



Korean Ladder Study Note

어른 먼저 드세요

Table Seniority and Manners with Elders

Level	Topic	Focus
A2 · Elementary TOPIK 2	Culture Etiquette	어른 먼저 드세요 Table Seniority and Manners with Elders

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-CULTURE-ETQ-003>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEpWUOEwB-c>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

I have a real question. If I sit down at a Korean dinner and I am hungry, can I just pick up my spoon and start eating?

Usually, no. When an elder is at the table, we wait until the eldest person lifts their spoon first.

This is not about being stiff. It is a small way to show respect. In Korean, 어른 means an elder or respected adult.

Our keeper sentence is 어른 먼저 드세요. In English, elders, please eat first, or please go ahead and eat first.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	이모님, 먼저 드세요. —	Auntie, please eat first.
Junho	제가 먼저 따라 드릴게요. —	I will pour for you first.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	두 손으로 따라 드리면 좋아요. —	It is good to pour with two hands.
Junho	네, 천천히 같이 먹어요. —	Yes, let's eat slowly together.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
어른 eo-reun	elder; respected adult	This is not about being stiff. It is a small way to show respect. In Korean, 어른 means an elder or respected adult.
어른 먼저 드세요 eo-reun meon-jeo deu-se-yo	Elders, please eat first	Our keeper sentence is 어른 먼저 드세요. In English, elders, please eat first, or please go ahead and eat first.
숟가락을 드셨어요 sut-ga-ra-geul deu-syeo-sseo-yo	They lifted the spoon	Right. You can quietly watch the table. When the eldest lifts the spoon, everyone can begin naturally.
먼저 드세요 meon-jeo deu-se-yo	Please eat first / please go ahead	If you want to be polite, you can say 어른 먼저 드세요, or to one elder, 먼저 드세요.
두 손으로 따라 드려요 du so-neu-ro tta-ra deu-ryeo-yo	I pour for them with two hands	Good. Now the second table manner is drinks. You usually pour for elders before yourself, and you use two hands.
공손하게 따라 드려요 gong-son-ha-ge tta-ra deu-ryeo-yo	I pour politely for them	Exactly. The two hands make the same action feel warmer and more respectful.
서로 따라 줘요 seo-ro tta-ra jwo-yo	People pour for each other	One more important point. At a drinking table, you usually do not fill your own glass. Someone pours for you, and you pour for others.
천천히 같이 드세요 cheon-cheon-hi ga-chi deu-se-yo	Please eat slowly together	Yes. And the third table manner is pace. You do not race ahead, finish early, and leave the elder behind.



Grammar / Structure Notes

어른

어른 — elder; respected adult

Age and relationship shape dining manners in Korea.

어른 먼저 드세요

어른 먼저 드세요 — Elders, please eat first

Use 드세요 to speak respectfully about eating.

어른 먼저 드세요

어른 + 먼저 + 드세요 — Elders, please eat first

Let's break that sentence into three useful parts.

어른 먼저 드세요

어른 + 먼저 + 드세요 — Elders, please eat first

어른 means elder. 먼저 means first. 드세요 is the respectful way to say please eat.

숟가락을 드셨어요

숟가락을 드셨어요 — They lifted the spoon

At the table, the eldest person's spoon often signals the start.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
먼저 드세요	meon-jeo deu-se-yo
어른 먼저 드세요	eo-reun meon-jeo deu-se-yo

Self-Check

- 1 Say 어른 먼저 드세요 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
나이 / 띠 / 빠른 년생 Why Koreans Ask Your Age First	A2 Culture: compare 나이 / 띠 / 빠른 년생 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-CULTURE-ETQ-002
신발 벗고 들어오세요 Shoes, Floors, and Korean Homes	A2 Culture: compare 신발 벗고 들어오세요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-CULTURE-ETQ-001
경조사 예절 결혼식·장례식 봉투와 조의금	B2 Culture: compare 경조사 예절 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-CULTURE-ETQ-001
고개 숙여 인사 How Koreans Bow and Greet Elders	A1 Culture: compare 고개 숙여 인사 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-CULTURE-ETQ-003

My Notes

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