

# Korean Basics Study Guide

From Simple Studies, <https://simplestudies.edublogs.org> & @simplestudiesinc on Instagram

## Origin of Hangul:

1. The Korean alphabet was created by **King Sejeong, also known as Sejeong the Great**, in the 15th century in the Chosun Dynasty.
2. King Sejeong was a widely respected scholar who was respected by even the most profound learners.
3. Their *foundation of Hangul* was made up of Chinese characters, which is where Sejeong got most of his inspiration for the alphabet.
4. The Koreans felt frustrated as they had no way of clearly expressing their thoughts and concerns using the Chinese language.
  - a. To help out, Sejeong started to create what they now call Hangul.

## The Alphabet:

### The Constants

ㅂ/ㅃ - b/bb	ㄱ/ㄲ - g/gg	ㄴ - n	ㅇ - h	ㅈ - ch
ㅅ/ㅆ - j/jj	ㄷ/ㄸ - s/ss	ㅇ - a/o	ㅋ - k	ㅍ - p
ㄷ/ㄸ - d/dd	ㅁ - m	ㄹ - l	ㅌ - t	

- For double letters, (ㅃ, ㄲ, ㄸ, ㄴ, ㅆ) you accentuate the pronunciation.

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### The Vowels

ㅜ - u	ㅐ / ㅑ - ae	ㅣ - ee	ㅓ - yeo
ㅒ / ㅓ - ae	ㅛ - o	ㅠ - u	ㅕ - ah
ㅗ - ya	ㅖ - uh	ㅜ - oo	ㅡ - eu

### The Basic Letter Combos

요 - yo	여 - yeo	야 - yah	애 - ae	예 - ae
오 - oh	어 - uh	아 - ah	이 - ee	우 - u
우 - ooh	으 - eu	얘 - ae	예 - ae	

- When mentioning the vowels by itself, we use the constant (a/o) to refer to it.
- When using a different constant you simply add the sound in front of the vowel.
- The vowels ㅒ, ㅓ, ㅐ, ㅑ nearly have the same pronunciation. It's hard to know which one to use when spelling a word, it really just depends on the spelling of the word.
- You can also combine some letters with each other to create a different sound.

#### For example,

고 : The ㄱ makes a g sound, the ㅛ makes a o sound. Together it would sound like go.

जू : The ㅈ makes a j sound, the ㅊ makes a oo sound. Together it would sound like joo.

미 : The ㅁ makes a m sound, the ㅣ makes a ee sound. Together it would sound like mee.

뒤 : The ㄷ makes a d sound, the ㅊ makes a oo sound, the ㅣ makes a ee sound. Together it phonetically sounds like d-oo-ee. However, we say it at a faster speed, making it sound more like dwi.

밥 : The ㅂ makes a b sound, the ㅏ makes a ah sound. Together it sounds like bab but to make it more smooth, we pronounce it bap.

### Sentence Structure:

#### 1. Korean sentence structure is the opposite of English.

- a. In English, we would say, "He went to go eat."
  - i. The noun comes before the verb.
- b. In Korean, we would say, "Eat went to go he."
  - i. The verb comes before the noun.
  - ii. 밥 먹으러 갔어.

I went to the market.

나 마켓 갔어.

2. Although in English, the subject is important, it isn't that important in Korean.
- a. Saying "went to go eat" wouldn't make that much sense in English.
  - b. However in Korea, you can just say "went to go eat", it would make perfect sense without the he.
  - c. "밥 먹으러 갔어" does not include a subject.
    - i. 밥 is food, 먹으러 갔어 means went to go eat.
      - 1. However, it still works as a sentence.
    - ii. To say "I went to go eat", you would put a 나 in front, meaning I.
      - 1. 나 밥 먹으러 갔어.
    - iii. To say "He went to go eat", you would put 그 남자, meaning that boy.
      - 1. 그 남자 밥 먹으러 갔어.
    - iv. But even without the 나 and 그 남자, it can still be used in both situations.

### 3. Dialogue Example...

Friend 1: 재찬 어디갔어? → jaechan eodi gasseo?

Where did Jaechan go?

Friend 2: 밥 먹으러 갔어. → bap mug-eu-leo gasseo.

He went to go eat.

Friend 1: 재찬, 너 어디갔어? → jaechan, neo eodi gasseo?

Jaechan, where did you go?

Friend 2: 밥 먹으러 갔어. → bap mug-eu-leo gasseo.

I went to go eat.

### Talking Etiquette:

1. In Korea, the differentiation of talking with someone of **higher authority than someone** with lower authority is a big deal.
2. One of the first things we ask when we meet each other is their age.
3. If you're talking to someone older than you, you must always use something called 존댓말 (jon-daet-mal). It just means to talk in a respectful tone.
  - a. The opposite of 존댓말 is 반말 (talking casually).
  - b. Although most words stay the same, some may change.
  - c. The way you talk and ask should change no matter what.

**For example,**

Birthday: 생일 → 생신

Ask: 물어봐 → 여쭙봐

Age: 나이 → 연세

4. There are **three different “levels” of talking.**
  - a. Friends - casual tone
  - b. Someone older in age - respectful
  - c. Seniors - most respectful
5. To make something more respectful, a simple way of doing it is adding a **요 (yo)** to the end of the sentence.

**For example,** when asking what age they are, you might say...

Friends: “몇 살이야?” → myeot sal-ee-ya?

“How old are you?”

Older: “**나이**가 어떻게 되**세**요?” → na-i-ga otteoke dwe-say-yo?

“What is your age?”

Senior: “**연세**가 어떻게 되**세**요?” → yeonse-ga otteoke dwe-say-yo?

“What is your age?” (age is used in a respectful tone)

## Basic Vocab Necessities:

### 1. What?

- a. What in Korean is 뭐 (mwo).
- b. **뭐** 했어? → **What** did you do?
- c. **그**게 **뭐** 야? → **What** is that?

### 2. When?

- a. When in Korean is 언제 (uhn-jae).
- b. **언제** 했어요? → **When** did you do that?
- c. **언제** 갈까? → **When** should we go?

### 3. Why?

- a. Why in Korean is 왜 (wae).
- b. **왜** 했어? → **Why** did you do that?
- c. **왜** 나 밀었어? → **Why** did you push me?

### 4. Where?

- a. Where in Korean is 어디 (eo-di).
- b. **어디** 갔어? → **Where** did you go?
- c. **어디** 갈까? → **Where** should we go?

### 5. Who?

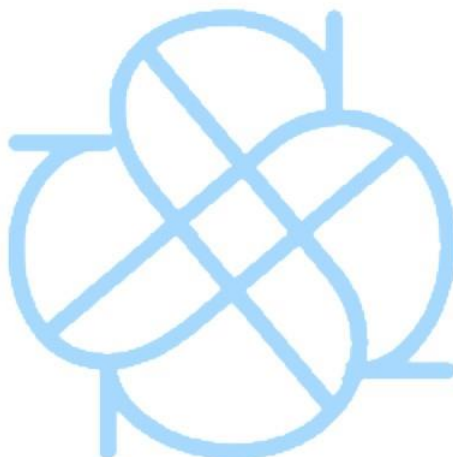
- a. Who in Korean has two different forms. It can be 누구 (nugu) or 누가 (nuga).
- b. **누가** 왔어? → **Who** came?
- c. **누구** 야? → **Who** is it?

## 6. How?

- a. How in Korean is 어떡해 (otteoke).
- b. 어떡해 했어? → How did you do that?
- c. 어떡해 나한테 그럴수있어? → How could you do that to me?

## 7. Because

- a. Because in Korean is 왜냐면 (wae-nya-myeon) or 왜냐하면 (wae-nya-ha-myeon).
- b. 나 지금 배고파 왜냐면 어제 저녁을 못 먹고 잤거든. → I'm hungry right now because I slept without eating dinner yesterday.
- c. 저는 오늘 아침에 늦게 일어났어요 왜냐하면 어제 늦게까지 놀았거든요. → I woke up late today because I was up late playing.



## Numbers:

1. In Korea, there are two ways to say numbers. There isn't a rule that you use to determine which set to use, but some objects require a certain set.

### For example,

이개월 → two months  
(ee-gaewol)

두달 → two moons

(doo-dal)

2. Both are a way of saying two months. However, you cannot use 이 with 달 or 두 with 개월.

### Native Korean Numbers

0 영 yeong	1 하나 hana	2 둘 dul	3 셋 set	4 넷 net	5 다섯 dasut
6 여섯 yesut	7 일곱 il-gop	8 여덟 ye-deol	9 아홉 ah-hob	10 열 yeol	11 열 하나 yeol-hana
12 열둘 yeol-dul	13 열셋 yeol-set	14 열넷 yeol-net	15 열다섯 yeol-dasut	16 열여섯 yeol-yesut	17 열일곱 yeol-ilgop
18 열여덟 yeol-yeo-deol	19 열아홉 yeol-ah-hob	20 스물 sumul	30 서른 seoleun	40 마흔 maheun	50 쉰 shu-in
60 예순 ye-seun	70 일흔 il-heun	80 여든 ye-deun	90 아흔 ah-heun	100 온 on	

- This set is often used for saying your age and number of items.
- When counting the number in between the tens, you simply add the ten value in front of the ones.
  - $10 + 7 = 17$ , 열 + 일곱 = 열 일곱
  - $20 + 7 = 27$ , 스물 + 일곱 = 스물 일곱

#### For example,

Friend 1: “몇 살이야?” → myeot sal-ee-ya?



“How old are you?”

Friend 2: “열 다섯살이야.” → yeol da-sut-sal eeya.

“I’m fifteen.”

### Sino Korean Numbers

0 영 yeong	1 일 il	2 이 ee	3 삼 sam	4 사 sa	5 오 oh
6 육 yuk	7 칠 chil	8 팔 pal	9 구 gu	10 십 sib	11 십일 sib-il
12 십이 sib-ee	13 십삼 sib-sam	14 십사 sib-sa	15 십오 sib-oh	16 십육 sib-yuk	17 십칠 sib-chil
18 십팔 sib-pal	19 십구 sib-gu	20 이십 ee-sib	30 삼십 sam-sib	40 사십 sa-sib	50 오십 oh-sib
60 육십 yuk-sib	70 칠십 chil-sib	80 팔십 pal-sib	90 구십 gu-sib	100 백 baek	

- The Sino set is based off of Chinese characters.
- This set is often used for dates, phone numbers, money, and addresses.
- When counting the number in between the tens, you simply add the ten value in front of the ones.
- When ‘십’ is stated, combine all letters to create the sound “shib”  
s+ee+b
  - 10 + 7 = 17, 십 + 칠 = 십 칠
  - 20 + 7 = 27, 이십 + 칠 = 이십 칠

#### For example,

Friend 1: “얼마나 줘야해?” → eol-mana ju-wo-yahae?

“How much do I owe you?”

Friend 2: “십일 달러.” → sib-il dollar/dalleo

“Eleven dollars.”

(In Korea, money is not represented by dollars, but I used dollars for easy understanding.)

## Counting:

### 1. Reading Months

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

### 2. Reading Dates

- a. In Korea, you read the date from year to month to date to day.

#### For example,

Saturday November 5, 2016 → 이천십육년 십일월 오일 토요일

2016 November 5, Saturday

### 3. Reading Time

- a. When referring to AM or PM, they use 오전, 오후

#### For example,

3:45 pm → 오후 세시 사십오 분

(oh-hu se-si sa-shib-oh bun)

- Hour → 시
- Minute → 분

- Second → 초

#### 4. Counting Objects

- a. In Korean, they have a different way of counting each object. You simply add the number before the word.

Number of ages	살 (sal)	Number of movies	편 (pyeon)
Number of boats	척 (chuk)	Number of oriental medicine	첩 (chup)
Number of books	권 (kwon)	Number of newspapers or magazines	부 (boo)
Number of bowls	그릇 (geu-leut)	Number of letters	통 (tong)
Number of cups	잔/컵 (jan/cup)	Number of bottles	병 (byeong)
Number of drawings	폭 (pok)	Number of pairs (socks, shoes)	켤레 (kyul-le)
Number of electronics (computers or cars)	대 (dae)	Number of trees	그루 (geu-loo)
Number of flowers	송이 (songyi)	Number of boxes	상자 (sangja)
Number of houses or buildings	채 (chae)	Number of pens or pencils	자루 (jalu)
Number of inanimate items	개 (gae)	Number of pills	알 (al)
Number of kinds/types	종류 (jong-ryu)	Number of animals	마리 (mali)

Number of people	명/사람 (myeong/salam)	Number experiences	번 (bun)
Number of places	군데 (goon-dae)	Number of sheets of papers	장 (jang)
Number of suits or pants	벌 (bul)		

## 5. Days of the Week

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
일요일	월요일	화요일	수요일	목요일	금요일	토요일
il-yo-il	wol-yo-il	hwa-yo-il	su-yo-il	mok-yo-il	geum-yo-il	to-yo-il

## Korean Particles:

In Korean, a particle goes after the word to show the role it plays in the sentence. This is what makes learning the language a little harder. In English, they don't have this.

### 1. 이/가, 께서

- Subject particle.
- 이/가 is used for more informal and casual talking.
- 께서 is used when you refer to someone older.

#### For example,

언니가 요리를 해요. → My sister is cooking.

할머니 **께서** 책을 읽고 계세요. → My grandma is reading a book.

## 2. 는/은

- This shows which word is the subject of the sentence.
- 는** is used when the last letter is a vowel.
- 은** is used when the last letter is a constant.

**For example,**

나는 → me

- 나 ends in a vowel, ㅏ

집은 → house

- 집 ends in a constant, ㅍ

## 3. 를/을

- This shows which word is the object.
- 를** is used when the last letter is a vowel.
- 을** is used when the last letter is a constant.

**For example,**

나를 → me

- 나 ends in a vowel, ㅏ

집을 → house

- 집 ends in a constant, ㅍ

## 4. 에서, 에게서, 한테서

- Locative particle
- 에서** → from a place
- 에게서/한테서** → from a place, formal

**For example,**

한국에서 왔어요. → I came from Korea.

hanguk-aeseo wasseo-yo.

## 5. 와/과, 하고, 이랑

- a. With, to connect two nouns

**For example,**

엄마와 아빠 → Mom and dad.

umma-wa appa.

엄마하고 아빠하고 같이 있고싶어요. → I want to be with my mom and dad.

umma-hago appa-hago gatchi itgo-sip-uh-yo.

## 6. 의

- a. Possessive particle

**For example,**

친구의 가방이에요. → It's my friend's bag.

chingu-ae gabang-ee-ae-yo.

## 7. 처럼

- a. A term used for like or as.

**For example,**

나도 너처럼 한국말을 잘 하고 싶어. → I want to be good at Korean like you.

nado neo-chulum hangukmal-eul hago sip-eo.

## 8. 만

- a. A term used for only.

### For example,

과일 안좋아요. 딸기 **만** 좋아요. → I don't like fruits. I only like strawberries.

gua-il ahn-jowa-yo. ddalgiman jowa-yo.

## 9. 도

- a. A term used for also.

### For example,

나는 영어 잘해요. 그리고 한국말 **도** 잘해요. → I'm good at English. I'm also good at Korean.

na-neun yeong-uh jal-haeyo. geu-ligo hangukmal-do jal-haeyo.

## 10. 부터

- a. A term used for from.

### For example,

우리 집 **부터** 학교까지 5분 걸려요. → It takes 5 minutes to go from my house to the school.

uli jib-butuh hakgyo-ggaji oh-boon geol-yeo-yo.

## 11. 까지

- a. A term used for until or to.

### For example,

너 집 **까지** 얼마나 걸리니? → How long does it take to get to your house?

neo jib-ggaji ulmana geol-lini?

## 12. 마다

- a. A term used for every or each.

### For example,

숙제 **마다** 열심히 해요. → I do hard on each homework assignment.

sookje-mada yeolsimi-haeyo.

## 13. 보다

- a. This term is used to compare two things.

### For example,

나는 수학 **보다** 영어를 더 좋아해요.. → I like math better than English.

na-neun suhak-boda yeonguh-leul deo jowahaeyo.

14. To create a sentence, you put the **는/은** after the subject, and the **를/을** after the object.

### For example,

“나는 한국어 **를** 말해.” → na-neun hangukeo-leul malhae.

“I speak Korean.”

“동생 **은** 밥 **을** 만들었어요.” → dongsaeng-eun bap-eul mandeuleoss-eoyo.

“My younger sibling made food.”

## Most Used Proverbs:



**Proverbs are commonly used in Korea.** It's good to know a few, a lot of older people will refer to them. These aren't all of them, just a few of the more oftenly used ones.

1. **급하다고 바늘허리에 실 매어 쓰라?**

→ The faster I go, the behind I get.

2. **돌다리도 두들겨 보고 건너라.**

→ Look before you leap.

3. **소 잃고 외양간 고친다.**

→ Shutting the gate after the horse's gone.

4. **낮말은 새가 듣고 밤말은 쥐가 듣는다.**

→ Walls have ears.

5. **쥐구멍에도 별 들 날 있다.**

→ Every dog has his day.

6. **가는 말이 고와야 오는 말이 곱다.**

→ What goes around comes around.

7. **엷친 데 덩친 격이다.**

→ It never rains, but it pours.

8. **세 살 버릇 여든까지 간다.**

→ What's learned in the cradle lasts till the grave.

9. **콩 심은 데 콩 나고 팥 심은데 팥난다.**

→ As one sows, so shall he reap.

10. 꿩 먹고 알 먹기.

→ Killing two birds with one stone.

11. 서당개 삼 년이면 풍월을 읊는다.

→ The sparrow near a school sings the primer.

12. 식은 죽 먹기, 누워서 떡 먹기.

→ Piece of cake.

13. 티끌 모아 태산.

→ Little drops of water make the mighty ocean.

14. 백지장도 맞들면 낫다.

→ Many hands make light work.

15. 소귀에 경 읽기.

→ Talking to the wall.

16. 세월이 약이다.

→ Time will heal wounds.

17. 하룻강아지 범 무서운 줄 모른다.

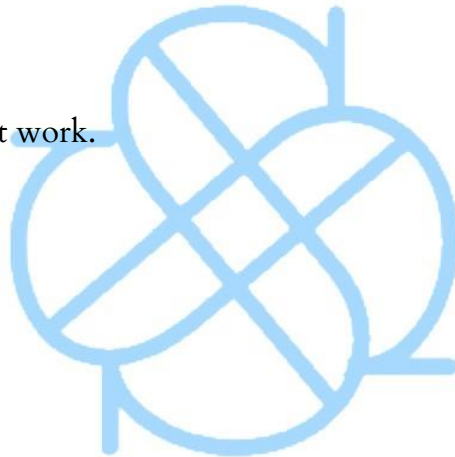
→ Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

18. 발 없는 말이 천리 간다.

→ News travels fast.

19. 낯 놓고 기억자도 모른다.

→ You don't know Jack/Do not know A from B



20. 아니 땐 굴뚝에 연기날까?

→ There's no smoking without fire.

21. 사공이 많으면 배가 산으로 간다.

→ Too many cooks spoil the broth.

22. 그 아비에 그 아들.

→ Like father, like son.

23. 설마가 사람 잡는다.

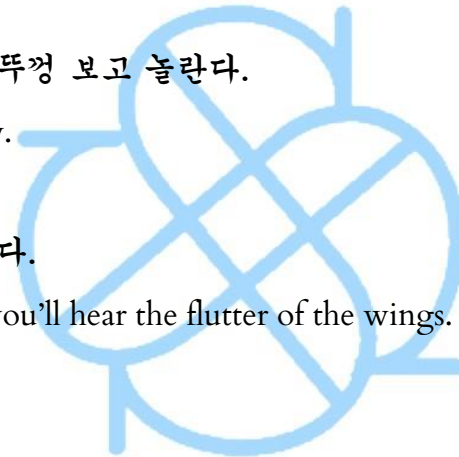
→ Never say never.

24. 자리 보고 놀란 가슴 슬똬꿩 보고 놀란다.

→ Once bitten, twice shy.

25. 호랑이도 제 말 하면 온다.

→ Talk of the devil and you'll hear the flutter of the wings.



## **Tenses:**

1. **Past tense is portrayed in the letters 았/였/했.**

a. 았 is used when the vowel before is 아 or 오.

For example,

가다	가았습니다	갔습니다
original verb form	past tense	contraction

b. 았 is used when the vowel before is 어 or 오.

For example,		
서다	서었습니다	섰습니다
original verb form	past tense	contraction

c. 했다 replaces 하다 when the words ends in 하다.

For example,		
공부하다	공부했습니다	n/a
original verb form	past tense	contraction

## 2. Future tense is portrayed using 겠, 게, 겄.

For example,	
공부를 하겠어요. → I will study.	
gongbu-leul ha-guess-eoyo	
내일은 비가 올 거예요. → It will rain tomorrow.	
nae-il-eun bi-ga ol geo-ae-yo.	

## 3. Present Tense

a. Present tense is portrayed by the term “고 있다.”

**For example,**

공부 하**고있다**. → I am studying.

TV 보**고있다**. → I am watching TV.

## **Conjunctions:**

1. **게다가** → moreover  
gae-daga

2. **그래서** → therefore  
geu-lae-seo

3. **그러나** → but  
geu-leo-na

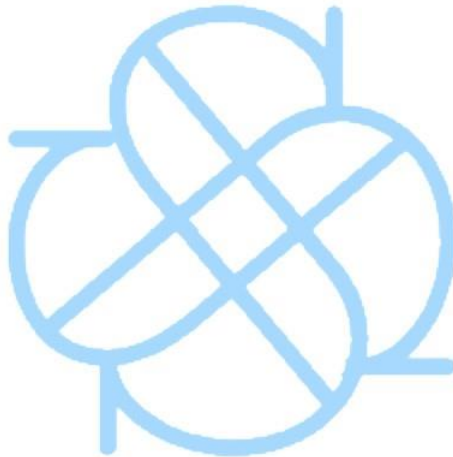
4. **그러니까** → therefore  
geu-leo-ni-kka

5. **그러면** → then  
geu-leo-myeon

6. **그러면서** → as  
geu-leo-myeon-seo

7. **그러므로** → therefore  
geu-leo-meu-lo

8. **그러자** → as soon as  
geu-leo-ja



9. **그런데** → but, then  
geo-lun-dae

10. **그럼** → then  
geu-lum

11. **그렇지만** → but  
geu-lu-ji-man

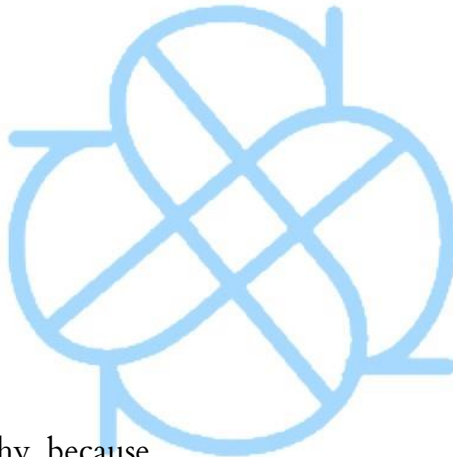
12. **그리고** → and  
geu-li-go

13. **그리하여** → therefore  
geu-li-ha-yeo

14. **따라서** → therefore  
dda-la-seo

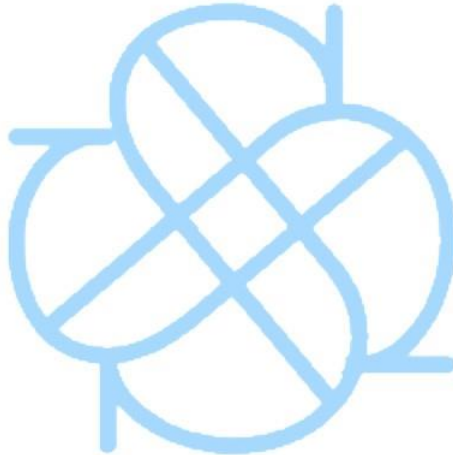
15. **왜냐하면** → the reason why, because  
wae-nya-ha-myeon

16. **하지만** → but  
ha-ji-man

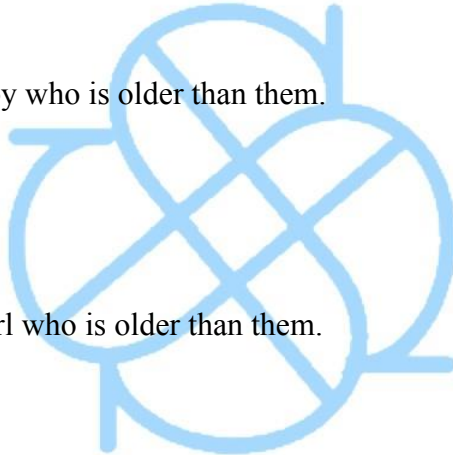


**Family Members:**

1. **엄마** → **mom**
  - a. A casual way.
  - b. Umma
2. **어머니** → **mother**
  - a. A more formal way.
  - b. Umuni
3. **아버지** → **father**
  - a. A formal way.
  - b. Abeoji.
4. **아빠** → **dad**
  - a. A casual way.
  - b. Appa.
5. **할머니** → **grandmother**
  - a. Halmeoni
6. **할아버지** → **grandfather**
  - a. Halabeoji
7. **삼촌** → **uncle**
  - a. Samchon
8. **고모** → **aunt**
  - a. The aunt of your dad's side of the family.
  - b. Gomo
9. **이모** → **aunt**
  - a. The aunt of your mom's side of the family.



- b. Imo
10. **동생** → **younger sibling**
- a. Referring to any gender.
  - b. Dongsaeng
11. **여동생** → **younger sister**
- a. Yeo-dongsaeng
12. **남동생** → **younger brother**
- a. Nam-dongsaeng
13. **오빠** → **older brother**
- a. What girls call a boy who is older than them.
  - b. Oppa
14. **언니** → **older sister**
- a. What girls call a girl who is older than them.
  - b. Unni
15. **형** → **older brother**
- a. What boys call a boy who is older than them.
  - b. Hyung.
16. **누나** → **older sister**
- a. What boys call a girl who is older than them.
  - b. Nuna



### **Independent Nouns:**

1. **는/은 날**에는 → on the day when



**For example,**

우리 선생님이 화나는 날에는 무서워요.

My teacher is scary on the days they get mad.

2. 는/은 편 (이다) → in the direction of, type, side

**For example,**

한국 학생들은 공부를 잘하는 편이에요?

Are Korean students on the good side of studying?

3. 는/은 관제로 → due to, because of

**For example,**

전기가 나간 관제로 오늘 영업을 중단하겠습니다.

Due to a power outage, we'll stop business today.

4. 는/은 대신에 → instead of, in place of

**For example,**

나 대신에 내 친구가 그것을 사 오기로 했다.

My friend will buy it instead of me.

5. 는 도중(에) → in the middle of

**For example,**

집으로 가는 도중에 아빠 사무실에 들러야겠다.

I'll stop by my father's office on my way home.

6. 는 마당에 → while

**For example,**

우체국에 가는 마당에 내 우표도 좀 사다줘.

Please buy some stamps for me while you're at the post office.

7. 는/은 바람에 → because of

**For example,**

비가 오는 바람에 야외 공연이 취소됐어요.

Because of the rain, the outdoor performance was cancelled.

8. 는/은 반면에 → in contrast to, on the contrary

**For example,**

동생은 공부를 잘하는 반면에 나는 공부를 못한다.

In contrast to my brother who is doing well at school, I am not doing well.

9. 는/은 사이에 → while, in between

**For example,**

내가 집을 나간 **사이에** 친구가 왔어요.

My friend stopped by while I was away from home.

10. **는/은 정도** → to the degree, to the extent

**For example,**

나는 간단한 인사를 할 수 있을 **정도로** 한국말을 한다.

I speak Korean to the extent that I can do greetings.

11. **는 한** → as much as possible

**For example,**

네가 여기에 있**는 한** 다시는 이곳에 안 오겠다.

I won't come back to this place as long as you are here.