



Korean Ladder Study Note

이 / 그 / 저

Pointing at Things Near and Far

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Grammar Modifiers & Clauses	이 / 그 / 저 Pointing at Things Near and Far

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-GRAM-MOD-001>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9d7yUV2L5hI>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Okay, real problem. In English I only have this and that. But in Korean I keep hearing three: 이, 그, and 저. Which that is which?

좋은 질문이에요. 영어의 that 하나가 한국어에서는 그하고 저로 갈라져요. In English, one that splits into 그 and 저 in Korean.

그리고 이도 있어요. And there is also 이 — for what is near the speaker. Three seats at the table, not two.

오늘의 패턴은 이, 그, 저예요. Today's pattern is 이, 그, 저 — the three-way pointing system.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	준호 씨, 이거예요? —	Junho, is it this one?
Junho	아니요. 그거 주세요. —	No. That one by you, please.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	아, 이거요? 아니면 저거요? —	Ah, this one? Or that one over there?
Junho	저거요. 창가에 있는 거요. —	That one over there. The one by the window.
Hana	준호 씨, 이거예요? —	Junho, is it this one?
Junho	아니요. 그거 주세요. —	No. That one by you, please.
Hana	아, 이거요? 아니면 저거요? —	Ah, this one? Or that one over there?
Junho	저거요. 창가에 있는 거요. —	That one over there. The one by the window.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
이 / 그 / 저 i / geu / jeo	this (near me) / that (near you or just mentioned) / that over there (far from both)	오늘의 패턴은 이, 그, 저예요. Today's pattern is 이, 그, 저 — the three-way pointing system.
이 = near me i	this — by the speaker	이는 화자 근처예요. 이 marks something near me, the speaker. Think: close to my hand.
그 = near you / just said geu	that — by the listener, or already in the conversation	그는 상대 근처이거나, 방금 말한 거예요. 그 is near you, the listener — or something we just mentioned in the talk.
저 = far from both jeo	that over there — distant from speaker and listener	저는 둘 다에게 먼 거예요. 저 is far from both of us — over there, across the room.
이 → 그 → 저 i → geu → jeo	near me → near you / mentioned → far from both	So if the cup is in my hand, 이. If it's by you, 그. If it's way over by the window... 저?
이거 / 그거 / 저거 igeo / geugeo / jeogeo	this thing / that thing / that thing over there	완벽해요. 그리고 물건 이름을 가리킬 때는 이거, 그거, 저거를 많이 써요. And when we point at a thing, we often say 이거, 그거, 저거.
이것 → 이거 igeot → igeo	written 'this thing' → spoken 'this one'	글로는 이것, 그것, 저것도 보여요. In writing you may see 이것, 그것, 저것. In casual speech, 거 sounds more natural than 것.
이거는 커피예요 igeo-neun keopi-yeyo	This one is coffee.	먼저 가까운 것부터요. First, the near one. 이거는 커피예요. This one is coffee.



Grammar / Structure Notes

이 / 그 / 저

이 / 그 / 저 — this (near me) / that (near you or just mentioned) / that over there (far from both)

Choose by distance — and by who already knows it.

이 = near me

이 = near me — this — by the speaker

my side of the table

그 = near you / just said

그 = near you / just said — that — by the listener, or already in the conversation

your side, or shared memory

저 = far from both

저 = far from both — that over there — distant from speaker and listener

point across the space

이 → 그 → 저

이 → 그 → 저 — near me → near you / mentioned → far from both

distance first; conversation memory for 그

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
이거는 커피예요	igeo-neun keopi-yeyo
그거 주세요	geugeo juseyo
저거 뭐예요	jeogeo mwo-yeyo

Self-Check

- 1 Say 이 / 그 / 저 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
-(으)ㄴ / 는 / (으)ㄹ 것 같다 Expressing Guesses and Impressions	B2 Grammar: compare -(으)ㄴ / 는 / (으)ㄹ 것 같다 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-GRAM-MOD-001
-(으)ㄹ 만큼 / -(으)ㄹ 정도로 Expressing Degree and Extent	C1 Grammar: compare -(으)ㄹ 만큼 / -(으)ㄹ 정도로 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-GRAM-MOD-002
-는 중이다 / -는 길에 In the Middle of Doing and On the Way	B1 Grammar: compare -는 중이다 / -는 길에 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-GRAM-MOD-002
-던 / -았던 / -었던 Retrospective Modifiers for Past Memory	C1 Grammar: compare -던 / -았던 / -었던 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-GRAM-MOD-001

My Notes

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