

Further Pronunciation Guidelines

1. Sometimes, Korean pronounced syllables follow Korean written syllables closely.

하나 hana (CV-CV) 어머니 əməni (V-CV-CV) 창문 c^hangmun (CVC-CVC)

2. At other times, the written structure tries to preserve consistency where, in pronunciation, changes occur. Thus, the final consonant of a preceding syllable is pronounced as the initial consonant sound of the following syllable when the following syllable begins with a vowel.

먹어요 CVC-V-V in writing, CV-CV-V mə-gə-yo in pronunciation (cf. 받아요, 산이나, 있어)

3. If the syllable has two different final consonants before a vowel-initial syllable, then the first of these closes the first phonetic syllable, and the second begins the following phonetic syllable.

읽어요 VCC-V-V in writing, VC-CV-V il^y-gə-yo in pronunciation (cf. 젊어요)

4.1 Automatic voicing of plain ㅂ, ㄷ, ㅈ, ㅊ

The normally voiceless sounds shown by the single ㅂ, ㄷ, ㅈ, ㅊ [p, t, c, k] (which have a light puff of local air when they are at the beginning of a word) are voiced between voiced sounds (i.e., vowels, y, w, m, n, ng, l) so that they will sound like b, d, dz, g.

1. 아버지	a-bə-dzi	<i>father</i>	2. 달아요	ta-da-yo	<i>closes it</i>
3. 아기	æ-gi	<i>baby</i>	4. 담배	tam-bæ	<i>cigarettes</i>
5. 안동	an-dong	(name of a city)	6. 중국	cung-guk	<i>China</i>
7. 갈비	kal ^y -bi	<i>ribs</i>	8. 안주	an-dzu	<i>food to go with alcohol</i>

4.2 Non-release of final consonants

Korean never allows its speakers to release a consonant at the end of a syllable unless they have to. Korean speakers have to release a consonant at the end of a syllable when the word is followed by (1) a particle or ending that begins with a vowel, or (2) by the special verb -이에요 *it is....*

In the case of final unreleased p, t, k, it is often difficult for English speakers to hear the consonant – it sounds as though the Koreans swallow their consonants.

Final /-P/	Final /-K/	Final /-T/ (usually from /ㅈ/)
굽 <i>hoof</i>	국 <i>soup</i>	꺾 <i>exorcism</i>
굽 <i>pus</i>	옥 <i>jade</i>	옷 <i>garment</i>
입 <i>mouth</i>	목 <i>throat</i>	못 <i>pond; nail</i>

4.3 The Gang of Seven: ㄹ ㅁ ㄴ ㅇ ㅂ ㄷ ㅊ

The only consonants that can be pronounced at the end of a syllable in Korean are the following seven: ㄹ ㅁ ㄴ ㅇ [l, m, n, ng] and ㅍ ㅌ ㅋ [p, t, k] (but remember: Korean doesn't allow you to release them unless you have to).

When the basic form of a word ends in something else other than these seven consonants, the “something else” must be reduced to one of these seven consonants, unless the word is followed by (1) a particle or ending that begins with a vowel, or (2) by the special verb -이에요 *it is...*

앞에	ap ^h e	<i>in front</i>	앞	[압] ap	<i>front</i>
값은	kaps̄in	<i>as for price</i>	값	[갑] kap	<i>price</i>
밖에	pakke	<i>outside</i>	밖	[박] pak	<i>outside</i>
닭이에요	tal ^ʎ gieyo	<i>it's a chicken</i>	닭	[닥] tak	<i>chicken</i>
부엌이에요	puək ^h ieyo	<i>it's a kitchen</i>	부엌	[부억] puək	<i>kitchen</i>
옷이에요	oshieyo	<i>it's a garment</i>	옷	[옷] ot	<i>garment</i>
밭에	pat ^h e	<i>in the field</i>	밭	[받] pat	<i>field</i>
낮에	nadze	<i>in the daytime</i>	낮	[날] nat	<i>daytime</i>
꽃이에요	kkoc ^h ieyo	<i>it's a flower</i>	꽃	[꼇] kkot	<i>flower</i>

The reduction rules are as follows.

Original sounds	→	Reduce to
ㅍ, ㅌ, ㅂ	→	ㅍ (or to <i>m</i> ; see section 4.5)
ㄱ, ㅋ, ㆁ	→	ㄱ (or to <i>ng</i> ; see section 4.5)
ㄷ, ㅌ, ㅈ, ㅊ, ㅅ, ㅆ, ㅎ	→	ㄷ (or to <i>n</i> ; see section 4.5)

Note how many different consonant sounds an unreleased *t* can disguise. In particular, note that an unreleased *s* gets pronounced as *t*. In fact, most unreleased *t*-sounds you will hear in Korean are really a final *s* in disguise.

4.4 Other gang of seven situations

The final-reduced forms in p, t, k and l, m, n, ng are used not only when the word is before a pause, but also before words beginning with consonants and even before words beginning with vowels, provided the following word is not a particle (e.g., the subject particle ㅇ) or the locative particle 에) or the special verb -이에요 *it is...*

닭고기 → 닭고기	[다꼬기] takkogi	<i>chicken (as meat)</i>
밭도 → 받도	[바또] patto	<i>the field too</i>
밭안 → 받안	[바단] padan	<i>inside the field</i>
옷안 → ot + an	[오단] odan	<i>garment lining</i>
옷도 → ot + to	[오또] otto	<i>the garment too</i>

4.5 Nasal Assimilation

When p, t, k precede m or n (or l pronounced as n due to the rule in section 4.6 below), they (that is, p, t, k) are pronounced as m, n, ng, respectively.

Remember that in Korean, p, t, k cannot be released in this position. When you have an unreleased p before a nasal sound like m or n and want to pronounce the next syllable, the p must be nasalized to m. The same nasalization occurs for unreleased t turning into n and unreleased k turning into ng.

합니다	[합니다] hamnida	<i>does it</i> [Formal style]
닫는다	[닫는다] tannīnda	<i>closes it</i> [Plain style]
먹는다	[먹는다] mængnīnda	<i>eats it</i> [Plain style]
십륙	[십륙] shimnyuk	<i>sixteen</i>
독립 → 독립 →	[동립] tongnip	<i>independence</i>
합리 → 합니 →	[합니] hamni	<i>rationality, reason</i>

Note that this rule also applies to any t which has been reduced from t^h, c^h, c, s, ss, or even h:

밭만 → [반만] →	[반만] panman	<i>the field only</i>
숯 + 만 → [순만] →	[순만] sunman	<i>the charcoal only</i>
낮 + 만 → [날만] →	[날만] nanman	<i>daytime only</i>
벗- + -네 → [번네] →	[번네] pønne	<i>he's taking it off!</i>
있었- + -네 → [있었네] →	[있었네] issønne	<i>she had it!</i>

The case of h changing to (t and then) n like this is an unusual one, and we will alert you to it again when you learn about verbs that end in final h.

넣- + -네 → [넌네] →	[넌네] nønne	<i>they're inserting it!</i>
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4.6 Peculiarities of the Korean ㄹ

1. When n is next to l (n.l or l.n, where the period represents a syllable break) a double ll is pronounced.

일년	[일련] illyən	<i>one year</i>
신라	[실라] shilla	<i>Silla (ancient Korean state)</i>

2. When preceded by a consonant other than l or n, the l is pronounced as n.

심리	[심니] shimni	<i>psychology</i>
상류	[상뉴] sangnyu	<i>upper reaches of a river</i>

3. When followed by t, c, or s in words borrowed from Chinese, the l has the effect of doubling these to tt, cc, and ss, respectively.

철도	[철또] cʰɛltto	railway
결정	[결뽕] kyɛlccəng	decision
설사	[설싸] sɛlssa	diarrhea

Because you have no way of telling which words are originally from Chinese and which are not, and because the Korean writing system ignores these differences between spelling and actual pronunciation, we will alert you to any such pronunciation details (by rewriting the pronunciation in 한글 in square brackets) when you first learn new words in the vocabulary lists at the beginning of each lesson.

4.7 Automatic Doubling

If the final sound of the preceding syllable is p, t, or k, the single voiceless consonants p, t, c, k, s, ㅍ, ㅌ, ㅊ, ㅋ, ㅌ are automatically doubled in pronunciation so they sound like pp, tt, cc, kk, ss, ㅍㅍ, ㅌㅌ, ㅊㅊ, ㅋㅋ, ㅌㅌ.

약방	[약뽕] yakppang	drugstore
작다	[작따] caktta	is little [Plain style]
먹자	[먹짜] məkcca	let's eat [Plain style]
덥다	[덥따] tɛptta	is hot [Plain style]
입자	[입짜] ipcca	let's wear it [Plain style]
십삼	[십쌈] shipssam	thirteen

4.8 Leap-frogging ㅎ h

The Korean ㅎ h can leap over a following plain ㅍ, ㅌ, ㅊ, ㅋ to yield a corresponding aspirated sound in pronunciation (ㅍ, ㅌ, ㅊ, ㅋ). In other words, the aspirated consonants ㅍ, ㅌ, ㅊ, ㅋ can be considered as equivalent to combination of ㅍ + ㅎ (or ㅎ + ㅍ), ㅌ + ㅎ (or ㅎ + ㅌ), ㅊ + ㅎ (or ㅎ + ㅊ), ㅋ + ㅎ (or ㅎ + ㅋ), respectively. Here are some examples.

ㅎ + ㅍ → ㅋ:	좋- + -고 →	좋고, pronounced 조코	is good, and...
ㅎ + ㅌ → ㅊ:	좋- + -다 →	좋다, pronounced 조타	is good

4.9 Pronunciation of ㅌ before i

The Korean ㅌ (aspirated tʰ) is palatalized to ㅌ when it occurs at the end of a morpheme or word and is followed by ㅇ.

같이	together	is pronounced	가치
밭	field + ㅇ (subject marker)	is pronounced	바치

4.10 Long and Short Vowels

Many Koreans distinguish words by pronouncing a vowel as long or short: 일 il *one*, 일 il (with a long vowel) *affair, work*. But even for those speakers, vowel length is often suppressed, especially when not at the beginning of a phrase, so that you will often hear short vowels in words that have basically long vowels.

Modern Korean spelling does not indicate the long vowels, and we do not show them in the body of this textbook. But you should at least be aware of this contrast. Here are some examples.

Short Vowels

밤	<i>evening</i>
굴	<i>oyster</i>
말	<i>horse</i>
눈	<i>eye</i>

Long Vowels

밤	<i>chestnut</i>
굴	<i>cave</i>
말	<i>words, speech</i>
눈	<i>snow</i>

In the case of long and short 어, many speakers pronounce the long 어 with the tongue in a considerably higher position than it is in for the short 어, as something resembling English *uh* in *uh-oh*. Many speakers hollow the back of the tongue to make the short 어 so that it sounds rounded like the vowel sound that many people use in English *saw, song, dawn*.

Short Vowels

거리 “kawrie”	<i>street</i>
연기 “yawn’gi”	<i>postponement</i>

Long Vowels

거리 “kuhri”	<i>distance</i>
연기 “yuhn’gi”	<i>performance</i>

4.11 The Names of the Korean Letters

The 한글 vowel signs do not have special names of their own. Instead, they are called by the sounds they represent. For example, 와 is called “wa”. Each 한글 consonant sign, however, has its own name based on the ingenious mnemonic device of beginning and ending the name with the consonant letter in question.

The tense, or ‘doubled’ consonants, have the same name as the corresponding plain series consonant, preceded by 쌍 *double*.

Letter	Name	Pronunciation
ㄱ	기역	kiyək
ㄲ	쌍기역	ssanggiyək
ㅋ	키읃	k ^h iik
ㄴ	니은	niin
ㄷ	디귄	tigīt
ㄸ	쌍디귄	ssangtigīt
ㅌ	티읃	t ^h iit
ㄹ	리을	riil
ㅍ	미읍	miim

ㅍ	비읍	piip
ㅑ	쌍비읍	ssangpiip
ㅓ	피읃	p ^h iip
ㅕ	시읃	shiot
ㅖ	쌍시읃	ssangshiot
ㅇ	이응	iing
ㅗ	지읃	ciit
ㅛ	쌍지읃	ssangciit
ㅜ	치읃	c ^h iit
ㅠ	히읃	hiit

Pronunciation Exercises

Exercise 1: Voicing Practice

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|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|
| 1. 가방 | 2. 안주 | 3. 지도 | 4. 방법 | 5. 감자 | 6. 만두 |
| 7. 두부 | 8. 공장 | 9. 모자 | 10. 구기 | 11. 군대 | 12. 아기 |
| 13. 담배 | 14. 공기 | 15. 구두 | 16. 수제비 | | |

Exercise 2: Non-release of Final Consonants

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|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. 각 | 2. 멀 | 3. 짓 | 4. 난 | 5. 갓 | 6. 셋 |
| 7. 칩 | 8. 길 | 9. 깊 | 10. 킬 | 11. 탑 | 12. 벗 |
| 13. 작 | 14. 난 | 15. 닷 | 16. 넥 | 17. 녁 | 18. 캡 |
| 19. 텃 | 20. 설 | 21. 말 | 22. 상 | 23. 밥 | 24. 빗 |

Exercise 3: Nasal Assimilation Practice

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|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| 1. 합니다 | 2. 한국말 | 3. 닫는다 | 4. 초등학교 | 5. 먹는다 | 6. 독립 |
| 7. 밥맛 | 8. 독립문 | 9. 앞문 | 10. 압록강 | 11. 숙녀 | 12. 십리 |
| 13. 못난이 | 14. 삽만 | 15. 작문 | 16. 부엌문 | 17. 붙는다 | 18. 꽃만 |
| 19. 빗만 | 20. 옛날 | 21. 옷만 | 22. 찾네 | | |

Exercise 4: Cluster Reinforcement Practice

- | | | | | | |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. 잡지 | 2. 목소리 | 3. 십자가 | 4. 엽서 | 5. 철도 | 6. 답장 |
| 7. 식당 | 8. 높고 | 9. 학교 | 10. 믿자 | 11. 학생 | 12. 견자 |
| 13. 역사 | 14. 국방 | 15. 국수 | 16. 국비 | 17. 설사 | 18. 결정 |