



Korean Ladder Study Note

뭐야

반말로 정체 · 위치를 묻는 법

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Colloquial Banmal (Casual)	뭐야 반말로 정체 · 위치를 묻는 법

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-COLLOQ-BAN-009>

Watch the full video on YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uj_IMp0sKBo

Visit koreanladder.com for all free lessons

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Here's my problem. I see something strange on my friend's desk and I want to ask, "What is that?" But my brain wants a long textbook sentence.

친구 사이에서는 아주 짧게 말해도 자연스러워요. 이거 뭐야 means "What is this?" in casual speech.

So I don't need 이거는 무엇입니까 in a casual moment.

맞아요. 오늘 핵심은 뭐야, 누구야, 어디야. These are short casual questions for things, people, and places.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	이거 뭐야? —	What is this?
Junho	선물이야. —	It's a gift.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	누구야? —	Who is it?
Junho	내 친구야. —	It's my friend.
Hana	여기 어디야? —	Where are we?
Junho	홍대야. —	It's Hongdae.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
뭐 / 누구 / 어디 mwo / nugu / eodi	what / who / where	뭐 asks about a thing or situation. 누구 asks about a person. 어디 asks about a place.
이거 뭐야 igeo mwoya	What is this?	먼저 물건이에요. 이거 뭐야 means “What is this?” Use it when the thing is near you or already in the conversation.
저 사람 누구야 jeo saram nuguya	Who is that person?	다음은 사람입니다. 저 사람 누구야 means “Who is that person?” Casual, but still clear.
여기 어디야 yeogi eodiya	Where are we?	그리고 장소예요. 여기 어디야 means “Where are we?” or literally, “Where is here?”
뭐 = 물건 누구 = 사람 어디 = 장소 mwo = thing, nugu = person, eodi = place	Choose by what you are asking about	Let me reason it out. 뭐 is for a thing, 누구 is for a person, and 어디 is for a place.
반말 banmal	casual speech	정확해요. One more thing: these are 반말. Use them with friends, younger family, or someone who has agreed to casual speech.
누구야 nuguya	Who is it?	친구 휴대폰에 모르는 이름이 떠요. 그때는 누구야. “Who is it?”
학생이야 haksaengiya	Are you a student?	If a noun has a final consonant, use 이야. For example, 학생이야 means “Are you a student?” casually.



Grammar / Structure Notes

이거 뭐야?

이거 뭐야? — What is this?

친구 사이 반말

뭐야? / 누구야? / 어디야?

뭐야? / 누구야? / 어디야? — What is it? / Who is it? / Where is it?

반말: 친구, 동갑, 아주 가까운 사이

질문어 + 야?

질문어 + 야? — question word + casual “is it?”

끝을 올리면 질문이에요

뭐 / 누구 / 어디

뭐 / 누구 / 어디 — what / who / where

대상에 맞게 골라요

이거 뭐야

이거 + 뭐 + 야 — What is this?

먼저 물건이에요. 이거 뭐야 means “What is this?” Use it when the thing is near you or already in the conversation.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
이거 뭐야?	igeo mwoya?
누구야?	nuguya?
어디야?	eodiya?

Self-Check

- 1 Say 뭐야 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
고마워 / 미안 / 괜찮아 친구끼리 주고받는 반말 인사	A1 Colloquial: compare 고마워 / 미안 / 괜찮아 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-COLLOQ-BAN-004
나 / 너 / 우리 Casual Pronouns That Replace 저 and Titles	A1 Colloquial: compare 나 / 너 / 우리 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-COLLOQ-BAN-008
몰라 / 싫어 / 그만해 친구에게 짧게 거절하고 반응하기	A1 Colloquial: compare 몰라 / 싫어 / 그만해 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-COLLOQ-BAN-006
밥 먹었어 Everyday Casual Questions Among Friends	A1 Colloquial: compare 밥 먹었어 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-COLLOQ-BAN-002

My Notes

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