



Korean Ladder Study Note

남자친구 / 여자친구 / 애인

Talking About a Romantic Partner

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Vocabulary Family & People	남자친구 / 여자친구 / 애인 Talking About a Romantic Partner

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-FAM-008>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9WZPohTxnQ>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

If 남자 means man and 친구 means friend, does 남자친구 mean a male friend or a boyfriend?

붙여 쓰는 남자친구는 보통 boyfriend라는 뜻이에요. Written as one word, it usually means a male romantic partner.

남자와 친구를 띄어 쓴 남자 친구는 문맥에 따라 male friend라는 뜻이 될 수 있어요. The space matters in writing.

오늘의 핵심 표현은 남자친구, 여자친구, 애인이에요. These words let you refer to a boyfriend, girlfriend, or romantic partner naturally.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	준호 씨, 만나는 사람 있어요? —	Junho, are you seeing anyone?
Junho	네, 있어요. —	Yes, I am.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	어떻게 알게 됐어요? —	How did you meet?
Junho	회사에서 만났어요. —	We met at work.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
남자친구 · 여자친구 · 애인 namjachingu · yeojachingu · aein	boyfriend · girlfriend · romantic partner	오늘의 핵심 표현은 남자친구, 여자친구, 애인이에요. These words let you refer to a boyfriend, girlfriend, or romantic partner naturally.
남자친구 namjachingu	boyfriend	남자친구는 보통 남성인 연애 상대를 뜻해요. It usually means boyfriend.
여자친구 yeojachingu	girlfriend	여자친구는 보통 여성인 연애 상대를 뜻해요. It usually means girlfriend.
애인 aein	romantic partner; sweetheart	애인은 성별과 관계없이 연애 상대를 가리키는 말이에요. It means a romantic partner without stating the person's gender.
남자친구 · 여자친구 → 성별 표시 애인 → 성별 표시 안 함 —	Boyfriend and girlfriend indicate gender; 애인 does not.	So 남자친구 and 여자친구 give gender information, but 애인 doesn't.
이쪽은 제 남자친구예요 ijjogeun je namjachinguyeyo	This is my boyfriend.	이쪽은 제 남자친구예요. This is my boyfriend. 이쪽 is a polite way to indicate a person who is here with you.
이쪽은 제 여자친구예요 ijjogeun je yeojachinguyeyo	This is my girlfriend.	이쪽은 제 여자친구예요. This is my girlfriend.
이쪽은 제 애인이에요 ijjogeun je aeinieyo	This is my romantic partner.	이쪽은 제 애인이에요. This is my partner. Here, 애인 keeps the partner's gender unstated.



Grammar / Structure Notes

남자친구 · 여자친구 · 애인

남자친구 · 여자친구 · 애인 — boyfriend · girlfriend · romantic partner

Choose the word that fits the person and context.

남자친구

남자친구 — boyfriend

Usually a male romantic partner.

여자친구

여자친구 — girlfriend

Usually a female romantic partner.

애인

애인 — romantic partner; sweetheart

The word itself does not specify gender.

남자친구 · 여자친구 → 성별 표시 애인 → 성별 표시 안 함

남자친구 · 여자친구 → 성별 표시

애인 → 성별 표시 안 함 — Boyfriend and girlfriend indicate gender; 애인 does not.

All three refer to a romantic relationship.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
제 남자친구예요	je namjachinguyeyo
남자친구예요	namjachinguyeyo
제 애인이예요	je aeinieyo

Self-Check

- 1 Say 남자친구 / 여자친구 / 애인 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
반려동물 / 주인 / 산책 Talking About Pets as Family	A1 Vocabulary: compare 반려동물 / 주인 / 산책 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-FAM-006
사람 / 친구 / 남자 / 여자 / 아이 Your First Words for People	A1 Vocabulary: compare 사람 / 친구 / 남자 / 여자 / 아이 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-FAM-001
생일 / 생년 / 생일날 Talking About Your Birthday as Personal Information	A1 Vocabulary: compare 생일 / 생년 / 생일날 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-FAM-007
아들 / 딸 / 손자 / 손녀 Talking About Children and Grandchildren	A1 Vocabulary: compare 아들 / 딸 / 손자 / 손녀 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-FAM-003

My Notes

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