



Korean Ladder Study Note

개 / 명 / 마리 / 잔 / 권

Korean Counters for Everything

Level	Topic	Focus
B1 · Intermediate TOPIK 3	Vocabulary Numbers & Counting	개 / 명 / 마리 / 잔 / 권 Korean Counters for Everything

Study Links

[Open this lesson on Korean Ladder](https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-VOCAB-NUM-001)

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

[Watch the full video on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIOz97R_Wxw)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIOz97R_Wxw

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

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Core Idea

Okay, real talk. In English I just say two coffees, three books, four dogs. Why does Korean need a special little word stuck in there?

Right? I tried to order and said 두 커피, and the barista just smiled politely. What did I miss?

좋은 질문이에요. Great question. Korean almost always puts a counter, a measure word, between the number and what you're counting. You don't say two coffee. You say coffee, two cups.

Think of it like English two cups of coffee or three sheets of paper. English does it sometimes; Korean does it almost every time.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	어서 오세요. 몇 분이세요? —	Welcome. How many people?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	두 명이에요. 그리고 커피 두 잔 주세요. —	Two people. And two coffees, please.
Hana	네, 케이크도 드릴까요? —	Sure, would you like cake too?
Junho	네, 케이크 한 개 주세요. —	Yes, one piece of cake, please.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
커피 두 잔 keopi du jan	two cups of coffee	좋은 질문이에요. Great question. Korean almost always puts a counter, a measure word, between the number and what you're counting. You don't say two coffee. You say coffee, two cups.
명사 + 숫자 + 단위 myeongsa + sutja + danwi	noun + number + counter	Think of it like English two cups of coffee or three sheets of paper. English does it sometimes; Korean does it almost every time.
단위 명사 danwi myeongsa	counter / measure word	오늘의 핵심은 단위 명사예요. Today's core idea is the counter word, 단위 명사. In English we'd call it a measure word.
무엇을 세느냐에 따라 단위가 달라요 mueoseul seneunyaye ttara danwiga dallayo	the counter changes with what you count	And the counter you pick depends on what you're counting. People, animals, flat things, drinks, books. Each has its favorite counter.
개 gae	things / objects (general)	다섯 개만 기억해요. Let's learn five. 개 is for general things and objects. 개 is your safe default.
명 myeong	people	명 is for people. 명 means people, and it is used for counting persons politely.
마리 mari	animals	마리 is for animals, like dogs, cats, fish, and birds. 마리에요.
잔 jan	cups / glasses of a drink	잔 is for cups and glasses of a drink, like coffee, tea, or water. 잔.



Grammar / Structure Notes

커피 두 잔

커피 두 잔 — two cups of coffee

noun + number + counter

명사 + 숫자 + 단위

명사 + 숫자 + 단위 — noun + number + counter

the basic counting frame

단위 명사

단위 명사 — counter / measure word

the word that matches the object

무엇을 세느냐에 따라 단위가 달라요

무엇을 세느냐에 따라 단위가 달라요 — the counter changes with what you count

And the counter you pick depends on what you're counting. People, animals, flat things, drinks, books. Each has its favorite counter.

개

개 — things / objects (general)

the safe default counter

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
커피 두 잔 주세요	keopi du jan juseyo
잔	jan
고양이 세 마리 있어요	goyangi se mari isseoyo
세 마리	se mari

Self-Check

- 1 Say 개 / 명 / 마리 / 잔 / 권 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
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
머리 / 배 / 목이 아파요 Body Parts and Saying Where It Hurts	B1 Vocabulary: compare 머리 / 배 / 목이 아파요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-VOCAB-BOD-001
속상하다 / 답답하다 / 뿌듯하다 Saying How You Really Feel	B1 Vocabulary: compare 속상하다 / 답답하다 / 뿌듯하다 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-VOCAB-EMO-001

My Notes

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