



Korean Ladder Study Note

이 / 가

The Korean Subject Marker

| Level | Topic | Focus |
|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1 | Grammar Particles | 이 / 가 The Korean Subject Marker |

Study Links

[Open this lesson on Korean Ladder](https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-GRAM-PRT-002)

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-GRAM-PRT-002>

[Watch the full video on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7POSTzhKkGY)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7POSTzhKkGY>

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

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Core Idea

Okay, real question. I learned 저는 — 'I am.' So why do I keep seeing 제가? Same 'I'... totally different word?

Right?! And sometimes it's 이, sometimes 가. Who decided this, and how do I pick?

Today's pattern is the subject marker: 이 and 가. 이거는 주어를 표시해요 — in English, it marks the subject of the sentence.

Think of it as a little tag that says, 'THIS is the one' — the one doing the action, or the new thing we're pointing at.

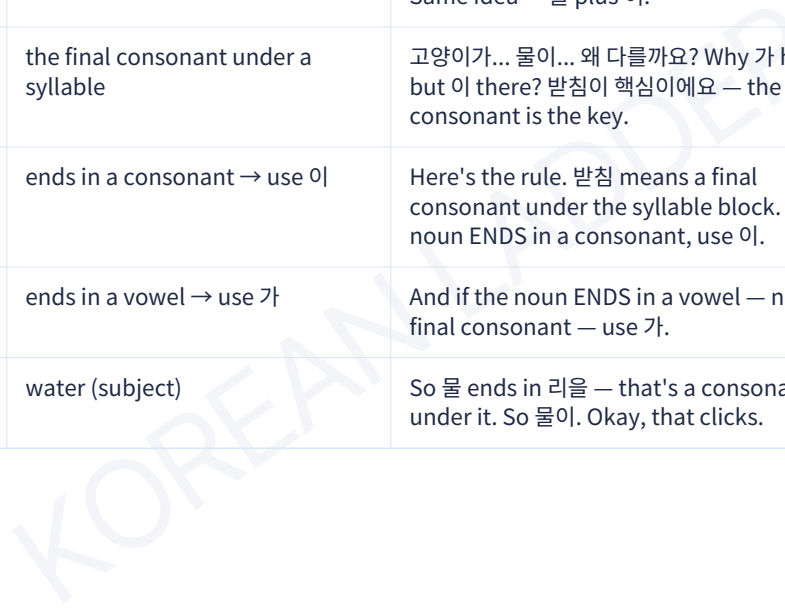
Conversation Snapshot

| Speaker | Korean | Meaning |
|---------|---------------|----------------|
| Junho | 누가 왔어요? — | Who came? |
| Hana | 친구가 왔어요. — | A friend came. |



Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

| Word | Meaning | Example |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 이 / 가 i / ga | subject marker — marks the subject | Today's pattern is the subject marker: 이 and 가. 이거는 주어를 표시해요 — in English, it marks the subject of the sentence. |
| 명사 + 이/가 myeongsa + i/ga | noun + subject marker = 'this one' | Think of it as a little tag that says, 'THIS is the one' — the one doing the action, or the new thing we're pointing at. |
| 고양이가 있어요 goyangi-ga isseoyo | There is a cat. | 들어보세요. 고양이가 있어요. There is a cat. |
| 물이 있어요 mul-i isseoyo | There is water. | 또 들어보세요. 물이 있어요. There is water. Same idea — 물 plus 이. |
| 받침 batchim | the final consonant under a syllable | 고양이가... 물이... 왜 다를까요? Why 가 here, but 이 there? 받침이 핵심이에요 — the final consonant is the key. |
| 받침 O → 이 batchim O → i | ends in a consonant → use 이 | Here's the rule. 받침 means a final consonant under the syllable block. If the noun ENDS in a consonant, use 이. |
| 받침 X → 가 batchim X → ga | ends in a vowel → use 가 | And if the noun ENDS in a vowel — no final consonant — use 가. |
| 물 mul-i | water (subject) | So 물 ends in 리을 — that's a consonant under it. So 물이. Okay, that clicks. |





Grammar / Structure Notes

이 / 가

이 / 가 — subject marker — marks the subject

tags WHO or WHAT is doing or being

명사 + 이/가

명사 + 이/가 — noun + subject marker = 'this one'

Think of it as a little tag that says, 'THIS is the one' — the one doing the action, or the new thing we're pointing at.

고양이가 있어요

고양이 + 가 + 있어요 — There is a cat.

들어보세요. 고양이가 있어요. There is a cat.

물이 있어요

물 + 이 + 있어요 — There is water.

또 들어보세요. 물이 있어요. There is water. Same idea — 물 plus 이.

받침

받침 — the final consonant under a syllable

this decides 이 vs 가

Pronunciation Loop

| Phrase | How to practice |
|--------------|---------------------|
| 제가 · 내가 · 누가 | jega · naega · nuga |
| 무리 있어요 | mul-i isseoyo |
| 물이 있어요 | mul-i isseoyo |
| 책이 · 사과가 | chaek-i · sagwa-ga |
| 잘했어요. | jalhaesseoyo |

Self-Check

- 1 Say 이 / 가 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.