



Korean Ladder Study Note

감 / 꺾 / 캄

Telling Apart ㄱ, ㄲ, and ㅋ in Real Words

Level	Topic	Focus
A2 · Elementary TOPIK 2	Pronunciation Consonants	감 / 꺾 / 캄 Telling Apart ㄱ, ㄲ, and ㅋ in Real Words

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-PRON-CNS-002>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSNE1a5PC-w>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Okay, real talk. When I hear 감, 꺾, and 캄, they all sound like the same 'gam' to me. Am I broken?

안 broken이에요. English has one 'g'. Korean splits that one sound into three doors.

세 소리의 차이는 두 가지예요. 숨(breath)과 목의 긴장(throat tension). 이 두 개만 조절하면 돼요.

먼저 ㄱ. 이걸 plain 소리예요. 숨을 거의 안 내보내고, 목도 편해요.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	준호 씨, 칼 좀 주세요. —	Junho, please pass the knife.
Junho	네, 여기요. 감도 드릴까요? —	Sure, here. Shall I give you a persimmon too?
Hana	네, 감 하나 주세요. 꺾빳했어요, 고마워요. —	Yes, one persimmon please. I forgot — thanks.



Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
숨 + 목의 긴장 sum + mogui ginjang	breath + throat tension	세 소리의 차이는 두 가지예요. 숨(breath)과 목의 긴장(throat tension). 이 두 개만 조절하면 돼요.
ㄱ giyeok	plain — soft, almost no breath	먼저 ㄱ. 이건 plain 소리예요. 숨을 거의 안 내보내고, 목도 편해요.
ㄲ ssang-giyeok	tense — squeeze the throat, hold the breath	다음은 ㄲ. tense 소리예요. 목을 꼭 조이고, 숨은 참아요. 짧고 단단하게.
ㅋ kieuk	aspirated — push a strong puff of air	마지막은 ㅋ. aspirated 소리예요. 숨을 세게 확 내보내요. 손을 입 앞에 대면 바람이 느껴져요.
감 · 째 · 캄 gam · kkam · kam	persimmon · blink · dark (as in 캄캄하다)	이제 진짜 단어로 볼게요. 감, 째, 캄. 잘 들어 보세요.
감 gam	Telling Apart ㄱ, ㄲ, and ㅋ in Real Words	감은 과일 persimmon이에요. 부드럽게 — 감.
째 kkam	Telling Apart ㄱ, ㄲ, and ㅋ in Real Words	째는 목을 꼭 조여요. 째째째 — blink. 째.
캄 kam	Telling Apart ㄱ, ㄲ, and ㅋ in Real Words	캄은 숨을 확 — 캄캄하다, pitch dark. 손에 바람 느껴져요? 캄.



Grammar / Structure Notes

숨 + 목의 긴장

숨 + 목의 긴장 — breath + throat tension

Change these two things and the sound changes.

ㄱ

ㄱ — plain — soft, almost no breath

Relaxed throat, tiny puff of air.

ㄲ

ㄲ — tense — squeeze the throat, hold the breath

Short, hard, no puff of air.

ㅋ

ㅋ — aspirated — push a strong puff of air

Feel the breath on your hand.

감 · 깜 · 캄

감 + · + 깜 + · + 캄 — persimmon · blink · dark (as in 캄캄하다)

이제 진짜 단어로 볼게요. 감, 깜, 캄. 잘 들어 보세요.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
감	gam
깜	kkam
캄	kam
칼	kal
칼 좀 주세요	kal jom juseyo
짜다	jjada
저는 자고 싶어요	jeo-neun jago sipeoyo
빵	ppang

Self-Check

1 Say 감 / 깜 / 캄 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
ㅅ Plain and Tense Sibilants	A2 Pronunciation: compare ㅅ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-PRON-CNS-001
ㄷ / ㅌ / ㅈ The Three Korean D/T Sounds	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㄷ / ㅌ / ㅈ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-006
ㄹ 발음 The Korean R/L Sound at the Start and Middle of Words	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㄹ 발음 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-002
ㅇ의 두 얼굴 첫소리 묵음과 받침 받침 'ㅇ'	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅇ의 두 얼굴 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-004

My Notes

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