



Korean Ladder Study Note

시

Keeping ㅅ and ㅆ Distinct Before ㅣ

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Pronunciation Consonants	시 Keeping ㅅ and ㅆ Distinct Before ㅣ

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

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

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DR9GmrFATTY>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

When I hear 시 and 히, they both sound a little airy. Am I supposed to give both of them an English sh sound?

아니요. 시와 히는 달라요. No. They are different. 시 has a more focused, sh-like hiss. 히 starts with a lighter, breathy sound.

오늘은 시옷과 히읃을 구별해 볼게요. Today we'll distinguish the consonants 시옷 and 히읃 before the vowel ㅣ.

시와 히의 첫소리를 구별해서 발음해 주세요. Keep the starting consonants of 시 and 히 distinct. That helps your listener recognize the word you mean.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	바람이 시원해요. —	The breeze feels cool.
Hana	여기서 잠깐 쉬어요. —	Let's rest here for a moment.



Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
ㅅ + ㅣ → 시 ㅎ + ㅣ → 히 —	Different starting consonants, the same vowel.	오늘은 시옷과 히읃을 구별해 볼게요. Today we'll distinguish the consonants 시옷 and 히읃 before the vowel 이.
시 ≠ 히 —	Keep the starting consonants distinct.	시와 히의 첫소리를 구별해서 발음해 주세요. Keep the starting consonants of 시 and 히 distinct. That helps your listener recognize the word you mean.
시 · 히 —	Same vowel. Different consonant.	So I keep the same vowel in 시 and 히, but change how I start it.
시장 sijang	market	시장. 시장은 market이라는 뜻이에요. 시장 means market. Listen for 시 at the beginning.
희망 huimang	hope	희망. 희망은 hope라는 뜻이에요. 희망 means hope. Its first syllable sounds like 히. We'll explain the spelling in a moment.
시장 · 희망 —	Keeping ㅅ and ㅎ Distinct Before ㅣ	시장. 희망. These are different words, not a pair differing in only one sound. For today's practice, compare just their first syllables: 시. 히.
시원하다 siwonhada	to be cool or refreshing — adjective	시원하다. This means to be cool or refreshing. It's an adjective. 시원하 is the adjective stem, and 다 is the dictionary ending. Listen to the starting 시.
희다 huida	to be white — adjective	희다. This means to be white. It's also an adjective. 희 is the adjective stem, and 다 is the dictionary ending. The whole word is pronounced 히다.



Grammar / Structure Notes

ㅅ + ㅣ → 시 | ㅎ + ㅣ → 히

ㅅ + ㅣ → 시

ㅎ + ㅣ → 히 — Different starting consonants, the same vowel.

ㅅ is 시읏. ㅎ is 히읏.

시 ≠ 히

시 ≠ 히 — Keep the starting consonants distinct.

The contrast is in the consonant, not the vowel.

시 · 히

시 · 히 — Same vowel. Different consonant.

So I keep the same vowel in 시 and 히, but change how I start it.

시장

시장 — market

Begins with 시.

희망

희망 — hope

Standard pronunciation: [히망]. The romanization reflects the spelling.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
시, 히	Listen to the start of each syllable.
시장. 희망.	Compare the first syllables: 시 versus [히].
시	A focused, sh-like hiss before the vowel.
히	Light, breathy onset. Some soft friction is normal.
희망	The first syllable is pronounced [히], not 시.
희다	Written 희다. Pronounced [히다].
시 · 히	Keep the vowel steady and the lips relaxed.
희망 → [히망]	Target: 희망. The learner's 시망 attempt changes the starting consonant.

Self-Check



- 1 Say 시 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
ㄷ / ㅌ / ㅍ The Three Korean D/T Sounds	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㄷ / ㅌ / ㅍ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-006
ㄹ 발음 The Korean R/L Sound at the Start and Middle of Words	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㄹ 발음 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-002
ㄴ / ㄷ / ㅎ The Soft Korean Consonants Beginners Overlook	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㄴ / ㄷ / ㅎ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-008
ㄴ · ㄷ · ㄹ · ㅎ 콧소리 자리 Feeling Where Korean Nasals Are Made	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㄴ · ㄷ · ㄹ · ㅎ 콧소리 자리 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-019

My Notes

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