



Korean Ladder Study Note

선물 문화

Gift-Giving Etiquette and What Not to Give

Level	Topic	Focus
B2 · Upper-Intermediate TOPIK 4	Culture Etiquette	선물 문화 Gift-Giving Etiquette and What Not to Give

Study Links

[Open this lesson on Korean Ladder](https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-CULTURE-ETQ-002)

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-CULTURE-ETQ-002>

[Watch the full video on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FTNzkgyutg)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FTNzkgyutg>

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

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Core Idea

Okay, true story: I almost brought my Korean girlfriend a pair of sneakers. My roommate panicked. What did I do wrong?

And I keep hearing you can never give a clock in Korea. Is that actually true, or just a rumor?

좋은 질문이에요. 선물에는 마음이 담겨요. In English — a gift carries your feelings. So both WHAT you give and HOW you give it matter.

오늘의 핵심은 두 가지예요. 무엇을 주느냐, 그리고 어떻게 주느냐. The what, and the how.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	이거 약소하지만 받으세요. —	It's not much, but please accept it.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	아이고, 뭐 이런 걸 다 가져오셨어요. —	Oh my, you shouldn't have brought anything.
Hana	집들이 선물이에요. 잘 부탁드립니다. —	It's a housewarming gift. I hope we get along well.
Junho	감사합니다. 잘 쓸게요. —	Thank you. I'll put it to good use.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
선물에는 마음이 담겨요 seonmureuneun maeumi damgyeoyo	A gift carries your heart	좋은 질문이에요. 선물에는 마음이 담겨요. In English — a gift carries your feelings. So both WHAT you give and HOW you give it matter.
무엇을 + 어떻게 mueoseul + eotteoke	the WHAT and the HOW	오늘의 핵심은 두 가지예요. 무엇을 주느냐, 그리고 어떻게 주느냐. The what, and the how.
두 손으로 드릴게요 du soneuro deurilgeyo	I'll give it with both hands	기본 예절부터요. 두 손으로 드릴게요 — I'll give it with both hands. 드리다 is the humble form of 'to give.'
약소하지만 받으세요 yaksohajiman badeuseyo	It's not much, but please accept it	그리고 건넬 때 한마디. 약소하지만 받으세요. It means 'it's only a small thing, but please take it.' Koreans downplay the gift on purpose.
집들이 jipdeuri	housewarming party	이제 좋은 선물을 볼게요. 집들이 — a housewarming. 집들이 선물에는 재미있는 의미가 있어요.
휴지 hyuji	toilet paper / tissue	첫 번째는 휴지예요. Toilet paper. 휴지가 술술 풀리죠? 그래서 '모든 일이 술술 풀리세요' — may everything unravel smoothly.
세제 seje	detergent	두 번째는 세제예요. Detergent. 거품이 많이 일어나죠. 그 거품처럼 재물이 일어나라는 뜻이에요 — may your wealth bubble up.
과일 gwail	fruit	그냥 방문할 때는 과일이 안전해요. Fruit — always welcome. 보통 사과나 배를 가져가요.



Grammar / Structure Notes

선물에는 마음이 담겨요

선물에는 마음이 담겨요 — A gift carries your heart

In Korea, gifts carry meaning — and we'll separate real customs from foreign myths.

무엇을 + 어떻게

무엇을 + 어떻게 — the WHAT and the HOW

Two things to master: the right gift, and a polite hand-over.

두 손으로 드릴게요

두 + 손 + 으로 + 드릴게요 — I'll give it with both hands

기본 예절부터요. 두 손으로 드릴게요 — I'll give it with both hands. 드리다 is the humble form of 'to give.'

약소하지만 받으세요

약소하지만 받으세요 — It's not much, but please accept it

A humble phrase you say as you hand a gift over.

집들이

집들이 — housewarming party

Invited to a new home? Certain gifts carry lucky wishes.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
두 손으로 드릴게요	du soneuro deurilgeyo
약소하지만 받으세요	yaksohajiman badeuseyo

Self-Check

- 1 Say 선물 문화 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
경조사 예절 결혼식·장례식 봉투와 조의금	B2 Culture: compare 경조사 예절 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-CULTURE-ETQ-001
눈치 / 정 / 체면 The Social Concepts Behind Korean Behavior	C1 Culture: compare 눈치 / 정 / 체면 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-CULTURE-ETQ-001
두 손으로 주세요 Why Koreans Give and Receive with Two Hands	A1 Culture: compare 두 손으로 주세요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-CULTURE-ETQ-002
신발 벗고 들어오세요 Shoes, Floors, and Korean Homes	A2 Culture: compare 신발 벗고 들어오세요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-CULTURE-ETQ-001

My Notes

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