

Unit 4: Today I'm Busy

In this unit, you will learn how to:

- talk about the existence of objects and events;
- conjugate verbs in the polite informal style;
- categorize verbs as either descriptive or action;
- add a direct object to an action verb using -을/를.
- talk about your weekly schedule referencing the days of the week (using -에);

Grammatical Notes

The existence verbs: 있다 and 없다

Perhaps the most common and useful verb in Korean, 있다 means "to exist." When used in sentences, 있다 can be translated as "there is/are" or as "have":

책이 있어요.	There are books. / I have (a) book(s).
시간이 있어요.	There's time. / I have time.
연필이 있어요?	Is there a pencil? / Do you have a pencil?
질문이 있어요?	Are there questions?

Note that there is no independent verb that corresponds directly with English "to have."

To indicate that something does not exist (or is absent), one uses the verb 없다:

책이 있어요.	There are books. / I have (a) book(s).
책이 없어요.	There aren't any books. / I don't have a book.
시간이 있지요.	There's time, isn't there? / I do have time.
시간이 없지요.	There's isn't any time, is there?
연필이 있어요?	Do you have a pencil?
아니요, 연필이 없어요.	No, I don't have a pencil.
or 아니요, 없어요.	No, I don't.

Verb Conjugations

In addition to their polite forms (both informal and formal), all verbs have a neutral form; this form is often referred to as the verb's "citation form" or its "dictionary form." When looking up a verb in the dictionary, one will find it listed in its citation form. The citation form is made up of two elements: the verb root and the citation form ending, -다.

To convert a verb from its citation form to its polite informal (-요) form, take the verb root, add the linking verb -어 (or -아, if the final verb in the root is either 아 or 오), and then -요:

Citation Form	Polite Informal Form	
있다	있어요	exist
없다	없어요	not exist
읽다	읽어요	read
먹다	먹어요	eat
쉬다	쉬어요	relax

There are numerous minor exceptions to this general pattern; the most relevant at this point are the following:

Citation Form	Polite Informal Form	
하다	해요	make, do, speak
가르치다	가르쳐요	teach

Verb Categories

Until this point, we have focused on two types of verbs: the linking 'be' verb -이다 and the existence verbs 있다~없다. In addition to these two categories, there are two more: descriptive verbs and action verbs.

In Korean, there are very few words that are true adjectives. Rather, words that correspond to adjectives (in English) are actually verbs in Korean:

Citation Form	Polite Informal Form	
바쁘다	바빠요	be busy
기쁘다	기뻐요	be happy
많다	많아요	be numerous

나는 아주 바빠요.	I am very busy.
김선생은, 바쁘세요?	Mr./Ms. Kim, are you busy?
책이 많아요?	Are there a lot of books?
네, 책이 많아요.	Yes, there are a lot of books.

Action verbs conjugate just like descriptive verbs:

Citation Form	Polite Informal Form	
하다	해요	make, do, speak
공부하다	공부해요	study
가르치다	가르쳐요	teach

To add an honorific sense to a verb in the polite informal form, the order of elements is as follows: Verb Root + Honorific Marker (세) + 요. The pattern is used for both descriptive and action verbs:

Citation Form	Polite Informal Form	
바쁘다	바쁘세요	be busy
기쁘다	기쁘세요	be happy
하다	하세요	make, do, speak
공부하다	공부하세요	study
가르치다	가르치세요	teach

If the verb root ends in a consonant, a linking vowel (으) is inserted before the honorific marker:

많다	많으세요	be numerous
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The Noun Particle -을~-를: Direct Object Marker

To mark the direct object of a noun (the accusative case), Korean attaches the particle -을 to nouns ending in a consonant or -를 to nouns ending in a verb.

한국어를 가르쳐요.	I teach Korean.
저도 영어를 조금 해요.	I, too, speak a bit of English.
일본말을 공부하세요?	Do you study Japanese?

The particle -을~-를 can also be used in conjunction with the question word 무엇 "what":

무엇을 가르치세요?	What do you teach?
수미는 무엇을 공부해요?	What does Sumi study?

It is often the case that this particle is omitted in casual speech, particularly in commonly used constructions:

한국어 가르쳐요.	I teach Korean.
저도 영어 조금 해요.	I, too, speak a bit of English.
일본말 공부하세요?	Do you study Japanese?

Locating Events in Time: The Nominal Particle -에

To locate an event in time, attach the temporal particle -에 to the time word. In such cases, -에 is equivalent to the English preposition "on" or "during":

수요일에 바빠요.	On Saturday(s), I am busy.
금요일에 영어를 공부해요.	I study English on Friday(s).

일요일에 무엇을 하세요?	What do you do on Sundays?
목요일에는 수업이 있어요.	On Thursday(s), we have class.
주중에 바쁘세요?	Are you busy during the week?
주말에는 틈이 많지요.	On the weekends, you have a lot free time, don't you?

A Note on the Days of the Week

In Korean, the days of the weeks are named after natural elements. The words are of Chinese origin and can be written in Chinese Characters.

일요일	월요일	화요일	수요일	목요일	금요일	토요일
日曜日	月曜日	火曜日	水曜日	木曜日	金曜日	土曜日
sun	moon	fire	water	wood	metal	earth
日	月	火	水	木	金	土

On calendars, it is often the case that the days of the week are indicated by the initial characters (indicate above in large print).

Exercises

Exercise A. For each of the following sentences, fill the blank space with the correct particle. For this exercise, limit your choices to the following: 이 가 을 를 에. You should then translate each of the sentences.

1. 이것 _____ 무엇이에요?
2. 내 _____ 바빠요.
3. 박 선생님은 무엇 _____ 가르치세요?
4. 실례지만, 펜 _____ 있어요?
5. 일요일 _____ 바쁘세요?
6. 나도 컴퓨터 _____ 없어요.
7. 김 선생님 _____ 영어 _____ 못 하세요.
8. 토요일 _____ 는 일본말 수업이 있어요.

Exercise B. Complete the following table by inserting the missing verb forms. (Use the neutral, non-honorific forms.)

	Citation Form	Polite Informal Form	Meaning
1.	있다		to exist
2.	없다		
3.			to make, do, speak
4.		가르쳐요	
5.	바쁘다		to be busy
6.		공부해요	

Don't forget to do the CD-ROM Exercises!