



Korean Ladder Study Note

지금 괜찮아요

Checking If Someone Has Time Before Small Talk

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Conversation Small Talk	지금 괜찮아요 Checking If Someone Has Time Before Small Talk

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

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

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQEmBqY7aH0>

Visit koreanladder.com for all free lessons

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Here's my problem. In English I might say, "Hey, quick question." But in Korean, how do I check first without sounding pushy?

좋은 질문이에요. In Korean, it is polite to check the other person's time or situation before you start talking.

The core idea is not "Are you okay emotionally?" Here, 괜찮아요 means "Is this okay?" or "Is now okay?"

오늘의 패턴은 지금 괜찮아요, and the more respectful version, 잠깐 괜찮으세요. In English, "Is now okay?" and "Do you have a moment?"

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	준호 씨, 잠깐 괜찮으세요? —	Junho, do you have a moment?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	네, 괜찮아요. 무슨 일이에요? —	Yes, it's okay. What is it?
Hana	오늘 회의 몇 시예요? —	What time is today's meeting?
Junho	세 시예요. —	It's at three.
Junho	지금 괜찮아요? —	Is now okay?
Hana	지금은 조금 바빠요. —	I'm a little busy right now.
Junho	네, 나중에 얘기해요. —	Okay, let's talk later.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
지금 괜찮아요 jigeum gwaenchanayo	Now is okay	맞아요. 지금 괜찮아요 is natural with classmates, coworkers you know, or friendly polite situations.
잠깐 괜찮으세요 jamkkan gwaenchaneuseyo	A moment is okay, respectfully	잠깐 괜찮으세요 is natural when you want to be extra considerate. 잠깐 means "for a moment."
괜찮아요 괜찮으세요 gwaenchanayo gwaenchaneuseyo	is okay, polite; is okay, respectfully	완벽해요. Now let's unpack why the ending changes.
잠깐 괜찮으세요 오늘 회의 몇 시예요 jamkkan gwaenchaneuseyo oneul hoeui myeot siyeyo	Do you have a moment? What time is today's meeting?	Notice the order. First, 잠깐 괜찮으세요? Then the real question. That makes the opening feel considerate.



Grammar / Structure Notes

지금 괜찮아요?

지금 괜찮아요? — Is now okay? Are you free now?

지금 means now. 괜찮아요 asks if it is okay.

지금 괜찮아요?

지금 괜찮아요? — Is now okay?

Friendly polite

잠깐 괜찮으세요?

잠깐 괜찮으세요? — Do you have a moment?

More respectful and careful

지금 괜찮아요?

지금 괜찮아요? — Is now okay?

Use with a comfortable polite relationship.

지금 괜찮아요

지금 + 괜찮아요 — Now is okay

맞아요. 지금 괜찮아요 is natural with classmates, coworkers you know, or friendly polite situations.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
지금 괜찮아요?	jigeum gwaenchanayo?
잠깐 괜찮으세요?	jamkkan gwaenchaneuseyo?

Self-Check

- 1 Say 지금 괜찮아요 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
날씨 좋네요 / 주말 잘 보내세요 Easy Small Talk to Start and End a Chat	A1 Conversation: compare 날씨 좋네요 / 주말 잘 보내세요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-CONV-SML-001
사진 한 장만 찍어 주시겠어요 Asking a Stranger to Take Your Photo	A1 Conversation: compare 사진 한 장만 찍어 주시겠어요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-CONV-SML-003
예쁘네요 / 맛있어요 / 맛있겠다 칭찬으로 대화 열기	A1 Conversation: compare 예쁘네요 / 맛있어요 / 맛있겠다 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-CONV-SML-002
이름 예쁘네요 / 한국 이름이에요 Asking About and Complimenting Names	A1 Conversation: compare 이름 예쁘네요 / 한국 이름이에요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-CONV-SML-004

My Notes

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