



Korean Ladder Study Note

Korean Honorifics

세요 and 께서

Level	Topic	Focus
A2 · Elementary TOPIK 2	Honorifics Subject Honorifics	Korean Honorifics 세요 and 께서

Study Links

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

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

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olfz-GdxWFI>

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

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Core Idea

Okay, real question. When my Korean boss walks into the room, do I really have to change the whole sentence?

And what is that little 세요 I keep hearing everywhere — 앉으세요, 드세요?

좋은 질문이에요. Korean has three small tools for respect. Today we learn 께서, 시, and 세요.

께서 marks the honored person as the subject. 시 goes inside the verb. 세요 is a warm, polite ending.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	하나 씨, 할머니께서 지금 뭐 하세요? —	Hana, what is your grandmother doing now?
Hana	할머니께서 주무세요. —	My grandmother is sleeping.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	아, 그러시군요. 조용히 할게요. —	Oh, I see. I'll be quiet.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
께서 · 시 · 세요 kkeseo · si · seyo	Three tools for showing respect	좋은 질문이에요. Korean has three small tools for respect. Today we learn께서, 시, and 세요.
께서 / 시 / 세요 kkeseo / si / seyo	marker · in the verb · polite ending	께서 marks the honored person as the subject. 시 goes inside the verb. 세요 is a warm, polite ending.
선생님께서 오십니다 seonsaengnimkkese o osimnida	The teacher is coming.	Here is our clean model sentence. 선생님께서 오십니다. In English, the teacher is coming.
이/가 →께서 i/ga →kkeseo	Honored subject marker	첫 번째 도구.께서는 주체 높임 조사예요. In English,께서 replaces 이 or 가 when the subject is someone you respect.
선생님께서 seonsaengnimkkese o	the teacher (honored subject)	So instead of 선생님이, the polite version is 선생님께서. The marker itself shows respect.
가다 →가시다 · 오다 →오시다 gada → gasida · oda → osida	Add 시 inside the verb to honor the doer	두 번째 도구. 시 goes inside the verb. 가다 becomes가시다, 오다 becomes 오시다. 시 lifts the action up with respect.
께서 + 시 kkeseo + si	honor the subject + honor the verb	So께서 marks the person, and 시 honors what they do. Two layers of polite.
-세요 -seyo	ONE ending, TWO jobs	세 번째 도구, 그리고 가장 중요해요. -세요 does two jobs. It can be a polite statement, AND it can be a polite request — please.



Grammar / Structure Notes

께서 · 시 · 세요

께서 · 시 · 세요 — Three tools for showing respect

Subject marker · verb honorific · polite ending

께서 / 시 / 세요

께서 / 시 / 세요 — marker · in the verb · polite ending

께서 marks the honored person as the subject. 시 goes inside the verb. 세요 is a warm, polite ending.

선생님께서 오십니다

선생님 + 께서 + 오 + 십니다 — The teacher is coming.

Here is our clean model sentence. 선생님께서 오십니다. In English, the teacher is coming.

선생님께서 오십니다

선생님께서 + 오십니다 — The teacher is coming.

들으세요. 선생님 is the teacher. 께서 says this subject is honored. 오십니다 is come, in the polite formal form.

이/가 → 께서

이/가 → 께서 — Honored subject marker

선생님이 → 선생님께서

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
그러시군요	geureosigunyo
앉으세요	anjeuseyo
선생님께서 오십니다	seonsaengnimkkeseo osimnida
완벽해요	wanbyeokhaeyo

Self-Check

- 1 Say Korean Honorifics 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
-(으)시- Adding the Honorific Infix to Any Verb	B1 Honorifics: compare -(으)시- with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-HON-SUB-002
계시다 / 드시다 / 주무시다 / 연세 / 진지 Special Honorific Words	B1 Honorifics: compare 계시다 / 드시다 / 주무시다 / 연세 / 진지 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-HON-SUB-001
압존법 When to Lower Honorifics in Front of a Higher Superior	C1 Honorifics: compare 압존법 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-HON-SUB-001
님 / 씨 Korean Titles and Address	A2 Honorifics: compare 님 / 씨 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-HON-ADR-001

My Notes

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