



Korean Ladder Study Note

실례합니다 / 죄송하지만 / 다름이 아니라

Softening a Request Humbly

Level	Topic	Focus
B2 · Upper-Intermediate TOPIK 4	Honorifics Humble Forms	실례합니다 / 죄송하지만 / 다름이 아니라 Softening a Request Humbly

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

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

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lo3BnwJFj7c>

Visit koreanladder.com for all free lessons

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Here's my problem. In English I say, "Sorry, could you help me?" But in Korean, if I just say 도와주세요 to a stranger, it can feel too direct, right?

맞아요. 도와주세요 is clear, but with a stranger or someone senior, we often add a cushion first. In Korean, we lower the pressure before the request.

Today's cushions are 실례지만, 죄송한데, 바쁘신데, and 혹시 실례가 안 된다면. They do not just mean sorry. They manage the relationship.

So the pattern is not just being fancy. It's like saying, "I know I'm imposing a little."

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	죄송한데, 바쁘신데 잠깐만 시간 괜찮으실까요? —	Sorry to bother you, I know you're busy, but would you have a moment?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	네, 괜찮습니다. 말씀하세요. —	Yes, that's fine. Please go ahead.
Hana	이 자료를 오늘 안에 확인 부탁드립니다 될까요? —	Could I ask you to check this material by today?
Junho	네, 확인해 보겠습니다. —	Yes, I'll check it.
Hana	이 자료를 오늘 안에 확인 부탁드립니다 될까요? —	Could I ask you to check this material by today?
Junho	네, 확인해 보겠습니다. —	Yes, I'll check it.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
실례지만 · 죄송한데 · 바쁘신데 · 혹시 실례가 안 된다면 sillyejiman · joesonghande · bappeusinde · hoksi sillyega an doendamyeron	Excuse me, but · I'm sorry, but · I know you're busy, but · If it's not too much trouble	Today's cushions are 실례지만, 죄송한데, 바쁘신데, and 혹시 실례가 안 된다면. They do not just mean sorry. They manage the relationship.
쿠션을 먼저 넣고 부탁하기 kusyeeoneul meonjeo neotgo butakagi	Put a cushion first, then ask	So the pattern is not just being fancy. It's like saying, "I know I'm imposing a little."
먼저 낮추고, 그다음 부탁하기 meonjeo natchugo, geudaeum butakagi	First lower the pressure, then make the request	네. 핵심은, 먼저 부담을 낮추고, 그다음 부탁을 해요. In English, first soften the imposition, then ask.
죄송한데 joesonghande	I'm sorry, but...	죄송한데 is softer than 죄송하지만 in many everyday conversations. 죄송하지만 can sound a bit more formal or stiff, depending on the tone.
혹시 + 실례가 안 된다면 hoksi + sillyega an doendamyeron	Perhaps, if it would not be rude	혹시 adds uncertainty. 실례가 안 된다면 adds humility. Together, they make the request feel very careful.
죄송한데, 바쁘신데... joesonghande, bappeusinde...	I'm sorry, and I know you're busy, but...	Now let's stack naturally. You do not need every cushion every time. But two can work well: 죄송한데, 바쁘신데.



Word	Meaning	Example
상황에 맞게 하나, 필요하면 둘 sanghwange matge hana, pir-yohamyeon dul	Use one that fits; two if needed	You can overdo it. Too many cushions may sound nervous, dramatic, or like the favor is huge. Choose the cushion that fits the situation.
실례지만 / 죄송한데 / 바쁘신데 / 혹시 실례가 안 된다면 sillyejiman / joesonghande / bappeusinde / hoksi sillyega an doendamyeon	Match the cushion to the burden	For a quick stranger request, 실례지만 is enough. For interrupting work, 죄송한데 or 바쁘신데 works. For a bigger favor, 혹시 실례가 안 된다면 is safer.



Grammar / Structure Notes

실례지만 · 죄송한데 · 바쁘신데 · 혹시 실례가 안 된다면

실례지만 · 죄송한데 · 바쁘신데 · 혹시 실례가 안 된다면 — Excuse me, but · I'm sorry, but · I know you're busy, but · If it's not too much trouble

Humble opening cushions before a favor

쿠션을 먼저 넣고 부탁하기

쿠션을 먼저 넣고 부탁하기 — Put a cushion first, then ask

Useful with strangers, staff, professors, managers, and older adults

먼저 낮추고, 그다음 부탁하기

먼저 낮추고, 그다음 부탁하기 — First lower the pressure, then make the request

네. 핵심은, 먼저 부담을 낮추고, 그다음 부탁을 해요. In English, first soften the imposition, then ask.

실례지만 길 좀 여쭙봐도 될까요?

실례지만 + 길 + 좀 + 여쭙봐도 + 될까요? — Excuse me, but may I ask for directions?

The most basic one is 실례지만. It connects to being a disturbance, but naturally it means, "Excuse me, but..."

실례지만 길 좀 여쭙봐도 될까요?

실례지만 + 길 + 좀 + 여쭙봐도 + 될까요? — Excuse me, but may I ask for directions?

실례지만 길 좀 여쭙봐도 될까요? 여기서 여쭙보다 is the humble form of 물어보다, to ask.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
실례지만 길 좀 여쭙봐도 될까요?	sillyejiman gil jom yeojjwobwado doelkkayo?
바쁘신데 잠깐만 확인 부탁드립니다 될까요?	bappeusinde jamkkanman hwagin butakdeuryeodo doelkkayo?
혹시 실례가 안 된다면 사진 한 장만 부탁드립니다 될까요?	hoksi sillyega an doendamyeon sajin han jangman butakdeuryeodo doelkkayo?
확인 부탁드립니다 될까요?	hwagin butakdeuryeodo doelkkayo?

Self-Check

- 1 Say 실례합니다 / 죄송하지만 / 다름이 아니라 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
드리다 / 뵙다 / 여쭙보다 Humble Forms That Show Respect	B2 Honorifics: compare 드리다 / 뵙다 / 여쭙보다 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-HON-HUM-001
도와드릴게요 / 여쭙봐도 될까요 나를 낮추는 기본 표현	A2 Honorifics: compare 도와드릴게요 / 여쭙봐도 될까요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-HON-HUM-002
모시다 / 올리다 / 말씀 올리다 Elevated Humble Vocabulary	C1 Honorifics: compare 모시다 / 올리다 / 말씀 올리다 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-HON-HUM-001
부탁드립니다 / 알려 주시면 감사하겠습니다 Humble Ways to Ask a Favor	B1 Honorifics: compare 부탁드립니다 / 알려 주시면 감사하겠습니다 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-HON-HUM-001

My Notes

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