



Korean Ladder Study Note

천만에요 / 별말씀을요

How to Respond When Someone Thanks or Apologizes to You

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Conversation Greetings & Basics	천만에요 / 별말씀을요 How to Respond When Someone Thanks or Apologizes to You

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-CONV-GRT-005>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnDVFpAeEz0>

Visit koreanladder.com for all free lessons

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Here's my problem. Someone says 감사합니다, and I freeze. Do I say 천만에요, 아니에요, or 괜찮아요? And if they say 죄송해요, is the answer different?

좋은 질문이에요. In Korean, many replies gently push the credit or worry away. You are saying, it was nothing, or it is okay.

오늘의 핵심은 두 갈래예요. Thanks: 고마워요, 감사합니다. Apologies: 미안해요, 죄송해요. We choose the reply by situation and politeness.

And for apologies, the most useful beginner reply is 괜찮아요. It means it is okay, or I am okay.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	감사합니다. —	Thank you.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	아니예요. —	Not at all.
Hana	죄송해요. —	I'm sorry.
Junho	괜찮아요. —	It's okay.
Hana	도와주셔서 감사합니다. —	Thank you for helping me.
Junho	아니예요. 별말씀을요. —	Not at all. Don't mention it.
Junho	물 갖다 줘서 고마워요. —	Thanks for bringing me water.
Hana	월요. —	Oh, it was nothing.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
감사합니다 → 아니예요 / 천만예요 / 별말씀을요 gamsahamnida → anieyo / cheonmaneyo / byeo lmalssseumeuryo	Thank you → not at all / you're welcome / don't mention it	오늘의 핵심은 두 갈래예요. Thanks: 고마워요, 감사합니다. Apologies: 미안해요, 죄송해요. We choose the reply by situation and politeness.
죄송해요 → 괜찮아요 / 아니예요, 신경 쓰지 마세요 joesonghaeyo → gwaenchanayo / anieyo, singyeong sseuji maseyo	I'm sorry → it's okay / no, please don't worry about it	And for apologies, the most useful beginner reply is 괜찮아요. It means it is okay, or I am okay.
대답 표현 daedap pyohyeon	reply expressions	So the lesson is not just "you're welcome." It is how to return the other person's thanks or apology without sounding weird.
아니예요 anieyo	No, not at all. / You're welcome.	First, listen to the everyday polite answer to thanks: 아니예요. Literally, no, but here it means no problem, or not at all.
천만예요 cheonmaneyo	You're welcome. / Not at all.	Next is 천만예요. It means you're welcome, but in real conversation it can sound a little textbook or formal. Still, beginners should recognize it.



Word	Meaning	Example
별말씀을요 byeolmalsseumeuryo	Don't mention it. / It was nothing.	A warmer formal reply is 별말씀을요. It means something like, don't mention it. It sounds gracious after 감사합니다.
월요 mwollyo	Oh, it was nothing. / No problem.	For casual thanks, 고마워, the short reply 월 works well among close people. With 요, 월요 is a soft polite version.
고마워요 → 아니에요 / 월요 gomawoyo → anieyo / mwollyo	Thanks → no problem / it was nothing	월요 is light. It is like saying, what for, no need to thank me. Use it when the mood is friendly, not too serious.



Grammar / Structure Notes

감사합니다 → 아니에요 / 천만에요 / 별말씀을요

감사합니다 → 아니에요 / 천만에요 / 별말씀을요 — Thank you → not at all / you're welcome / don't mention it

Formal thanks usually takes a polite reply.

죄송해요 → 괜찮아요 / 아니에요, 신경 쓰지 마세요

죄송해요 → 괜찮아요 / 아니에요, 신경 쓰지 마세요 — I'm sorry → it's okay / no, please don't worry about it

Use these to reassure someone.

대답 표현

대답 표현 — reply expressions

Responding is different from starting a thank-you or apology.

아니에요

아니에요 — No, not at all. / You're welcome.

First, listen to the everyday polite answer to thanks: 아니에요. Literally, no, but here it means no problem, or not at all.

천만에요

천만에요 — You're welcome. / Not at all.

Next is 천만에요. It means you're welcome, but in real conversation it can sound a little textbook or formal. Still, beginners should recognize it.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
아니에요	anieyo
괜찮아요	gwaenchanayo
별말씀을요	byeolmalsseumeuryo
월요	mwollyo

Self-Check

- 1 Say 천만에요 / 별말씀을요 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
실례합니다 / 잠깐만요 Excusing Yourself and Getting Past People	A1 Conversation: compare 실례합니다 / 잠깐만요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-CONV-GRT-004
안녕하세요 / 안녕히 계세요 Greetings and Goodbyes	A1 Conversation: compare 안녕하세요 / 안녕히 계세요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-CONV-GRT-001
안녕히 주무세요 / 잘 자 Saying Good Night in Korean	A1 Conversation: compare 안녕히 주무세요 / 잘 자 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-CONV-GRT-007
오랜만이에요 / 잘 지냈어요 Greeting Someone After a Long Time	A1 Conversation: compare 오랜만이에요 / 잘 지냈어요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-CONV-GRT-002

My Notes

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