



Korean Ladder Study Note

장단음

When 눈, 말, and 밤 Mean Two Different Things

Level	Topic	Focus
C1 · Advanced TOPIK 5	Pronunciation Vowels	장단음 When 눈, 말, and 밤 Mean Two Different Things

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-PRON-VOW-001>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SoGzvgMleY>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Okay, I have to start with something that broke my brain. 눈 means 'eye'... but 눈 also means 'snow'? Same spelling, same block?

네, 맞아요. 글자는 똑같아요. In writing, 눈 is 눈. 그런데 소리의 '길이'가 달라요 — the length of the vowel is different. 이걸 장단음이라고 해요. 장은 길다, 단은 짧다. So 장단음 means 'long-short sound.' 짧은 소리와 긴 소리로 뜻이 갈려요. So the meaning is hiding in how LONG I hold the vowel. That's wild.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	밖에 눈이 와요. —	It's snowing outside. (눈 long)
Junho	눈이 정말 예쁘네요. —	Your eyes are really pretty. (눈 short)



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	말이 참 빨라요. —	The horse is so fast. (말 short)
Junho	말이 너무 많아요. —	You talk too much. (말 long)

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
장단음 jangdaneum	long / short vowel length	이걸 장단음이라고 해요. 장은 길다, 단은 짧다. So 장단음 means 'long-short sound.' 짧은 소리와 긴 소리로 뜻이 갈려요.
짧게 vs 길게 jjalge vs gilge	short vs long — the length carries the meaning	그래서 오늘의 핵심은 이거예요. 짧게 발음하면 한 뜻, 길게 발음하면 다른 뜻. In English — short vowel is one word, long vowel is another word.
눈이 와요 nun-i wayo	It's snowing. (눈 = snow, long)	먼저 눈부터 봐요. 하늘에서 내리는 눈은 길게 발음해요. On the card you'll see a length mark, but your ear just hears a longer vowel.
눈이 예뻐요 nun-i yeppeoyo	Your eyes are pretty. (눈 = eye, short)	그리고 얼굴에 있는 눈은 짧게 발음해요. 눈이 예뻐요 — your eye. 이때는 소리를 딱 짧게 끊어요.
눈 / 눈 nun (eye) / nun (snow)	short = eye · long = snow	So... 눈이 와요 is long snow, and 눈이 예뻐요 is short eye. The spelling didn't move at all.
말이 달려요 mal-i dallyeoyo	The horse runs. (말 = horse, short)	정확해요. 다음은 말이에요. 타고 다니는 말 — the animal, a horse — 짧게 발음해요.
말이 많아요 mal-i manyo	You talk a lot. (말 = speech, long)	그런데 입에서 나오는 말, 즉 speech, words — 이 말은 길게 발음해요. 말이 많아요, on the card. 소리를 조금 더 길게 늘여요.
말 / 말 mal (horse) / mal (speech)	short = horse · long = speech	Horse is short 말, speech is long 말. Got it — hold it and it becomes words.



Grammar / Structure Notes

장단음

장단음 — long / short vowel length

장 = long, 단 = short

짧게 vs 길게

짧게 vs 길게 — short vs long — the length carries the meaning

그래서 오늘의 핵심은 이거예요. 짧게 발음하면 한 뜻, 길게 발음하면 다른 뜻. In English — short vowel is one word, long vowel is another word.

눈이 와요

눈 + 이 + 와요 — It's snowing. (눈 = snow, long)

먼저 눈부터 봐요. 하늘에서 내리는 눈은 길게 발음해요. On the card you'll see a length mark, but your ear just hears a longer vowel.

눈이 예뻐요

눈 + 이 + 예뻐요 — Your eyes are pretty. (눈 = eye, short)

그리고 얼굴에 있는 눈은 짧게 발음해요. 눈이 예뻐요 — your eye. 이때는 소리를 딱 짧게 끊어요.

눈 / 눈

눈 / 눈 — short = eye · long = snow

So... 눈이 와요 is long snow, and 눈이 예뻐요 is short eye. The spelling didn't move at all.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
눈이 와요	nun-i wayo
눈이 예뻐요	nun-i yeppeoyo
눈 vs 눈	nun vs nun

Self-Check

- 1 Say 장단음 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
ㅏ The Two Open Vowels Beginners Blur	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅏ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-006
ㅗ The Vowels That Now Sound the Same	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅗ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-002
ㅓ / ㅕ / ㅛ / ㅠ The 'Y' Glide Vowels	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅓ / ㅕ / ㅛ / ㅠ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-004
ㅜ The Vowels English Speakers Mix Up	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅜ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-001

My Notes

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