wishyou.today learning

day 1 vowels: 아, 이, 우

Read the Korean vowels and say “it's …” with 예요.

Hangul is built from a handful of letters: learn the vowels and the silent ㅇ today, and you can already read your first words.

words

word	romanisation	meaning	example
아	a	ah, oh	아, 우유예요! Oh, it's milk!
아이	ai	child, kid	아, 아이예요! Oh, it's a child!
오	o	five (5)	오예요. It's a five.
이	i	two (2)	이예요, 오예요? Is it a two or a five?
이	i	this (before a noun)	이{i-2} 우유예요? Is it this milk?
우유	uyu	milk	우유예요. It's milk.
예	ye	yes (polite)	예, 우유예요. Yes, it's milk.
이에요	ieyo	is, am, are (polite)	아이예요? Is it a child?

pattern a first block: ㅇ + ㅏ = 아 • it's …: 예요

ㅇ + ㅏ = 아

Every Korean syllable is a square block that starts with a consonant. When it starts with a vowel sound, the silent ㅇ holds the place: ㅇ + ㅏ = 아. Tall vowels (ㅏ ㅓ ㅣ ㅐ ㅔ) stand to the right of the ㅇ, flat ones (ㅗ ㅜ ㅡ) sit under it: 아, 오, 우. Add 예요 to a word to say “it's …”; with a rising voice it's a question.

우유예요. **uyu yeyo** It's milk.

아이예요? **ai yeyo** Is it a child?

오예요. **o yeyo** It's a five.

dialogue is this milk?

anna 우유예요?
uyu yeyo · Is this milk?

minjun 예, 우유예요.
ye uyu yeyo · Yes, it's milk.

anna 아, 이 우유예요?
a i uyu yeyo · Oh, this milk here?

minjun 아, 아이 우유예요!
a ai uyu yeyo · Oh, wait, that's milk for kids!

anna 아이 우유예요?
ai uyu yeyo · Milk for kids?

minjun 예. 이 우유예요.
ye i uyu yeyo · Yes. This is the one you want.

write it trace the grey, then write your own

아
a
ah, oh

이
i
two (2)

오
o
five (5)

우
u
milk

유
yu
milk

예
ye
yes (polite)



에
e
to, at, in (a place)



요
yo
is, am, are (polite)

good to know · The vowels are made of three shapes: a dot-stroke, a long line — (the flat earth) and a tall line ㅣ (a standing person). ㅏ is ㅣ with a short stroke on the outside. Two short strokes add a y-sound: ㅏ a → ㅑ ya, ㅓ eo → ㅕ yeo, ㅗ o → ㅛ yo, ㅜ u → ㅠ yu. ㅐ and ㅔ sound the same in Seoul today, like the e in “bed”; ㅒ and ㅖ are both “ye”. Spelling still keeps them apart. ㅇ is silent at the start of a block. At the bottom of a block (day 6) it sounds “ng”.

Fifteen letters in, and you've read your first Korean words. Tomorrow come the first consonants, and the words start to multiply.
Do this day interactively, with audio and games, free at **wishyou.today/learning**

wishyou.today learning

day 2 first consonants: ㄱ ㄴ ㄷ ㄹ ㅁ

Korean TOPIK 1 in 70 days
unit 1 · hangul: the alphabet

Read ㄱ ㄴ ㄷ ㄹ ㅁ and ask “where?” and “who?” with 가.

With five consonants you can ask the two questions every newcomer needs: 여기가 어디예요? and 누구예요?

words

word	romanisation	meaning	example
나	na	I, me (casual)	나예요! It's me!
네	ne	yes; okay	네, 고기예요. Yes, it's meat.
누구	nugu	who	누구예요? Who is it?
어디	eodi	where	어디예요? Where are you?
여기	yeogi	here	여기예요! Over here!
거기	geogi	there (near you)	거기가 어디예요? Where are you right now?
나라	nara	country	나라가 어디예요? Which country are you from?
나무	namu	tree; wood	나무예요? Is it wood?
고기	gogi	meat	고기예요? Is it meat?
노래	norae	song	누구 노래예요? Whose song is this?
어머니	eomeoni	mother	어머니예요? Is that your mother?
누나	nuna	older sister (of a man)	누가 누나예요? Which one is your older sister?
가	ga	subject marker	여기가 어디예요? Where am I?

pattern consonant + vowel: ㄴ + ㅏ = 나 • who or what: 가

ㄴ + ㅏ = 나

A consonant takes the place of the silent ㅇ: ㄴ + ㅏ = 나, ㄱ + ㅗ = 고, ㅁ + ㅜ = 무. Now for grammar: 가 after a word marks the subject, the one the question is about: 여기가 어디예요? Where is here? After a final consonant it becomes 이 (day 6). 누구 + 가 squeezes into 누가.

여기가 어디예요? **yeogi ga eodi yeyo** Where am I?

누가 어머니예요? **nuga eomeoni yeyo** Which one is your mother?

나라가 어디예요? **nara ga eodi yeyo** Which country are you from?

dialogue who's this?

anna 이 아이가 누구예요?
i ai ga nugu yeyo · Who's this kid?

minjun 나예요!
na yeyo · That's me!

anna 아! 어머니예요?
a eomeoni yeyo · Oh! And is that your mother?

minjun 네, 어머니예요.
ne eomeoni yeyo · Yes, that's my mum.

anna 누가 누나예요?
nuga nuna yeyo · Which one is your sister?

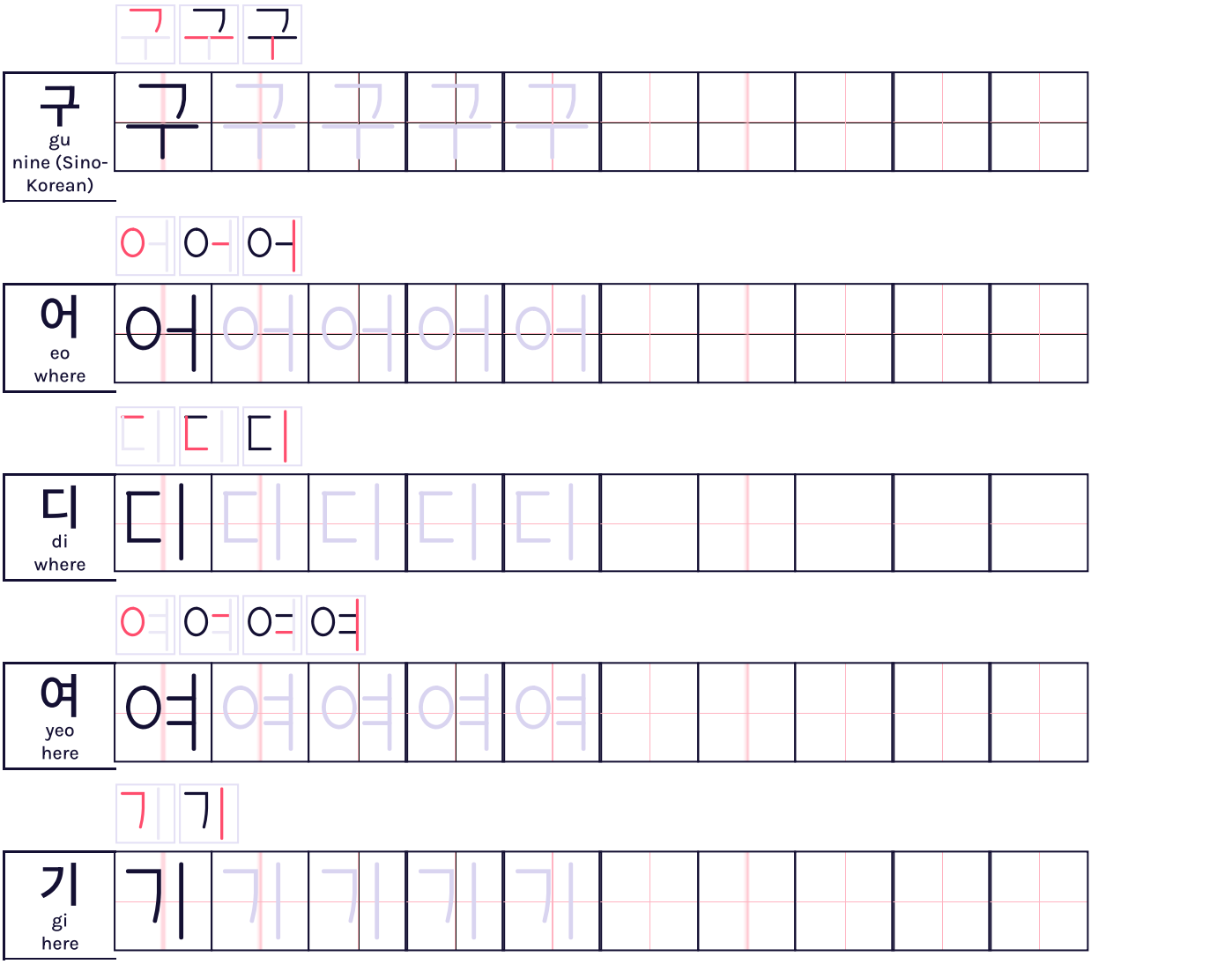
minjun 이 아이가 누나예요.
i ai ga nuna yeyo · This kid here is my sister.

write it trace the grey, then write your own

나
na
I, me
(casual)

네
ne
yes; okay

누
nu
who



good to know · The consonants are drawings of the mouth: ㄱ is the back of the tongue raised, ㄴ the tongue tip on the gums, ㅁ the closed lips. ㄹ sounds between an English r and l: a quick flap of the tongue tip, as in the middle of “butter” in American English. At the start of a word ㄱ and ㄷ are softer than English k and t, almost g and d: 고기 gogi. 여기 here (near me), 거기 there (near you): the next one, 저기 over there, comes tomorrow.

Five consonants and you can ask “where?” and “who?”. You're reading Korean, block by block.
Do this day interactively, with audio and games, free at **wishyou.today/learning**

day 3 more consonants: ㅂ ㅅ ㅈ ㅎ

Read ㅂ ㅅ ㅈ ㅎ and say where you're going with 에 가요.

"Where are you going?" is one of the commonest questions in Korean, and the answer is just a place + 에 가요.

words

word	romanisation	meaning	example
저	jeo	I, me (polite)	저도 가요. I'm going too.
아버지	abeoji	father	아버지가 노래해요. My dad is singing.
바다	bada	sea, ocean	바다에 가요. I'm going to the sea.
바지	baji	trousers, pants	바지 사요. I'm buying some trousers.
가수	gasu	singer	아버지가 가수예요? Is your dad a singer?
모자	moja	hat, cap	모자 하나 사요. I'm buying a hat.
하나	hana	one (native number)	하나 사요. I'll buy one.
저기	jeogi	over there	저기예요! It's over there!
가다	gada	to go	어디에 가요? Where are you going?
사다	sada	to buy	모자 사요? Are you buying a hat?
하다	hada	to do	어머니가 노래해요. Mum is singing.
도	do	too, also	저도 가요! I'm going too!
에	e	to, at, in (a place)	저기에 가요. Let's go over there.

pattern ㅂ + ㅏ = 바 • going places: 에 가요

place 에 가요

Today's letters build blocks the same way: ㅂ + ㅏ = 바, ㅅ + ㅏ = 사, ㅈ + ㅓ = 저, ㅎ + ㅏ = 하. And a new particle: 에 after a place says where you're going. 바다에 가요 is “I'm going to the sea”, and with the right tone “let's go to the sea!” Ask with 어디에 가요? (people often drop the 에: 어디 가요?).

바다에 가요. **bada e gayo** I'm going to the sea.

어디에 가요? **eodi e gayo** Where are you going?

저기에 가요. **jeogi e gayo** Let's go over there.

dialogue to the sea!

minjun 어디에 가요?
eodi e gayo · Where are you off to?

anna 바다에 가요!
bada e gayo · To the sea!

minjun 아, 바다! 저도 가요!
a bada jeo do gayo · Oh, the sea! I'm coming too!

anna 모자 사요? 저기, 모자!
moja sayo jeogi moja · Shall we buy hats? Look, hats, over there!

minjun 네, 저기에 가요.
ne jeogi e gayo · Sure, let's go over there.

anna 저 이 모자 하나 사요.
jeo i moja hana sayo · I'll take this hat.

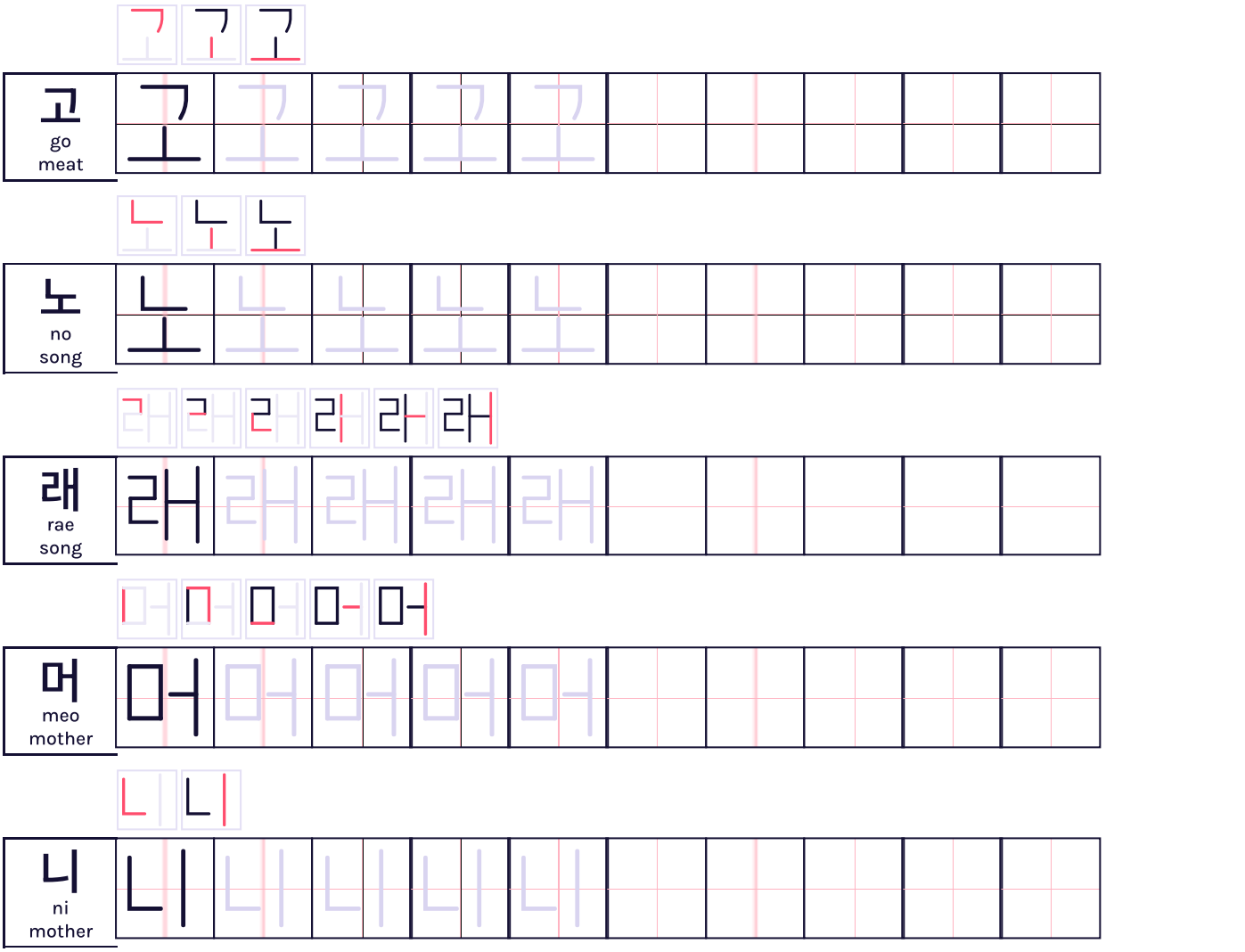
minjun 저도 하나 사요. 바지도 사요.
jeo do hana sayo baji do sayo · I'll get one too. And some trousers.

write it trace the grey, then write your own

거
geo
there (near you)

라
ra
country

무
mu
tree; wood



good to know · ㅅ before ㅣ (and ㅑ ㅕ ㅛ ㅠ) sounds like “sh”: 시 is shi. Elsewhere it's a soft s. ㅈ is like the j in “jam”, but softer; ㅎ is an English h. ㅂ is between p and b. Between two vowels it sounds clearly like b: 바다 bada, 아버지 abeoji. 저 is the polite “I”. Use it with everyone except close friends and family (with them, 나).

Four new letters, and you can say where you're going. That's the most-asked question in any Korean street.
Do this day interactively, with audio and games, free at **wishyou.today/learning**

day 4 strong sounds: ㅋ ㅌ ㅍ ㅊ, ㄲ ㄸ ㅃ ㅆ ㅉ

Read the strong consonants and describe things: expensive, cheap, big, busy.

With the 아요/어요 ending you can turn any describing word into polite everyday Korean: 비싸요, 싸요, 커요.

words

word	romanisation	meaning	example
커피	keopi	coffee	커피가 비싸요. The coffee is expensive.
오빠	oppa	older brother (of a woman)	오빠가 바빠요. My brother is busy.
아저씨	ajeossi	sir; (middle-aged) man	아저씨, 비싸요! That's expensive, sir!
씨	ssi	Mr, Ms (after a name)	민준 씨, 바빠요? Minjun, are you busy?
기차	gicha	train	기차가 싸요? Is the train cheap?
치마	chima	skirt	이{i-2} 치마 싸요! This skirt is cheap!
카드	kadeu	card	누나 카드 사요? Shall we buy a card for your sister?
파티	pati	party	파티에 가요? Are you going to the party?
비싸다	bissada	expensive	이{i-2} 모자 비싸요. This hat is expensive.
싸다	ssada	cheap	저기가 싸요. That place is cheap.
아프다	apeuda	to hurt; be ill	어디 아파요? Are you feeling ill?
바쁘다	bappeuda	busy	아버지가 바빠요. My dad is busy.
크다	keuda	big; tall	모자가 커요. The hat is big.

pattern strong sounds: ㄱ ㅋ ㄲ • polite present -아요 / -어요

stem **-아요 / -어요**

Take 다 off the dictionary form and add 아요 if the last vowel is ㅏ or ㅗ, 어요 otherwise. Vowels melt together: 비싸 + 아요 → 비싸요, 크 + 어요 → 커요, and ㅡ drops out: 아프 → 아파요, 바쁘 → 바빠요. 하다 is special: 해요. The same form is a statement or, with a rising voice, a question.

기차가 싸요? **gicha ga ssayo** Is the train cheap?

오빠가 바빠요. **oppa ga bappayo** My brother is busy.

파티에 가요! **pati e gayo** Let's go to the party!

dialogue pricey coffee

anna 민준 씨, 커피가 비싸요!
minjun ssi keopi ga bissayo · Minjun, the coffee's expensive!

minjun 네, 여기 커피가 비싸요. 저기가 싸요.
ne yeogi keopi ga bissayo jeogi ga ssayo · Yeah, it's pricey here. That place over there is cheap.

anna 아, 저기에 가요!
a jeogi e gayo · Oh, let's go there!

minjun 안나 씨, 파티에 가요? 누나 파티예요.
anna ssi pati e gayo nuna pati yeyo · Anna, are you coming to the party? It's my sister's party.

anna 네, 가요! 카드 사요?
ne gayo kadeu sayo · Yes, I'll come! Shall we buy her a card?

minjun 네! 저기 카드가 싸요.
ne jeogi kadeu ga ssayo · Yes! The cards over there are cheap.

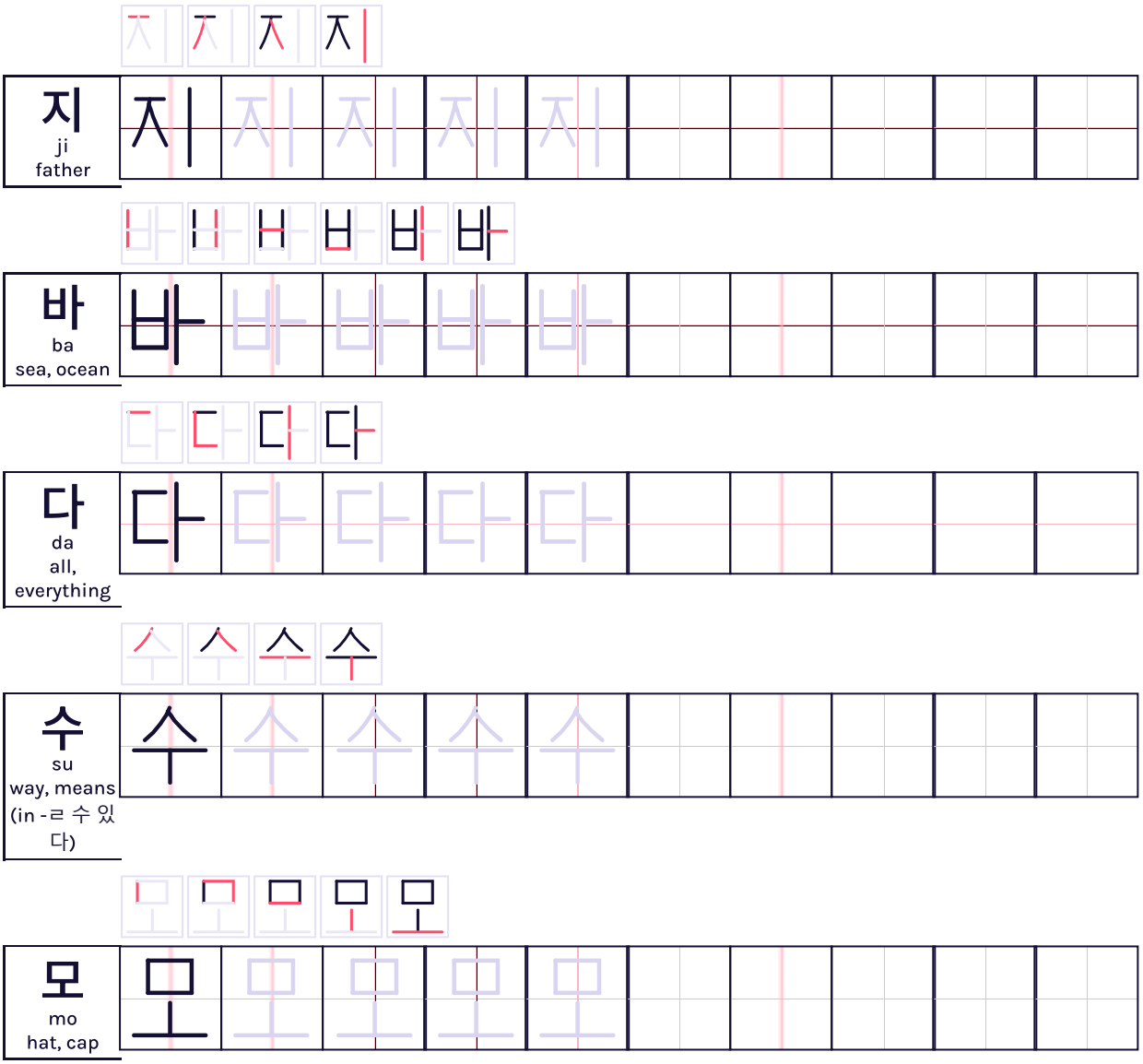
anna 치마도 하나 사요!
chima do hana sayo · And I'll buy a skirt for it!

write it trace the grey, then write your own

가
ga
subject marker

저
jeo
I, me (polite)

버
beo
father



good to know · Three kinds of sound per family: plain ㄱ (soft k), aspirated ㅋ (k with a puff of air) and tense ㄲ (a tight k with no air). The same goes for ㄷ ㅌ ㄸ, ㅂ ㅍ ㅃ, ㅈ ㅊ ㅉ, and ㅅ ㅆ. Hold a tissue in front of your mouth: it should flutter for 커, stay still for 꺼. Add 씨 after a name to be polite: 민준 씨, 안나 씨. Never use it about yourself, and never for teachers: they're 선생님 (day 6). 오빠 is what a woman calls her older brother, and often a close older male friend. Men say 형 (day 21).

You can now read every consonant of Hangul. Only the double vowels and the final consonants are left before real words fly.
Do this day interactively, with audio and games, free at **wishyou.today/learning**

day 5 double vowels: 와, 워, 의

Read the double vowels (와, 워, 의…) and ask politely with -세요: 주세요, 보세요, 쉬세요.

주세요 alone gets you coffee, water and apples anywhere in Korea, and -세요 is the polite way to ask anyone to do anything.

words

word	romanisation	meaning	example
사과	sagwa	apple	사과 하나 주세요. One apple, please.
뭐	mwo	what	뭐 해요? What are you doing?
왜	wae	why	왜 비싸요? Why is it so expensive?
의자	uija	chair	의자 하나 주세요. Could I have a chair, please?
의사	uisa	doctor	어머니가 의사예요. My mother is a doctor.
회사	hoesa	company; the office	회사에 가세요? Are you on your way to work?
위	wi	top; above, on	위 보세요! Look up!
뒤	dwi	back; behind	뒤 보세요! Look behind you!
오다	oda	to come	여기 오세요! Come over here!
보다	boda	to see, look at, watch	뭐 봐요? What are you watching?
주다	juda	to give	커피 주세요. A coffee, please.
쉬다	swida	to rest	아파요? 쉬세요. Not feeling well? Get some rest.
의	ui	’s, of (possessive)	아버지의 회사예요. It's my father's company.

pattern double vowels: ㅗ + ㅏ = ㅘ • please …: -세요

verb stem **-세요**

Two vowels can share one block: ㅗ + ㅏ = ㅘ (와), ㅜ + ㅓ = ㅝ (워), ㅡ + ㅣ = ㅢ (의). And for grammar: add 세요 to a verb stem that ends in a vowel to ask politely: 주다 → 주세요 please give, 보다 → 보세요 look, 쉬다 → 쉬세요 rest. After a consonant it's 으세요 (later). The same form politely asks about someone you respect: 회사에 가세요?

사과 하나 주세요. **sagwa hana juseyo** One apple, please.

위 보세요! **wi boseyo** Look up!

의자 하나 주세요. **uija hana juseyo** Could I have a chair, please?

쉬세요. **swiseyo** Get some rest.

dialogue get some rest!

minjun 안나 씨, 뭐 해요?
anna ssi mwo haeyo · Anna, what are you up to?

anna 쉬어요. 저 아파요.
swieoyo jeo apayo · Resting. I'm not feeling well.

minjun 아, 쉬세요! 저 사과 사요.
a swiseyo jeo sagwa sayo · Oh, get some rest! I'll buy you some apples.

anna 사과? 왜 사과예요?
sagwa wae sagwa yeyo · Apples? Why apples?

minjun 사과가 싸요! 거기 가요.
sagwa ga ssayo geogi gayo · Apples are cheap! I'm coming over.

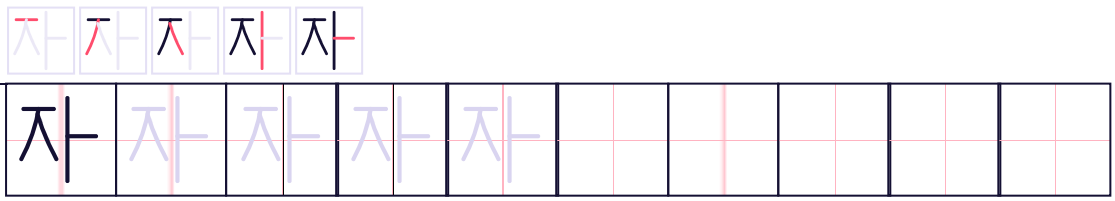
anna 민준 씨, 와요?
minjun ssi wayo · Minjun, are you here yet?

minjun 안나 씨, 뒤 보세요!
anna ssi dwi boseyo · Anna, look behind you!

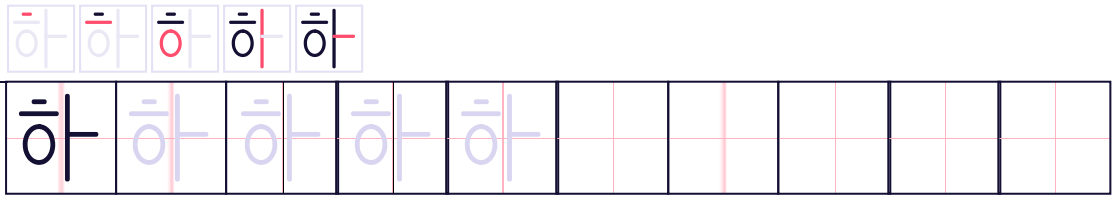
anna 아, 민준 씨!
a minjun ssi · Oh, Minjun!

write it trace the grey, then write your own

자
ja
hat, cap



하
ha
one (native number)





good to know · The double vowels are two vowels said fast: 사 wa, 거 wo, 기 wi, 긔 ui. 새, 게 and 괴 all sound like “we” in Seoul today. 긔 has three sounds: [의] at the start of a word (의자), [이] after a consonant, and [에] as the particle 의 (아버지의). Ordering is easy: thing + 주세요. Add a number before 주세요: 커피 하나 주세요.

You've met every letter shape in Hangul. Tomorrow the last piece clicks in: the consonants at the bottom of a block.
Do this day interactively, with audio and games, free at **wishyou.today/learning**

wishyou.today learning

day 6 final consonants: 한국, 사람

Korean TOPIK 1 in 70 days
unit 1 · hangul: the alphabet

Read final consonants and introduce yourself: 안녕하세요, 저는 … 이에요.

With the bottom consonants (받침) you can read every Hangul word, and 저는 … 이에요 is your first full self-introduction.

words

word	romanisation	meaning	example
는	neun	topic marker: as for …	저는 안나예요. I'm Anna.
를	reul	object marker	한국어를 해요? Do you speak Korean?
한국	hanguk	Korea (South Korea)	한국 사람이에요. I'm Korean.
한국어	hangugeo	Korean (the language)	한국어 책을 사요. I'm buying a Korean textbook.
사람	saram	person, people	민준 씨는 한국 사람이에요. Minjun is Korean.
이름	ireum	name	이름이 뭐예요? What's your name?
학생	haksaeng	student	저는 학생이에요. I'm a student.
선생님	seonsaengnim	teacher	선생님은 한국 사람이에요. Our teacher is Korean.
안녕	annyeong	hi; bye (casual)	안녕하세요! Hello!
물	mul	water	물 주세요. Some water, please.
밥	bap	cooked rice; a meal	어머니가 밥을 해요. Mum is cooking.
책	chaek	book	책을 사요. I'm buying a book.
집	jip	house, home	집에 가요. I'm going home.

pattern final consonants: ㅎ + ㅏ + ㄴ = 한 • as for me: 은 / 는

ㅎ + ㅏ | + ㄴ | = 한

A consonant can sit at the bottom of a block, the 받침: ㅎ + ㅏ + ㄴ = 한, ㄱ + ㅜ + ㄱ = 국. Now 은/는 marks the topic, what you're talking about: 저는 학생이에요, as for me, I'm a student. Use 는 after a vowel (저는) and 은 after a consonant (선생님은). The same rule gives 이에요 after a consonant: 학생이에요.

저는 학생이에요. **jeo neun haksaeng ieyo** I'm a student.

선생님은 한국 사람이에요. **seonsaengnim eun hanguk saram ieyo** Our teacher is Korean.

저는 집에 가요. **jeo neun jip e gayo** I'm going home.

dialogue the same book

tom 안녕하세요! 한국어 책을 사요?
annyeong haseyo hangugeo chaek eul sayo · Hi! Are you buying a Korean textbook?

anna 네! 저는 학생이에요.
ne jeo neun haksaeng ieyo · Yes! I'm a student.

tom 저도 학생이에요! 이름이 뭐예요?
jeo do haksaeng ieyo ireum i mwo yeyo · I'm a student too! What's your name?

anna 저는 안나예요. 이름이 뭐예요?
jeo neun anna yeyo ireum i mwo yeyo · I'm Anna. What's yours?

tom 저는 톰이에요.
jeo neun tom ieyo · I'm Tom.

anna 톰 씨, 선생님이 누구예요?
tom ssi seonsaengnim i nugu yeyo · Tom, who's our teacher?

tom 김 선생님이에요. 선생님은 한국 사람이에요.
gim seonsaengnim ieyo seonsaengnim eun hanguk saram ieyo · Ms Kim. She's Korean.

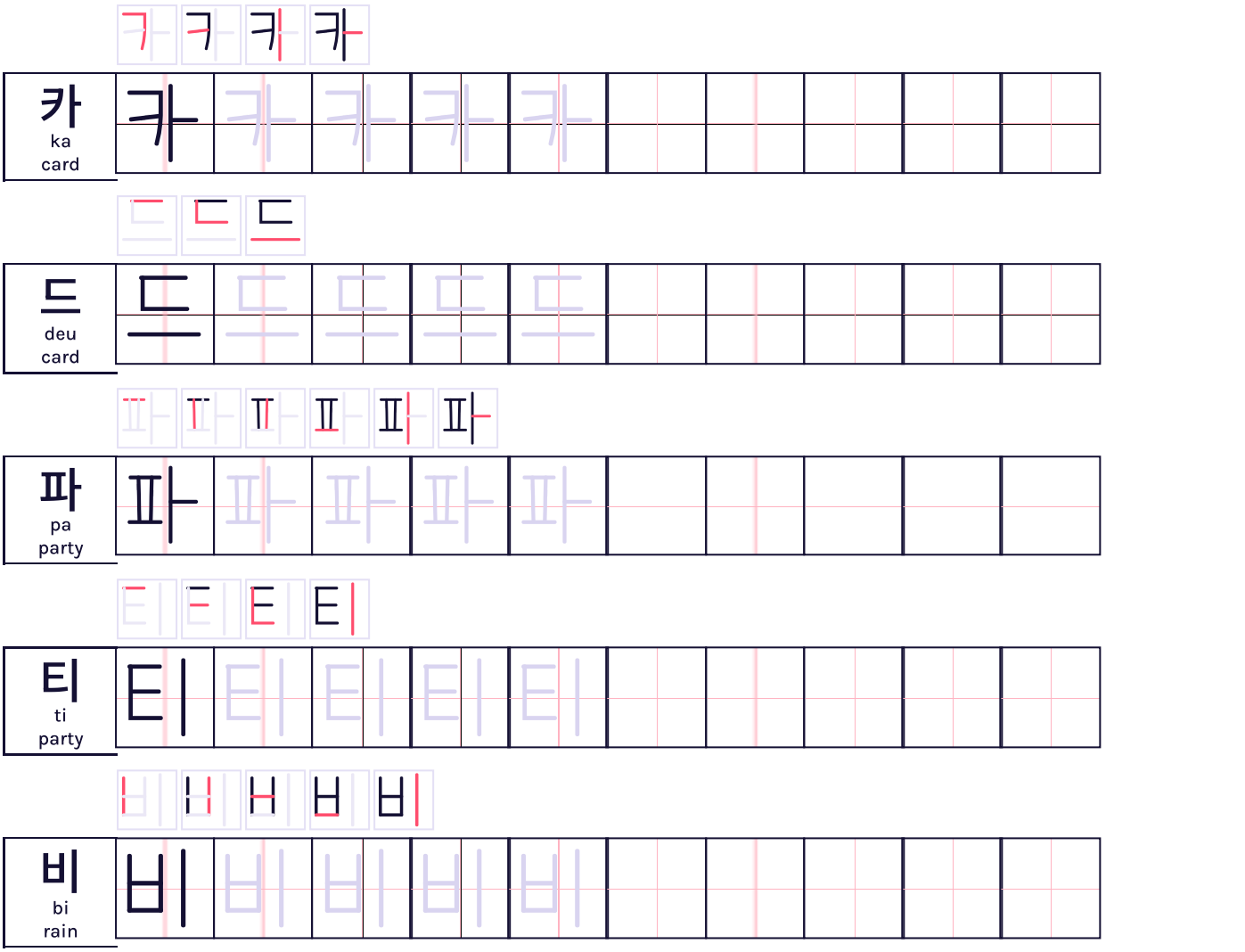
anna 아, 김 선생님!
a gim seonsaengnim · Ah, Ms Kim!

write it trace the grey, then write your own

차
cha
train

치
chi
skirt

마
ma
skirt



good to know · However many letters you can write at the bottom, a final consonant is said as one of only seven sounds: ㄱ k, ㄴ n, ㄷ t, ㄹ l, ㅁ m, ㅂ p, ㅇ ng. So ㅅ ㅈ ㅊ ㅌ ㅎ at the end all sound like t. When the next block starts with the silent ㅇ, the final consonant slides over: 한국어 is said [한구거], 이름이 [이르미]. The romanisation follows the sound: hangugeo. At the end, the sound stops without a puff of air: 밥 is “bap” with closed lips, 책 is “chaek” with the tongue stopped at the back.

That's the whole alphabet. From now on, every Korean word you see, on a sign, a menu or a screen, is one you can sound out.
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