



Korean Ladder Study Note

-거든요

Explaining a Reason the Listener Didn't Know

Level	Topic	Focus
B1 · Intermediate TOPIK 3	Grammar Sentence Endings	-거든요 Explaining a Reason the Listener Didn't Know

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-GRAM-END-002>

Watch the full video on YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_hqbdWSb5Q

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Okay, real talk. My friend was late and said 길이 막혔거든요. I already know 막혔어요 means the road was jammed. So what is that ending거든요 doing?

좋은 질문이에요. 많은 학습자가 because만 생각해요. But Korean chooses the ending based on what the listener already knows.

오늘 패턴은거든요. In English, it gives background the other person did not know yet — like, the thing is, or see, here's why.

거든요는 상대가 모르는 이유나 배경을 알려 줄 때 써요. In English, you are handing them new information, not reminding them.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	오늘 저녁에 만날까요? —	Shall we meet this evening?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	오늘은 힘들 것 같아요. —	Today might be hard.
Hana	아, 왜요? —	Oh, why?
Junho	회사 회식이 있거든요. —	We have a work dinner, you see.
Hana	아, 그렇군요. 그러면 내일 봐요. —	Ah, I see. Then see you tomorrow.
Hana	아, 왜요? —	Oh, why?
Junho	회사 회식이 있거든요. —	We have a work dinner, you see.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
-거든요 -geodeunyo	here's why — new background for the listener	오늘 패턴은 거든요예요. In English, it gives background the other person did not know yet — like, the thing is, or see, here's why.
모르는 이유 → -거든요 moreuneun iyu → -geodeunyo	unknown reason → -거든요	거든요는 상대가 모르는 이유나 배경을 알려 줄 때 써요. In English, you are handing them new information, not reminding them.
길이 막혔거든요 giri makhyeotgeodeunyo	the road was jammed, you see	들어 보세요. 늦었어요. 길이 막혔거든요. First I say I'm late, then I give the reason they did not know.
약속이 있거든요 yaksogi itgeodeunyo	I have an appointment, you see	맞아요. 하나 더요. 오늘은 못 가요. 약속이 있거든요.
친구가 추천해 줬거든요 chinguga chucheonhae jwotgeodeunyo	a friend recommended it, you see	그리고 이런 말도 자주 해요. 이거 맛있어요. 친구가 추천해 줬거든요.
주장 + 이유(-거든요) jujang + iyu (-geodeunyo)	claim, then new reason	먼저 맛을 말하고, 그다음에 배경을 설명해 줘요. First the claim, then the new reason. That order feels very natural with the ending 거든요.
비가 와서 못 갔어요 biga waseo mot gasseoyo	it rained, so I couldn't go	아서/어서는 이유와 결과를 한 줄로 이어요. In English, it chains cause and result, like 비가 와서 못 갔어요.



Word	Meaning	Example
-아서/어서 = 연결 / -거든요 = 설명 -aseo/eoseo = link / -geodeunyo = explain	chain vs explanatory footnote	거든요는 따로 설명을 붙여 주는 느낌이에요. In English, it is more like adding a confiding footnote after your main point.



Grammar / Structure Notes

-거든요

-거든요 — here's why — new background for the listener

Use when the other person does not already know the reason.

모르는 이유 → -거든요

모르는 이유 → -거든요 — unknown reason → -거든요

New info for the listener

길이 막혔거든요

길 + 이 + 막혔 + 거든요 — the road was jammed, you see

들어 보세요. 늦었어요. 길이 막혔거든요. First I say I'm late, then I give the reason they did not know.

길이 막혔거든요

길 + 이 + 막혔 + 거든요 — road + jammed + explanatory ending

여기서 '길'은 명사예요. '이'는 주격 조사예요. And the ending 거든요 wraps the reason like a soft explanation.

길이 막혔거든요

길 + 이 + 막혔 + 거든요 — the road was jammed — new reason

So... 길이 막혔거든요? I'm giving a reason my friend didn't already know.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
거든요	geodeunyo
길이 막혔거든요	giri makhyeotgeodeunyo
선약이 있거든요	seonyagi itgeodeunyo

Self-Check

- 1 Say -거든요 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
-네요 / -군요 / -잖아요 Reacting, Realizing, and Reminding	B1 Grammar: compare -네요 / -군요 / -잖아요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-GRAM-END-001
-(으)ㄴ 수 있어요 / 없어요 Saying What You Can and Can't Do	A2 Grammar: compare -(으)ㄴ 수 있어요 / 없어요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-GRAM-END-004
-(으)ㄴ게요 Promising and Committing to Do Something	A2 Grammar: compare -(으)ㄴ게요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-GRAM-END-002
-(으)ㄴ까요? / -(으)ㄴ시다 Suggesting and Proposing Together	A1 Grammar: compare -(으)ㄴ까요? / -(으)ㄴ시다 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-GRAM-END-003

My Notes

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