



Korean Ladder Study Note

억울하다 / 서운하다 / 벅차다

Nuanced Emotional Expression

Level	Topic	Focus
C1 · Advanced TOPIK 5	Vocabulary Feelings	억울하다 / 서운하다 / 벅차다 Nuanced Emotional Expression

Study Links

[Open this lesson on Korean Ladder](https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-VOCAB-EMO-001)

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

[Watch the full video on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0i9_MKBmSsU)

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

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Core Idea

Okay, real confession. Last week I got blamed for a mistake that wasn't mine, and all I could say in Korean was 슬퍼요. That felt... wrong.

Right? And when my friend forgot my birthday, 'sad' wasn't it either. It was something softer — disappointed, but quiet. English kind of blurs all of these together.

그래서 오늘은 세 단어를 배워요. 억울하다, 서운하다, 벅차다. 각각 상황이 완전히 달라요.

핵심은 '상황'이에요. 같은 슬픔이 아니라, 누가 무엇을 했느냐에 따라 단어가 바뀌어요.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	준호 씨, 발표 끝났어요? 어땠어요? —	Junho, is the presentation over? How was it?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	네, 끝났어요. 너무 긴장했는데, 박수받을 때 가슴이 벅찼어요. —	Yes, it's done. I was so nervous, but when they clapped, my heart was overwhelmed.
Hana	그런데 왜 좀 서운한 표정이예요? —	But why do you look a little let down?
Junho	팀장님이 제 이름을 안 불러서 조금 서운했어요. —	The team lead didn't say my name, so I felt a little hurt.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
억울하다 · 서운하다 · 벅차다 eo-gul-ha-da · seo-un-ha-da · beok-cha-da	to feel wronged · to feel quietly let down · to be overwhelmed with emotion	그래서 오늘은 세 단어를 배워요. 억울하다, 서운하다, 벅차다. 각각 상황이 완전히 달라요.
감정 = 상황 —	The feeling depends on the situation, not just the mood.	핵심은 '상황'이에요. 같은 슬픔이 아니라, 누가 무엇을 했느냐에 따라 단어가 바뀌어요.
억울하다 eo-gul-ha-da	to feel wronged / unjustly accused	먼저 억울하다. 잘못이 없는데 비난을 받을 때 느껴요. In English, it's that 'this is unfair, I didn't do it' feeling.
저는 억울해요 jeo-neun eo-gul-hae-yo	I feel wronged (I'm being blamed unfairly).	예문을 들어 볼게요. 저는 억울해요. The whole feeling is in one verb — no extra explaining needed.
억울하다 = unfair + blamed —	Innocent + accused = 억울하다	So 억울하다 isn't really about sadness — it's about injustice. Like, 'I didn't do anything, why am I in trouble?'
슬퍼요 → 억울해요 —	Not 'I'm sad' — 'I've been wronged.'	Oh, that's exactly my office story. So I should have said 억울해요, not 슬퍼요.
제 잘못이 아니예요 je jal-mo-si a-ni-e-yo	It's not my fault.	맞아요. 그리고 자주 같이 써요. 제 잘못이 아니예요. Notice 잘못이 sounds like [잘모시] — the ㅅ slides over.
서운하다 seo-un-ha-da	to feel quietly let down / hurt by someone close	이제 두 번째, 서운하다. 가까운 사람에게 조용히 마음이 상할 때 써요. It's soft — quiet hurt, not anger.



Grammar / Structure Notes

억울하다 · 서운하다 · 벅차다

억울하다 · 서운하다 · 벅차다 — to feel wronged · to feel quietly let down · to be overwhelmed with emotion

Each one is triggered by a different situation.

감정 = 상황

감정 = 상황 — The feeling depends on the situation, not just the mood.

Match the word to who did what — that's the skill today.

억울하다

억울하다 — to feel wronged / unjustly accused

You're innocent, but you're being blamed.

저는 억울해요

저 + 는 + 억울해요 — I feel wronged (I'm being blamed unfairly).

예문을 들어 볼게요. 저는 억울해요. The whole feeling is in one verb — no extra explaining needed.

억울하다 = unfair + blamed

억울하다 = unfair + blamed — Innocent + accused = 억울하다

Not sadness — it's the sting of injustice.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
억울해요	eo-gul-hae-yo
서운해요	seo-un-hae-yo

Self-Check

- 1 Say 억울하다 / 서운하다 / 벅차다 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
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
업무 / 보고서 / 협업 Advanced Workplace Vocabulary	C1 Vocabulary: compare 업무 / 보고서 / 협업 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-VOCAB-WRK-001
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

My Notes

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