



Korean Ladder Study Note

줄 서기 / 정숙

Public-Place Manners in Korea

Level	Topic	Focus
A2 · Elementary TOPIK 2	Culture Etiquette	줄 서기 / 정숙 Public-Place Manners in Korea

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-CULTURE-ETQ-004>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqF3C4UyxEI>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Okay, real question. At a Korean bank, if a counter seat is empty, can I just walk up? And on the subway, is it rude if I talk like I am in a cafe?

Those two moments trip a lot of English speakers. In Korea, public places often run on quiet order — wait your turn, and keep your voice soft.

One key word on signs is 정숙. 정숙 means quietness or silence — the formal word you see on signs for keeping shared spaces quiet.

And for lines, we say 줄 서기. That is the habit of lining up — at ticket machines, buses, cafes, and service counters.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	여기 번호표 있어요? —	Is there a number ticket here?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	네. 번호표를 뽑고 기다리세요. —	Yes. Please take a number ticket and wait.
Hana	알겠어요. 줄을 설게요. —	Got it. I'll wait in line.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
정숙 jeong-suk	quietness; silence (formal, on signs)	One key word on signs is 정숙. 정숙 means quietness or silence — the formal word you see on signs for keeping shared spaces quiet.
줄 서기 jul seo-gi	lining up; queuing	And for lines, we say 줄 서기. That is the habit of lining up — at ticket machines, buses, cafes, and service counters.
공공장소 매너 gong-gong-jang-so mae-neo	public-place manners	Why does this matter? Because if you skip the line or speak loudly on a quiet train, you stand out fast. These manners help you move smoothly.
줄을 서요 ju-reul seo-yo	We line up / wait in line	Let's unpack the useful sentence 줄을 서요. 줄 means the line. 을 marks the object. 서요 is from 서다, to stand. Together, 줄을 서요 means we line up / wait in line.
표를 살 때 줄을 서요 pyo-reul sal ttae ju-reul seo-yo	When buying tickets, we wait in line	Here is a natural example. 표를 살 때 줄을 서요. When we buy tickets, we wait in line.
조용히 해요 jo-yong-hi hae-yo	We keep quiet / keep our voice down	정숙 is the formal word on signs. In everyday speech we describe the habit as 조용히 해요. If you need to ask someone, you can say 조용히 해 주세요 — please keep your voice down.
조용히 해 주세요 jo-yong-hi hae ju-se-yo	Please keep your voice down	So on the subway, people usually just keep their voice down. They do not usually walk up to strangers and say 조용히 해 주세요, because that can sound confrontational.
번호표 beon-ho-pyo	number ticket	Third public habit: number tickets. At banks, clinics, and some government offices, you take a 번호표 first.



Grammar / Structure Notes

정숙

정숙 — quietness; silence (formal, on signs)

A noun used on public signs, not everyday chat.

줄 서기

줄 서기 — lining up; queuing

A core public habit in Korea.

공공장소 매너

공공장소 매너 — public-place manners

Small habits that help you blend in.

줄을 서요

줄 + 을 + 서요 — We line up / wait in line

Let's unpack the useful sentence 줄을 서요. 줄 means the line. 을 marks the object. 서요 is from 서다, to stand. Together, 줄을 서요 means we line up / wait in line.

줄을 서요

줄 + 을 + 서요 — We line up / wait in line

So do not think 서요 alone means lining up. The lining-up meaning comes from the whole idiom 줄을 서다.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
줄을 서요	ju-reul seo-yo
번호표를 뽑고 기다리세요	beon-ho-pyo-reul ppa-go gi-da-ri-se-yo

Self-Check

- 1 Say 줄 서기 / 정숙 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
빨리빨리 문화 Why Everyday Life in Korea Moves So Fast	A2 Culture: compare 빨리빨리 문화 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-CULTURE-ETQ-005
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
어른 먼저 드세요 Table Seniority and Manners with Elders	A2 Culture: compare 어른 먼저 드세요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-CULTURE-ETQ-003

My Notes

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