



Korean Ladder Study Note

존댓말이 꼭 필요한 순간

When Polite Speech Is Non-Negotiable

Level	Topic	Focus
A2 · Elementary TOPIK 2	Honorifics Speech Levels	존댓말이 꼭 필요한 순간 When Polite Speech Is Non-Negotiable

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

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

Watch the full video on YouTube

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

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Okay, real panic question. A classmate looked my age and smiled, so I almost said 아, 안녕. Is that fine on day one?

좋은 질문이에요. 나이가 비슷해 보여도, 처음에는 존댓말이 안전해요. In English, even if someone looks your age, polite speech is the safe start.

오늘의 핵심은 이거예요. 존댓말이 꼭 필요한 순간. In English, the moments when polite speech is non-negotiable.

첫째, 처음 만난 사람이에요. First meetings. 모르는 사람에게는 존댓말로 시작하세요. In English, with strangers and first meetings, start polite.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	안녕하세요. 처음 뵙겠습니다. —	Hello. Nice to meet you. (formal)



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	안녕하세요. 만나서 반갑습니다. —	Hello. Nice to meet you. (formal)
Hana	오늘 날씨가 정말 좋네요. —	The weather is really nice today.
Junho	네, 이쪽에 앉세요. —	Yes — please sit over here.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
존댓말이 꼭 필요한 순간 jondaetmari kkok piryohan sungan	Moments when polite speech is required	오늘의 핵심은 이거예요. 존댓말이 꼭 필요한 순간. In English, the moments when polite speech is non-negotiable.
처음 만난 사람 → 존댓말 cheoeum mannan saram → jondaetmal	First meeting → polite speech	첫째, 처음 만난 사람이에요. First meetings. 모르는 사람에게는 존댓말로 시작하세요. In English, with strangers and first meetings, start polite.
윗사람 / 연장자 → 존댓말 witsaram / yeonjangja → jondaetmal	Seniors and elders → polite speech	둘째, 나이가 위인 분, 선배, 윗사람이에요. Elders and seniors. 이분들께는 존댓말이 기본이에요. In English, with elders and seniors, polite speech is the default.
서비스 상황 → 존댓말 seobiseu sanghwang → jondaetmal	Service situations → polite speech	셋째, 가게, 식당, 카페 같은 서비스 상황이에요. In stores and restaurants, both sides usually stay in polite speech.
기본은 존댓말 giboneun jondaetmal	The default is polite speech	So the pattern is: first meeting, elders, service staff — 존댓말이 기본이에요.
존댓말 = 안전한 기본 jondaetmal = anjeonhan giban	Polite speech = the safe default	맞아요. 한국어에서는 존댓말이 안전한 기본이에요. In English, polite speech is the safe default, not the special upgrade.
반말 = 허락 후 banmal = heorak hu	Casual speech = after permission	반말은 친해진 다음에, 상대가 허락할 때 쓰는 말이에요. In English, casual speech comes later, after permission.
서비스에서는 존댓말 seobiseuseoneun jondaetmal	In service settings, stay polite	서비스 상황에서는 나이가 어려 보여도 존댓말이 자연스러워요. In English, in service situations, polite speech still sounds natural.



Grammar / Structure Notes

존댓말이 꼭 필요한 순간

존댓말이 꼭 필요한 순간 — Moments when polite speech is required

default to 존댓말

처음 만난 사람 → 존댓말

처음 만난 사람 → 존댓말 — First meeting → polite speech

첫째, 처음 만난 사람이에요. First meetings. 모르는 사람에게는 존댓말로 시작하세요. In English, with strangers and first meetings, start polite.

윗사람 / 연장자 → 존댓말

윗사람 / 연장자 → 존댓말 — Seniors and elders → polite speech

둘째, 나이가 위인 분, 선배, 윗사람이에요. Elders and seniors. 이분들께는 존댓말이 기본이에요. In English, with elders and seniors, polite speech is the default.

서비스 상황 → 존댓말

서비스 상황 → 존댓말 — Service situations → polite speech

셋째, 가게, 식당, 카페 같은 서비스 상황이에요. In stores and restaurants, both sides usually stay in polite speech.

처음 뵙겠습니다.

처음 + 뵙겠습니다 + . — Nice to meet you. (humble / first meeting)

들어 보세요. 첫 만남에서 자주 쓰는 문장이예요 — 처음 뵙겠습니다. In English, nice to meet you, in a careful first-meeting style.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
처음 뵙겠습니다	cheoeum boepgetseumnida.
처음 뵙겠습니다.	cheoeum boepgetseumnida.
이거 얼마예요?	igeo eolmayeyo?

Self-Check

- 1 Say 존댓말이 꼭 필요한 순간 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
편하게 하세요 / 말씀 낮추세요 Inviting Someone to Drop the Formality	A2 Honorifics: compare 편하게 하세요 / 말씀 낮추세요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-HON-LVL-004
해 주세요 Levels of Asking a Favor	A2 Honorifics: compare 해 주세요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-HON-LVL-002
해요체 Choosing Between Two Polite Styles	A2 Honorifics: compare 해요체 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-HON-LVL-001
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

My Notes

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