

Welcome to the Wonderful World of Hangul!

Hangul (한글) is the writing system of the Korean language -elegant, logical, and surprisingly easy to learn. Created in 1443 by King Sejong the Great, it was designed so that **anyone could learn to read and write**. Let's begin your journey!



21 Vowels

Built from lines representing people, earth, and sun



19 Consonants

Shaped to mimic your mouth as it makes each sound



Syllable Blocks

Consonants and vowels combine into beautiful square blocks

Meet the Vowels: The Heart of Korean Sounds! ❤️

Hangul vowels have a beautiful origin story — each shape is rooted in the natural world around us.



Vertical Lines

Represent a **person standing upright** — the human element



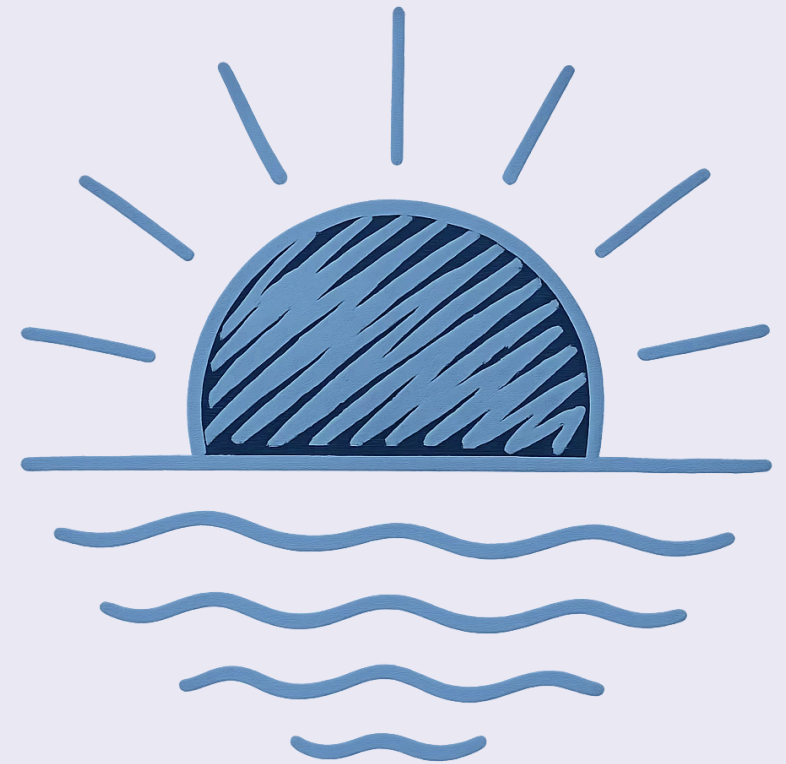
Horizontal Lines

Represent the **flat Earth** beneath our feet



Short Strokes (Dots)



Originally dots representing the **Sun** — now written as short strokes



Basic Vowels: The Foundation

These 6 core vowels are the building blocks of every Korean word. Master these first and everything else falls into place!

Vowel	Name	Romanization	Sounds Like...	Example Word
ㅏ	아 (a)	a	"a" in fa ther	아버지 (father)
ㅑ	어 (eo)	eo	"o" in so ng (mouth more open)	어머니 (mother)
ㅓ	오 (o)	o	"o" in g o	오리 (duck)
ㅕ	우 (u)	u	"oo" in mo on	우유 (milk)
ㅡ	으 (eu)	eu	"u" in pu t (tongue flat)	으쓱 (shrug)
ㅣ	이 (i)	i	"ee" in se e	이름 (name)

  **Tip:** Practice each vowel sound out loud! Say "a - eo - o - u - eu - i" repeatedly until it feels natural. Your mouth shape is the key!

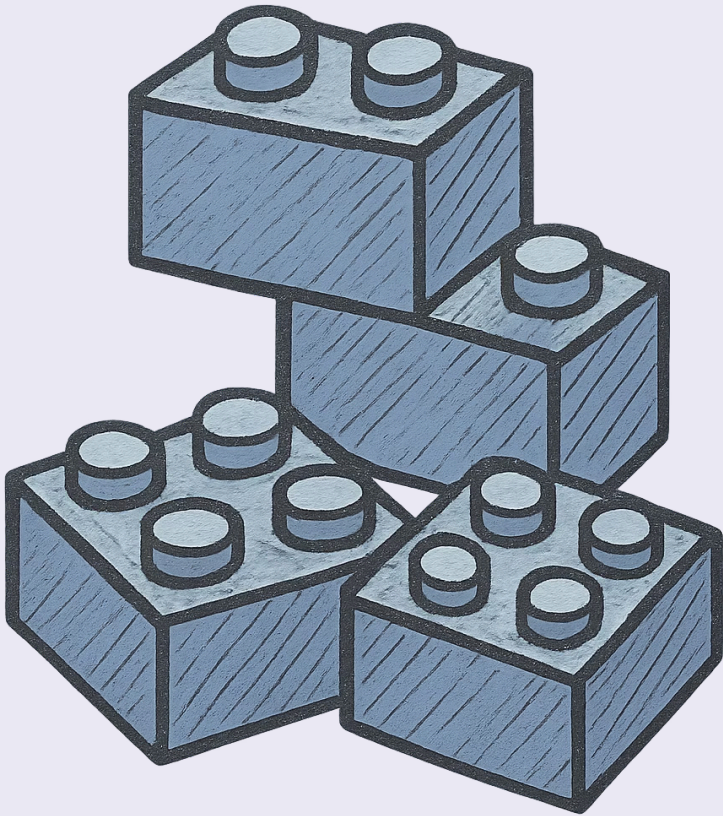
Double the Fun: Diphthongs & Combined Vowels! 🎉

When two basic vowels combine, they create new, richer sounds called **diphthongs**. Think of them as vowel mashups!

Vowel	Romanization	Built From	Sounds Like...
ㅏ	ae	ㅏ + ㅣ	"a" in apple
ㅓ	e	ㅓ + ㅣ	"e" in bed
ㅘ	wa	ㅘ + ㅏ	"wa" in water
ㅚ	wo	ㅚ + ㅓ	"wo" in won
ㅙ	wae	ㅙ + ㅏ	"wae" in wafer
ㅜ	we	ㅜ + ㅓ	"we" in wet
ㅝ	oe	ㅝ + ㅣ	"we" in we (mouth more open)
ㅞ	wi	ㅞ + ㅣ	"wi" in win
ㅟ	ui	ㅟ + ㅣ	"ui" in quit (tongue flat)

📌 🎵 **Memory trick:** ㅏ and ㅓ sound almost identical in modern Korean! Native speakers often use them interchangeably. Don't stress — just listen and repeat!

Meet the Consonants: The Building Blocks of Words!



Hangul consonants were brilliantly designed by **King Sejong** to visually mirror the shape your mouth, tongue, and throat make when producing each sound. There are **19 consonants** in total — including basic, tense, and aspirated varieties.

Basic Consonants

14 standard sounds ,
the core of the Korean
consonant system

Tense Consonants

5 doubled sounds pronounced
with **extra force** and no air
puff


Aspirated Consonants

4 sounds released with a **strong burst of breath**

Basic Consonants: The Core Sounds (Part 1)

Many consonants change sound depending on their **position** in a syllable. Pay close attention to beginning vs. end of word placement!

Letter	Name	Start of Word	Middle of Syllable	End of Word
ㄱ	기역 (giyeok)	"k" as in k ite	"g" as in g o	"k" as in tal k
ㄴ	니은 (nieun)	"n" as in n o	"n" as in n o	"n" as in sun n
ㄷ	디귤 (digeut)	"t" as in t alk	"d" as in d ream	"t" as in t op
ㄹ	리을 (rieul)	"r" as in r un	"r" as in r un	"l" as in l ove
ㅁ	미음 (mieum)	"m" as in m om	"m" as in m om	"m" as in m om
ㅂ	비읍 (bieup)	"p" as in p ool	"b" as in b ook	"p" as in p ool

 **Key insight:** ㄹ is one of the trickiest consonants — it's neither a pure "r" nor a pure "l." At the start of a syllable it sounds like a flipped "r"; at the end, like a soft "l." Listen carefully!

Basic Consonants: Core Sounds (Part 2)

Here are the remaining 4 basic consonants — including the unique **silent placeholder** ㅇ that every Korean learner finds fascinating!

Letter	Name	Start of Word	Before "i"	End of Word
ㅅ	시옷 (siot)	"s" as in sun	"sh" as in ship	"t" as in it
ㅇ	이응 (ieung)	🙄 Silent! Vowel placeholder	🙄 Silent!	"ng" as in sing
ㅈ	지읒 (jieut)	"ch" as in chair	"j" as in jump	"t" as in cat
ㅎ	히읒 (hieut)	"h" as in hat	"h" as in hat	Often silent at end

📖 🙄 **Fun fact about ㅇ:** When it appears at the *beginning* of a syllable, it's completely silent — it simply holds the space for the vowel. When it appears at the *end*, it makes the "ng" sound. The same letter, two jobs!

Tense Consonants: Adding Extra Punch! ⚡

Tense consonants (쌍 / ssang, meaning "double") are written by doubling a basic consonant. They are pronounced with **extra muscular tension** — no puff of air, just pure force. Think of them as "squeezed" sounds!

Letter	Name	Sound	English Example	How to Say It
ㄱ	쌍기역 (ssang giyeok)	kk	"sk" in sky	Tense throat, no air release
ㄷ	쌍디귤 (ssang digeut)	tt	"st" in stop	Tongue presses roof firmly
ㅍ	쌍비읍 (ssang bieup)	pp	"sp" in spin	Lips tightly pressed together
ㅅ	쌍시옷 (ssang siot)	ss	"s" in sea (sharp & tight)	Hiss with extra tension
ㅈ	쌍지읒 (ssang jieut)	jj	"j" in judge (tense)	Tongue presses just behind teeth

📌 **Practice tip:** Hold a piece of paper in front of your mouth. When saying tense consonants, the paper should *barely move*. When saying aspirated consonants (next slide), it should *flutter wildly!*

Aspirated Consonants: A Breath of Fresh Air!



Aspirated consonants are pronounced with a **strong, audible puff of air** — like blowing out a candle. Each one is the "breathy" big sibling of a basic consonant.

Letter	Name	Based On	Sound	English Example
ㅋ	키읔 (kieuk)	ㄱ + breath	Strong "k"	"k" in king — with a big puff of air!
ㅌ	티읕 (tieut)	ㄷ + breath	Strong "t"	"t" in top — with a big puff of air!
ㅍ	피읖 (pieup)	ㅍ + breath	Strong "p"	"p" in pen — with a big puff of air!
ㅊ	치읓 (chieut)	ㅈ + breath	Strong "ch"	"ch" in church — with a big puff of air!

📄💡 **The "paper test":** Hold a tissue in front of your mouth. For aspirated consonants, you should feel a strong gust of air. If the tissue moves dramatically, you're doing it right! 🌬️

You've Got This! Practice Makes Perfect! 🏆

Incredible work — you've now covered **all the vowels and consonants of Hangeul!** You're ready to start combining them into real Korean syllables and words.

1

Vowels = Lines & Strokes

21 vowels built from vertical lines, horizontal lines, and short strokes representing people, earth, and sun

2

Consonants = Mouth Shapes

19 consonants that mimic your lips, tongue, and throat — basic, tense, and aspirated

3

Syllables = Blocks

Combine consonants + vowels into compact square blocks to form every Korean word

4

Practice Daily!

Even 10 minutes a day of reading and writing will have you fluent in Hangeul within weeks

- 📌 **☀️ Your next steps:** Try writing your own name in Korean! Use what you've learned — pick the consonants and vowels that match your name's sounds and stack them into syllable blocks. 한글 화이팅! (Hangeul, Fighting! = You can do it!)