



Korean Ladder Study Note

엄마 / 아빠 / 형 / 오빠

Naming Your Family

Level	Topic	Focus
A2 · Elementary TOPIK 2	Vocabulary Family & People	엄마 / 아빠 / 형 / 오빠 Naming Your Family

Study Links

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

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

[Watch the full video on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hh9Su6yvksM)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hh9Su6yvksM>

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

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Core Idea

So here's my real question. My friend Soyeon calls her older brother 오빠, but my friend Minjun calls his older brother 형. Same brother — different word. What's going on?

좋은 질문이에요. That is a great question, Brian. And the answer is the heart of today's lesson.

In Korean, the word for a sibling depends on YOUR gender, not theirs. So the same older brother is 형 if a boy is speaking, and 오빠 if a girl is speaking.

맞아요. The brother doesn't change. YOU change the word. 내가 누구냐에 따라 달라져요 — it depends on who I am.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	준호 씨, 형제가 있어요? —	Junho, do you have any siblings?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	네, 누나가 한 명 있어요. —	Yes, I have one older sister.
Hana	저는 오빠가 있어요. 그리고 여동생도 있어요. —	I have an older brother. And a younger sister too.
Junho	아, 하나 씨는 오빠, 저는 누나. 재미있네요. —	Ah, you say 오빠, I say 누나. Interesting.
Hana	저는 오빠가 있어요. —	I (a woman) have an older brother.
Junho	저는 누나가 있어요. —	I (a man) have an older sister.
Hana	저는 오빠가 있어요. —	I (a woman) have an older brother.
Junho	저는 누나가 있어요. —	I (a man) have an older sister.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
형 / 오빠 hyeong / oppa	older brother — chosen by the SPEAKER's gender	In Korean, the word for a sibling depends on YOUR gender, not theirs. So the same older brother is 형 if a boy is speaking, and 오빠 if a girl is speaking.
엄마 / 아빠 eomma / appa	mom / dad (casual, warm)	But first, the easy ones. 집에서 보통 엄마, 아빠라고 불러요. At home we usually say 엄마 for mom and 아빠 for dad — warm and casual, like 'mom' and 'dad.'
어머니 / 아버지 eomeoni / abeoji	mother / father (polite, formal)	그런데 정중하게 말할 때는 어머니, 아버지라고 해요. But in polite or formal situations, we say 어머니 for mother and 아버지 for father.
손위 호칭 sonwi hoching	older-sibling terms	Okay, parents are clear. Now back to the part that scares me — the brothers and sisters.
형 / 누나 hyeong / nuna	(boy speaking) older brother / older sister	남자가 말할 때예요. When a BOY is speaking: 형 is older brother, 누나 is older sister.
오빠 / 언니 oppa / eonni	(girl speaking) older brother / older sister	여자가 말할 때예요. When a GIRL is speaking: 오빠 is older brother, 언니 is older sister.



Word	Meaning	Example
형·누나 (남자) / 오빠·언니 (여자) hyeong·nuna / oppa·eonni	boy says 형·누나 — girl says 오빠·언니	Let me see if I've got the grid. I'm a guy, so I say 형 and 누나. Alice is a woman, so she says 오빠 and 언니.
동생 dongsaeng	younger sibling (any gender, any speaker)	아니요, 동생은 안 바뀌어요. No — for younger siblings, the word doesn't change. 동생 works for everyone, no matter who is speaking.

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Grammar / Structure Notes

형 / 오빠

형 / 오빠 — older brother — chosen by the SPEAKER's gender

Boy speaking → 형. Girl speaking → 오빠.

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엄마 / 아빠

엄마 / 아빠 — mom / dad (casual, warm)

Everyday home words — like 'mom' and 'dad.'

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Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
오빠	oppa
형	hyeong

Self-Check

- 1 Say 엄마 / 아빠 / 형 / 오빠 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
맵다 / 짜다 / 달다 / 시다 Describing How Food Tastes	A2 Vocabulary: compare 맵다 / 짜다 / 달다 / 시다 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-VOCAB-FOO-001
비 / 눈 / 바람 Talking About the Weather	A2 Vocabulary: compare 비 / 눈 / 바람 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-VOCAB-NAT-001
Counting in Korean Native vs Sino Numbers	A1 Vocabulary: compare Counting in Korean with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-NUM-001
공항 / 기차역 / 표 Getting Around While Traveling	B1 Vocabulary: compare 공항 / 기차역 / 표 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-VOCAB-TRV-001

My Notes

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