



Korean Ladder Study Note

아까 / 조금 전에 / 방금

Talking About What Just Happened

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Vocabulary Time & Date	아까 / 조금 전에 / 방금 Talking About What Just Happened

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-TIM-007>

Watch the full video on YouTube

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

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Here is my problem. In English I say, “I just ate,” “I saw him earlier,” and “I called a little while ago.” In Korean, do I use the same word every time?

좋은 질문이에요. Korean separates the immediate past into a few natural time words.

Today, focus on three words: 아까, 조금 전에, and 방금. They all point to the past, but the feeling is different.

프레임부터 잡을게요. 방금 means just now, very close to now. 조금 전에 means a little while ago. 아까 means earlier today, or earlier in the same situation.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	방금 왔어요? —	Did you just arrive?
Junho	네, 방금 왔어요. —	Yes, I just arrived.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	커피는 주문했어요? —	Did you order coffee?
Junho	네, 조금 전에 주문했어요. —	Yes, I ordered a little while ago.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
아까 · 조금 전에 · 방금 akka · jogeum jeon-e · banggeum	earlier · a little while ago · just now	Today, focus on three words: 아까, 조금 전에, and 방금. They all point to the past, but the feeling is different.
방금 → 조금 전에 → 아까 banggeum → jogeum jeon-e → akka	just now → a little while ago → earlier	프레임부터 잡을게요. 방금 means just now, very close to now. 조금 전에 means a little while ago. 아까 means earlier today, or earlier in the same situation.
시간 말 + 과거형 sigan mal + gwageohyeong	time word + past tense	그리고 아주 중요해요. These words often pair with past tense verbs, like 먹었어요, 봤어요, 왔어요.
방금 왔어요 banggeum wasseoyo	I just arrived.	첫 번째 예문이에요. 방금 왔어요. It means, “I just arrived.”
조금 전에 전화했어요 jogeum jeon-e jeonhwahaesseoyo	I called a little while ago.	두 번째 예문이에요. 조금 전에 전화했어요. It means, “I called a little while ago.”
아까 봤어요 akka bwasseoyo	I saw it earlier.	세 번째 예문이에요. 아까 봤어요. It means, “I saw it earlier.”
조금 전에 jogeum jeon-e	a little while ago	Now let’s unpack the shape. 전에 means before. 조금 means a little. So 조금 전에 is literally “a little before,” but naturally, “a little while ago.”
방금 banggeum	just now	방금 is one word. It means just now. Use it when the action is extremely fresh.



Grammar / Structure Notes

아까 · 조금 전에 · 방금

아까 · 조금 전에 · 방금 — earlier · a little while ago · just now

All refer to something that already happened.

방금 → 조금 전에 → 아까

방금 → 조금 전에 → 아까 — just now → a little while ago → earlier

From closest to now to a bit farther back.

시간 말 + 과거형

시간 말 + 과거형 — time word + past tense

Most retelling uses past tense.

방금 왔어요

방금 + 왔어요 — I just arrived.

첫 번째 예문이에요. 방금 왔어요. It means, “I just arrived.”

방금 왔어요

방금 + 왔어요 — I just arrived.

방금 is very close to now. Maybe the door just closed a second ago.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
방금 왔어요	banggeum wasseoyo
조금 전에 전화했어요	jogeum jeon-e jeonhwahaesseyo
아까 봤어요	akka bwasseoyo
아까	akka

Self-Check

- 1 Say 아까 / 조금 전에 / 방금 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
며칠이에요 Reading Calendar Dates Out Loud	A1 Vocabulary: compare 며칠이에요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-TIM-005
새벽 / 한낮 / 해 질 녘 Naming Finer Parts of the Day	A1 Vocabulary: compare 새벽 / 한낮 / 해 질 녘 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-TIM-006
아침 / 점심 / 저녁 / 밤 The Parts of a Korean Day	A1 Vocabulary: compare 아침 / 점심 / 저녁 / 밤 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-TIM-002
오늘 / 내일 / 어제 Talking About Days	A1 Vocabulary: compare 오늘 / 내일 / 어제 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-TIM-001

My Notes

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