



Korean Ladder Study Note

은 / 는

The Korean Topic Marker

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Grammar Particles	은 / 는 The Korean Topic Marker

Study Links

[Open this lesson on Korean Ladder](https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-GRAM-PRT-001)

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

[Watch the full video on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELTUMIfy-H0)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELTUMIfy-H0>

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

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Core Idea

Okay, real talk — why is it 저는 sometimes and 제가 other times? It is breaking my brain.

딱 한 가지만 기억하면 돼요.

은/는, 이걸 '주제'를 표시해요. In English — it marks the topic of your sentence, 'as for ____.'

Wait — so it is like saying 'as for me...'?

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	커피는 좋아해요. —	As for coffee, I like it.
Junho	그런데 차는 안 좋아해요. —	But as for tea, I don't.
Alice	커피는 좋아해요. —	coffee (topic A)



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Brian	차는 안 좋아해요. —	tea (topic B) → contrast

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
은 / 는 eun / neun	the topic marker — “as for ___”	딱 한 가지만 기억하면 돼요.
저 + 는 jeo + neun	as for me ...	Wait — so it is like saying 'as for me...?'
저는 jeo-neun	as for me	네, 맞아요. 저는.
[주제]는 ... [topic]-neun ...	[Topic], + comment	Ohh. So the topic comes first, then whatever you want to say about it.
받침 O → 은 · 받침 X → 는 batchim O → eun · batchim X → neun	consonant ending → 은 · vowel ending → 는	받침이 있으면 '은', 없으면 '는'. If a word ends in a consonant, use 은; if it ends in a vowel, use 는.
선생님은 seonsaengnim-eun	as for the teacher (ends in ㅁ → 은)	선생님 — 받침 있어요 — 선생님은. It ends in a consonant, ㅁ, so it takes 은.
한국은 hanguk-eun	as for Korea (ends in ㄱ → 은)	한국 — 받침 ㄱ — 한국은. '한국' ends in ㄱ, a consonant, so 한국은.
브라이언은 beuraieon-eun	as for Brian	So my name, Brian, ends in a consonant sound... so, 브라이언은?



Grammar / Structure Notes

은 / 는

은 / 는 — the topic marker — “as for ___”

You only need to remember one idea.

은 / 는

은 / 는 — marks the TOPIC — “as for ___”

It tells the listener what your sentence is about.

저 + 는

저 + 는 — as for me ...

Topic first, then what you say about it.

저는

저 + 는 — as for me

네, 맞아요. 저는.

[주제]는 ...

[주제]는 ... — [Topic], + comment

저는 학생이에요 → (As for me), I'm a student.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
저는	jeo-neun
는	neun
은	eun
는 / 은	neun / eun

Self-Check

- 1 Say 은 / 는 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
도 Saying 'Also', 'Too', and 'Even' in Korean	A1 Grammar: compare 도 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-GRAM-PRT-006
에 The Korean Particle for Place and Time	A1 Grammar: compare 에 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-GRAM-PRT-004
에서 Where the Action Happens	A1 Grammar: compare 에서 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-GRAM-PRT-005
와 / 과 / 하고 Linking Two Nouns with 'And'	A1 Grammar: compare 와 / 과 / 하고 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-GRAM-PRT-007

My Notes

Free Korean lessons, one rung at a time. This PDF, the website, and the video lessons are free for personal study.