



Korean Ladder Study Note

어디 / 뭐 / 누구

Dropping Particles in Casual Speech

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Colloquial Contractions	어디 / 뭐 / 누구 Dropping Particles in Casual Speech

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-COLLOQ-CTR-004>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lOBjd0KnCnA>

Visit koreanladder.com for all free lessons

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Here's my problem. I learned 어디에 가요, but in dramas I keep hearing 어디 가요. Did the 에 just disappear?

좋은 질문이에요. Yes, in casual speech, Korean often drops small particles when the meaning is clear.

Today we focus on three question words: 어디, 뭐, 누구. They often sound shorter in everyday conversation.

The pattern is simple. 어디에 can become 어디, 뭐를 can become 뭐, and 누가 can sound like 누구 in a casual short question.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	어디 가요? —	Where are you going?
Junho	편의점에 가요. —	I'm going to the convenience store.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	뭐 사요? —	What are you buying?
Junho	커피 사요. —	I'm buying coffee.
Hana	누구 만나요? —	Who are you meeting?
Junho	친구 만나요. —	I'm meeting a friend.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
어디 / 뭐 / 누구 eodi / mwo / nugu	where / what / who	Today we focus on three question words: 어디, 뭐, 누구. They often sound shorter in everyday conversation.
어디에 → 어디 뭐를 → 뭐 누가 → 누구 eodie → eodi / mworeul → mwo / nuga → nugu	to where → where / what-object → what / who-subject → who	The pattern is simple. 어디에 can become 어디, 뭐를 can become 뭐, and 누가 can sound like 누구 in a casual short question.
짧게 말해요 jjalge malhaeyo	People say it shorter.	So this is not sloppy Korean. It's normal spoken Korean.
말하기: 자주 생략 쓰기: 보통 유지 malhagi: jaju saengnyak / sseugi: botong yuji	Speaking: often dropped / Writing: usually kept	맞아요. But it is context-sensitive. In tests, careful writing, or very clear correction, keep the particle.
어디 가요 eodi gayo	Where are you going?	First, 어디에 가요 means where are you going, or where do you go. In casual speech, 어디 가요 is very natural.
어디에 가요 eodie gayo	Where are you going?	The particle 에 marks destination or direction here. But with 가요, 어디 already feels like a destination, so 에 can drop.
뭐 먹어요 mwo meogeoyo	What are you eating?	Second, 뭐 먹어요 means what are you eating, or what do you eat. The object particle 를 is often dropped.
뭘 먹어요 mwol meogeoyo	What are you eating?	So 뭐 먹어요 drops 를, and 뭘 먹어요 contracts 뭘. Both are useful.



Grammar / Structure Notes

어디 / 뭐 / 누구

어디 / 뭐 / 누구 — where / what / who

Casual questions often drop 에, 를, or 가.

어디에 → 어디 뭐를 → 뭐 누가 → 누구

어디에 → 어디

뭐를 → 뭐

누가 → 누구 — to where → where / what-object → what / who-subject → who

Shorter forms are common in speech.

짧게 말해요

짧게 말해요 — People say it shorter.

Natural in everyday talk.

말하기: 자주 생략 쓰기: 보통 유지

말하기: 자주 생략

쓰기: 보통 유지 — Speaking: often dropped / Writing: usually kept

Use the full form when you need clarity or formality.

어디 가요

어디 + 가요 — Where are you going?

First, 어디에 가요 means where are you going, or where do you go. In casual speech, 어디 가요 is very natural.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
어디 가요?	eodi gayo?
따라 해 보세요	ttara hae boseyo
뭐 먹어요?	mwo meogeoyo?
누구 왔어요?	nugu wasseoyo?
누가 왔어요?	nuga wasseoyo?

Self-Check

- 1 Say 어디 / 뭐 / 누구 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
그치 / 그니까 / 아냐 Tiny Casual Confirmations Friends Say	A1 Colloquial: compare 그치 / 그니까 / 아냐 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-COLLOQ-CTR-003
난 / 넌 / 뭘 / 날 Everyday Spoken Contractions of Particles	A1 Colloquial: compare 난 / 넌 / 뭘 / 날 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-COLLOQ-CTR-002
이건 / 저건 / 그건 Everyday Spoken Contractions of 이것은	A1 Colloquial: compare 이건 / 저건 / 그건 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-COLLOQ-CTR-001
-ㄹ 거야 / -는 거지 / -ㄴ 걸 Spoken Contractions of 것	B2 Colloquial: compare -ㄹ 거야 / -는 거지 / -ㄴ 걸 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-COLLOQ-CTR-001

My Notes

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