



Korean Ladder Study Note

어머니 계세요

Asking Whether Someone Is In

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Honorifics Subject Honorifics	어머니 계세요 Asking Whether Someone Is In

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-HON-SUB-004>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbkElXyJ33A>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

I'm at a friend's door. To ask whether their mother is home, can I say 어머니 있어요?

뜻은 통해요. The meaning gets across. But to ask respectfully about your friend's mother, say 어머니 계세요?

So a polite ending isn't the whole story. The verb can show respect for the person I'm asking about.

오늘의 표현은 계세요예요. Today's expression is 계세요. Use it for the presence or location of someone you treat with respect.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	안녕하세요. 사장님 계세요? —	Hello. Is the owner in?
Junho	네, 안에 계세요. —	Yes, they're inside.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	감사합니다. —	Thank you.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
계세요 gyeseyo	is here, is there, or is present, respectfully	오늘의 표현은 계세요예요. Today's expression is 계세요. Use it for the presence or location of someone you treat with respect.
있어요 → 계세요 —	is present → is present, respectfully	있어요 대신 계세요를 써요. For this meaning, replace 있어요 with 계세요 when you honor the person who is present.
요 —	Politeness toward the listener	요는 듣는 사람에게 공손하게 말하는 부분이에요. The ending 요 makes your speech polite to the listener. That is a different job.
있어요 · 계세요 —	Both are polite to the listener.	Then 있어요 is already polite to the listener. 계세요 also respects the person who might be there.



Grammar / Structure Notes

계세요

계세요 — is here, is there, or is present, respectfully

An honorific verb form for a person's presence or location

있어요 → 계세요

있어요 → 계세요 — is present → is present, respectfully

Today's meaning is presence, not possession.

호칭 + 계세요?

호칭 + 계세요? — Title + is that person in?

The situation can tell us which location you mean.

어머니 계세요?

어머니 + 계세요? — Is your mother in?

어머니 계세요? Is your mother in? At your friend's door, the situation tells us whose mother you mean.

사장님 계세요?

사장님 + 계세요? — Is the boss or owner in?

사장님 계세요? Is the boss in? At a small shop, 사장님 can refer to the owner.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
계세요? 네, 계세요.	Let the question rise gently and the answer settle.
어머니 계세요?	eomeoni gyeseyo?
어머니 있어요?	Learner attempt: understandable, but missing the honorific verb.
사장님 계세요?	sajangnim gyeseyo?

Self-Check

- 1 Say 어머니 계세요 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
누구세요 Your First Honorific Questions	A1 Honorifics: compare 누구세요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-HON-SUB-001
뭐 드릴까요 The Honorifics Staff Use on You	A1 Honorifics: compare 뭐 드릴까요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-HON-SUB-002
앉으세요 / 이쪽으로 오세요 -(으)세요로 웃어른께 권하기	A1 Honorifics: compare 앉으세요 / 이쪽으로 오세요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-HON-SUB-003
-(으)시- Adding the Honorific Infix to Any Verb	B1 Honorifics: compare -(으)시- with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-HON-SUB-002

My Notes

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