



Korean Ladder Study Note

형·오빠 / 누나·언니

Choosing Sibling-Style Address Terms by Gender and Age

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Honorifics Titles & Address	형·오빠 / 누나·언니 Choosing Sibling-Style Address Terms by Gender and Age

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-HON-ADR-009>

Watch the full video on YouTube

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

Visit koreanladder.com for all free lessons

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

I know the four words, but I freeze when I need one. If the other person is an older man, do I say 형 or 오빠? 둘 다 나이 많은 남성을 부를 때 쓸 수 있어요. Both can address an older man, but the speaker's gender changes the choice.

나이만 확인하면 안 돼요. Age alone is not enough. You also need the two people's genders and their relationship.

So I check who is speaking, who the older person is, and whether they are family or close. 화자부터 확인해요.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	누나, 점심 먹었어요? —	Nuna, did you eat lunch?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	아직 안 먹었어요. 준호 씨는요? —	Not yet. How about you, Junho?
Junho	저도요. 같이 먹어요. —	Me neither. Let's eat together.
Hana	좋아요. 같이 가요. —	Sounds good. Let's go together.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
화자 + 상대 + 나이 + 관계 hwaja + sangdae + nai + gwangye	speaker + other person + age + relationship	나이만 확인하면 안 돼요. Age alone is not enough. You also need the two people's genders and their relationship.
화자부터 확인해요 hwajabuteo hwaginhaeyo	Check the speaker first.	So I check who is speaking, who the older person is, and whether they are family or close. 화자부터 확인해요.
남자 화자: 형 · 누나 여자 화자: 오빠 · 언니 namja hwaja: hyeong · nuna yeoja hwaja: oppa · eonni	Male speaker: 형 and 누나. Female speaker: 오빠 and 언니.	핵심 규칙이에요. Here is the core rule. A male speaker uses 형 and 누나. A female speaker uses 오빠 and 언니.
남자 화자 → 형 · 누나 namja hwaja → hyeong · nuna	Male speaker → 형 for an older male, 누나 for an older female	남자가 말하면 형하고 누나를 써요. A male speaker uses 형 for a close older male and 누나 for a close older female.
여자 화자 → 오빠 · 언니 yeoja hwaja → oppa · eonni	Female speaker → 오빠 for an older male, 언니 for an older female	여자가 말하면 오빠하고 언니를 써요. A female speaker uses 오빠 for a close older male and 언니 for a close older female.
남자: 형 · 누나 여자: 오빠 · 언니 namja: hyeong · nuna yeoja: oppa · eonni	Male: 형 and 누나. Female: 오빠 and 언니.	My shortcut is simple. Male speaker: 형 and 누나. Female speaker: 오빠 and 언니.
상대가 화자보다 나이가 많아요 sangdaega hwajaboda naiga manayo	The other person is older than the speaker.	그리고 상대가 화자보다 나이가 많아야 해요. The other person must be older than the speaker.
남자 → 나이 많은 남자: 형 namja → nai maneun namja: hyeong	Male speaker → close older male: 형	먼저 남자 화자를 볼게요. A male speaker calls a close older male 형.



Grammar / Structure Notes

화자 + 상대 + 나이 + 관계

화자 + 상대 + 나이 + 관계 — speaker + other person + age + relationship

Check the whole situation.

화자부터 확인해요

화자부터 확인해요 — Check the speaker first.

Then check the older person's gender and the relationship.

남자 화자: 형 · 누나 | 여자 화자: 오빠 · 언니

남자 화자: 형 · 누나 | 여자 화자: 오빠 · 언니 — Male speaker: 형 and 누나. Female speaker: 오빠 and 언니.

Start with the speaker.

남자 화자 → 형 · 누나

남자 화자 → 형 · 누나 — Male speaker → 형 for an older male, 누나 for an older female

남자가 말하면 형하고 누나를 써요. A male speaker uses 형 for a close older male and 누나 for a close older female.

여자 화자 → 오빠 · 언니

여자 화자 → 오빠 · 언니 — Female speaker → 오빠 for an older male, 언니 for an older female

여자가 말하면 오빠하고 언니를 써요. A female speaker uses 오빠 for a close older male and 언니 for a close older female.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
형 · 오빠 · 누나 · 언니	hyeong · oppa · nuna · eonni
오빠	oppa

Self-Check

- 1 Say 형 · 오빠 / 누나 · 언니 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
뭐라고 부르면 돼요 Asking What to Call Someone as a Beginner	A1 Honorifics: compare 뭐라고 부르면 돼요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-HON-ADR-005
선생님 / 언니 / 아저씨 Addressing People You See Every Day	A1 Honorifics: compare 선생님 / 언니 / 아저씨 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-HON-ADR-001
씨라고 불러도 될까요 Asking Permission Before You Use 씨	A1 Honorifics: compare 씨라고 불러도 될까요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-HON-ADR-006
아줌마 / 아가씨 / 총각 Calling Strangers by Age and Gender	A1 Honorifics: compare 아줌마 / 아가씨 / 총각 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-HON-ADR-002

My Notes

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