



## Korean Ladder Study Note

# -든지 / -거나

Listing Alternatives and 'Whether or Not'

| Level                                 | Topic                 | Focus                                                  |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| B2 ·<br>Upper-Intermediate<br>TOPIK 4 | Grammar<br>Connectors | -든지 / -거나<br>Listing Alternatives and 'Whether or Not' |

## Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

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

Watch the full video on YouTube

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

Visit koreanladder.com for all free lessons

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

## Core Idea

Okay, real talk. When I want to say coffee or a walk, I keep saying 커피 또는 산책 like I'm reading a menu. And when I mean I don't care which, I freeze.

좋은 고민이에요. 한국어에서는 선택지를 이을 때 거나를 많이 써요. 그리고 어느 쪽이든 괜찮다, 상관없다를 말할 때는 든지가 잘 맞아요.

거나는 선택지를 나열할 때 많이 써요. In English, it is closer to listing A or B.

든지는 어느 쪽이든 괜찮다, 상관없다는 느낌이 더 강해요. In English, think whether or not, or whichever.

## Conversation Snapshot

| Speaker | Korean                                    | Meaning                                                            |
|---------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hana    | 점심은 비빔밥을 먹거나 김밥을 먹거나, 아니면 간단하게 먹을까요?<br>— | For lunch, should we have bibimbap or gimbap, or something simple? |



| Speaker | Korean                                   | Meaning                                                                  |
|---------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Junho   | 저는 뭐든지 괜찮아요. 배가 고프든지 안 고프든지 일단 나가요.<br>— | Anything is fine for me. Whether I'm hungry or not, let's just head out. |

## Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

| Word                                                                                              | Meaning                                               | Example                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| -거나 / -든지<br>-geona / -deunji                                                                     | list A or B / whichever · whether or not              | 좋은 고민이에요. 한국어에서는 선택지를 이을 때 거나를 많이 써요. 그리고 어느 쪽이든 괜찮다, 상관없다를 말할 때는 든지가 잘 맞아요.      |
| A거나 B<br>A-geona B                                                                                | A or B                                                | 거나는 선택지를 나열할 때 많이 써요. In English, it is closer to listing A or B.                 |
| A든지 B든지<br>A-deunji B-deunji                                                                      | whether A or B · whichever                            | 든지는 어느 쪽이든 괜찮다, 상관없다는 느낌이 더 강해요. In English, think whether or not, or whichever.  |
| 나열 → -거나 ·<br>상관없음 → -든지<br>nayeol: -geona /<br>sanggwaneopseum:<br>-deunji                       | list options with 거나; show indifference with 든지       | 오늘의 핵심은 이거예요. 선택지를 나열할 때는 거나, 상관없다는 뜻일 때는 든지, 특히 A든지 B든지예요.                       |
| V거나 V<br>V-geona V                                                                                | do A or do B                                          | So 거나 is like lining up options. 커피를 마시거나 산책을 해요. Coffee or a walk.               |
| -거나 = 나열 · -든지 =<br>상관없음<br>-geona = nayeol ·<br>-deunji =<br>sanggwaneopseum                     | 거나 lists; 든지 shows indifference                       | 잘 봤어요. 거나는 메뉴처럼 선택지를 펼쳐 주고, 든지는 어느 쪽이든 괜찮다는 태도를 보여 줘요.                            |
| 뭐든지 / 언제든지 /<br>어디든지 / 누구든지<br>mwodeunji /<br>eonjedeunji /<br>eodideunji /<br>nugudeunji         | anything / anytime / anywhere / anyone                | 의문사에 붙을 때는 거의 든지예요. 뭐든지, 언제든지, 어디든지, 누구든지.                                        |
| 먹거나 ... / 뭐든지 /<br>고프든지 안 고프든지<br>meokgeona ... /<br>mwodeunji /<br>gopeudeunji an<br>gopeudeunji | list lunch options / anything / whether hungry or not | I heard 거나 when Hana listed lunch options, and 든지 when Junho said he didn't mind. |



## Grammar / Structure Notes

### -거나 / -든지

-거나 / -든지 — list A or B / whichever · whether or not

거나 lists options. 든지 leans toward indifference.

### A거나 B

A거나 B — A or B

Use it when you are offering or listing alternatives.

### A든지 B든지

A든지 B든지 — whether A or B · whichever

Often pairs as A든지 B든지 to cover both sides.

### 나열 → -거나 · 상관없음 → -든지

나열 → -거나 · 상관없음 → -든지 — list options with 거나; show indifference with 든지

Keep the jobs separate. Do not treat them as the same or.

### 커피를 마시거나 차를 마셔요.

커피를 + 마시거나 + 차를 + 마셔요. — I drink coffee or tea.

예문을 들어 볼게요. 커피를 마시거나 차를 마셔요. I drink coffee or tea.

## Pronunciation Loop

| Phrase            | How to practice                   |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 뭐든지 괜찮아요          | mwodeunji gwaenchanaayo           |
| 비가 오든지 눈이 오든지 같게요 | biga odeunji nuni odeunji galgeyo |

## Self-Check

- 1 Say -든지 / -거나 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                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| -(으)르수록<br>The More X, the More Y                              | B2 Grammar: compare -(으)르수록 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.                  | Open lesson<br><a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-GRAM-CON-001">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-GRAM-CON-001</a> |
| -(으)ㄴ / 는 탓에 / 덕분에 / 바람에<br>Assigning Blame, Credit, and Cause | C1 Grammar: compare -(으)ㄴ / 는 탓에 / 덕분에 / 바람에 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer. | Open lesson<br><a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-GRAM-CON-002">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-GRAM-CON-002</a> |
| -(으)니까<br>Reason, Discovery, and Why It Isn't 아서/어서            | B1 Grammar: compare -(으)니까 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.                   | Open lesson<br><a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-GRAM-CON-002">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-GRAM-CON-002</a> |
| -(으)러 vs -(으)려고<br>Going Somewhere to Do Something             | A2 Grammar: compare -(으)러 vs -(으)려고 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.          | Open lesson<br><a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-GRAM-CON-003">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-GRAM-CON-003</a> |

## My Notes

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