



Korean Ladder Study Note

The Flat Vowel Beginners Round Too Much

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Pronunciation Vowels	— The Flat Vowel Beginners Round Too Much

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-005>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhTkRnc3iMw>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Okay, real talk. I tried to say 그만 — like 'stop' — and Hana looked confused. I think I said something else entirely.

Same problem here. To my English ear, 으 and 우 sound almost identical, so I just round my lips and hope for the best.

이건 정말 흔한 실수예요. This is a very common mistake. 으 and 우 are two different vowels, and rounding the lips changes the meaning.

So here is today's one job: keep — flat and un-rounded, and only round your lips for ㅜ. That's the whole lesson.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	커피 몇 잔 드려요? —	How many cups of coffee?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	두 잔 주세요. —	Two cups, please.
Hana	네, 그러면 두 잔이요. —	Okay, two cups then.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
— vs ㅏ eu vs u	flat vowel vs round vowel	So here is today's one job: keep — flat and un-rounded, and only round your lips for ㅏ. That's the whole lesson.
— eu	The Flat Vowel Beginners Round Too Much	먼저 —예요. For —, leave your lips relaxed and un-rounded — do NOT push them forward. 이 모음은 입술에 힘을 빼고 둥글게 하지 않아요.
— = 으 eu	The Flat Vowel Beginners Round Too Much	—는 '으리을'의 이 소리예요. The name of this letter is 으, and the sound stays neutral — your lips don't move outward or pucker.
ㅓ u	The Flat Vowel Beginners Round Too Much	맞아요. 입술을 그냥 편하게 두세요. Exactly — just leave the lips comfortable. Now ㅓ is the opposite: round them and push forward.
ㅓ = 우 u	The Flat Vowel Beginners Round Too Much	ㅓ는 '우'예요. The name is 우. Round, forward, like the 'oo' in 'food.' 으 stays flat; 우 rounds.
그 / 구 geu / gu	that / nine	이제 진짜 단어로 들어봐요. Let's hear it in real words. 그 means 'that.' 구 means 'nine.' Listen: 그... 구.
그 vs 구 geu vs gu	that vs nine	그—flat lips. 구—round lips. 같은 자음, 다른 모음. Same consonant 기억, different vowel. The vowel does all the work.
들 / 둘 deul / dul	field, plural / two	또 하나. 들 means 'field' or a plural mark. 둘 means 'two.' 들... 둘. The flat one, then the round one.



Grammar / Structure Notes

ㅡ vs ㅜ

ㅡ vs ㅜ — flat vowel vs round vowel

ㅡ: lips relaxed, neither spread nor rounded. ㅜ: lips rounded and pushed forward.

그 / 구

그 + / + 구 — that / nine

이제 진짜 단어로 들어봐요. Let's hear it in real words. 그 means 'that.' 구 means 'nine.' Listen: 그... 구.

그 vs 구

ㄱ + + + ㅡ / ㅜ — that vs nine

그—flat lips. 구—round lips. 같은 자음, 다른 모음. Same consonant 기억, different vowel. The vowel does all the work.

들 / 둘

들 + / + 둘 — field, plural / two

또 하나. 들 means 'field' or a plural mark. 둘 means 'two.' 들... 둘. The flat one, then the round one.

ㅡ ← 영어에 없음

ㅡ ← 영어에 없음 — English has no flat ㅡ — so we substitute round 우

The fix: consciously un-round for ㅡ.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
으	eu
우	u
두 잔	du jan
그만	geuman
둘	dul
둘 들	dul / deul
그	geu → lips still

Self-Check

- 1 Say ㅡ 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 / ㅌ / ㅍ / ㅍ The 'Y' Glide Vowels	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅊ / ㅌ / ㅍ / ㅍ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-004
ㅓ The Vowels English Speakers Mix Up	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅓ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-001
ㅕ / ㅖ / ㅗ Korea's Tricky Compound Vowels	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅕ / ㅖ / ㅗ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-003

My Notes

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