action verbs (like "to go" or "to eat") and descriptive verbs (like "to be big" or "to be small").

- There are virtually no exceptions in modern Korean, so you can rely on this rule to identify verbs and adjectives in their base forms.

This regularity makes it easier to recognize and learn new verbs in Korean!



Thanks a lot ! Can you give me a vocabulary list of 10 very useful Korean words for me to start with ?



Sure! Here's a list of 10 essential Korean words to help you get started, covering basics you'll use daily:

1. 안녕하세요 (**annyeonghaseyo**) – Hello / Hi (formal)
2. 감사합니다 (**gamsahamnida**) – Thank you (formal)
3. 미안합니다 (**mianhamnida**) – I'm sorry (formal)
4. 네 (**ne**) – Yes
5. 아니요 (**aniyo**) – No
6. 사람 (**saram**) – Person / People
7. 시간 (**sigan**) – Time
8. 물 (**mul**) – Water
9. 어디 (**eodi**) – Where
10. 집 (**jip**) – House / Home

These words will help you navigate basic conversations, especially greetings, politeness, and asking simple questions! Let me know if you'd like a few sentences to practice as well.



Thanks ! Can you provide 10 more please ?



Of course! Here are 10 more useful Korean words to expand your vocabulary:

11. 학교 (**hakgyo**) – School
12. 음식 (**eumsik**) – Food
13. 사랑 (**sarang**) – Love
14. 친구 (**chingu**) – Friend
15. 돈 (**don**) – Money
16. 차 (**cha**) – Car
17. 전화 (**jeonhwa**) – Phone / Call
18. 오늘 (**oneul**) – Today
19. 내일 (**naeil**) – Tomorrow
20. 공부 (**gongbu**) – Study

These words will help you in everyday conversations and situations. They're also great building blocks for learning more complex phrases later on.



Perfect. Another question: does the Korean writing system use spaces between words ?



Yes, Korean **does use spaces between words**! This is one of the key differences between Korean and languages like Chinese or Japanese, which typically don't use spaces. In Korean writing, spaces are used to separate **words** much like they are in English or French.

For example:

- 안녕하세요 저는 학생입니다 (annyeonghaseyo jeoneun haksaengimnida) without spaces is difficult to read.
- With spaces: 안녕하세요, 저는 학생입니다. ("Hello, I am a student.")

The basic rule is that you place spaces between each **syntactic unit** (words like verbs, nouns, particles, etc.). However, some parts like **particles** (such as 은/는, 이/가, 을/를) stick to the preceding word without a space.

Here's an example to clarify:

- 저는 학생입니다 ("I am a student") is written with spaces between 저는 (I) and 학생입니다 (am a student), but 는 and 입니다 stay attached to their respective preceding words.

In summary, spaces are important in Korean writing and help make the text readable, much like in European languages.



Great ! I can now read, write, and know a bit of vocabulary. Now what is missing is how to combine words to make sentences.

For this, what should I learn next ? I've heard Korean grammar is similar to Japanese, which I already know. For example, are there some particles like は, を, に, が, etc ? Can I use the same syntax ?



Absolutely! Since you already know Japanese, you'll find some similarities in Korean grammar, especially with particles and sentence structure. Like Japanese, Korean primarily follows a **Subject-Object-Verb (SOV)** word order, so sentences often end with verbs. Additionally, Korean also uses **particles** to indicate the grammatical roles of words, similar to Japanese particles like は (wa), を (wo), and が (ga).

Key Korean Particles and Their Functions:

Here's an overview of some basic Korean particles that play similar roles to their Japanese counterparts:

1. Subject Markers:

- **이/가 (i/ga)** – Used to mark the subject of a sentence.
 - Example: **고양이가 예뻐요.** (goyang-i-ga yeppeoyo) – "The cat is pretty."
- This is similar to **が (ga)** in Japanese.

2. Topic Markers:

- **은/는 (eun/neun)** – Used to mark the topic of a sentence.
 - Example: **저는 학생이에요.** (jeo-neun haksang-ieyo) – "As for me, I am a student."
- This is similar to **は (wa)** in Japanese.

3. Object Markers:

- **을/를 (eul/reul)** – Used to mark the direct object of a verb.
 - Example: **책을 읽어요.** (chaek-eul ilg-eoyo) – "I read a book."
- This is similar to **を (wo)** in Japanese.

4. Location and Time Markers:

- **에 (e)** – Used to indicate a location or time, similar to **に (ni)** in Japanese.
 - Example: **학교에 가요.** (hakgyo-e gayo) – "I go to school."
- **에서 (eseo)** – Indicates the location where an action takes place, similar to **で (de)** in Japanese.
 - Example: **집에서 공부해요.** (jip-eseo gongbuhaeyo) – "I study at home."

5. Possessive Particle:

- **의 (ui)** – Shows possession, like **の (no)** in Japanese.
 - Example: **나의 책** (na-ui chaek) – "My book."

Basic Sentence Structure:

Since Korean uses an SOV structure, you'll place the verb at the end of the sentence, just as in Japanese. Here's a basic example:

• I eat food.

- Korean: **저는 음식을 먹어요.** (jeo-neun eumsig-eul meogeoyo)
- Japanese: **私は食べ物を食べます。** (watashi wa tabemono o tabemasu)

Politeness and Verb Conjugation:

Korean, like Japanese, has different levels of formality that affect verb conjugation. You'll likely start with **-요 (-yo)** endings for polite informal speech, and as you progress, you'll learn the more formal **-습니다 (-seumnida)** forms for more formal speech.

Next Steps for Learning:

1. **Master Particles:** Understanding how to use Korean particles is essential, so focus on memorizing and practicing these.
2. **Verb Conjugation and Politeness:** Learn basic verb conjugation for present, past, and future tenses, and understand how to use different levels of politeness.
3. **Sentence Building Practice:** Start building simple sentences by combining vocabulary you know with particles and basic verb endings. Since you already know Japanese, try translating simple Japanese sentences into Korean to get familiar with the structure.

Once you get comfortable with particles and basic conjugation, forming sentences will become much easier. You'll find that Korean and Japanese are wonderfully similar in these foundational ways!



Very nice, thank you. Can you teach me the basics of verb conjugation then ? Let's say at the present tense and polite informal speech as you suggested.



Absolutely! Let's dive into the basics of Korean verb conjugation for the present tense, focusing on **polite informal speech** (the **-요 (-yo)** ending). This form is ideal for everyday conversations and is polite without being too formal.

Step-by-Step Guide to Present Tense Conjugation:

1. Identify the Verb Stem:

- In Korean, verbs in their dictionary form end in **-다 (-da)**.
- To find the verb stem, simply remove the **-다 (-da)** ending.
 - Example:
 - **하다 (hada)** (to do) → **하- (ha-)**
 - **먹다 (meokda)** (to eat) → **먹- (meok-)**
 - **가다 (gada)** (to go) → **가- (ga-)**

2. Add the Appropriate Ending Based on the Stem Vowel: Korean has two primary endings for the present tense polite informal form, which are **-아요 (-ayo)** or **-어요 (-eoyo)**. The choice depends on the **last vowel** of the verb stem:

- If the **last vowel** in the verb stem is **ㅏ (a)** or **ㅗ (o)**, add **-아요 (-ayo)**.
- For **other vowels** (ㅓ, ㅜ, ㅣ, etc.), add **-어요 (-eoyo)**.

3. Special Ending for 하다 (hada) Verbs**:

- Verbs that end with **하다** change to **해요 (haeyo)** in the present tense polite informal form.
- This is a common exception you'll encounter frequently because **하다** is used to form many compound verbs.

Examples of Present Tense Conjugation:

Let's apply these steps to some verbs:

1. 하다 (hada) – to do

- Verb stem: 하- (**ha-**)
- Since it's a 하다 verb, it changes to 해요 (**haeyo**).
- Example: 운동해요 (undonghaeyo) – "I exercise."

2. 먹다 (meokda) – to eat

- Verb stem: 먹- (**meok-**)
- The last vowel is ㅣ, so add -어요 (-eoyo).
- Conjugated: 먹어요 (meogeoyo) – "I eat."

3. 가다 (gada) – to go

- Verb stem: 가- (**ga-**)
- The last vowel is ㅣ, so add -아요 (-ayo).
- Conjugated: 가요 (gayo) – "I go."

4. 보다 (boda) – to see/watch

- Verb stem: 보- (**bo-**)
- The last vowel is ㅏ, so add -아요 (-ayo).
- Conjugated: 봐요 (bwayo) – "I see/watch."

5. 마시다 (masida) – to drink

- Verb stem: 마시- (**masi-**)
- The last vowel is ㅣ, so add -어요 (-eoyo).
- Conjugated: 마셔요 (masyeoyo) – "I drink."

Irregular Verbs:

While most verbs follow the rules above, there are some **irregular verbs** that conjugate differently, particularly when they end with ㅅ, ㅈ, or ㅊ. But for now, focusing on regular verbs is a good start.

Summary:

To conjugate Korean verbs in the polite informal present tense:

1. Remove -다 (-da) from the dictionary form.
2. Add -아요 (-ayo) if the last vowel of the stem is ㅏ (a) or ㅑ (o), and -어요 (-eoyo) for other vowels.
3. Remember the special case for 하다 (hada) verbs, which become 해요 (haeyo).

Once you get used to this, you'll be able to conjugate a wide range of verbs and start building sentences in no time!



I have the intuition that Korean 하다 verbs work in a very similar way to Japanese する verbs. Is that correct ?



Yes, you're absolutely right! Korean 하다 (**hada**) verbs are very similar to Japanese する (**suru**) verbs, both in function and usage. Just like する (**suru**) in Japanese, 하다 (**hada**) in Korean is a versatile verb that means "to do." It is often combined with nouns to form compound verbs, allowing you to express various actions.

How Korean 하다 and Japanese する are Similar:

1. Used to Form Compound Verbs:

- In both languages, you can take a noun and attach 하다 or する to turn it into a verb.
- For example:
 - 공부 (**gongbu**) = "study" → 공부하다 (**gongbu-hada**) = "to study"
 - Japanese: 勉強 (**benkyou**) = "study" → 勉強する (**benkyou suru**) = "to study"
 - 운동 (**undong**) = "exercise" → 운동하다 (**undong-hada**) = "to exercise"
 - Japanese: 運動 (**undou**) = "exercise" → 運動する (**undou suru**) = "to exercise"

2. Flexible in Creating New Verbs:

- In both languages, 하다 and する are highly productive, meaning you can take almost any noun and make it into a verb. This flexibility makes it easy to expand your vocabulary by learning nouns and then creating verbs from them.
- For example:
 - Korean: 요리하다 (**yorihada**) – "to cook"
 - Japanese: 料理する (**ryouri suru**) – "to cook"

3. Conjugation Follows Regular Patterns:

- In Korean, 하다 verbs generally follow the regular 하다 → 해요 (**haeyo**) pattern for the present tense, which is simple and consistent.
- Similarly, in Japanese, する verbs conjugate regularly, turning into します (**shimasu**) for polite speech.

4. Useful for Learning Advanced Vocabulary:

- Just like in Japanese, where many complex or borrowed terms use する to form verbs, Korean does the same with 하다. You'll find many Sino-Korean words (borrowed from Chinese) that use 하다 to express more formal or technical actions.

Practical Examples:

Here are a few more common 하다 verbs and their Japanese する counterparts:

- 전화하다 (**jeonhwa-hada**) – to make a phone call
 - Japanese: 電話する (**denwa suru**)
- 연습하다 (**yeonseup-hada**) – to practice

- Japanese: 練習する (renshuu suru)
- 이해하다 (ihae-hada) – to understand
 - Japanese: 理解する (rikai suru)

Summary:

Your intuition is spot-on. If you're familiar with Japanese **する** verbs, you'll have an easy time understanding **하다** verbs in Korean. The patterns are remarkably similar, and it will help you build a robust vocabulary quickly!



Really helpful, thanks a lot again. From what you've said so far about verb conjugation in the present tense and polite form, and from my knowledge of Japanese, I have assumed that the subject is implicit and understood within the context of the sentence. Is that correct ? Moreover, can you develop how to conjugate verbs in the negative form (if that works the same as in Japanese, e.g. **します** becomes **しません**) ?



You're absolutely correct! In Korean, just like in Japanese, the subject is often **implicit and understood from the context**. This means that in everyday conversations, Korean speakers frequently omit the subject, especially when it is clear who or what they are talking about. For example:

- 밥을 먹어요. (bap-eul meogeoyo) – "I eat rice" or "You eat rice," depending on context.
- 공부해요. (gongbuhaeyo) – "I am studying" or "They are studying."

The listener generally infers the subject based on the situation, similar to how it works in Japanese.

Conjugating Verbs in the Negative Form in Korean:

Negative verb conjugation in Korean is indeed quite similar to Japanese, but there are two main ways to make verbs negative in Korean. The basic equivalent of turning **します (shimasu)** into **しません (shimasen)** in Japanese is by adding **안 (an)** before the verb or by using **지 않다 (-ji anhta)**.

1. Using 안 (an) + Verb:

This is the simpler and more common way to negate a verb in everyday conversation. Simply place **안** before the verb stem or the **하다 (hada)** verb construction.

- Example with **하다** verbs:
 - 공부하다 (gongbu-hada) → 안 공부해요 (an gongbuhaeyo) – "I don't study."
 - 운동하다 (undong-hada) → 안 운동해요 (an undonghaeyo) – "I don't exercise."
- Example with other verbs:
 - 먹다 (meokda) (to eat) → 안 먹어요 (an meogeoyo) – "I don't eat."

- 가다 (gada) (to go) → 안 가요 (an gayo) – "I don't go."

2. Using Verb Stem + 지 않다 (-ji anhta):

This is a slightly more formal way to form negatives and is closer to the Japanese **しません** pattern. You add **-지 않아요 (-ji anayo)** to the verb stem for the present tense polite informal form.

- Example with 하다 verbs:
 - 공부하다 (gongbu-hada) → 공부하지 않아요 (gongbu-haji anayo) – "I don't study."
 - 운동하다 (undong-hada) → 운동하지 않아요 (undong-haji anayo) – "I don't exercise."
- Example with other verbs:
 - 먹다 (meokda) (to eat) → 먹지 않아요 (meokji anayo) – "I don't eat."
 - 가다 (gada) (to go) → 가지 않아요 (gaji anayo) – "I don't go."

When to Use Each Form:

- **안 + Verb:** This form is more conversational and often used in spoken Korean because it's shorter and less formal.
- **-지 않아요 (-ji anayo):** This form is more neutral or formal, often seen in writing or when you want to be a bit more polite.

Summary:

The negative form in Korean can be constructed in two ways:

1. By placing **안** before the verb for a simpler and more casual negation.
2. By using the **-지 않아요 (-ji anayo)** structure for a slightly more formal tone, similar to how **しません** works in Japanese.

Your background in Japanese grammar will certainly make this transition smoother, as the concepts are quite parallel!



Thanks. Can you give me as an exercise some sentences with verbs to conjugate in present tense, polite affirmative and negative form ? Please don't give me the correct answers yet: I'll give them to you afterwards.



Absolutely, I'd be happy to help with that! Here are some sentences for you to practice conjugating verbs in both the **present tense polite affirmative** and **negative** forms:

1. 저는 아침에 커피를 마시다.
(Affirmative: I drink coffee in the morning.)
(Negative: I don't drink coffee in the morning.)

2. 우리는 저녁에 공원에 **가다**.
(Affirmative: We go to the park in the evening.)
(Negative: We don't go to the park in the evening.)
3. 친구가 한국어를 **공부하다**.
(Affirmative: My friend studies Korean.)
(Negative: My friend doesn't study Korean.)
4. 그들은 주말에 운동을 **하다**.
(Affirmative: They exercise on the weekend.)
(Negative: They don't exercise on the weekend.)
5. 저는 매일 책을 **읽다**.
(Affirmative: I read a book every day.)
(Negative: I don't read a book every day.)

Try conjugating these in both the affirmative and negative forms, and let me know your answers when you're ready!



Ok, here are my answers for the first sentence, for the moment: are they correct ?

- 1a. 저는 아침에 커피를 마셔요.
- 1b. 저는 아침에 커피를 안마셔요.
- 1c. 저는 아침에 커피를 마시지 않아요.



Your answers are perfect! Let's go through them:

1. Affirmative Form:

- 1a. 저는 아침에 커피를 마셔요.
 - Correct! You correctly conjugated **마시다 (masida)** to **마셔요 (masyeoyo)** for the present tense polite affirmative form.

2. Negative Forms:

- 1b. 저는 아침에 커피를 안 마셔요.
 - Also correct! You used **안** before the verb to make it negative, which is the simple conversational way to say "I don't drink coffee in the morning."
- 1c. 저는 아침에 커피를 마시지 않아요.
 - Spot on! You used the **-지 않아요 (-ji anayo)** structure to form the more formal negative, and it's perfectly correct.

You've got the conjugation pattern down really well! If you want to proceed with the next sentences, go ahead—I'll be here to check your answers.



Thanks !

- 2a. 우리는 저녁에 공원에 가요.
- 2b. 우리는 저녁에 공원에 안가요.
- 2c. 우리는 저녁에 공원에 가지않아요.



Well done! Let's go through each of your answers for the second sentence:

1. Affirmative Form:

- 2a. 우리는 저녁에 공원에 가요.
 - Correct! You've conjugated 가다 (gada) into 가요 (gayo) correctly for the affirmative present tense.

2. Negative Forms:

- 2b. 우리는 저녁에 공원에 안 가요.
 - Correct! You've correctly used 안 before the verb to make the negative form. Note that there's typically a space between 안 and 가요, so it's usually written as 안 가요.
- 2c. 우리는 저녁에 공원에 가지 않아요.
 - Perfect! You've used the -지 않아요 form here accurately.

Just a quick note on spacing for **2b**: in Korean, it's common to put a space between 안 and the verb stem, as in 안 가요. Other than that, you've nailed all the forms!



Thanks a lot, you anticipated one question I wanted to ask you about 안 and using spaces. Please continue correcting whenever I do a mistake !

Here are my next answers:

- 3a. 친구가 한국어를 공부해요.
- 3b. 친구가 한국어를 안 공부해요.
- 3c. 친구가 한국어를 공부하지않아요.



You're doing great! Let's review your answers for the third sentence:

1. Affirmative Form:

- 3a. 친구가 한국어를 공부해요.
 - Correct! You've conjugated 공부하다 (gongbu-hada) into 공부해요 (gongbuhaeyo), which is perfect for the affirmative present tense.

2. Negative Forms:

- 3b. 친구가 한국어를 안 공부해요.

- Correct again! You used **안** before **공부해요** to form the negative, and there's a space between **안** and **공부해요** as it should be.

3. Negative Form (using -지 않아요):

- 3c. 친구가 한국어를 공부하지 않아요.
 - Here you made a small mistake in the spelling. It should be **공부하지 않아요** (gongbu-haji anayo).
 - Remember that **하다 (to do)** verbs change to **하지 않아요** for the **-지 않아요** form.

So, the corrected form would be:

- 3c. 친구가 한국어를 공부하지 않아요.

You're really getting the hang of it—keep up the good work! Let me know if you'd like to continue with the next sentences.



Great. Thanks for spotting this spelling mistake. Here are my answers to the last questions:

- 4a. 그들은 주말에 운동을 해요.
- 4b. 그들은 주말에 운동을 안 해요.
- 4c. 그들은 주말에 운동을 하지않아요.
- 5a. 저는 매일 책을 일거요.
- 5b. 저는 매일 책을 안 일거요.
- 5c. 저는 매일 책을 안 읽지않아요.



You're making excellent progress! Here's the breakdown for each answer:

Sentence 4

1. Affirmative Form:

- 4a. 그들은 주말에 운동을 해요.
 - Perfect! **하다** verbs like **운동하다** change to **운동해요**, so this is correct for the affirmative form.

2. Negative Forms:

- 4b. 그들은 주말에 운동을 안 해요.
 - Correct! You used **안** before **해요** for the negative, and there's a space between **안** and **해요**, which is perfect.
- 4c. 그들은 주말에 운동을 하지 않아요.
 - Spot on! You applied **-지 않아요** to **하다**, resulting in **하지 않아요**. You also remembered the space between **하지** and **않아요**.

Sentence 5

1. Affirmative Form:

- 5a. 저는 매일 책을 일거요.
 - There's a minor mistake here: the verb 읽다 (**to read**) should conjugate to 읽어요 (**ilgeoyo**) in the present tense.
 - So the corrected sentence would be: 저는 매일 책을 읽어요.

2. Negative Forms:

- 5b. 저는 매일 책을 안 일거요.
 - You got the 안 form right, but remember that 읽다 conjugates to 읽어요. So the negative form should be: 저는 매일 책을 안 읽어요 (**an ilgeoyo**).
- 5c. 저는 매일 책을 안 읽지 않아요.
 - Here, you have an extra 안 that isn't needed. When using the -지 않아요 form, just use 읽지 않아요. So the correct form is: 저는 매일 책을 읽지 않아요.

Corrected Answers for Sentence 5:

- 5a. 저는 매일 책을 읽어요.
- 5b. 저는 매일 책을 안 읽어요.
- 5c. 저는 매일 책을 읽지 않아요.

You're doing so well! Just a few small details to fine-tune, and you've got this. Let me know if you have more questions or would like to practice further.



Thanks, got it !

Now let's move to another topic: when introducing particles previously, you mentioned 을 and 를 as well as 은 and 는. When should I choose one form over another ?

My random guess is that when the previous word finishes with a consonant we must choose 을 and 은 and otherwise 를 and 는 (so for pronunciation purposes)



You're exactly right with your guess! The choice between 을/를 and 은/는 in Korean indeed depends on whether the preceding word ends in a consonant or a vowel. This is done primarily for ease of pronunciation, just as you noted.

Here's How It Works:

1. Object Particles: 을/를

- These particles indicate the **direct object** of the sentence.
- 을 is used **after a noun that ends with a consonant**.

- Example: 책 (chaek) → 책을 (chaek-eul) – "book"
- 를 is used **after a noun that ends with a vowel**.
 - Example: 영화 (yeonghwa) → 영화를 (yeonghwareul) – "movie"

2. Topic Particles: 은/는

- These particles are used to mark the **topic** of the sentence. They emphasize what the sentence is about or introduce a new topic.
- 은 is used **after a noun that ends with a consonant**.
 - Example: 학생 (haksaeng) → 학생은 (haksaeng-eun) – "student"
- 는 is used **after a noun that ends with a vowel**.
 - Example: 친구 (chingu) → 친구는 (chingu-neun) – "friend"

Summary of Your Rule:

- If the noun ends in a **consonant**, use 을 for the object particle and 은 for the topic particle.
- If the noun ends in a **vowel**, use 를 for the object particle and 는 for the topic particle.

Examples to Illustrate:

• Object Particles (을/를):

- 사과 를 먹어요. (Sagwa **reul** meogeoyo.) – "I eat an apple."
- 책 을 읽어요. (Chaek **eul** ilgeoyo.) – "I read a book."

• Topic Particles (은/는):

- 나는 학생이에요. (Na **neun** haksaeng-ieyo.) – "I am a student."
- 그는 친절해요. (Geu **neun** chinjeolhaeyo.) – "He is kind."
- 책 은 재미있어요. (Chaek **eun** jaemi-isseyo.) – "The book is interesting."

This rule helps to maintain a smooth, natural flow in speech, which is especially important in Korean because of its phonetic characteristics. Your intuitive guess was spot-on!



Terrific ! Is that also the same with 이 and 가 subject markers ?



Yes, the rule is the same for the subject markers 이 and 가! These markers are used to indicate the **subject** of a sentence, and like 을/를 and 은/는, they are chosen based on whether the noun ends in a consonant or a vowel for ease of pronunciation.

Here's How It Works with 이/가:

1. Subject Markers: 이/가

- 이 is used **after a noun that ends with a consonant**.
 - Example: 책 (chaek) → 책이 (chaeki) – "book"
- 가 is used **after a noun that ends with a vowel**.

- Example: 영화 (yeonghwa) → **영화가** (yeonghwaga) – "movie"

Examples to Illustrate:

- **Subject Marker (이/가):**
 - 영화 **가** 재미있어요. (Yeonghwa **ga** jaemi-isseyo.) – "The movie is interesting."
 - 책 **이** 비싸요. (Chaek **i** bissayo.) – "The book is expensive."
 - 사람 **이** 많아요. (Saram **i** manyo.) – "There are many people."

Comparing 은/는 and 이/가:

- **은/는** often emphasizes or contrasts a topic (sometimes like "as for" in English) and is used when you're stating a fact about a topic or bringing up a new topic.
- **이/가** is more focused on identifying or emphasizing the subject within a specific context, like identifying a person or thing among others.

So yes, you're absolutely right! The rule regarding whether the preceding noun ends in a consonant or a vowel applies here as well, just as it does for **을/를** and **은/는**. This consistency in Korean grammar makes it easier to apply the correct marker based on phonetic patterns!



Excellent. Now can you give me a lesson on adjectives (whether there are different types, how to use them in the present tense polite form, the verb "to be", etc.) ?



Absolutely! In Korean, adjectives are often called **descriptive verbs** because they act similarly to verbs in sentence structure. Let's dive into how they work, the types, and how to use them in sentences.

1. Types of Adjectives

Korean adjectives are generally used in two ways:

- **Predicative Adjectives:** Describe the noun in a sentence and are used with the verb **이다** ("to be").
- **Attributive Adjectives:** Modify nouns directly, similar to how adjectives work in English.

2. Using Adjectives as Descriptive Verbs

In Korean, adjectives are essentially **conjugated like verbs**. You don't need to add a verb like "to be" separately; instead, the adjective already conveys the meaning of "is/are + [adjective]."

For example:

- 크다 (**keuda**) = "to be big"
- 작다 (**jakda**) = "to be small"
- 좋다 (**jota**) = "to be good"
- 예쁘다 (**yeppeuda**) = "to be pretty"

When used as the main descriptor in a sentence, they take on the present tense polite form.

3. Conjugating Adjectives in the Present Tense Polite Form

To conjugate adjectives into the present tense polite form, follow these steps:

1. Remove **다** from the adjective stem.
2. Add **-아요 (-ayo)** or **-어요 (-eoyo)** based on the vowel harmony:
 - Use **-아요** if the last vowel in the adjective stem is **아** or **오**.
 - Use **-어요** for other vowels.

Examples:

- 크다 → 커요 (keoyo): "It is big."
- 작다 → 작아요 (jagayo): "It is small."
- 좋다 → 좋아요 (joayo): "It is good."
- 예쁘다 → 예뻐요 (yeppeoyo): "It is pretty."

4. Using the Verb "To Be" (이다)

The verb **이다** ("to be") is used when you want to describe a noun with another noun, or when using adjectives as **predicative** rather than **attributive** adjectives. In this case, **이다** attaches directly to the noun.

- **이다** conjugates as follows in the present tense polite form:
 - If the noun ends in a consonant: **이에요 (ieyo)**
 - If the noun ends in a vowel: **예요 (yeyo)**

Examples:

- 친구 예요. (chingu yeyo) – "It is a friend."
- 선생님 이예요. (seonsaengnim ieyo) – "It is a teacher."

5. Adjectives as Modifiers (Attributive Form)

When you want to modify a noun directly with an adjective, it usually takes a modified form that attaches directly to the noun.

1. Remove **다** from the adjective stem.
2. Add **-은 (-eun)** or **-ㄴ (-n)**:
 - Use **-은** if the adjective stem ends in a consonant.
 - Use **-ㄴ** if the adjective stem ends in a vowel.

Examples:

- 큰 집 (keun jip) – "big house" (from 크다, "to be big")
- 작은 방 (jageun bang) – "small room" (from 작다, "to be small")
- 예쁜 꽃 (yeppeun kkot) – "pretty flower" (from 예쁘다, "to be pretty")

6. Example Sentences

- As a **descriptive verb**:
 - 날씨가 **좋아요**. (Nalssiga **joayo**.) – "The weather is good."
 - 이 꽃은 **예뻐요**. (I kkot-eun **yeppeoyo**.) – "This flower is pretty."
- With **이다**:
 - 학생 **이에요**. (Haksaeng **ieyo**.) – "It is a student."
 - 꽃 **예요**. (Kkot **yeyo**.) – "It is a flower."
- As an **attributive adjective**:
 - 큰 공원 (Keun gongwon) – "big park"
 - 좋은 책 (Joheun chaek) – "good book"

Summary

- Adjectives work like verbs and don't need a separate "to be" verb.
- Conjugate adjectives like verbs to use them in the present tense.
- Use **이다** to express "to be" when directly stating "A is B."
- Modify adjectives for direct noun descriptions with **-은** or **-ㄴ**.

This gives you the basics on how to use and conjugate adjectives in Korean. Let me know if you want to explore any specific part of this in more detail!



Thanks. Can you now teach me how to ask questions ? What should I know to put a sentence in interrogative form ?



Certainly! Asking questions in Korean is relatively straightforward. Here's a breakdown of what you need to know to form questions:

1. Using the Interrogative Particle

Korean doesn't require special particles or auxiliary verbs to form questions like "do" or "does" in English. Instead, **questions are formed primarily by intonation** (rising tone) and context. You can turn a statement into a question simply by raising your tone at the end of the sentence, similar to how yes/no questions work in English.

2. Yes/No Questions

To make a **yes/no question**, just say the sentence with a rising intonation at the end. The structure and conjugation remain the same as in a declarative sentence.

Examples:

- **Declarative**: 김치는 맛있어요. (Kimchi-neun masisseoyo.) – "Kimchi is delicious."
- **Interrogative**: 김치는 맛있어요? (Kimchi-neun masisseoyo?) – "Is kimchi delicious?"

- **Declarative:** 오늘 날씨가 좋아요. (Oneul nalssiga joayo.) – "The weather is good today."
- **Interrogative:** 오늘 날씨가 좋아요? (Oneul nalssiga joayo?) – "Is the weather good today?"

3. Wh-Questions (Who, What, When, Where, Why, How)

Korean has specific **question words** that you can use to form **wh-questions**. When you add one of these words to a sentence, it naturally forms an interrogative sentence without needing any special grammatical changes.

Common Korean Question Words:

- **Who:** 누구 (nugu)
- **What:** 뭐/무엇 (mwo/mueot) – 뭐 is more conversational
- **When:** 언제 (eonje)
- **Where:** 어디 (eodi)
- **Why:** 왜 (wae)
- **How:** 어떻게 (eotteoke)

Examples of Wh-Questions:

- **What:**
 - 뭐 먹어요? (Mwo meogeoyo?) – "What are you eating?"
- **Who:**
 - 누가 왔어요? (Nuga wasseoyo?) – "Who came?"
- **When:**
 - 언제 갈 거예요? (Eonje gal geoyeyo?) – "When will you go?"
- **Where:**
 - 어디에 살아요? (Eodie sarayo?) – "Where do you live?"
- **Why:**
 - 왜 울어요? (Wae ureoyo?) – "Why are you crying?"
- **How:**
 - 어떻게 해요? (Eotteoke haeyo?) – "How do you do it?"

4. Politeness Levels

As with all Korean sentences, when asking questions, you can adjust the politeness level depending on whom you're addressing. Typically, the **-요** ending is used for the **standard polite form**.

5. Questions with "Is it...?" Using 이에요/예요

To ask if something is a certain thing (similar to "Is it...?" in English), you can also use **이에요/예요** with a rising intonation.

Examples:

- 이것은 책이에요? (Igeoseun chaek-ieyo?) – "Is this a book?"
- 저 사람은 선생님이예요? (Jeo saram-eun seonsaengnim-ieyo?) – "Is that person a teacher?"

6. Adding Emphasis with -나요?

In more formal or curious settings, Koreans often use the **-나요?** ending to ask questions. It softens the question and expresses polite curiosity.

Example:

- 시간이 있어요? (Sigani isseoyo?) – "Do you have time?"
- 시간이 있나요? (Sigani innayo?) – "Do you have time?" (softer, more polite)

Summary

- For **yes/no questions**, simply raise your intonation at the end of the sentence.
- For **wh-questions**, use the appropriate question word without changing sentence structure.
- **Politeness** is maintained as in statements, using **-요** for politeness.
- To add a **polite and softer tone**, consider using **-나요?**.

Let me know if you'd like some practice questions or have more specific questions on this topic!



Thanks a lot, very clear, as always.

Is there a way to turn an adjective into an adverb, similar to the Japanese に particle or < termination ? How to use adverbs ?



Yes, Korean has a straightforward way to turn adjectives into adverbs, much like the Japanese に (ni) particle or < (ku) termination. In Korean, you typically add **-게 (-ge)** to the adjective stem to create an adverb, which then modifies a verb or adds nuance to the sentence.

1. Forming Adverbs from Adjectives

To change an adjective into an adverb, follow these steps:

1. **Remove the 다 (-da)** ending from the adjective to get the stem.
2. **Add -게 (-ge)** to the stem.

Examples:

- 빠르다 (ppareuda) – "to be fast"
 - 빠르게 (ppareuge) – "quickly" or "fast"
- 조용하다 (joyonghada) – "to be quiet"
 - 조용하게 (joyonghage) – "quietly"
- 쉽다 (swipda) – "to be easy"
 - 쉽게 (swipge) – "easily"
- 행복하다 (haengbokhada) – "to be happy"
 - 행복하게 (haengbokhage) – "happily"

2. Using Adverbs in Sentences

Once you've turned the adjective into an adverb, you can use it to describe or modify a verb, similar to how adverbs work in English. The structure usually places the adverb **before the verb** it modifies.

Examples:

- 그는 빠르게 달려요.
(Geuneun ppareuge dalryeoyo.)
– "He runs quickly."
- 아이들이 조용하게 앉아요.
(Aideuri joyonghage anjayo.)
– "The children sit quietly."
- 숙제를 쉽게 끝냈어요.
(Sukje-reul swipge kkeunnaesseoyo.)
– "I finished the homework easily."

3. Common Adverbs in Korean

Apart from -게 adverbs, Korean also has adverbs that are standalone words, just like in English. Here are a few commonly used adverbs:

- 잘 (jal) – "well"
- 빨리 (ppalli) – "quickly"
- 천천히 (cheoncheonhi) – "slowly"
- 항상 (hangsang) – "always"
- 자주 (jaju) – "often"
- 많이 (mani) – "a lot"

Examples:

- 잘 했어요. (Jal haesseoyo.) – "You did well."
- 항상 행복하게 지내세요. (Hangsang haengbokhage jinaeseyo.) – "Always live happily."

4. Special Case: 히 (-hi) Adverbs

While -게 (-ge) is the most common way to form adverbs, there's another suffix, -히 (-hi), which is used with some specific adjectives, especially those borrowed from Chinese characters.

Examples:

- 솔직하다 (soljikhada) – "to be honest"
 - 솔직히 (soljikhi) – "honestly"
- 조심하다 (josimhada) – "to be careful"
 - 조심히 (josimhi) – "carefully"

Most adverbs in Korean, however, are formed with **-게**, and with practice, you'll become familiar with the few that use **-히**.

Summary

- To create adverbs from adjectives, simply add **-게 (-ge)** to the adjective stem.
- Adverbs are used directly before verbs to modify them.
- Be aware of some **-히** adverbs, although they are less common.

You're well on your way to constructing more detailed sentences with these adverb forms! Let me know if you want to practice some sentences or have more questions on this topic.



Ok, I see. From the examples you gave above, it seems to me that **히** is the adverbial form of **하다**, is it correct? In this case, wouldn't those **히** adverbs simply be the adverbial forms of all **하다** verbs / adjectives? Or are there also some **히** adverbs unrelated to **하다**? Also, can you develop a bit about this Chinese etymology you mentioned?



You're absolutely correct—many **히 (-hi)** adverbs are indeed the adverbial forms of **하다 (-hada)** adjectives and verbs. These adjectives and verbs are often derived from **Sino-Korean** roots, meaning they come from Chinese characters adapted into Korean. The **하다** verbs and adjectives frequently describe qualities or actions that can be conceptually abstract or relate to a state or manner, which makes them suitable for adverbial use.

1. 히 (-hi) with 하다 Adjectives and Verbs

Most adjectives or verbs that end in **하다** are derived from Chinese-origin words. When these adjectives or verbs turn into adverbs, they often take the **-히** ending rather than **-게**.

Examples of -히 Adverbs from 하다 Adjectives:

- **정확하다** (jeonghwakada) – "to be accurate"
 - **정확히** (jeonghwakhi) – "accurately"
- **조용하다** (joyonghada) – "to be quiet"
 - **조용히** (joyonghi) – "quietly"
- **깨끗하다** (kkaekkeuthada) – "to be clean"
 - **깨끗이** (kkaekkeushi) – "cleanly, neatly"

However, not all **하다** adjectives convert to adverbs with **-히**; some use **-게** as well. The distinction is largely due to conventions and specific word usage over time.

2. Are There 히 Adverbs Unrelated to 하다?

Most **히** adverbs do indeed stem from **하다** adjectives or verbs. It's uncommon to find a **히** adverb that is not tied to an adjective or verb ending in **하다**, especially among commonly used words. Generally,

the **-히** ending is closely associated with Sino-Korean (Chinese-derived) vocabulary, so if you come across a **히** adverb, it's likely connected to an adjective or verb with **하다**.

3. Sino-Korean Vocabulary and Chinese Etymology

Korean, like Japanese and Vietnamese, has many words that are derived from Chinese characters. This part of the Korean vocabulary is known as **Sino-Korean** (한자어, hanja-eo). Such words often use **하다** as a verb or adjective ending, corresponding to Chinese characters that describe states, manners, or qualities.

These **하다** verbs and adjectives, when converted to adverbs, can take **-히** due to the original adverbial suffix conventions in Chinese. Thus, **-히** adverbs often reflect this connection, embodying the stative or qualitative nature associated with the Chinese-derived words.

Examples of Common Sino-Korean Terms in Korean:

- **역사하다** (yeoksa-hada) from 歷史 (lìshǐ) – "to be historical"
 - Adverb: 역사적으로 (yeoksa-jeogeuro) – "historically"
- **필요하다** (piryo-hada) from 必要 (bìyào) – "to be necessary"
 - Adverb: 필요히 (in archaic Korean; in modern, the phrase is 필요하게 "necessarily")

Not every Sino-Korean word will take **-히**; some use **-게** or other structures depending on what sounds more natural or has been standardized over time.

4. Summary and Usage Tips

- **하다** adjectives and verbs, especially those from Chinese-derived words, often become adverbs with **-히**.
- **-히** is closely linked to the Sino-Korean vocabulary.
- There are a few exceptions, and some **하다** verbs take **-게** instead.
- Understanding which to use comes with practice and familiarity, but starting with **하다** words and noting their common adverbial forms will be a helpful guide.

If you focus on **하다** adjectives and verbs, you'll naturally encounter most of the **히** adverbs. If you're ever unsure, checking usage patterns in a dictionary or through examples is a great way to confirm!



Now let's practice ! Can you give me a first exercise on particles, in which I would have to fill the right one in a sentence ?



Absolutely, I'd be happy to help you practice! Below are some sentences where you need to fill in the correct particle. For each sentence, choose from **이/가**, **은/는**, **을/를**, **에**, or **에서**.

Exercise: Fill in the Correct Particle

1. 저는 학교__ 갑니다.
 2. 책__ 재미있어요.
 3. 친구__ 커피를 마셔요.
 4. 우리는 공원__ 놀아요.
 5. 날씨__ 좋아요.
 6. 어제 영화__ 봤어요.
 7. 책상 위__ 책이 있어요.
 8. 아침__ 밥을 먹어요.
 9. 학생들이 교실__ 공부해요.
 10. 그 사람은 회사__ 일해요.
-

Tips:

- **이/가**: Marks the subject, especially to introduce new information or to specify.
- **은/는**: Marks the topic, often used for known information or to set the context.
- **을/를**: Marks the direct object of a verb.
- **에**: Indicates a direction, place, or time for static locations or goals.
- **에서**: Indicates the location of an action or the origin.

Take your time filling in the blanks, and let me know when you're ready to check your answers!

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