



Korean Ladder Study Note

밥 먹었어

Everyday Casual Questions Among Friends

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Colloquial Banmal (Casual)	밥 먹었어 Everyday Casual Questions Among Friends

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-COLLOQ-BAN-002>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kn5SG4ogBx0>

Visit koreanladder.com for all free lessons

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Okay, real story: my Korean friend texted me '밥 먹었어?' and I panicked—did she want to grab lunch?

아주 좋은 질문이에요. 사실 '밥 먹었어?'는 밥 이야기가 아니에요. It's really just 'How are you?'

한국 친구들은 하루에도 이런 질문을 많이 해요. '밥 먹었어?', '어디야?', '뭐 해?' — the three you'll hear most.

핵심은 반말이에요. 친구 사이에서는 존댓말의 요를 빼요. In English, banmal is casual speech — with close friends you just drop the polite 요.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	아, 밥 먹었어? —	Hey, did you eat?
Junho	아니, 아직. 넌 어디야? —	No, not yet. Where are you?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	나 집이야. 뭐 해? —	I'm home. What are you doing?
Junho	그냥 쉬어. —	Just resting.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
반말 banmal	casual speech (with close friends)	핵심은 반말이에요. 친구 사이에서는 존댓말의 요를 빼요. In English, banmal is casual speech — with close friends you just drop the polite 요.
짧고 요 없이 jjalkko yo eopsi	keep it short, and without 요	규칙은 간단해요. 요 없이, 짧고 편하게. Short, no 요, relaxed.
반말 = 친한 사이에서만 banmal = chinhan saieseoman	banmal = only with close friends	그런데 조심할 게 있어요. 반말은 아주 친한 사이에서만 써요. Only with close friends — same age or younger.
요 없이, 짧게 yo eopsi, jjalkke	no 요, say it short	다시 한번, 요 없이, 짧게. Drop the 요, keep it short.
친하면 반말 / 아니면 요 chinhameon banmal / animyeon yo	close → casual / else → keep the 요	잘 모르는 사이엔 '밥 먹었어요?'처럼 요를 붙여요. 친하면 반말, 아니면 존댓말. Add the 요 back to stay polite.



Grammar / Structure Notes

반말

반말 — casual speech (with close friends)

drop the polite 요

밥 먹었어요? → 밥 먹었어?

밥 먹었어요? → 밥 먹었어? — Did you eat? (polite → casual)

the 요 disappears

밥 먹었어?

밥 + 먹었 + 어? — Did you eat? (= How are you?)

먼저 '밥 먹었어?'. 글자 그대로는 'Did you eat rice?'지만, 진짜 뜻은 'You doing okay?' 예요.

어디야?

어디 + 야? — Where are you?

'어디야?'는 'Where are you?'예요. 존댓말 '어디예요?'에서 요가 빠지고, 예요가 야로 짧아졌어요.

뭐 해?

뭐 + 해? — What are you doing?

'뭐 해?'는 'What are you doing?'예요. '뭐 해요?'에서 역시 요가 빠졌어요.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
밥머거써?	bap meogeosseo
어디야?	eodiya
뭐해?	mwo hae
어디야? / 뭐해?	eodiya / mwo hae
어디야? / 뭐 해?	eodiya / mwo hae

Self-Check

- 1 Say 밥 먹었어 three times: slow, natural, then inside a short sentence.
- 2 Write one original sentence that was not in the video.
- 3 Rewatch the YouTube lesson and pause when the same pattern appears.



Related / Subsequent Studies

Lesson	Why study it next	Link
안녕 / 잘 가 / 뭐 해 친구끼리 반말 첫걸음	A1 Colloquial: compare 안녕 / 잘 가 / 뭐 해 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-COLLOQ-BAN-001
-어 / -지 / -자 / -르래? Casual Sentence Endings Among Friends	B1 Colloquial: compare -어 / -지 / -자 / -르래? with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-COLLOQ-BAN-001
말 놓을까요 Switching to Casual Banmal with Friends	A2 Colloquial: compare 말 놓을까요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-COLLOQ-BAN-001
반말 의문·명령 -냐? / -어라 / -지 마	B2 Colloquial: compare 반말 의문·명령 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-COLLOQ-BAN-001

My Notes

Your ladder to fluent Korean. This PDF, the website, and the video lessons are free for personal study.