



Korean Ladder Study Note

밖에 안 / 밖에 없어요

Using 밖에 with Negatives to Mean 'Only'

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Grammar Particles	밖에 안 / 밖에 없어요 Using 밖에 with Negatives to Mean 'Only'

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-GRAM-PRT-025>

Watch the full video on YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9P_t-EL074

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

If 커피밖에 안 마셔요 means I only drink coffee, why is 안 there? Doesn't that mean not?

맞아요. 안 means not. Think of this sentence as: I don't drink anything except coffee.

So coffee is the exception. The sentence rules out the other drinks, not the coffee.

오늘의 표현은 밖에예요. Today's pattern is 밖에 with a negative. When 밖에 means only, it needs a negative expression.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	차 있어요? —	Do you have tea?
Hana	아니요. 커피밖에 없어요. —	No. We only have coffee.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	그럼 커피 주세요. —	Then please give me coffee.
Hana	두 잔 드릴까요? —	Shall I give you two cups?
Junho	아니요. 한 잔밖에 못 마셔요. —	No. I can only drink one cup.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
명사 + 밖에 + 부정 표현 —	Noun + 밖에 + negative expression	오늘의 표현은 밖에예요. Today's pattern is 밖에 with a negative. When 밖에 means only, it needs a negative expression.
커피 + 밖에 → 커피밖에 —	Coffee + except → except coffee	밖에는 명사 뒤에 붙여 써요. Write 밖에 attached to the noun before it. 커피밖에. Then finish the sentence with a negative.
안 · 못 · 없어요 —	Don't · Can't · Don't have or there isn't	We'll practice three choices. 안 means don't, 못 means can't, and 없어요 means don't have or there isn't.
안 해요 · 못 해요 —	Don't do it · Can't do it	Then 안 and 못 still mean different things. Don't and can't aren't the same.
밖에 · 커피밖에 bakke · keopibakke	Using 밖에 with Negatives to Mean 'Only'	따라 해 보세요. Repeat after me. 밖에. 커피밖에. Keep the middle consonant firm and tight.
커피밖에 keopibakke	Using 밖에 with Negatives to Mean 'Only'	커피밖에.
밖에 + 안 · 못 · 없어요 —	Name the limit, then choose the right negative.	My checklist is: name the limit, then decide whether I mean don't, can't, or don't have.



Grammar / Structure Notes

명사 + 밖에 + 부정 표현

명사 + 밖에 + 부정 표현 — Noun + 밖에 + negative expression

In this pattern, nothing except means only.

커피 + 밖에 → 커피밖에

커피 + 밖에 → 커피밖에 — Coffee + except → except coffee

No space before 밖에. The complete sentence needs a negative.

안 · 못 · 없어요

안 · 못 · 없어요 — Don't · Can't · Don't have or there isn't

Choose the negative that matches your meaning.

커피밖에 안 마셔요.

커피 + 밖에 + 안 + 마셔요. — I only drink coffee.

커피밖에 안 마셔요. I only drink coffee. I don't drink anything except coffee.

한국어를 조금밖에 못 해요.

한국어 + 를 + 조금 + 밖에 + 못 + 해요. — I can only speak a little Korean.

한국어를 조금밖에 못 해요. I can only speak a little Korean. 못 tells us that the speaker's ability is limited.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
커피밖에	bakke · keopibakke
커피밖에 안 마셔요.	Remember the negative 안.
천 원밖에 없어요.	없어요 already supplies the negative.

Self-Check

- 1 Say 밖에 안 / 밖에 없어요 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)로 Saying 'By', 'With', and 'Toward' in Korean	A1 Grammar: compare (으)로 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-GRAM-PRT-012
같이 / 와 함께 / 하고 Saying 'Together With' Someone	A1 Grammar: compare 같이 / 와 함께 / 하고 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-GRAM-PRT-017
끼리 Saying 'Among Ourselves' and 'Between Friends'	A1 Grammar: compare 끼리 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-GRAM-PRT-023
도 안 / 도 못 / 도 없어요 Saying 'Not Even' with 도 and Negatives	A1 Grammar: compare 도 안 / 도 못 / 도 없어요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-GRAM-PRT-021

My Notes

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