



Korean Ladder Study Note

ㅟ / ㅠ / ㅡ / ㅢ

The 'Y' Glide Vowels

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Pronunciation Vowels	ㅟ / ㅠ / ㅡ / ㅢ The 'Y' Glide Vowels

Study Links

[Open this lesson on Korean Ladder](https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-004)

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

[Watch the full video on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nk9qnb0r4mA)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nk9qnb0r4mA>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Okay, real question — why does **여기**, 'here', start with that little y-sound, but **어디**, 'where', doesn't? It keeps tripping me up.

좋은 질문이에요. 한국어에는 'y' glide vowels가 있어요. In English, that means some vowels start with a quick 'y' — like the y in 'yes.'

These four are just the basic vowels with a 'y' added in front. 기본 모음 아, 어, 오, 우에 'y'만 더하면 돼요.

'아'에 'y'를 붙이면 '야'가 돼요. 아 → 야. 'ah' becomes 'ya.'

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	여기 우유 있어요? —	Is there milk here?
Junho	네, 우유 여기 있어요. —	Yes, the milk is right here.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	요리에 쓸 거예요. —	I'll use it for cooking.
Junho	좋아요. —	Sounds good.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
ㅏ ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ya yeo yo yu	the y-glide vowels	좋은 질문이에요. 한국어에는 'y' glide vowels가 있어요. In English, that means some vowels start with a quick 'y' — like the y in 'yes.'
아 어 오 우 + y a eo o u + y	add a 'y' to the four basic vowels	These four are just the basic vowels with a 'y' added in front. 기본 모음 아, 어, 오, 우에 'y'만 더하면 돼요.
ㅏ → ㅑ a → ya	'ah' + y = 'ya'	'아'에 'y'를 붙이면 '야'가 돼요. 아 → 야. 'ah' becomes 'ya.'
ㅓ → ㅕ eo → yeo	'uh' + y = 'yuh'	어 → 여. 'uh' becomes 'yuh.' ㅓ에 'y'를 더해요.
ㅓ → ㅕ o → yo	'oh' + y = 'yo'	오 → 요. 'oh' becomes 'yo.'
ㅜ → ㅠ u → yu	'oo' + y = 'yoo'	우 → 유. 'oo' becomes 'yoo.' Same trick every time.
ㅏ vs ㅑ a vs ya	the extra stroke = the y-glide	Oh! So that extra little stroke on the letter is basically the 'y'?
야구 · 여기 · 요리 · 우유 ya-gu · yeo-gi · yo-ri · u-yu	baseball · here · cooking · milk	맞아요. The extra stroke is the y-glide. 이제 진짜 단어로 들어볼게요. Let's hear it in real words.



Grammar / Structure Notes

ㅟ ㅢ ㅠ ㅝ

ㅟ ㅢ ㅠ ㅝ — the y-glide vowels

a quick 'y' glides into the vowel

아 어 오 우 + y

아 어 오 우 + y — add a 'y' to the four basic vowels

These four are just the basic vowels with a 'y' added in front. 기본 모음 아, 어, 오, 우에 'y'만 더하면 돼요.

ㅏ → ㅙ

ㅏ → ㅙ — 'ah' + y = 'ya'

'아'에 'y'를 붙이면 '야'가 돼요. 아 → 야. 'ah' becomes 'ya.'

ㅓ → ㅛ

ㅓ → ㅛ — 'uh' + y = 'yuh'

어 → 여. 'uh' becomes 'yuh.' ㅓ에 'y'를 더해요.

ㅗ → ㅠ

ㅗ → ㅠ — 'oh' + y = 'yo'

오 → 요. 'oh' becomes 'yo.'

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
우유	u-yu
야구	a-gu → ya-gu
여기	eo-gi → yeo-gi
요리	o-ri vs yo-ri

Self-Check

- 1 Say ㅟ / ㅢ / ㅠ / ㅝ 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
ㅈ The Vowels That Now Sound the Same	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅈ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-002
ㅊ The Vowels English Speakers Mix Up	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅊ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-001
ㅅ / ㅆ / ㅈ Korea's Tricky Compound Vowels	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅅ / ㅆ / ㅈ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-003
ㅋ ㅌ ㅍ Aspirated and Tense Consonants	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅋ ㅌ ㅍ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-001

My Notes

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