



Korean Ladder Study Note

뭐예요 / 어디예요

How Beginners Hear and Write Spoken 예요

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Colloquial Contractions	뭐예요 / 어디예요 How Beginners Hear and Write Spoken 예요

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-COLLOQ-CTR-006>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qk-ad2WBcTo>

Visit [koreanladder.com](https://www.koreanladder.com) for all free lessons

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

I keep hearing 뭐예요 and 어디예요, but then my textbook writes 뭐예요 and 어디예요. Am I hearing it wrong, or spelling it wrong?

좋은 질문이에요. Your ear is catching relaxed speech, but standard writing still matters.

The key today is simple: after a vowel-ending noun, write 예요. And after noun-like question words like 뭐 and 어디, usually write 예요 too.

오늘은 모음으로 끝나는 말 뒤에 붙는 ‘예요’를 배워 볼게요. In English, it means polite “is,” “am,” or “are” after a noun or noun-like question word that ends in a vowel.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	이거 뭐예요? —	What is this?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	커피예요. —	It is coffee.
Hana	아, 커피예요? —	Oh, it is coffee?
Junho	네, 아이스커피예요. —	Yes, it is iced coffee.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
모음으로 끝나는 명사 + 예요 moeumeuro kkeunnaneun myeongsa + yeyo	vowel-ending noun + polite “is/am/are”	The key today is simple: after a vowel-ending noun, write 예요. And after noun-like question words like 뭐 and 어디, usually write 예요 too.
명사나 의문사 + 예요 myeongsa-na uimunsa + yeyo	noun or question word + polite “is/am/are”	오늘은 모음으로 끝나는 말 뒤에 붙는 ‘예요’를 배워 볼게요. In English, it means polite “is,” “am,” or “are” after a noun or noun-like question word that ends in a vowel.
어디예요 eodiyeoyo	standard spelling	Exactly. Chat spelling may drift toward what people hear. But for standard Korean, write 어디예요.
받침 있는 명사 + 이에요 batchim inneun myeongsa + ieyo	consonant-ending noun + polite “is/am/are”	Now the other side. If the noun ends in a consonant, use 이에요, not 예요.
아니예요 anieyo	No. / It is not. / That’s not it.	Exactly. Now one special standard form: 아니예요.
모음 끝 + 예요 moeum kkeut + yeyo	vowel-ending word in this pattern + 예요	Good. The sound is relaxed, but the pattern is steady.



Grammar / Structure Notes

모음으로 끝나는 명사 + 예요

모음으로 끝나는 명사 + 예요 — vowel-ending noun + polite “is/am/are”

Also used after noun-like question words such as 뭐 and 어디.

명사나 의문사 + 예요

명사나 의문사 + 예요 — noun or question word + polite “is/am/are”

Use this when the word before it ends in a vowel.

뭐예요?

뭐 + 예요 + ? — What is it?

So 뭐 is not just any noun, but it behaves like a noun-like question word here. 뭐예요 means what is it?

뭐예요?

뭐 + 예요 + ? — What is it?

맞아요. 뭐 ends in the vowel sound 오, so standard writing is 뭐예요.

어디예요?

어디 + 예요 + ? — Where is it?

좋아요. Now 어디. 어디 is a place question word, and it ends in the vowel 이, so write 어디예요.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
뭐예요?	mwoyeyo?
어디예요?	eodiyeyo?
서울러기예요	seoullyeogieyo.
아니예요	anieyo
저는 엘리스예요.	jeoneun aelliseuyeyo.

Self-Check

- 1 Say 뭐예요 / 어디예요 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 / 뭐 / 날 Everyday Spoken Contractions of Particles	A1 Colloquial: compare 난 / 넌 / 뭐 / 날 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-COLLOQ-CTR-002
어디 / 뭐 / 누구 Dropping Particles in Casual Speech	A1 Colloquial: compare 어디 / 뭐 / 누구 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-COLLOQ-CTR-004
없어요 Dropping 요 From Everyday Existence Phrases	A1 Colloquial: compare 없어요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-COLLOQ-CTR-005

My Notes

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