



Korean Ladder Study Note

해요체

Choosing Between Two Polite Styles

Level	Topic	Focus
A2 · Elementary TOPIK 2	Honorifics Speech Levels	해요체 Choosing Between Two Polite Styles

Study Links

[Open this lesson on Korean Ladder](https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-HON-LVL-001)

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-HON-LVL-001>

[Watch the full video on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMa50URhbY)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMa50URhbY>

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

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Core Idea

Okay, real question. I learned 해요 for polite Korean... so why does the subway announcement sound totally different?

Right? It announces something like 내리십니다, not 내려요. Are they being extra polite, or is it a whole different style?

좋은 질문이에요. There are two polite styles, and they're sisters: 해요체 and 합니다체. 같은 뜻, 다른 옷이에요.

해요체 ends in ~요. It's the everyday polite — warm, friendly, what you use with almost everyone, every day.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	안녕하십니까. 회의를 시작하겠습니다. —	Hello. I'll begin the meeting. (합니다체 — formal)
Hana	네, 자료 여기 있어요. —	Yes, the materials are here. (해요체 — casual-polite, to a close colleague)



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	감사합니다. 그럼 발표를 시작합니다. —	Thank you. Then I'll start the presentation. (back to 합니다체)

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
해요체 / 합니다체 haeyoche / hamnidache	the casual-polite style / the formal-polite style	좋은 질문이에요. There are two polite styles, and they're sisters: 해요체 and 합니다체. 같은 뜻, 다른 옷이에요.
해요체 ~요 haeyoche ~yo	everyday polite — cafes, friends-of-friends, daily life	해요체 ends in ~요. It's the everyday polite — warm, friendly, what you use with almost everyone, every day.
합니다체 ~버니다 / ~습니다 hamnidache ~mnida / ~seumnida	formal polite — news, presentations, first business meetings	합니다체 ends in ~버니다 or ~습니다. It's the formal, on-the-record polite — news, presentations, first business meetings.
커피를 마셔요 keopireul masyeoyo	I drink coffee. (해요체 — casual-polite)	들어 보세요. 해요체로는 — 커피를 마셔요. 'I drink coffee,' the friendly way.
커피를 마십니다 keopireul masimnida	I drink coffee. (합니다체 — formal-polite)	And in 합니다체 — 커피를 마십니다. Same coffee, same meaning, but it now stands at attention.
마십니다 masimnida	(someone) drinks — formal-polite	이 끝을 보세요. 마십 + 니다. The ~ㅁ merges into 시 to make 십, then 니다 closes it.
마셔요 masyeoyo	(someone) drinks — casual-polite	Compare the casual ending: 마셔 + 요. The ~요 is what makes it 해요체.
뜻은 같아요 tteuseun gatayo	The meaning is the same.	맞아요. 뜻은 같아요. 해요체 is like business-casual; 합니다체 is the suit and tie.



Grammar / Structure Notes

해요체 / 합니다체

해요체 / 합니다체 — the casual-polite style / the formal-polite style

Same meaning, different level of formality.

해요체 ~요

해요체 ~요 — everyday polite — cafes, friends-of-friends, daily life

Soft and friendly.

합니다체 ~습니다 / ~습니다

합니다체 ~습니다 / ~습니다 — formal polite — news, presentations, first business meetings

Crisp and official.

커피를 마셔요

커피를 마셔요 — I drink coffee. (해요체 — casual-polite)

Ends in ~요.

커피를 마십니다

커피를 마십니다 — I drink coffee. (합니다체 — formal-polite)

Ends in ~습니다.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
감사합니다	gamsahamnida
고마워요	gomawoyo

Self-Check

- 1 Say 해요체 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
감사합니다 / 죄송합니다 Formal Thanks and Apologies	A1 Honorifics: compare 감사합니다 / 죄송합니다 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-HON-LVL-002
요 Polite and Casual Korean	A1 Honorifics: compare 요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-HON-LVL-001
하계체 The Familiar Speech Level Elders Use	C1 Honorifics: compare 하계체 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-HON-LVL-001
하십시오체 The Formal Speech Level for Announcements	B1 Honorifics: compare 하십시오체 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-HON-LVL-001

My Notes

Free Korean lessons, one rung at a time. This PDF, the website, and the video lessons are free for personal study.