



Korean Ladder Study Note

감사합니다 / 죄송합니다

Formal Thanks and Apologies

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Honorifics Speech Levels	감사합니다 / 죄송합니다 Formal Thanks and Apologies

Study Links

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

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

[Watch the full video on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wR2Rd60apDw)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wR2Rd60apDw>

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

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Core Idea

Okay, real question. I learned 고마워요 for thank you. But at a hotel front desk it felt... too friendly? Like I was thanking my buddy.

Same with apologies. I bumped into someone on the subway and said 미안해요, and my friend winced a little.

Such a good catch. 고마워요 and 미안해요 are polite, yes — but to strangers, staff, and elders, Korean has a more formal level that sounds more respectful.

That formal level is called 합니다체. Today's two anchors are 감사합니다 and 죄송합니다.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	어서 오세요. 뭐 찾으세요? —	Welcome. What are you looking for?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	꽃 한 다발 주세요. —	One bouquet, please.
Hana	여기 있습니다. —	Here you are.
Junho	감사합니다. —	Thank you.
Hana	또 오세요. 감사합니다. —	Come again. Thank you.
Junho	늦어서 죄송합니다. —	I'm sorry for being late.
Hana	괜찮아요. 앉으세요. —	It's okay. Please sit.
Junho	기다려 주셔서 감사합니다. —	Thank you for waiting.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
고마워요 / 미안해요 gomawoyo / mianhaeyo	thanks / sorry (polite, but casual-warm)	Such a good catch. 고마워요 and 미안해요 are polite, yes — but to strangers, staff, and elders, Korean has a more formal level that sounds more respectful.
합니다체 hamnida-che	the formal '-합니다' speech level	That formal level is called 합니다체. Today's two anchors are 감사합니다 and 죄송합니다.
감사합니다 gamsa-hamnida	thank you (formal)	감사합니다 means 'thank you,' formal. 감사 is a noun — it means 'gratitude.' In Korean, that 합니다 ending marks formal respect.
죄송합니다 joesong-hamnida	I'm sorry (formal)	죄송합니다 means 'I'm sorry,' formal. 죄송 carries the sense of feeling sorry, and 합니다 makes it formal.
-합니다 vs -해요 hamnida vs haeyo	formal-public vs polite-casual	So 합니다 is like the respectful 'suit and tie' ending, and 해요 is the everyday 'sweater' ending?
감사합니다 / 죄송합니다 gamsa-hamnida / joesong-hamnida	formal thanks / formal sorry	정확해요. Same warmth, different formality. With a barista, a clerk, an elder you just met — 합니다 sounds polished.



Word	Meaning	Example
늦어서 죄송합니다 / 도와주셔서 감사합니다 neujeoseo joesong-hamnida / dowajusyeseo gamsa-hamnida	sorry for being late / thank you for helping	And you can stack them. 늦어서 죄송합니다 — 'I'm sorry for being late.' 도와주셔서 감사합니다 — 'Thank you for helping me.'
관계 + 격식 gwangye + gyeoksik	relationship + formality	Because Korean tells the listener how you see the relationship. 합니다 says 'I'm treating this moment with respect and distance.' That's a kindness to a stranger.

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Grammar / Structure Notes

고마워요 / 미안해요

고마워요 / 미안해요 — thanks / sorry (polite, but casual-warm)

Fine with friends — softer with strangers.

합니다체

합니다체 — the formal '-합니다' speech level

Respectful, public, polished.

감사합니다

감사 + 합니다 — thank you (formal)

감사합니다 means 'thank you,' formal. 감사 is a noun — it means 'gratitude.' In Korean, that 합니다 ending marks formal respect.

죄송합니다

죄송 + 합니다 — I'm sorry (formal)

죄송합니다 means 'I'm sorry,' formal. 죄송 carries the sense of feeling sorry, and 합니다 makes it formal.

-합니다 vs -해요

-합니다 vs -해요 — formal-public vs polite-casual

Both are polite — 합니다 is more formal.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
감사합니다	gamsa-hamnida
감사합니다	gamsa-hamnida
죄송합니다	joesong-hamnida
죄송합니다	joesong-hamnida

Self-Check

- 1 Say 감사합니다 / 죄송합니다 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
요 Polite and Casual Korean	A1 Honorifics: compare 요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-HON-LVL-001
하계체 The Familiar Speech Level Elders Use	C1 Honorifics: compare 하계체 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-HON-LVL-001
하십시오체 The Formal Speech Level for Announcements	B1 Honorifics: compare 하십시오체 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-HON-LVL-001
해라체 The Plain Style for Writing and News	B2 Honorifics: compare 해라체 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-HON-LVL-001

My Notes

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