



## Korean Ladder Study Note

# 과 / 거 / 개 / 계

## Korea's 'W' Glide Vowels

Level	Topic	Focus
A2 · Elementary TOPIK 2	Pronunciation Vowels	과 / 거 / 개 / 계 Korea's 'W' Glide Vowels

## Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

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

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kk2WxBkEiMQ>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

## Core Idea

Okay, real talk. When I see 과일, I want to say it like 가일. Where did the 'w' even go?

Same. And 뭐 comes out too flat for me, almost like 머. I lose the round start every time.

그게 제일 흔한 실수예요. That is the most common mistake. These vowels are two mouth positions sliding into one sound.

이런 모음을 이중 모음이라고 해요. We call them compound vowels: a quick 'w' glide, then the main vowel.

## Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	뭐 드릴까요? —	What can I get you?
Hana	사과 주스요. 과일 좋아해요. —	Apple juice, please. I like fruit.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	왜 웃어요? —	Why are you smiling?
Hana	웬 서비스가 이렇게 많아요? —	What's with all these free extras?
Junho	뭐, 과일, 왜, 웬 —	겨, 나, 새, 게
Hana	입술 먼저, 한 번에 미끄러져요. —	Lips first, then one smooth glide.

## Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
이중 모음 ijung moeum	compound vowel	이런 모음을 이중 모음이라고 해요. We call them compound vowels: a quick 'w' glide, then the main vowel.
ㅏ + ㅑ = ㅜㅓ o + a = wa	round, then open: wa	먼저 ㅜㅓ예요. The vowel ㅜㅓ is made from ㅏ plus ㅑ. Round your lips like ㅏ, then open to ㅑ.
사과 sagwa	apple	예를 들면 사과. Apple. 사, 과. The second syllable is a clear ㅑ, not 가.
ㅜ + ㅓ = ㅜㅓ u + eo = wo	round, then relax: wo	다음은 ㅜㅓ예요. The vowel ㅜㅓ is made from ㅜ plus ㅓ. Round to ㅜ, then relax into ㅓ.
뭐 mwo	what	가장 흔한 단어는 뭐예요. It means 'what'. It is ㅜㅓ, with a small round start, never just ㅓ.
ㅏ + ㅔ = ㅞ o + ae = wae	round, then bright: wae	이제 ㅞ예요. The vowel ㅞ is made from ㅏ plus ㅔ. Round to ㅏ, then brighten into ㅔ.
왜 wae	why	예를 들면 왜. It means 'why'. ㅞ is one smooth slide, not two separate beats.
ㅜ + ㅔ = ㅟ u + e = we	round, then close: we	마지막은 ㅟ예요. The vowel ㅟ is made from ㅜ plus ㅔ. Round to ㅜ, then close into ㅔ.



## Grammar / Structure Notes

### 이중 모음

이중 모음 — compound vowel

a fast round glide plus a full vowel

#### ㅛ + ㅓ = ㅛ

ㅛ + ㅓ + ㅓ = ㅛ — round, then open: wa

먼저 ㅛ예요. The vowel ㅛ is made from 오 plus 아. Round your lips like 오, then open to 아.

### 사과

사과 — apple

과 = g + wa; keep the glide

#### ㅜ + ㅓ = ㅜ

ㅜ + ㅓ + ㅓ = ㅜ — round, then relax: wo

다음은 ㅜ예요. The vowel ㅜ is made from 우 plus 어. Round to 우, then relax into 어.

### 뭐

뭐 — what

m + wo; lips round first

## Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
과일	gwa-il
뭐	mwo
왜	wae

## Self-Check

- 1 Say ㅛ / ㅜ / ㅛ / ㅜ 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
ㅏ The Two Open Vowels Beginners Blur	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅏ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson <a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-006">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-006</a>
ㅓ The Vowels That Now Sound the Same	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅓ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson <a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-002">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-002</a>
ㅗ / ㅛ / ㅜ / ㅠ The 'Y' Glide Vowels	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅗ / ㅛ / ㅜ / ㅠ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson <a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-004">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-004</a>
ㅑ The Vowels English Speakers Mix Up	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅑ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson <a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-001">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-001</a>

## My Notes

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