

Comprehensive Korean Self-Study Guide

For Beginners: Lessons 1 & 2

Welcome to your ultimate self-study guide for learning Korean! This guide is designed specifically for English-speaking beginners to master basic greetings, nationalities, everyday objects, and fundamental sentence structures.

Lesson 1: 안녕하세요? 저는 마이클입니다 (Hello? I am Michael)

In this lesson, you will learn how to formally greet someone, state your name and nationality, and understand the most fundamental building blocks of a Korean sentence: Topic Markers and the Polite Copula.

1. Dialogue: Meeting Someone for the First Time

마이클: 안녕하세요? 저는 마이클입니다. 미국 사람입니다. 만나서 반갑습니다.

[An-nyeong-ha-sim-ni-kka? Jeo-neun Ma-i-keu-rim-ni-da. Mi-guk sa-ra-mim-ni-da. Man-na-seo ban-gap-sseum-ni-da.]

(Michael: Hello. I am Michael. I am an American. Nice to meet you.)

유강: 마이클 씨, 안녕하세요? 제 이름은 유강입니다. 저는 중국 사람입니다. 만나서 반갑습니다.

[Ma-i-keu-ri Ssi, an-nyeong-ha-sim-ni-kka? Je i-reu-meun Yu-gang-im-ni-da. Jeo-neun Jung-guk sa-ra-mim-ni-da. Man-na-seo ban-gap-sseum-ni-da.]

(Yugang: Hello, Mr. Michael. My name is Yugang. I am Chinese. Nice to meet you.)

2. Vocabulary & Cultural Notes

- **저 (Jeo) / 제 (Je):** This means “I” and “My” in a polite, humble form. Use “저” instead of the casual “나 (Na)” with new acquaintances. “제” is the contraction of “저의” (my).
- **사람 (Saram):** This word means “a person” or “people”. Express nationality by combining [Country Name] + 사람:
 - 한국 (Han-guk / Korea) + 사람 = **한국 사람** (Korean person)
 - 미국 (Mi-guk / USA) + 사람 = **미국 사람** (American person)
 - 중국 (Jung-guk / China) + 사람 = **중국 사람** (Chinese person)
 - 일본 (Il-bon / Japan) + 사람 = **일본 사람** (Japanese person)
- **씨 (Ssi):** Attached to a person's name to show respect (Mr./Ms./Miss). Never attach it to your own name!

3. Grammar Explanations

Grammar Rule 1: N은/는 (The Topic Marker)

Particles are attached to nouns to specify their role. **은** and **는** indicate the main topic of the sentence.

- **Use 은** when the noun ends in a consonant (Patchim): 이름 → **이름은**, 마이클 → **마이클은**
- **Use 는** when the noun ends in a vowel (No Patchim): 저 → **저는**, 유강 씨 → **유강 씨는**

Grammar Rule 2: N입니다 (To be – Am / Is / Are)

입니다 is the formal, polite form of the copula "to be". Korean verbs always come at the very end of the sentence and attach directly to the noun.

- 저는 미국 사람**입니다**. (I am an American.)
- 제 이름은 유강**입니다**. (My name is Yugang.)

Lesson 2: 이것이 무엇입니까? (What is this?)

Now let's learn how to ask about surrounding objects using demonstrative pronouns, subject markers, and how to deny something using negative sentences.

1. Dialogue: Identifying Classroom Objects

질문자: 이름이 무엇입니까?

(What is your name?)

나오미: 제 이름은 나오미입니다.

(My name is Naomi.)

질문자: 나오미 씨는 일본 사람입니까?

(Are you Japanese, Naomi?)

나오미: 네, 일본 사람입니다.

(Yes, I am Japanese.)

질문자: 이것이 무엇입니까?

(What is this?)

나오미: 그것은 안경입니다.

(That is a pair of glasses.)

질문자: 그것은 일본어 책입니까?

(Is that a Japanese book?)

나오미: 아니요, 이것은 일본어 책이 아닙니다. 한국어 책입니다.

(No, this is not a Japanese book. It is a Korean book.)

2. Vocabulary: Core Demonstratives and Objects

Korean	English Meaning	Usage Note
이것 (I-geot)	This (thing)	Object is close to the speaker.
그것 (Geu-geot)	That (thing)	Object is close to the listener.
저것 (Jeo-geot)	That thing over there	Object is far from both speaker and listener.
무엇 (Mu-eot)	What	Interrogative pronoun used for asking questions.
네 / 아니요	Yes / No	Polite and formal responses.
안경 / 책 / 의자	Glasses / Book / Chair	Everyday nouns (An-gyeong / Chaek / Ui-ja).

3. Grammar Explanations

Grammar Rule 1: N이/가 (The Subject Marker)

이 and **가** focus tightly on the specific subject performing the action or being described, answering "Who?" or "Which exact thing?".

- Use **이** when the noun ends in a consonant: 이것 + 이 → **이것이** 무엇입니까?
- Use **가** when the noun ends in a vowel: 의자 + 가 → **의자가** 있습니다.

Grammar Rule 2: N입니까? (Am / Is / Are...? – Question Form)

To turn a statement ending in **입니다** into a formal question, simply change it to **입니까?** with an rising intonation.

- 그것은 일본어 책**입니까?** (Is that a Japanese book?)
- 한국 사람**입니까?** (Are you a Korean person?)

Grammar Rule 3: N이/가 아닙니다 (To Not Be / Negative Form)

To negate a noun, use the pattern **Noun + 이/가 아닙니다**. The noun being negated takes the subject marker.

- 저는 선생님**이 아닙니다**. (I am not a teacher. 선생님 ends in 'ㅁ' → 이)
- 그것은 의자**가 아닙니다**. (That is not a chair. 의자 ends in 'ㅏ' → 가)

Lesson Exercises: Check Your Progress

Part A: Topic Markers (은/는)

Fill in the blanks:

1. 저_____ 마이클입니다. (I am Michael.)
2. 제 이름_____ 유강입니다. (My name is Yugang.)

Part B: Subject Markers (이/가)

Fill in the blanks:

1. 이것_____ 무엇입니까? (What is this?)
2. 그것은 책상_____ 아닙니다. (That is not a desk.)