



Korean Ladder Study Note

삼촌 / 이모 / 고모 / 외삼촌

Aunts and Uncles on Both Sides

Level	Topic	Focus
B1 · Intermediate TOPIK 3	Vocabulary Family & People	삼촌 / 이모 / 고모 / 외삼촌 Aunts and Uncles on Both Sides

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-VOCAB-FAM-001>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C9hVUZP3uZ4>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

My Korean friend said 고모, 이모, 삼촌, 외삼촌 in one story, and I completely lost the family tree.

In English, I just say aunt or uncle. But Korean often asks, mother's side or father's side?

맞아요. Korean family words often tell you the side of the family. 친가는 father's side, and 외가는 mother's side.

오늘의 핵심은 네 단어예요. 삼촌, 외삼촌, 이모, 고모. We sort them by side and gender.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	이번 주말에 이모 집에 가요. —	This weekend, I'm going to my maternal aunt's house.
Junho	어머니 동생분이세요? —	Is she your mother's younger sibling?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	네, 어머니 여동생이에요. 그리고 다음 주에는 고모도 만나요. —	Yes, she's my mother's younger sister. And next week I'm also meeting my paternal aunt.
Junho	아버지의 여자 형제니까 고모군요. —	Because she is your father's female sibling, she's 고모.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
친가 / 외가 chin-ga / oe-ga	father's side / mother's side	맞아요. Korean family words often tell you the side of the family. 친가는 father's side, and 외가는 mother's side.
삼촌 / 외삼촌 / 이모 / 고모 sam-chon / oe-sam-chon / i-mo / go-mo	uncle / maternal uncle / maternal aunt / paternal aunt	오늘의 핵심은 네 단어예요. 삼촌, 외삼촌, 이모, 고모. We sort them by side and gender.
외- + 삼촌 = 외삼촌 oe- + sam-chon = oe-sam-chon	maternal side + uncle = maternal uncle	어머니의 남자 형제는 외삼촌이에요. 외 means the mother's side in many family words.
이모 i-mo	mother's sister; maternal aunt	여기서 주의할 점이 있어요. 외이모라고 하지 않아요. Mother's sister is simply 이모.
고모 go-mo	father's sister; paternal aunt	아버지의 여자 형제는 고모예요. In English, your aunt on your father's side.
여자 형제: 이모 / 고모 yeo-ja hyeong-je: i-mo / go-mo	female sibling: mother's side / father's side	If the sibling is female, choose 이모 for mother's side and 고모 for father's side.
남자 형제: 외삼촌 / 삼촌 nam-ja hyeong-je: oe-sam-chon / sam-chon	male sibling: mother's side / father's side	If the sibling is male, choose 외삼촌 for mother's side and 삼촌 for father's side in this beginner-friendly family map.
삼촌 sam-chon	Aunts and Uncles on Both Sides	좋습니다. Now 삼촌. The final sound in 삼 is a closed 미음 sound, then 촌 starts clearly.



Grammar / Structure Notes

친가 / 외가

친가 / 외가 — father's side / mother's side

가 means family or household here.

삼촌 / 외삼촌 / 이모 / 고모

삼촌 / 외삼촌 / 이모 / 고모 — uncle / maternal uncle / maternal aunt / paternal aunt

Side matters in Korean kinship terms.

삼촌이 왔어요.

삼촌 + 이 + 왔 + 어요. — My uncle came.

먼저 삼촌이에요. In this map, 삼촌 points to your father's male sibling, especially a younger uncle in many family contexts.

삼촌이 왔어요.

삼촌 + 이 + 왔 + 어요. — My uncle came.

삼촌이 왔어요. Here, 이 marks 삼촌 as the subject: the uncle came.

외- + 삼촌 = 외삼촌

외- + 삼촌 = 외삼촌 — maternal side + uncle = maternal uncle

외- marks the mother's side in words like 외삼촌 and 외할머니.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
이모	i-mo
고모	go-mo
삼촌	sam-chon
외삼촌	oe-sam-chon

Self-Check

- 1 Say 삼촌 / 이모 / 고모 / 외삼촌 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
사람 / 친구 / 남자 / 여자 / 아이 Your First Words for People	A1 Vocabulary: compare 사람 / 친구 / 남자 / 여자 / 아이 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-FAM-001
사촌 / 이모부 / 며느리 / 처가 Extended Family and In-Law Terms	C1 Vocabulary: compare 사촌 / 이모부 / 며느리 / 처가 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-VOCAB-FAM-001
아들 / 딸 / 손자 / 손녀 Talking About Children and Grandchildren	A1 Vocabulary: compare 아들 / 딸 / 손자 / 손녀 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-VOCAB-FAM-003
엄마 / 아빠 / 형 / 오빠 Naming Your Family	A2 Vocabulary: compare 엄마 / 아빠 / 형 / 오빠 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-VOCAB-FAM-001

My Notes

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