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Unit 1

Lesson 7

<p>Nouns: 눈썹 = eyebrow 교사 = teacher 반 = class of students in school 직장 = location of work 벽 = wall 털 = hair (not on head)/fur 머리카락 = hair (on head) 저녁식사 = dinner 저녁시간 = evening time 점심식사 = lunch 점심시간 = lunch time (It is also common to omit the word “식사” and use 아침, 점심 and 저녁 to refer to the respective meals).</p> <p>Verbs: 찾다 = search for 공부하다 = study 가르치다 = teach 일하다 = work 짓다 = build 가지다 = own/possess 잠그다 = to lock something 잊다 = forget 돕다 = help 주다 = give</p>	<p>Adjectives: 쉽다 = easy 덥다 = hot 그립다 = to miss (a thing) 귀엽다 = cute 춥다 = cold 어렵다 = difficult 더럽다 = dirty 바쁘다 = busy 같다 = same 안전하다 = safe 딱딱하다 = hard 부드럽다 = soft 가능하다 = possible 불가능하다 = impossible 맞다 = correct</p> <p>Adverbs and Other Words: 지각 = late 일찍 = early 오전 = morning 오후 = afternoon 매일 = everyday 여름 = summer 가을 = fall 겨울 = winter 봄 = spring</p>
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Irregulars

As with all languages, there are some irregular conjugations that you need to know. Irregulars are applied to certain verbs or adjectives when adding something to the stem of the word. Korean grammar is based on these “additions” that are added to stems. I mentioned this in Lesson 5, but I want to reiterate it here.

There are hundreds of additions that you can add to the stem of a verb or adjective. Some of these are conjugations and some of them are grammatical principles that have meaning in a sentence. You have learned about some of these additions now. For example:

- ~ㄴ/는다 to conjugate to the plain form
- ~아/어요 to conjugate to the informal high respect form
- ~ㅂ/습니다 to conjugate to the formal high respect form
- ~았/었어 to conjugate to the informal low respect form in the past tense
- ~ㄴ/은 added to an adjective to describe an upcoming noun

In future lessons, you will learn about many more of these additions. For example, some of them are:

- ~ㄴ/은 후에 to mean “after”
- ~기 전에 to mean “before”
- ~기 때문에 to mean “because”
- ~아/어서 to mean “because”
- ~(으)면 to mean “when”
- ~아/어야 하다 to mean “one must”
- ~아/어서는 안 되다 to mean “one should not”

Notice that some of these additions start with a vowel, and some of them start with a consonant. Most of the irregulars are applied when adding a vowel to a stem. The ㄷ irregular that is introduced at the end of the lesson is the only irregular that applies when adding a consonant to a stem.

Let’s look at one example before I introduce each irregular one by one. Let’s say we want to conjugate the word “어렵다” into the past tense using the informal low respect form. The following would happen:

어렵다 + ~았/었어 = 어려웠어

Here, you can see that the actual *stem* of the word changed. This is referred to as the “ㅌ irregular” because the same phenomenon happens with many (but not all) words whose stem ends in “ㅌ”.

As I mentioned previously, most of these irregulars are applied when adding a vowel to a stem. Although there are many additions that start with a vowel, the only ones that you have learned about to this point are the conjugations taught in Lessons 5 and 6:

- ~아/어
- ~아/어요
- ~았/었어
- ~았/었어요
- ~았/었습니다
- ~았/었다

As such, this lesson will present the Korean irregulars and how they change as a result of adding these conjugations. In later lessons when you learn about other additions, you can apply what you learned in this lesson to those concepts. For now, let’s get started.

ㅅ Irregular

If the last letter of a word stem ends in ㅅ (for example: 짓다 = to build), the ㅅ gets removed when adding a vowel. For example, when conjugating:

짓다 = to make/build

짓 + 어 = 지어

나는 집을 지어 = I build a house

짓 + 었어요 = 지었어요

저는 집을 지었어요 = I built a house

Notice that this only happens when adding a vowel. When conjugating to the plain form, for example, you only add “~는다” to the stem and thus ㅅ does not get removed:

집을 짓는다 = to build a house

The reason this irregular is done is to avoid changing the sound of a word completely after conjugating it.

Pronouncing 짓다 sounds like ‘jit-da.’

Pronouncing 지어 sounds like ‘ji-uh’

Pronouncing 짓어 sounds like ‘jis-suh’

The third one (which is incorrect) completely changes the sound of the word stem when a vowel is added (from ‘jit’ to ‘jis.’ Whereas in the second one, the sound of the word stem only changes from ‘jit’ to ‘ji,’ which is much smaller of a difference (especially considering the ‘t’ in the pronunciation of 짓 is not aspirated - which makes it barely audible). I know that is confusing, but if you can’t understand *why* it is done, that’s fine. Just know that it must be done.

Some other examples of words that follow this irregular are (these words are too difficult for you right now, but I’m just showing you):

낫다 = better (adjective) - You will learn more about this word in Lesson 19

잇다 = to continue (verb)

Common words that this does not apply to are:

웃다 (to laugh) = 저는 웃었어요 = I laughed

벗다 (to take off clothes) = 저는 저의 옷을 벗었어요 = I took off my clothes

씻다 (to wash) = 저는 저의 손을 씻었어요 = I washed my hands

Here is a table with the word “짓다 (to build)” being conjugated using all the honorific forms you have learned. The irregular conjugations are in bold. Notice that this only occurs when ~아/어 (or one of its derivatives like ~았/었어요) is added to the verb stem.

짓다 = build	Past	Present	Future
Informal low	지었어	지어	짓겠어
Informal high	지었어요	지어요	짓겠어요
Plain form	지었다	짓는다	짓겠다
Formal high	지었습니다	짓습니다	짓겠습니다

Note that when a word stem has ㅅ as the fourth consonant, this irregular does not apply. For example, this does not apply to 없다, which you will learn about in the next lesson.

ㄷ irregular

If the last letter of a word stem ends in ㄷ (걷다 = to walk), the ㄷ gets changed to ㄹ when adding a vowel. This is only done with verbs. For example:

걷다 = to walk

걷 + 어 = 걸어

저는 걸어요 = I walk

걷 + 었어요 = 걸었어요

저는 걸었어요 = I walked

I don't mean to confuse you, but I will:

걷다 means “to walk.” When conjugating, by adding a vowel it changes to 걸어
 Another meaning of 걷다 is “to tuck.” But this meaning of 걷다 does not follow the irregular rule. So, when conjugating, by adding a vowel is simply stays as 걸어. In addition, 걸다 means “to hang.” When conjugating, by adding a vowel it stays as 걸어

Confusing enough? Let's look at all three:

	걷다 = To walk	걷다 = To tuck	걸다 = To hang
Past Formal	걸었어요	걸었어요	걸었어요
Present Formal	걸어요	걸어요	걸어요
Future Formal	걸겠어요	걸겠어요	걸겠어요

Honestly, though, the whole 걷다/걷다/걸다 thing is probably the most confusing part of this conjugation, and don't worry too much about it. “Walk” is a word that is used much more frequently than “tuck,” so it is not something that comes up a lot.

The reason this conjugation is done is simply because the sounds flows off your tongue better. It is similar to pronouncing the word “butter” in English. When pronouncing “butter” we don’t say “butt-tter,” we just say “bud-er.” Like the ㅈ irregular, it is simply to avoid saying a hard consonant.

This is done to most stems ending in ㅈ, common words that this does not apply to (like 걷다 = to tuck) are:

받다 (to get/receive) = 저는 돈을 받았어요 = I received money

묻다 = 묻어요 (to bury) = 저는 저의 강아지를 묻었어요 = I buried my dog

닫다 = 닫아요 (to close) = 저는 문을 닫았어요 = I closed the door

Here is a table with the word “걷다 (to walk)” being conjugated using all the honorific forms you have learned so far. The irregular conjugations are in bold. Notice that this only occurs when ~아/어 (or one of its derivatives like ~았/었어요) is added to the verb stem.

걷다 = walk	Past	Present	Future
Informal low	걸었어	걸어	걸겠어
Informal high	걸었어요	걸어요	걸겠어요
Plain form	걸었다	걷는다	걸겠다
Formal high	걸었습니다	걷습니다	걸겠습니다

ㅂ Irregular

If the last letter of a word stem ends in ㅂ (쉽다 = easy), the ㅂ changes to 우 when adding a vowel. 우 then gets added to the next syllable in the conjugated word.

This is mostly done with adjectives. Many verbs end with ㅂ but this rule is rarely applied to verbs (some of the few verbs where this rule applies are: 줍다 (to pick up), 눕다 (to lie down)). For example:

쉽다 = to be easy

쉽 + 어 = 쉬 + 우 + 어 = 쉬워

그 것은 쉬워 = That thing is easy

어렵다 = to be difficult

어렵 + 어요 = 어려 + 우 + 어요 = 어려워요

그 것은 어려워요 = That was difficult

귀엽다 = cute

귀엽 + 어요 = 귀여 + 우 + 어요 =귀여워요

그 여자는 귀여워요 That girl is cute

In the words “돕다” (to help) and “곱다” (an uncommon way to say “beautiful”) ㅅ changes to 오 instead of 우. For example:

돕다 = to help

돕 + 았어요 = 도 + 오 + 았어요 = 도왔어요

저는 저의 어머니를 도왔어요 = I helped my mother

Because this irregular is found in adjectives, you will be conjugating it not only at the end of a sentence, but also in the middle of a sentence (before a noun). Remember the difference between these two sentences.

사과는 크다 = Apples are big

나는 큰 사과를 좋아한다 = I like big apples

In the first sentence, ‘big’ is an adjective that describes the noun (apple) at the end of the sentence. In the second, ‘big’ *describes* the apple (as ‘a big apple’) and then “like” acts on the noun. In Lesson 4, you learned how to describe a noun by placing an adjective with ~ㄴ/은 before it. Adding ~ㄴ/은 to adjectives where the stem ends in “ㅅ” causes this irregular to come into play.

When placing an adjective (who's stem ends in "ㅅ") before a noun to describe it, you add ~ㄴ to the newly formed 우/오 syllable:

귀엽 + ㄴ = 귀여 + 우 + ㄴ = 귀여운

저는 귀여운 여자를 좋아해요 = I like cute girls

More examples:

쉽다 = easy

쉽 + ㄴ = 쉬 + 우 + ㄴ = 쉬운

저는 쉬운 일을 했어요 = I did easy work

부드럽다 = soft

부드럽 + ㄴ = 부드러 + 우 + ㄴ = 부드러운

나는 부드러운 손이 있어 = I have soft hands

춥다 = cold

춥 + ㄴ = 추 + 우 + ㄴ = 추운

저는 추운 날씨를 좋아해요 = I like cold weather

Note that in most irregulars, the word changes differently if the last vowel in the stem is ㅏ OR ㅑ. However, in the ㅅ irregular, except for 돕다 and 곱다, all applicable words are changed by adding 우.

아름답다 = beautiful:

아름답 + 어요 = 아름다 + 우 + 어요 = 아름다워요

그 여자는 아름다워요 = That girl is beautiful

새롭다 = new

새롭 + 어요 = 새로 + 우 + 어요 = 새로워요

그 학교는 새로워요 = That school is new

그 것은 새로운 학교예요 = That (thing) is a new school

Probably the most confusing of all irregulars, mainly because it seems strange that ㅁ can change to 우/오. The reason this happens is similar to the ㅅ irregular. As you know, when pronouncing a syllable with the last letter ㅁ, you don't really pronounce the 'B' sound. But, if you add a vowel after ㅁ the sound of 'B' would be pronounced. The purpose of the irregular is to eliminate the 'B' sound which isn't actually in the word.

This is done to some words ending in ㅁ. Some common words where this does not apply:

좁다 (narrow) = 이 방은 좁아요 = This room is narrow

넓다 (wide) = 이 방은 넓어요 = This room is wide (Korean people often describe a room/place being "big" by saying it is "wide")

잡다 (to catch/grab) = 저는 공을 잡았어요 = I caught the ball

Here is a table with the word "춥다 (cold)" being conjugated using all the honorific forms you have learned so far. The irregular conjugations are in bold. Notice that this only occurs when ~아/어 (or one of its derivatives like ~았/었어요) is added to the verb stem.

춥다 = cold	Past	Present	Future
Informal low	추웠어	추워	춥겠어
Informal high	추웠어요	추워요	춥겠어요
Plain form	추웠다	춥다	춥겠다
Formal high	추웠습니다	춥습니다	춥겠습니다
Adjective form	추운 날씨 = cold weather		

ㅡ Irregular

If the final vowel in a stem is ㅡ (for example: 잠그다 = to lock), when adding ~아/어, you can not determine whether you need to add ~어 or ~아 to the stem by looking at ㅡ. Instead, you must look at the vowel in the second last syllable. For example, in the word "잠그다", the second last syllable in the stem is "잠", and the vowel here is ㅏ. Therefore, as usual, we add ~아 to 잠그.

For example:

잠그다 + ~아/어
= 잠그아

In cases like this where a word ends in "ㅡ" (that is, there is no final consonant after "ㅡ") and is followed by ~아/어 (or any of its derivatives), the ~아/어~ the "ㅡ" is eliminated and the addition of ~아/어~ merges to the stem. For example:

잠그다 = to lock

The last vowel in the stem is ㅡ. The vowel in the second last syllable is ㅓ, so we add 아.

For example: 잠그 + 아

Because there is no final consonant after "ㅡ", ~아 replaces ㅡ.

잠그 + 아 = 잠가

This would be the same in the past tense as well, for example:

잠그 + 았어요 = 잠갔어요

저는 문을 잠갔어요 = I locked the door

Let's look at another example:

바쁘다 = to be busy

The last vowel in stem is ㅡ. The vowel in the second last syllable is ㅓ, so we add 아.

For example: 바쁘 + 아

Because there is no final consonant after "ㅡ", ~아 replaces ㅡ.

바쁘 + 아요 = 바빠요
저는 바빠요 = I am busy

Let's look at another example:

예쁘다 = pretty

The last vowel in the stem is ㅡ. The vowel in the second last syllable is not ㅓ or ㅕ, so we add 어.

For example: 예쁘 + 어

Because there is no final consonant after "ㅡ", ~어 replaces ㅡ.

예쁘 + 어요 = 예뻐
그 여자는 예뻐요 = That girl is pretty

If the word ends in a consonant (for example: 긁다 = to scratch), you just add the ~아/어 as you would to a normal word and nothing needs to merge. For example:

저는 머리를 긁었어요 = I scratched my head

Another example where we find a single-syllable word with "ㅡ" as the only vowel is "듣다 (to hear)"

듣다 = to hear

Last vowel in stem is ㅡ. There is no syllable preceding 듣, so we must add 어.

듣 ends in a consonant, so 어 does not get added directly to the syllable.

듣 + 었어요 = 들었어요

But! Don't forget the ㅈ irregular. In this example, both ㅡ and ㅈ irregulars are used:

듣 + 었다 = 들었다

저는 쥐를 들었어요 = I heard a mouse

This same rule applies when adding ~아/어 to words where, not only is the last vowel in the stem ㅡ, but all the vowels in the stem are ㅡ. For example, in the word "슬프다".

저는 아주 슬퍼요 = I am very sad

An irregular to this already irregular rule is "만들다 (to make)." Even though the second last syllable in the stem has the vowel "ㅏ", ~어~ is added instead of ~아~. For example:

만들다 + ~아/어요
= 만들어요

Here is a table with the word "잠그다 (to lock – which is a verb)" being conjugated using all the honorific forms you have learned so far. The irregular conjugations are in bold. Notice that this only occurs when ~아/어 (or one of its derivatives like ~았/었어요) is added to the verb stem.

잠그다 = lock	Past	Present	Future
Informal low	잠갔어	잠가	잠그겠어
Informal high	잠갔어요	잠가요	잠그겠어요
Plain form	잠갔다	잠근다	잠그겠다
Formal high	잠갔습니다	잠급니다	잠그겠습니다

And here is a table with the word "예쁘다 (pretty – which is an adjective)" being conjugated using all the honorific forms you have learned so far. The irregular conjugations are in bold. Notice that this only occurs when ~아/어 (or one of its derivatives like ~았/었어요) is added to the verb stem.

예쁘다 = pretty	Past	Present	Future
Informal low	예뻤어	예뻐	예쁘겠어
Informal high	예뻤어요	예뻐요	예쁘겠어요
Plain form	예뻤다	예쁘다	예쁘겠다
Formal high	예뻤습니다	예쁩니다	예쁘겠습니다

Finally, here is a table with the word “만들다 (to make – which is a verb)” being conjugated using all the honorific forms you have learned so far.

만들다 = to make	Past	Present	Future
Informal low	만들었어	만들어	만들겠어
Informal high	만들었어요	만들어요	만들겠어요
Plain form	만들었다	만든다	만들겠다
Formal high	만들었습니다	만듭니다	만들겠습니다

You will learn how 만든다 and 만듭니다 are formed later in the lesson when you learn about the ㄹ irregular.

ㄹ Irregular

If the final syllable in a stem is ㄹ (마르다), it is conjugated differently when adding ~아/어. This irregular only applies when adding ~아/어 (or any of its derivatives) to a stem and not when adding any other grammatical principles that starts with a vowel or consonant. Up until now, you haven't learned about any of these other grammatical principles, that can start with anything other than ~아/어~, so don't worry about this distinction too much.

When adding ~아/어 to these words, an additional ㄹ is created and placed in the syllable preceding ㄹ as the last consonant. The ㄹ also gets changed to either 러 or 라 (depending on if you are adding 어 or 아). This is done to both verbs and adjectives (the only exception is 따르다 = to follow/to pour). For example:

다르다 = different

다르 + 아요 = 다 + ㄹ + 라요 = 달라요

그 것은 달라요 = That thing is different

빠르다 = to be fast

빠르 + 아요 = 빠 + ㄹ + 라요 = 빨라요

그 남자는 빨라요 = That man is fast

부르다 = to call somebody's name

부르 + 었어요 = 부 + ㄹ + 렀어요 = 불렀어요

저는 저의 누나를 불렀어요 = I called my sister

Here is a table with the word “고르다 (to choose – which is a verb)” being conjugated using all the honorific forms you have learned so far. The irregular conjugations are in bold. Notice that this only occurs when ~아/어 (or one of its derivatives like ~았/었어요) is added to the verb stem.

고르다 = choose	Past	Present	Future
Informal low	골랐어	골라	고르겠어
Informal high	골랐어요	골라요	고르겠어요
Plain form	골랐다	고른다	고르겠다
Formal high	골랐습니다	고룹니다	고르겠습니다

And here is a table with the word “빠르다 (fast/quick – which is an adjective)” being conjugated using all the honorific forms you have learned so far. The irregular conjugations are in bold. Notice that this only occurs when ~아/어 (or one of its derivatives like ~았/었어요) is added to the verb stem.

빠르다 = fast	Past	Present	Future
Informal low	빨랐어	빨라	빠르겠어
Informal high	빨랐어요	빨라요	빠르겠어요
Plain form	빨랐다	빠르다	빠르겠다
Formal high	빨랐습니다	빠룹니다	빠르겠습니다
Adjective form	빠른 남자 = Fast man		

ㄹ Irregular

If the final letter of a stem is ㄹ AND you add ~ㄴ/~ㄹ to that stem, the ㄹ is removed and the ㄴ / ㄹ get added on directly to the stem. However, if you are adding ‘ㄴ’ or something starting with ㄴ to the stem – the ㄹ is removed and ~ㄴ/~ㄴ is added directly after the stem. In addition, when adding ㄹ/을 to a stem that ends in ㄹ, you actually eliminate the ㄹ/을. That is a lot, so let’s look at each in more detail:

ㄹ Irregular – Adding ㄴ to words

You have learned about adding ㄴ/은 to adjective stems when modifying nouns:

크다 = 큰 남자
작다 = 작은 남자

When adding ~ㄴ/은 to a stem that ends in ㄹ, ㄹ is removed and ㄴ is added to the stem:

길다 = long
길 + ㄴ = 긴
저는 긴 거리를 건넜어요 = I crossed the long street

멀다 = far away

멀 + ㄴ = 먼

저는 먼 병원에 갔어요 = I went to a far away hospital (a hospital that is far away)

You have also learned about adding ㄴ/는다 to verbs when conjugating to the plain form:

나는 집에 간다 = I go home

나는 잔다 = I sleep

But when adding ㄴ/는다 to a verb stem that ends in ㄷ, you must remove ㄷ and add ㄴ다 to the verb stem:

나는 문을 연다 = I open the door

나는 케이크를 만든다 = I make a cake

ㄷ Irregular – Adding ㅁ to words

You have also learned about adding ㅁ to verb and adjective stems when conjugating in the Formal high respect form:

Verbs:

저는 집에 갑니다 = I go home

저는 잡니다 = I sleep

Adjectives:

그 여자는 예쁩니다 = That girl is beautiful

그 것은 불가능합니다 = That thing is impossible

But when adding ㅁ니다 to verbs or adjectives whose stems end in ㄷ, you must remove ㄷ and add ㅁ directly to the stem:

Verbs:

저는 문을 엽니다 = I open the door

저는 케이크를 만듭니다 = I make a cake

Adjectives:

그 병원은 멩니다 = That hospital is far

그 여자의 머리는 깁니다 = That girls hair is long

머리 *can mean 'head' or 'hair' depending on the context. If you want to specifically mention your hair, you can say “머리카락” always means the hair on one’s head. 머리 or 머리카락 does not refer to the hair on an animal, or the body hair of a human. This hair is referred to as “털” and extends to most of the hair that can be found on animals (fur, the wool on a sheep, etc)*

Here is a table with the word “열다 (to open – which is a verb)” being conjugated using all the honorific forms you have learned so far. The irregular conjugations are in bold. Notice that this only occurs when ~ㄴ or ~ㅁ is added to the verb stem.

열다 = open	Past	Present	Future
Informal low	열었어	열어	열겠어
Informal high	열었어요	열어요	열겠어요
Plain form	열었다	연다	열겠다
Formal high	열었습니다	엽니다	열겠습니다

And here is a table with the word “길다 (long – which is an adjective)” being conjugated using all the honorific forms you have learned so far. Notice that this only occurs when ~ㄴ or ~ㅁ is added to the verb stem (it would happen when ~ㄴ is added, but you don’t add ~ㄴ/는 to an adjective when you conjugate it like this. There are times, however, when this would happen, but you haven’t even gotten close to learning about them yet. For example, in Lesson 76, we talk about the addition of ~ㄴ/는데 to clauses. This would make 길다 turn into 긴데. Please don’t even think about looking ahead until Lesson 76 until you’ve finished with this lesson, and the 69 lessons in between.

길다 = long	Past	Present	Future
Informal low	길었어	길어	길겠어
Informal high	길었어요	길어요	길겠어요
Plain form	길었다	길다	길겠다
Formal high	길었습니다	깁니다	길겠습니다
Adjective form	긴 거리 = long road		

I don’t want to confuse you too much more because I am sure you are already really confused. Just the amount of content on this page alone is enough to make somebody cry.

That being said, I think it is a very good exercise to try to compare how the words 듣다 and 들다 differ in their conjugations. Don’t worry about the meaning of 들다 yet (it is a very complex word that has many meanings), but just assume it is a verb in this case. For now, let’s just focus on how they are conjugated.

Notice that when conjugating 듣다, you need to consider the following irregular patterns:

- ㅌ irregular (because it ends in ㅌ)
- ㅡ irregular (because the final vowel is ㅡ)

The following table shows how 듣다 should be conjugated across the honorifics and tenses you have learned so far:

듣다 = to hear	Past	Present	Future
Informal low	들었어	들어	들겠어
Informal high	들었어요	들어요	들겠어요
Plain form	들었다	듣는다	들겠다
Formal high	들었습니다	듣습니다	들겠습니다

Notice when conjugating 듣다, you need to consider the following irregular patterns:

- ㄹ irregular (because it ends in ㄹ)
- ㅡ irregular (because the final vowel is ㅡ)

The following table shows how 듣다 should be conjugated across the honorifics and tenses you have learned so far:

듣다	Past	Present	Future
Informal low	들었어	들어	들겠어
Informal high	들었어요	들어요	들겠어요
Plain form	들었다	듣다	들겠다
Formal high	들었습니다	듣니다	들겠습니다

I feel that comparing these two is a very good exercise because you can see that sometimes, because of the irregular conjugations, 듣다 might look exactly like 들다. For example, in all of the past tense conjugations, there is no way to distinguish between the two based on sound, and the only way to distinguish them is by context in a sentence.

There is no easy way around memorizing stuff like this. The only words of encouragement I can give you is that – as you become more and more familiar with the language, and as you expose yourself to it more and more, it *does* become second nature. I know you can't believe that now, but it does.

ㄹ Irregular – Adding Anything that Starts with a “Solid” ㄴ or ㄷ

As of now, you have not yet learned about adding anything that starts with a solid ㄴ or ㄷ to a stem, so don't worry about this too much now. What I mean by “solid ㄴ” is that – any addition where you add ㄴ, but there is no choice of having to add ~ㄴ or something else. For example, even though the plain form conjugation “~ㄴ/는다” starts with “~ㄴ”, there is a choice of having to add “ㄴ” OR “는다”. This irregular only applies to grammar additions that start with “ㄴ”, and there is no alternate addition.

For example, as you will learn later, a grammatical addition to form a question is ~니. There is no alternate addition to this. For example, it is not ~ㄴ/니.

I will show you the examples of how this works, but you won't be able to understand them. Just try to see how the irregular works within these examples, and I will re-present these again when you learn how to deal with adding a solid ~ㄴ and ~ㅅ.

When you add a solid ~ㄴ or ~ㅅ to a stem of a word that ends in ㄹ, you must drop the ㄹ from the stem, and add the solid ~ㄴ or ~ㅅ after the stem:

For example:

열다 + ~나(요) = 여나요

열다 + ~니 = 여니

열다 + ~는 = 여는

열다 + ~냐 = 여냐

열다 + ~세요 = 여세요

Again, that is just for your reference. I will teach you more about those irregulars when I teach you about the specific grammar within them. Specifically, you will learn about adding ~니 and ~나 to stems in Lesson 22; you will learn about ~는 in Lessons 26, 27 and 28; and will learn about ~세요 in Lesson 40.

Make sure that you realize that you have not learned any grammatical principle where "~는" is added. The addition of "~는" is *not* the diary form conjugation that you learned in Lesson 5. That conjugation is ~ㄴ/는다 - where, depending on the stem of the verb, you might need add ~ㄴ다 or ~는다. The "~는" addition is not the same, and will be talked about in Lessons 26, 27 and 28, but try not to worry about it now.

Just to make my point clear - the diary form present tense conjugation of "열다" is "연다" (based on the information earlier). It is *not* 여는다.

ㄹ Irregular – Adding ~ㄹ/을 to words

Just like the above (ㄴ/ㅅ) example, you have not learned about adding ~ㄹ/을 to a stem, so don't worry about this too much now either. I will show you the examples, but you won't be able to understand them. Just try to see how the irregular works within these examples, and I will re-present these again when you learn how to deal with adding ~ㄹ/을. When you add ~ㄹ/을 to a stem of a word that ends in ㄹ, you actually drop the ㄹ/을 altogether:

갈다 + ㄹ/을 = 갈

빨다 + ㄹ/을 = 빨

Again, that is just for your reference. I will teach you more about this irregular when I teach you about the specific grammar within it in Lesson 9.

Adding ~ㄴ/은 to Adjectives

I mentioned this in some of the sections above, but I would like to organize it all here. In Lesson 4, you learned how to add ~ㄴ/은 to adjectives to describe an upcoming noun. Some irregulars will come into play when adding doing this because of the possibility of adding a vowel to a stem. Let's look at the word “어렵다” as an example. 어렵다 has a consonant as its final letter, which means that ~은 must be added (instead of ~ㄴ). Therefore, we end up with:

어렵은

Because of this, now we now have the final consonant “ㄹ” followed by a vowel, which causes the ㄹ irregular to be applied. The correct conjugation of 어렵다 + ~ㄴ/은 is therefore “어려운.”

Below is a table that shows how irregular adjectives can change because of adding ~ㄴ/은:

Irregular	Example Word	Does this apply?	Application
ㅅ Irregular	낫다 (better)	YES	나은
ㄷ Irregular	NA	NA	NA
ㅂ Irregular	쉽다 (easy)	YES	쉬운
ㅡ Irregular	바쁘다 (busy)	NO	바쁜
ㄹ Irregular	빠르다 (fast)	NO	빠른
ㄴ Irregular	길다 (long)	YES	긴

That's it! Wow that is a lot of irregulars.

Note that these irregulars do not apply to word stems ending with a four-letter syllable. For example, the ㅅ irregular does not apply to 없다, which you will learn about in the next lesson.

Check out our Irregular Guide (which is included next) if you are confused (I'm sure you are!). Everybody is confused when they learn these irregulars. Eventually you will reach a point where all of these will come natural to you. Whenever you learn a new word where the stem ends in ㅅ/ㄴ/ㅂ/ㄷ/ㄹ/ㅡ just make a mental note about how you should conjugate that word in the future. I don't even have to think about these irregulars anymore because they just flow out naturally. If you can't memorize them all right now, just try to understand them, which will allow you to recognize them later. Eventually, you will memorize them simply from using and hearing them so much.