



Korean Ladder Study Note

열 / 스물 / 서른 / 마흔

Native Korean Numbers by Tens

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Vocabulary Numbers & Counting	열 / 스물 / 서른 / 마흔 Native Korean Numbers by Tens

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

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

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Az5zDkMitf0>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Okay, real beginner panic. I learned 이십 for twenty, but then someone asked my age and said 스무 살. Which twenty is right?

좋은 질문이에요. 이십 is Sino-Korean twenty. For age, Korean usually reaches for the native form, 스무 살.

오늘의 패턴은 고유어 십 단위예요. In English, these are the native Korean tens you need for age, clock hours, and many counters.

좋아요. Now the important short form for age: before 살, 스물 becomes 스무.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	준호 씨는 스무 살이에요? —	Junho, are you twenty years old?
Junho	아니요. 서른 살이에요. —	No. I am thirty years old.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	몇 시에 만나요? —	What time shall we meet?
Junho	두 시에 만나요. —	Let's meet at two o'clock.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
열 / 스물 / 서른 / 마흔 yeol / seumul / seoreun / maheun	10 / 20 / 30 / 40	오늘의 패턴은 고유어 십 단위예요. In English, these are the native Korean tens you need for age, clock hours, and many counters.
열, 스물, 서른, 마흔 yeol, seumul, seoreun, maheun	Native Korean Numbers by Tens	열, 스물, 서른, 마흔. In English: ten, twenty, thirty, forty. Keep each one short and clear.
쉰, 예순, 일흔, 여든, 아흔 swin, yesun, ilheun, yeodeun, aheun	Native Korean Numbers by Tens	그리고 쉰, 예순, 일흔, 여든, 아흔. In English: fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety.
쉰 swin	Native Korean Numbers by Tens	좋아요. 쉰 is short. Do not stretch it into English fifty.
스물 → 스무 살 seumul → seumu sal	twenty → twenty years old	좋아요. Now the important short form for age: before 살, 스물 becomes 스무.
스무 살이에요 seumu sal-ieyo	I am twenty years old.	들어 보세요. 스무 살이에요. In English: I am twenty years old.
서른 살, 마흔 살 seoreun sal, maheun sal	thirty years old, forty years old	맞아요. 서른 살, 마흔 살 keep their full tens. In English: thirty years old, forty years old.
스무 살 seumu sal	twenty years old	Keep this card in your head. Before 살, 스물 changes to 스무. That is the irregular form beginners need.



Grammar / Structure Notes

열 / 스물 / 서른 / 마흔

열 / 스물 / 서른 / 마흔 — 10 / 20 / 30 / 40

Native tens for age and hours

스물 → 스무 살

스물 → 스무 살 — twenty → twenty years old

Final ㄹ drops before 살

스무 살이에요

스무 + 살 + 이에요 — I am twenty years old.

들어 보세요. 스무 살이에요. In English: I am twenty years old.

스무 살이에요

스무 + 살 + 이에요 — I am twenty years old.

So... 스무 살이에요? The age form is shorter than 스물.

서른 살, 마흔 살

서른 + 살, + 마흔 + 살 — thirty years old, forty years old

맞아요. 서른 살, 마흔 살 keep their full tens. In English: thirty years old, forty years old.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
열, 스물, 서른, 마흔	yeol, seumul, seoreun, maheun
췌, 예순, 일흔, 여든, 아흔	swin, yesun, ilheun, yeodeun, aheun
췌	swin
열 시예요	yeol si-yeyo
스무 살이에요	seumu sal-ieyo
스물 살이에요	seumul sal-ieyo
두 시	du si

Self-Check

- 1 Say 열 / 스물 / 서른 / 마흔 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
몇 개예요 Your First Counters for Things and People	A1 Vocabulary: compare 몇 개예요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-NUM-005
영 / 공 / 백 / 천 / 만 Reading Big Sino Numbers Out Loud	A1 Vocabulary: compare 영 / 공 / 백 / 천 / 만 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-NUM-002
층 / 호 / 번 Reading Floors, Room Numbers, and Bus Numbers	A1 Vocabulary: compare 층 / 호 / 번 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-NUM-006
하나 · 둘 · 셋 · 넷 손으로 세는 고유어 수 1~10	A1 Vocabulary: compare 하나 · 둘 · 셋 · 넷 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-NUM-003

My Notes

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